



# The Compassionate Friends

**El Paso Chapter**



**June**



**July**



**August**



## **WELCOME TO THE SUMMER MEETINGS**

**Date:** Wednesday  
June 24, 2009  
July 29, 2009  
August 26, 2009

**Program:**

**Time:** 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Place:**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
1000 Montana Avenue  
El Paso, Texas

**Board of Directors:**

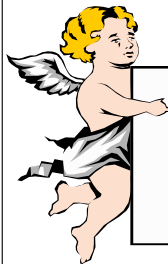
Chairperson: Susan Crews  
542-0908

Sec/Treasurer: Lou Cain  
Newsletter, Copies & Mailing:  
The Winkelmans

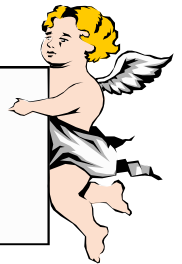
### **Mark Your Calendar For Future Meetings**

Sept 30: Regular Meeting  
Oct 4?: Annual Balloon Picnic  
Oct 28: Regular Meeting  
Nov 25: Regular Meeting

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS** is a self help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purpose of TCF is to aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of their child and to foster the physical and emotional health of bereaved parents and surviving children. The El Paso chapter meets in donated church facilities, but no religious creed or affiliation is involved. There are no dues and no one is required to talk at any meeting. Listening is okay! Please join us, together we can make it.



## **Editor's Notes**



We want this newsletter to be *your* newsletter. To do that, we need your help. You are invited – actually, you are strongly encouraged – to contribute to this publication. If you have something to share with other bereaved parents, e-mail it to me so that it can be published in our next newsletter. Please write and share your stories of your child or your sibling. Some of us get to know each other's children through the monthly chapter meetings. But, this newsletter also can be a forum for us to share. Writing is a form of therapy. It will help us get to know each other a little better and it will help us to heal a bit, too. We all have favorite memories that we can share – things that have helped us over the days, months or years. I hope you'll share them with us. It doesn't even have to be a full article. Sometimes, brief paragraphs of memories or thoughts are perfect.

Mail all Entries to: Eric Winkelman  
5337 Hunters Glenn  
El Paso, TX 79932  
or  
E-mail me at: [ejwink@sbglobal.net](mailto:ejwink@sbglobal.net)

National Office: TCF National Office  
PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
(630) 990-0010 or (877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## To My Dad On Father's Day

I came to mom in a vision the other night' I sent a message and asked her if a letter she'd write. There are so many things I intended to say- I know you felt the same, in your own way.

I heard that you wished you'd hugged me the night I left, Just hearing your wish gave me warmth in my chest. Though you never said, "I love you" aloud and in the open, I always knew it, though the words were not spoken.

I'm as guilty as you for not expressing my feelings- In our hearts and minds, we knew about such dealings. We were so much alike, that you cannot deny, Which could be the reason we didn't always see eye to eye.

Though I'm no longer with you physically, I wanted Mom to tell you what you really meant to me. Don't feel guilty or sad for things you could have done- You taught me to enjoy life and have so much fun.

Thank you for the times we spent hunting and fishing, There was nothing greater on earth, no matter the wishing. So much we shared on weekends, when we'd all go jeeping, It was exciting and a memory worth keeping.

You taught me to love and respect Mother Nature, And do no harm to land or creature. Your love gave me all of these things, Add them all up and see what happiness it brings.

I left for another life without saying goodbye- That's something we couldn't have done, no matter where or why. Just remember I'm with you every hour of every day, Remember our love grows stronger in things we do and say.

Some day we'll be together as a family again- I can assure you of that because I know we can. I needed Mom to tell you in her special way, That's why I asked her to write what I had to say.

I'll tell you now, because I didn't while on Earth, I loved, admired and respected you from my birth. We'll keep our love alive and won't be sad, Because you will always be Mike Sharp's Dad. Love Michael (form Heaven) by Carol Sharp, Springfield, Missouri

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### Happy Father's Day

Today is Father's Day, Daddy.

This is your special day.

I realize this is hard for you since your son went away.

Today should be a happy day for fathers far and near.

But for you it's not that way because not everyone is here.

Along with the joy you feel because you are a Dad,  
comes the hurt you have for the son you once had.

The rest of us kids realize that Wade is on your mind.

The card looks so strange without his name signed.

WE all miss him a lot, and we really hurt for you.

Even though he is gone now, his Dad is still you.

Although he can't tell you, the rest of us can.

"Happy Father's Day, Daddy!" We do understand.

Delaine Reindel, TCF, Houston, TX

### What Makes A Dad

God took the strength of a mountain,

The majesty of a tree,

The warmth of a summer sun,

The calm of a quiet sea,

The generous soul of nature,

The comforting arm of night,

The wisdom of the ages,

The power of the eagle's flight,

The joy of a morning in spring,

The faith of a mustard seed,

The patience of eternity,

The depth of a family need,

Then God combined these qualities,

When there was nothing more to add,

He knew His masterpiece was complete,

And so,

He called it ... Dad

Author is unknown

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Warm and sunny day in June

Father's Day

Children, small and grown

Give gifts to father

Say thanks to father

### Father's Day

Say I Love You.

But there are fathers

Whose children are not here

To give gifts and say thanks

And say I Love You.

Remember the fathers

Whose children are gone,

Because they will always be

Fathers at heart.

~Sascha

# June, July and August Children Remembered

If your child's name has been left out of this section, or there is missing/incorrect information, please contact me immediately so I can update our data base.

LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN



HERE AND THEN GONE

BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

Death Date:	Age:	Child's Name:	Parents:
6/1/1993	NB	Daniel	Son of Charla McDaniel
6/4/2001	24	Ernesto Torres	Son of Connie Arce
6/17/1991	23	David	Son of Karen Valentino
6/19/1995	35	Mark	Son of Estella Townsend
6/24/2008	16	Hector Jr.	Son of Hector and Sandra Garcia
6/26/1988	17	Peter	Son of Bonnie Winkelman
7/13/1996	9	Thomas	Son of Ann Sparkes
7/14/2007	31	Lawrence	Son of Elsie and Edward Margerum
7/28/2008	New Born	William David	Son of Jorge and Vanessa Ramirez
7/29/2000	15	Sherrie	Daughter of Norma and Tim Foote
8/1/2008	27	Vicente David	Son of David and Debbie Costalez
8/7/1993	19	R. J.	Son of Mr. & Mrs. Joe Halow
8/24/2008	19	Ruben Soliz	Son of Ruben Navarette
8/26/1996	28	Philip	Son of Mr. & Mrs. Herb Winograd

## July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven  
 Brilliant colors in the sky.  
 Their splendor ends in seconds  
 On this evening in July.  
 "Her birthday is this Saturday,"  
 I whisper with a sigh.  
 She was born this month,  
 She loved this month  
 And she chose this month to die.  
 Like the bright and beautiful fireworks  
 Glowing briefly in the dark  
 They are gone too soon, and so was she  
 Having been, and left her mark.

A glorious incandescent life,  
 A catalyst, a spark...  
 Her being gently lit my path  
 And softened all things stark.  
 The July birth, the July death of  
 my happy summer child  
 Marked a life too brief that ended  
 Without rancor, without guile.  
 Like the fireworks that leave images  
 On unprotected eyes...  
 Her lustrous life engraved my heart...  
 With love that never dies.

*Sally Migliaccio, TCF Babylon, Long Island, N.Y.*

## VACATIONS

Vacation time is upon us again. You may be having trouble with that very thought. My only advice is to go where it is most comfortable for you. Large places with many people may not be the answer this year. The family oriented spots may make it more obvious that one of your blessings is missing. It may be that you are locked into plans that were made before the tragedy of your child's death. You may hesitate to change these plans if they involve other people. I, personally, could only be with people who understood my feelings in the beginning. If the other people involved are not sensitive and understanding, you may want to reconsider your plans. Good, warm, caring friends who will allow you to be wherever it is that you are can be a great comfort.

Keeping it simple with a back door through which you can escape if necessary, can be the best answer. Going away and coming home can be a problem in the beginning. Know that it is normal. Whatever it is that you do and wherever it is that you go, I hope you will keep in mind that it won't always be this painful.

IT WILL BE BETTER. Be patient. If you can find peace and enjoyment, do it. You deserve it and it doesn't mean you don't care.

- Mary Cleckley  
TCF, Atlanta, GA

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## Summer Memories

Summertime is a happy time for most people in this country: vacations, holidays, family reunions, relaxed days at the pool, evenings in the backyard talking with family and friends, the smell of a fresh rain, the long days, the cooling nights, fresh mowed grass and flowers that bloom profusely.

Despite Houston's heat, summer has become a treasured time for me. My son was a child of summer. Born in May, he loved the summer sun on his face and the wind in his hair as he first rode a tricycle, then a bicycle, then drove a car. Those were wonderful times for him.

The summer solstice on June 21 was a favorite day for us both. Since the summer solstice is the longest day of the year, Todd particularly loved to watch the sunrise and sunset. I found myself doing that again this year. As I looked at the sun directly overhead at noon (1:00 pm DST), I made the comment that this is the one perfectly balanced day of the year. Later as I watched a beautiful solstice sunset, I remarked to my husband about the light...the gorgeous light. I was seeing Todd in that light. He was laughing, chasing lightening bugs, running and spinning and turning, filled with the joy of summer. He was happy.

I listened to the neighbors' children playing, and I thought about all the wonderful summer days I had spent with my son. I am thankful that I had that time. I am thankful that my child was a son of summer. He found much joy in nature, in the outdoors, in activities that took him out of the ordinary and into the sublime.

That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of the loss of our child to death. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience.

We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent-child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child. There is no way to measure the depth, width or volume of a parent's love. It exceeds every other human relationship. Yes, we miss them terribly. We weep silently into our pillows at night. We light candles, take flowers to the cemetery, wear their favorite colors, treasure pictures of our children and keep them forever in our hearts. This is a big part of life for every bereaved parent.

Somehow, on the summer solstice, I felt my child's presence in the light of the day and the beautiful rose color of the solstice sunset. I could hear his voice, see his smile and feel his emotions. Peace slips into our hearts in extraordinary ways.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, Texas*

## Father's Day

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father's Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday.

Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son's life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead, I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan's arrival, but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die.

Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child's death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex's memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might.

So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother's needs on Mother's Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husbands this Father's Day as well. It is frequently said that we males don't often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and 'warm fuzzies' when we hurt also. Please remember us on Fathers Day, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonalds, Hallmark, and AT&T.

Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.

Doug Hughes TCF ~ Cincinnati, Ohio

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## Nothing Lasts Forever

Our days on earth we try  
to find a bit of joy,  
To hold within our arms,  
what time cannot destroy.  
Like petals in the wind,  
we drift from here to there,  
Because nothing lasts forever,  
except for what we share.

And even though we hold  
a dream within each heart,  
It's in human nature's way  
to tear it all apart.  
And so it is we strive  
in faith to carry on,  
after all is said and done,  
when what we've loved is gone.

But if we can contain  
some peace within our mind,  
Our heart will surely follow,  
and happiness we'll find.  
*Written by Mark Lee and  
submitted by Pam Gnanamani in  
memory of her brother, Dan  
Prescott*

# Love Gifts

A LOVE GIFT is a gift of money or service to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died but it can also be a gift to help in the work of the El Paso Chapter of TCF. Your gifts are tax deductible and are our Chapter's only monetary support. Your donation will help us pay for postage and labels for sending our newsletter each month.

## LOVE GIFT

Name of Person to be Remembered \_\_\_\_\_

Special Occasion of Person \_\_\_\_\_

Given By \_\_\_\_\_

Send To: Mary Lou Cain  
5664 Beth View  
El Paso, TX 79932

### Love Gifts For Summer

Gordon Mahon Jr, In Loving Memory of His Son Samael, 9/5/2006, Age 28

### A Father's Prayer....

I am a man, God, and I have been taught that I should be strong and show no weakness. My wife needs me to be strong; I cannot and I must not be weak and lean on her. It is only with You that I can be honest, Lord, and even with You I am ashamed to admit it, but I want to cry. I can feel the tears securely dammed up behind eyes that want to burst. There is a voice in me that shouts, BE STRONG! BE A MAN! SHOW NO WEAKNESS! SHED NO TEARS! But there is another voice inside that speaks softly and somehow I feel it is Your voice, Father. Is it You Who tells me that I am also a feeling human being who can cry if I need to? Is it Your voice that tells me that maybe my wife needs the tenderness of my tears more than she needs the strength of my muscles? You are right, Lord, as always. My wife needs to see my grief. She needs to feel the dampness of my tears and know the aching of my heart. Then, just as we became one to create this life, we become one in our grief which mourns this death. I think I understand, Lord. It is in sharing the awful pain of my grief that I become an even stronger man. It is in sharing my tears that I share my true strength. Oh, God, help me to communicate my deepest and most sensitive feelings to my wife so that we may become whole together. -

Norman Hagley, TCF Palestine, TX

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### Father's Love

Father weighed us once a month  
And totaled up the pounds.  
Then he weighed the dog and cat  
(As silly as that sounds)

He then included their weight, too,  
And with pride and joy he'd say,

"Hmm. Yes. I do believe  
Here's what we have today"

There's thirty-five and forty-eight  
And Jim weighs eighty-nine,  
Spot and Puss weigh twenty-four  
And all these pounds are mine!"

Father loved us not by age  
Nor virtues that he found  
He gathered all his children in  
And loved us by the pound.

Dee L. McCollum, TCF Atlanta  
North Carolina Poetry Society

## Thoughts After the Graduation Party

It was been a long time since I have written and I feel out of touch with all you wonderful people. I have been so busy that I haven't even read the line for the last two to three weeks and I miss you. I get so much strength from your strength, and so much outpouring of genuine caring from you whom I have never met, yet feel like I know you so well.

The baby of my family, my son Dan, graduated from high school at the end of May and we had his graduation open house yesterday. It was a bittersweet day of mixed emotions. On the one hand, I am so thankful and so blessed to have him here with me so that I was able to have the party for him. He was in the back seat, sitting right next to his sister Nina, when she was killed six years ago, and he could have been killed as well. She was his mentor and his best friend. His life was changed immeasurably by her absence these past years during the difficult years of junior high school and high school. He missed the counselor and adviser in his sister.

Making the picture board for the party was a very emotional experience. I have had boxes of pictures untouched for so many years and this forced me to go through them. Looking for pictures of the two of them together; well, it just broke my heart. She was always at his side or looking over his shoulder making sure he was okay. I have to trust that she still is looking over his shoulder, from a distance. We missed her physical presence so much yesterday. I know she was here in spirit, but, of course, it is not the same. She loved big gatherings like this and she would have been so pleased to see her brother looking so happy and watching her nephews, that unfortunately she never got to meet, as they played together. Oh, sweet Nina, we missed you!

My heart hurts for those of you experiencing the first summer without your child. Their absence is even more apparent during the summertime, especially for the school age children, because they would have been on summer vacation and home with you. You are all in my prayers every day and night. Thinking of you and wishing you as much peace as you can grab hold of,

Cathy, Nina's mom forever

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Newsletter May/June 2002

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## What My World is Like Without You

They say that death changes the way you think,  
It changes the way we eat and drink,  
It changes the way we plan our lives  
It makes us just want to crawl and hide.  
Our future is forever now unknown  
Each day my heart aches and I groan  
There is no sparkle in my eyes  
Unless you count those many tears inside.  
I wonder what our future will bring  
Not the sound of your children singing  
No babies to hug, no son to hold

What would it be like growing old?  
Your father and I still talk about you  
And all the things we thought you'd do  
Those dreams are gone, and so is the rest  
Of those things in life that you did best.  
Love you Ma 6/20/2008

*In memory of my beloved son, David William  
Burns Gone four years Born 9-11-1972 and left  
us 7-2-2004 We love and miss you so much.  
Lydia R. Burns*

## INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Fourth of July, Independence Day, Our Nation's Birthday. Whatever you call it, we celebrate America's independence from England on July 4th each year. As a nation, we have endured for 200+ years to become a significant, independent, and powerful force in the world. We were founded on the principles of equality and religious tolerance, of equity and opportunity, and of rights and responsibilities. Several generations of men and women have defended our precious freedom with their lives. As we celebrate this year, let's take a moment to remember those who paid the ultimate price for freedom—and to remember their families. It is sometimes easy to think only of the glory of their sacrifices, and to overlook the sacrifice of their families. War is never glorious, no matter how romantic the notion created by Hollywood. War has casualties that go farther and deeper into the fabric of our nation than we may realize. Those who died are buried with fanfare, as befits nation's fallen valliants. Their families learn to go on, just as we have, in spite of their loss.

But think for a moment of those who were declared missing in action, or who were prisoners of war. Their families must endure, often for years, and sometimes without an end to their pain and loss. Remember all of our nation's fallen when you celebrate this year. Remember those ceremoniously laid to rest; remember those who were captured, imprisoned, even tortured; remember those whose fate remains unknown. And remember, too, the families of all of them. Death, no matter how noble, is never easy for those left behind. We send our thanks to the veterans—living, dead, and missing—and their families.

**- Tom and Sondra Wright  
TCF Tucker, GA**

Self Help Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parent

Address Correction Requested



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