



# The Compassionate Friends



El Paso Chapter



September



October



November



## WELCOME TO OUR FALL MEETINGS

**Picnic: October 16, 5:00 PM**  
Madeline Park

**Meetings: Wednesdays**  
September 28, 2011  
October 26, 2011  
November 30, 2011

**Program:**  
To be Announced

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

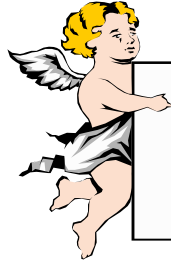
**Place:**  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
1000 Montana Avenue  
El Paso, Texas

**Board Of Directors:**  
Chairman: Ray Gallardo  
Sec/Treasurer: Lou Cain  
Newsletter, Copies & Mailing:  
The Winkelmans

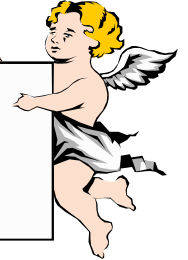
### Mark Your Calendar For Future Meetings

Dec 11 Around the Globe  
Candlelight Ceremony  
Jan 25 Monthly Meeting  
Feb 29 Monthly 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



In October, we will be having our annual balloon picnic at Madeline Park. Everyone is invited, parents, children and other family members. We all **bring our favorite dish**, eat, socialize, then send off a balloon with a special message to our child(ren). Each person is asked to **bring one or more helium balloons** to send off to their child. We also suggest you **bring lawn chairs** to sit on. The picnic will be held at **Madeline Park on Sunday, October 16, at 5:00 PM, located off of Cincinnati Avenue, in Kern Place**. See you there.

Mail all Entries to: Eric Winkelman  
[ejwinkel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ejwinkel@sbcglobal.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)

If you would like to receive this monthly newsletter, please e-mail [ejwinkel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ejwinkel@sbcglobal.net) or [www.elpasotcf.org](http://www.elpasotcf.org)

## Parenting Through a Glass Partition — After the Death of a Child

By Alice J. Wisler

Reprinted from the national magazine of The  
Compassionate Friends, "We Need Not Walk Alone?"  
Fall 2002. Copyright 2001-2010

Alice J. Wisler's son, Daniel, died from cancer treatments in 1997 at the age of four. In his memory, she writes and speaks, conducting "Writing the Heartache?" workshops across the country. <http://www.alicewisler.com/>  
Raising children and being bereaved makes me feel like I did when I was six years old. My red tights bagged around my ankles, I often had doggy poop on the bottom of my scuffed patent-leather shoes, and I was constantly running to catch the bus. Now, as a mother of three living children and one who died, I feel overwhelmed, forgetful and, to use a word my aunt Mollie often said, discombobulated.

At the fast food restaurant, my children laugh in the play area as I sit drinking coffee behind the glass partition that separates the play area from the dining section. While I have hugged them so tightly their tonsils could pop out, I am still, much of the time, finding myself watching them from a distance. They are mine but so was Daniel, and in the course of a moment I know they could be gone, as he is.

When Rachel, 11, was late coming home from a shopping trip with her grandmother, I thought they had been tied up in traffic, but then my mind leaped off into an insane spin and I was certain she'd been in an accident. My thoughts dove into planning her funeral.

She came home without a scratch, and I gulped my worries away — for the moment.

When my children say, "I love you, Mom," and spontaneously wrap their arms around me, I'm certain this could be the end.

"So you live in fear?" a friend asks.

Well, no. I live in reality.

My reality is hearing my children call "Hi, Daniel?"

when we drive on Interstate 40 near Exit 270, where there's

a view of Daniel's Place, what my children have named the cemetery. Ben, at five, older than his older brother ever got to be, asks which of our toys Daniel liked to play with and with a smile on his face, listens as I share a story about Daniel and the Fisher Price fishing rod. Elizabeth, age

four, tells me out of the blue that Daniel isn't dead; he lives with God. Later, she hugs me and says she wishes Daniel was here. She's never been photographed with her oldest brother. She kicked in the womb as Daniel breathed his last. Three months later, this failed-vasectomy child was born. I was certain she'd be severely traumatized, but so far, at age four; she has only been known to tell the neighbor girl she doesn't like her.

My reality is that a part of my heart wanted to be childless when Daniel died so that I could have time to weep and wail without having to meet the demands of exasperated cries, without having to wipe little bottoms and without having to search for tiny shoes and socks. When infant Liz used to wake crying months after Daniel's death, I'd hold her and we'd sob together.

The hole in my heart looms large today. The new school year and Daniel's birthday are just around the corner. I finish my coffee and tell my kids it's time to attend the Open House. While grinning at my children and me, a friend exclaims, "One in middle school, one in kindergarten, and one in preschool! You will be busy." I paste on a phony smile and think, not busy enough. I need my fourth grader. But Daniel, my would-be-nine-year-old, died four years ago before completing a year of preschool. When we arrive home from the Open House, Ben trips onto the pavement while playing ball and I hold him as he cries and his knee bleeds. Whispering, I assure him, "It is going to be okay." What a luxury to be able to tell my children this line of comfort. For Daniel, with the cancer treatments he had to go through, it was not "okay."

Although I prayed daily he'd be cured, it was beyond my control. A scraped knee will heal.

How do we do it? How do we continue living the role of the nurturing and loving parent with the enormous responsibilities, when at times, we can barely put one foot in front of the other?

Here are some tips that have worked for fellow bereaved parents and me:

Take breaks. This is easier said than done, I know. But I believe you need more breaks than before the death of your child. Your energy for living has been depleted. If you're home all day with the demands of little ones as I have been, you need time alone. If your spouse is at home all day with the children, he or she needs a break.

**Continued on Page 4**

# Fall Angel Dates

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

LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN



HERE AND THEN GONE

BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

<b>DEATH DATES:</b>	<b>AGE:</b>	<b>CHILD:</b>	<b>PARENT(S):</b>
9/1/2000	8 Months	Emily Victoria	Daughter of Selina Ruiz
9/2/1983	3	Jonathon	Son of Mrs. Susan Crews
9/2/2009	20	Philip	Son of Martha and Felipe Jordan
9/4/1998	12	Adam	Son of Beverly Hurley
9/5/1997	41	Harlow III	Son of Mr. & Mrs. Harlow Paul
9/5/2006	8	Samual	Son of Gordon Mahon
9/18/1993	29	Steven	Son of Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Waite
9/20/2009	53	Mary	Daughter of Mary Martinez
10/6/2005	47	Fred	Son of Fran Zimet
10/7/2007	2	Ethan	Son of Gloria Ortiz
10/14/2007	1	Ethan	Son of Elien & Denim Slade
10/16/2001	26 Days	Elsie	Daughter of Ann Sigholz
10/19/1991	8	Jeremy	Alvin and Carmen Dobard
10/24/2006	19	Mathew Jordan	Son of Tara and Dean Higginbrothan
10/29/2009	9	Brandon	Son of Sharon Gonzalez
10/30/2003	10	Ruben	Son of Cindy and Mark Flack
11/8/2009	23	Shawn	Son of Pamela
11/14/2007	24	Jessica M.	Daughter of Maria-Elena Pando
11/19/2007	27	Michael	Son of Terri & Robert Gallardo
11/23/2009	19	Enrique	Son of Susana Everrete
11/28/2003	19 Days	Gabrielle	Daughter of Edna and Andrew Sierra
11/30/1991	21	Mark Anthony	Son of Maria Molina

---

---

## Continued from Page 2

Let anger out in a constructive way. When you find you're constantly yelling at the kids, it's time to figure out another release for anger. Play basketball, go on a walk or bike ride. Shut yourself in a room and write. Use your pent-up frustration to pull weeds in the garden or sweep the garage.

Learn to apologize — often. When you do find yourself unreasonably upset with your children, apologize for your reactions. Grief can make you irrational. Page 12 of 28

Hug your kids more — even if the older ones whine and don't want you to. They know now as we do how important hugs and showing our affection really are.

Talk it out. Tell your children why you are feeling sad or discouraged. If you're having a frustrating day, let them know. Even my little ones could understand that "Mommy or Daddy is sad because she/he misses Daniel."

Spend time with the kids — one on one — if possible. Just you and your daughter can go shopping or out for ice cream. Don't force talk of her dead brother or sister. Just be together for the sake of spending time together. We focus a lot on our deceased children; our living children need to feel valued, too.

Don't stifle your children as they grow and grieve in their own ways.

Write love letters to your surviving children. Sometimes it is easier to convey feelings on paper.

Give the letters to your kids or keep them to reread later. Share your child who died. He is a part of the family and his story needs to be told.

Don't fear your "glass partition" view of parenting. As with the other phases and experiences of grief, honor it and don't fight it.

You are modeling survival. Even as your tears flow and you are overcome with sorrow, your children can learn this is okay. They will also reflect (although it may be years later) that Mom got out of bed, made us breakfast, shopped for school supplies, and went to our soccer games even when she didn't feel like it. They will learn life is tough and even when the storms hit the hardest, it is possible to live through them.

Believe your surviving children will be all right even as they see you suffering and as they face their own monumental pain. In time, they may learn a deeper sensitivity. Perhaps they will become more compassionate because of their experiences. You can guarantee they're more realistic. Your son or daughter might even become a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. (We can still dream, can't we?)

I have to remember that although once laid-back, I was never the perfect parent before Daniel died. I had vices and virtues then, just as I have now. Perhaps grief has helped us become better aware of what we are all about. Listen. There are many negatives, but there is much to smile about now, too. Devotion made us caring and loving parents before, and it can carry us through during this rocky road of bereavement. There is the ability to parent effectively through the glass partition.

---

---

## To My Miscarried Baby

By Betty Ruder

Reprinted from TCF, North Shore Chapter Illinois

Out of our love you came.

Planned, wanted, welcomed.

Your announcement created excitement, joy.

Friends and family inquired,

Do you want a girl or boy?

Will you take Lamaze?

What colors for the nursery?

Then suddenly you're gone — and silence.

No one talks about a baby that won't be.

Were you real or a dream?

I feel alone and empty.

Where can I put my love that was for you?

Now what does it mean?



# 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

---

---

### **WHAT SIBLINGS THINK...**

#### **Give Teens a Chance - Understanding Teen Grief**

I had just turned 16 when my older brother, Tim, was murdered. I was already struggling with the pressures of being a teen. I certainly did not need my life to be any more complicated. It was the most difficult thing I had ever experienced.

Eventually, I emerged from my loss with a better understanding of grief. Since then, I have always felt the need to advocate for grieving teens.

Being a parent to a grieving teen can be tough. When I've heard them say things like: "My teen doesn't want to talk to me about their loss. They seem so distant." I want to help but I don't know how. I just want to share a good cry with them.

Being a grieving teen can be tough. Some of things I've heard teens say are: "I don't talk to my parents about my loss because I don't want to upset them. I am really going through a difficult time right now. I feel a tremendous weight upon my shoulders. I don't think my parents understand."

Allow a teen to be a teen. Not only has their loss been difficult for them to get through, but they also get bombarded with all kinds of other stress.

Never allow yourself to compare your surviving teen with the one who died. In my house, we had a bookshelf dedicated to the "greatness" of my brother. One of the things that really angered me was that his memory was being distorted. He was a great brother but he was not an angel. I wanted to remember him for exactly who he was—good and bad included.

One of the most important things that a grieving teen can have is a friend they can talk to. As a parent, this may be you, but more often it is not. There are several reasons for this. The teen may feel that bringing up the subject will only make the parent feel worse. I call this "parenting the parent." Another reason is that all griever tend to be selfish. Often the parents feel that they are entitled to most of the grief. (At least it seems that way) Grief should not be competitive. Everyone handles his or her grief differently. No one said this was going to be easy.

Give yourself some room to grieve as well as your teen. I have found that when you give a teen a chance to express his/her grief, then they may do the same for you.

- Ben Sieff, Omaha, NE

Reprinted with permission from Compassionate Friends  
Newsletter, Summer 2008

# Ten Healing Rights for Grieving Children

By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

Reprinted from Bereavement Magazine,

8133 Telegraph Drive,

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80920-7169,

[719] 282-1850.

Dr. Wolfelt is a clinical thanatologist and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, in Fort Collins, CO.

Author's note: This bill of rights for grieving children is intended to empower them to help themselves heal – and to help direct the adults in their lives to be supportive as well.

Someone you love has died. You are probably having many hurtful and scary thoughts and feelings right now. Together those thoughts and feelings are called grief, which is a normal (though really difficult) thing everyone goes through after someone they love has died.

The following 10 rights will help you understand your grief and eventually feel better about life again. Use the ideas that make sense to you. Post this list on your refrigerator or on your bedroom door or wall. Re-reading it often will help you stay on track as you move toward healing from your loss. You might also ask the grown-ups in your life to read this list so they will remember to help you in the best way they can.

1. I have the right to have my own unique feelings about the death.

I may feel angry, sad, or lonely. I may feel scared or relieved. I may feel numb or sometimes not anything at all.

No ONE will feel exactly like I do.

2. I have the right to talk about my grief whenever I feel like talking.

When I need to talk, I will find someone who will listen to me and love me. When I don't want to talk about it, that's okay, too.

3. I have the right to show my feelings of grief in my own way.

When they are hurting, some kids like to play so they'll feel better for awhile. I can play or laugh, too. I might also get mad and scream. This does not mean I am bad, it just means I have scary feelings that I need help with.

4. I have the right to need other people to help me with my grief, especially grown-ups who care about me.

Mostly I need them to pay attention to what I am feeling and saying and to love me no matter what.

5. I have the right to get upset about normal, everyday problems.

I might feel grumpy and have trouble getting along with others sometimes.

6. I have the right to have "griefbursts."

Griefbursts are sudden, unexpected feelings of sadness that just hit me sometimes – even long after the death.

These feelings can be very strong and even scary. When this happens, I might feel afraid to be alone.

7. I have the right to use my beliefs about my God to help me deal with my feelings of grief.

Praying might make me feel better and somehow closer to the person who died.

8. I have the right to try to figure out why the person I loved died.

But it's okay if I don't find an answer. Why?

Questions about life and death are the hardest questions in the world.

9. I have the right to think and talk about my memories of the person who died.

Sometimes those memories will be happy, and sometimes they might be sad. Either way, these memories help me keep alive my love for the person who died.

10. I have the right to move toward and feel my grief and, over time, to heal.

I'll go on to live a happy life, but the life and death of the person who died will always be a part of me. I'll always miss this special person.



Normal day let me be aware of the treasure you are.  
Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you  
before you depart.  
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect  
tomorrow.  
Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.  
One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my  
face  
in the pillow,  
or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky,  
and want more than all the world for your return?  
~ Mary Jean Irion

## **PATRIOT'S DAY**

Remembering those who died on 9/11

Lady Liberty

I wonder what she thought  
as she stood there, strong and tall.

She couldn't turn away,  
and was forced to watch it all.

Did she long to offer comfort  
as her country bled?

With her arm forever frozen  
high above her head.

She could not shield her eyes,  
she could not hide her face.

She just stared across the water  
keeping Freedom's place.

The smell of smoke and terror  
somehow reduced her size.

So small within the harbor  
but still we recognized...

How dignified and beautiful  
on a day so many died

I wonder what she thought  
and I know she must have cried.

Author unknown

Lovingly lifted from TCF York Newsletter

---

---

## **Is Your Child Like The Dragonfly?**

Once, in a little pond, in the muddy water under the lily pads, there lived a little water beetle in a community of water beetles. They lived a simple and comfortable life in the pond with few disturbances and interruptions.

Once in a while, sadness would come to the community when one of their fellow beetles would climb the stem of a lily pad and would never be seen again. They knew when this happened, their friend had died, gone forever.

Then, one day, one little water beetle felt an irresistible urge to climb up that stem. However, he was determined that he would not leave forever. He would come back and tell his friends what he had found at the top.

When he reached the top and climbed out of the water onto the surface of the lily pad, he was so tired, and the sun felt so warm, that he decided he must take a nap. As he slept, his body changed and when he woke up, he had turned into a beautiful blue-tailed dragonfly with broad wings and a slender body designed for flying.

So, fly he did! And, as he soared he saw the beauty of a whole new world and a far superior way of life to what he had never known existed.

Then he remembered his beetle friends and how they were thinking by now he was dead. He wanted to go back to tell them, and explain to them that he was now more alive than he had ever been before. His life had been fulfilled rather than ended.

But, his new body would not go down into the water. He could not get back to tell his friends the good news. Then he understood that their time would come, when they too would know what he now knew. So, he raised his wings and flew off into his joyous new life!

- Author Unknown

---

---

## **PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS DAY**

October 15th

My Darling's First Birthday

I cannot celebrate with cake  
and candles to blow out;

I can't put you in a stroller  
and proudly walk you about.

But there is a special place  
where I hold you close to me.

It is deep within my heart  
and there you will forever be.

And even though you aren't here,  
we are thankful for your birth.

and we will continue someday in Heaven,  
the love we began here on earth.

- Thena Smith, Letters to Heaven



**The Annual El Paso  
TCF Picnic**

will be on Sunday,  
**October 16, 2011**  
from **5:00 – 7:00** at  
Madeline Park in Kern  
Place. The main dish  
will be provided by El  
Paso TCF. We would  
like for you to bring a  
favorite salad, side dish,  
appetizer, snacks (chips,  
pretzels, etc.), sodas  
and water, or dessert.  
We will have our

**Memorial Balloon Release between 6:00 and 6:30.** Please bring your own balloons, lawn chairs or a blanket to spread out. As always, you are welcome to bring friends and/or family members. Check our local website: [www.elpasotcf.org](http://www.elpasotcf.org) for pictures of previous year's picnics.



Self Help Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parent

Address Correction Requested



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1000 MONTANA  
EL PASO, TX 79902