



# The Compassionate Friends



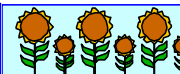
*El Paso Chapter*



**March**



**April**



**May**



## **WELCOME TO THE SPRING MEETINGS**

**Date:** Wednesday Evenings  
March 26, 2007  
April 30, 2007  
May 28, 2007

**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

Meeting Facilitators: The Footes

Treasurer: Lou Cain

Newsletter, Website & Mailings:  
The Winkelmans

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

June 25: Regular Meeting

July 30: Regular Meeting

Aug 27: 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: [ejwinkelsbcglobal.net](mailto:ejwinkelsbcglobal.net)  
Visit our Website at: [elpasotcf.org](http://elpasotcf.org)

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)

# My Hope Chest

By Barbara Parson, TCF Atlanta

On November 24, 1991, I became a bereaved parent when my 15 year old son, Robert, died by suicide.

We had run out of time for prevention and/or intervention. It was now time to begin grieving. Death by suicide (because it is normally seen as a choice thus the stigma attached to it) typically elicits a more significant amount of anger and guilt. This added dimension often takes longer to work through and the "what if" questions are relentless with no answers. I HOPE to give you some insight into the things that helped me and gave me the courage to grieve and gave me Hope for the future. These are things that I put in what I now call my HOPE CHEST.

Hope comes to us in many ways, people, places, things, in looking back and in looking forward. Many of our "hopes" come to us before we even know what they are and how significant they will be down the road.

Hope is in support groups like Survivors of Suicide and TCF. I learned the language of a bereaved parent and received encouragement, unconditional acceptance, and hope. I learned to work toward changing my anger to forgiveness and my guilt to regret. Two of the hardest hurdles were forgiveness of self that came with the "why" questions and letting go of the guilt, real and imagined. How could my strong, yet sensitive child with a belly laugh that is still music to my ears, make this choice? Leaving these behind brought hope.

Hope is passing on knowledge that you have gained through your journey and/or circumstances or using it for change.

Hope is in time...we need time to heal and that time frame is different for each of us.

Hope is in the grieving process, you heard that right. Grief opens us up and bares all...showing us our strengths and weaknesses. We foster hope within ourselves when we use our strength to bolster our weaknesses and vulnerable areas, gaining confidence with each step.

Hope is in the memories we have of our children. Hope is in Heaven, knowing that we will one day be reunited with them. The candles we light tonight in memory of our children are to celebrate their lives, to show them, the community, and the world how much we love them and miss them. The candles also represent hope for us, they reflect our courage to stand here tonight, even though wounded, to show we have taken up the challenge to grieve with as much courage and grace as possible and make our children proud of us.

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## They Don't Wear Purple Hearts in Heaven

I lost my brother to a foreign land;  
I was too young to even understand

There was a knock at the front door,  
Then Momma wasn't smiling anymore.  
The man at the door was a Marine;  
The first I've ever seen.

Momma told me to go out and play,  
Then the preacher came and they started to pray.  
Tears ran down Momma's eyes, and  
I heard her say, "Why, Lord, Why?"  
Father stood there seemingly mindless, all he said was,  
"We've lost another of America's finest."  
The Marine handed Momma a small velvet case,  
Inside was a Purple Ribbon, attached to  
a gold heart with Washington's face.

I asked Momma if it were mine,  
But she said "It's your brother's, Sunshine."  
"Momma can we send it to Kevin?"  
She answered, "They don't wear Purple Hearts in Heaven."

Author unknown  
Lifted from TCF Atlanta Linked Together Newsletter

*Memorial Day is Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup>*



# January - March's 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. Register your child at the El Paso Compassionate Friends website at [elpasotcf.org](http://elpasotcf.org)

LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN



HERE AND THEN GONE

BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

Death Date:	Child's Name:	Age:	Parents:
1/03/07	John Michael	12	Son of Kevin Lockett
1/14/91	Richard	19	Son of Josie Sanchez
1/14/98	Carly Raquel	18	Daughter of Carlos and Rachel Martinez
2/2/03	Joshua Chavez	1 Mo.	Son of Amanda and Marc Ovalle
2/9/80	Greg	20	Son of Sidney and Bobbi Cohen
2/11/05	Dametri	23 Mo.	Son of Charmine Jackson
2/12/05	Elijah	2	Son of Charmine Jackson
2/15/95	Michael	17	Son of Eddie and Laurie Knipp
2/17/80	Rebecca	22	Daughter of Carlos amd Delfina Hernandez
2/17/91	Evan	14 Mo.	Son of Al and Eva Dominguez
2/19/95	C. J.	20	Son of Mary Jane De Cutler
3/18/93	Robert Todd	23	Son of Mary Lou Cain
3/27/59	Dennis	NB	Son of Carol Winkelman
3/31/95	David Fox	18	Son of Nina Turley

## Happy Passover

Jews throughout the world will celebrate the holiday of Passover this month. Passover has been called our favorite holiday because it operates on so many levels. It is a time of triumph, but it is also a time of tears.

Perhaps at no other time do we feel the absence of our loved onemore than at the time of Passover. As we gather around the table, we cannot help but recall those who were so dear to us in life andwho are with us here no more. We recall them in friendship and inlove, for Passover is the time of family service.

But even as wemourn their loss, we understand that the life of the dead is now placed in the memory of the living. Spring and Passover are a time of new hope and new life.

~Rabbi Dr. Earl Grollman

## Sweet Baby Girl

It's been five long years,  
 Yet it feels like yesterday  
 Since we held you and kissed you good-bye  
 That early Easter morning.  
 So few memories to hold onto,  
 As we left the hospital with empty, aching arms.  
 Gone, were the hopes and dreams we had for you.  
 Replaced, with only the intense pain and tears of grief.  
 How could we say good-bye...  
 When we really never had a chance to say hello?  
 Your footprints will remain on our hearts forever,  
 Time cannot diminish our love for you...

Mommy & Daddy  
 Debbie & Clay Pearson, TCF Winnipeg, Canada

# April's Children Remembered

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LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN



HERE AND THEN GONE

BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

<b>Death Date:</b>	<b>Child:</b>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Parent:</b>
4/20/97	Richard	30	Son of Mary Windham
4/29/94	Matthew	4	Son of Eric and Patsy Winkelman

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## **Rough Spots From a Faith Standpoint.**

Written by Bishop Edmund Lee Browning from "A Year of Days with the Book of Common Prayer.":

God does not cheapen himself or us by offering us easy answers to the anguished, "Why?" that we who are human cannot help but ask. The mystery of life and death and suffering remains a mystery in all human generations, and it is no less a mystery for us. We don't get a quick fix from our faith.

But we do encounter a God who sits patiently beside us in grief, usually silently, like an orthodox Jew sitting shivah with his bereaved friend, offering no words to explain away a mystery that is beyond words. God sits with us in our sorrow. In the days and weeks after a loss, as we sit together in the silence, something new begins to creep into our consciousness. The faith that has sustained our whole lives will begin to knot our sorrow over this death together with what we believe about the life to come. Faith and experience will knit together like a broken bone knits together as time passes. We begin to be able to see for ourselves what is already a reality for those who have gone on ahead of us, something the tears of early bereavement make it hard for us to see at first. They begin to appear in our vision of heaven, taking their place in the communion of the saints. We begin to feel their presence, not just their absence. Once again, the resurrection faith to which we cling gently bathes our hearts, and our hearts are healed.

In love and peace, with gentle thoughts,

Cathy Seehuetter, mom to angel Nina

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*There is a place that we call Memory  
A province by itself  
Which, though unseen,  
Is home and haven to the heart...  
And there, in peace and beauty,  
Waiting,  
Are those with whom we shared our  
yesterdays.  
Nancy Cassell, TCF Monmouth County,  
New Jersey*

# May's Children Remembered

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LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN



HERE AND THEN GONE

BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

Death Dates:	Child's Name:	Age:	Parent's Name:
5/11/04	Christopher	19	Son of Colleen Lydon
5/18/04	Aylssa	15 Months	Daughter of Desiree and Hugo Villanueva
5/30/04	Anthony	20	Son of Richard and Sylvia Chacon

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## *The Significance of Mother's Day*

I don't think I really appreciated the significance of Mother's Day until I myself became one. My life would never be the same and the death of my child did not alter the fact that I am still a mother. I still have the intense feeling of love for my child, a love greater than any I had known before. So as Mother's Day approached, a day on which we recognize the love and pride of motherhood, I too, want to be remembered as a mother.

By Ginny Smith  
TCF Charlottesville, VA

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### **I believe in a place...**

A place where we are free from pain and sorrow  
A place where there is truthfully no tomorrows  
A place to find our children that left before  
A place where our spirits will completely soar  
A place of beauty and tranquility  
A place where we all will have humility  
A place that we will call Heaven Above  
A place that we will cherish and love

Lyndie Sorenson

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## *Mother's Day*

Our last Mother's Day together  
You bought me a hammock  
I remember your excitement  
As I opened it and my  
Anticipation as you  
Gleefully put it together  
We all tried it out of course  
Each of us one at a time,  
Gently swinging in the breeze  
Under the warmth of the sun  
Later we both got in together  
Your sister snapped our picture.  
A year passed and another  
Mother's Day arrived.  
The hammock still sat in the yard  
The photograph of the  
Two of us swinging together  
Still hanging on our fridge.  
This year and every year after  
I climb in the hammock alone  
Sometimes...  
I feel you next to me.

By Deb Kosmer, TCF Redlands, CA  
in memory of her son Shawn Jeremy Schmitz

My thoughts are with all of you this weekend. Since Nina died, I have a renewed interest in Easter weekend. Funny that it was during the middle years of my life, after Nina died, that Easter began to hold extra special meaning, well; the true meaning, anyway. Most of my Easter's previous were just worrying about getting the house in order to cook a ham dinner for 25 people or more, buying things for the Easter baskets for my four children and wondering where to hide them, what to wear to church, etc. Not that those things aren't important, but that was before I lost my innocence.

In the early days of my grief, my anger at God far outweighed thoughts of anything else. Anything that had a God-like meaning connected to it I wanted nothing to do with. For the most part, I was shaking my fist at Him for taking my Nina away from me.

I think that my anger started to thaw somewhat after I read the book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* by Rabbi Harold Kushner (spelling?). Rabbi Kushner had also lost a child to death. I believed after reading his book that God didn't point the finger at my daughter and say May 11, 1995, "Okay, time is up. You're coming with me!" like I had believed and despised Him for it. But rather that He was there sitting next to me, shedding tears along with me for the pain of my loss. That He was there to be a comfort to me. Anyway, that is what I got out of reading the book and it had so much validity to it coming from not only a Man of the Cloth, but one who also had suffered through the loss of a beloved child.

Almost a year later, the Easter after Nina died, I surprisingly found myself at church. The pastor of that church, Pastor Joel, had been so kind and comforting to our family after Nina died; sort of took our family under his wing after we felt abandoned by our former church. I remember really listening hard to the sermon given that day and found it interesting that at the ripe ol' age of 46 years old I suddenly the true meaning of Easter and what it meant to us came through loud and clear! That Jesus had suffered and died, and risen from the cross that day so that we all might have eternal life. This was the promise given us that we would see our children again someday! This has now become a day of hope where I focus on seeing my Nina again, that we will ALL see our children again.

To those of you new in your grief, this is, for the most part, an impossible thing to think about. I will not say that I still don't have my moments of anger at God; even if they are misdirected. I think someone told me once that I could give it to God; that He has big shoulders and can take my anger. What else do we have to cling to other than this hope...the hope that someday we will experience joy again, someday we will not feeling the all encompassing sorrow, the kind that takes your breath away, for the rest of our lives. And, ultimately, the hope that we will wrap our children in our arms again and live together for eternity.

"Those who leave us in the springtime of their lives, will greet us again in a land where springtime is eternal."

Peace and Easter blessings to all my compassionate friends,

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### **Mother's Day...Father's Day...Graduations...Proms**

Spring comes – and with it comes the uneasy awareness of difficult days ahead. For those who are still going through all the “firsts” without your child, we share with you some special ways other parents have coped and managed.

Mother's Day...Father's

Day...graduations...vacations...these are special family times which often catch us unaware and bring unexpected tears and painful memories of young lives cut short. It does get better! And you can make these special days better with some planning and with encouragement from those who have already been there. Whatever the “special day” that lies ahead for your family, try to focus on doing something meaningful and tangible in remembrance of your child.

Share as a family thoughts and suggestions about planting a tree or starting a rose garden, donating a book to the library or school, putting flowers on the altar, lighting a special

candle or taking that long talked-of vacation. Tears and moments of sadness are okay, for they are expressions of love.

Remember:

~ take one day at a time

~ keep things simple by playing down the holidays and special days, while they are so painful

~ change your routine from past years

~ make plans to be “busy” during at least part of the day (go out to lunch or to a movie, or visit friends)

~ give your older children some “space”; they not only feel your extreme sadness at these **times**; they also have their own feelings to deal with.

The anticipation is often worse than the day itself!

From Fox Valley TCF Chapter, Aurora, Illinois

# 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 Spring**

Carol Winkelman, In memory of her son Dennis 3/27/59, and her grandson Matthew's Birthday, February 15

## **OUT OF THE WINTER, INTO SPRING**

In the dark of winter the skies are gray, the trees are bare, the grass is brown and all the world appears to be dead. Yet inside the branches of the barren trees are underneath the dormant grass, a silent happening is taking place. The seeds and juices of new life are moving within and underneath. It is a silent, slow process not seen with the eye until one day a tiny leaf bud appears on the tree branch and another and another. Little grass blades begin to emerge out of the brown and seemingly lifeless ground. Again and again the leaves appear and the grass grows and thickens and a new world has emerged. We see patches of beautiful flowers in variations of bright colors, the birds come and nest in the trees, butterflies flutter and we realize the miracle of a new season - Springtime. Out of the long cold winter, a transformation has occurred. A new world has happened. One that is fresh and full of promise of new life and miracle.

The grief process is much like this. We feel barren and alone. Our world is cold and gray and we do not feel alive inside. Yet all the while, the grief work taking place in each of us is a transforming process; new life is silently at work within our inner being bringing forth a new life as we emerge as a new person in a new world. It is a world quite different than our old world, for we have survived through our suffering to our rebirth. No one ever said it would be easy. We cried. We hurt. We stumbled. We sometimes doubted and some of us cursed the darkness. Our grief season was long and hard but we told ourselves, "this to shall pass." And so it did.

And finally the springtime of our soul was created. Darkness gave way to sunshine, the bitter cold gave way to warmth. Desolation gave way to hope and we let go and embraced the new season of our soul. A miracle has happened.

Connie Andrews  
TCF, Harvey County, KS

## EASTER

Like Phoenix I Rise  
From The Ashes Of My Grief  
After All These Hard Times  
Finding Blessed Relief

Remembering My Loss  
But Accepting My Fate  
Growing Thankful with Time  
For The Blessings Of Late.

I Learned to Believe  
That God's With Us Still  
Through Trials And Sorrow  
We Know It's His Will

In Honor of My Son Steven  
By Marianne Waite  
TCF, El Paso, TX

## CROSSING THE BRIDGE

Each day I cross the bridge of love  
my longing thoughts of you have built  
to seek my child who lives above  
where pain and sorrow have been still.

In hope to glimpse that special face  
we used to hold so dear  
and dream of one long embrace  
from you my son so far, yet near.

It has become a pleasant chore  
to cross that bridge each day  
I go through a revolving door  
until one day I'm allowed to stay.

In Memory of My Beloved  
Son Steven Waite

By Marianne Waite  
TCF, El Paso, TX

Self Help Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parent

Address Correction Requested



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
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1000 MONTANA  
EL PASO, TX 79902