



# *The Compassionate Friends*

*Eastern Jackson County Chapter*

**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

**July-August 2017**

**Chapter Leader: Theresa Phillips**

**24-Hour Help Line: (816)229-2640**

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**Website: [www.easternjacksoncountycf.org](http://www.easternjacksoncountycf.org)**

**TCF National Headquarters**

**PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522**

**Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)**

**630-990-0010**

## **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, Long Island, NY

**From Sascha Wagner:**

## **August**

This summer runs to harvest—Do  
you ask  
How could a harvest be without my  
child?  
Friend, someday soon  
the harvest in your life  
will bring you home and wealth,  
from love remembered.

## **Summer Soon...**

Sunlight dancing on the branches  
Of the birch tree at my door.  
Meadow stretching smug and lazy,  
Darker, greener than before.

Wind as warm as hugging children,  
Clouds so round and very close--  
And on one small grave their trembles  
Lovingly an early rose.

## **Summer wind**

*The one who owns this summer is  
not here,  
not here to know the tender  
summer wind,  
not here to share the glowing and  
the song.*

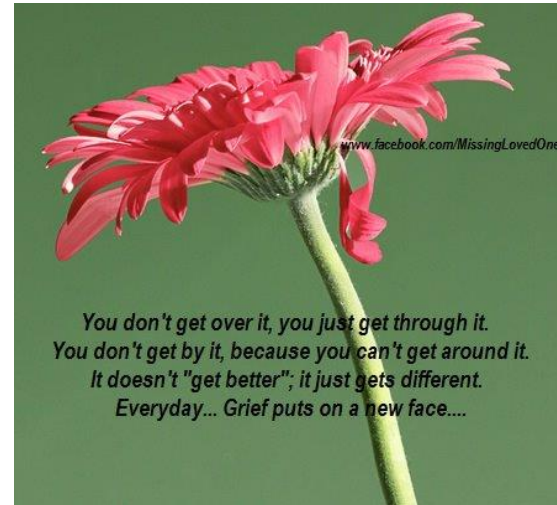
*The one who owns this summer  
did not live  
to touch the richness of this day,  
this day in summer when you are  
alone.*

*Weep to the summer wind,  
weep and love again  
the one you remember.*

## **Summer Breezes**

There's a hint of girlish laughter  
Wafting past the porch.  
For a moment, I pause to listen.  
In the warmth of summer sun  
Memories are to bask in.  
Trees you climbed, kites you flew,  
Bikes you raced,  
Waves you splashed in.  
At night we wrapped time around us  
As we blanketed the grass  
And gazed toward heaven.  
The stars were full of wonder then,  
And lazy days seemed endless.  
Life spread before you,  
Laughter filling the wind with happiness.  
Just now I thought I heard you  
once again.  
How pleasant this breath of summer,  
The breezes hold such memories  
Of life, of you.

--Karen Nelson, Box Elder County, UT



## **Dandelions and Grass**

Dandelions and grass  
Clasped in a chubby hand,  
Starry eyed, so pleased with himself,  
Never a bouquet so grand;  
Slightly wilted, with drooping  
leaves,  
Received as the rarest of blooms.  
In my best vase on a cloth of lace  
They proudly graced my rooms.

In the years to come, that same hand  
Wrote a lovely poem,  
Built a model airplane  
And played the saxophone,  
But ever in this mother's heart  
In all the years that passed,  
The loveliest thing that David gave  
Was dandelions and grass.

--Joy C. Worland

## **When It Is Dark Enough, You Can See the Stars**

Often it is easiest to see the stars in  
the long, cold nights of winter. People  
who have come through any kind of life  
threatening event—a crash, a tornado, a  
severe illness, the loss of a loved one—

speak of how it has changed their perspective, how it's easier to see what's important.

Several years after our daughter died, we experienced a burglary. All of our wedding silver was stolen, as well as antique pieces that had been handed down through many generations. Of course, we were upset. But right away the words came to me: "It's only things." I have no way of knowing whether or not I'd have been this calm if the theft occurred before her death, but I suspect not.

The stars are not only clearer, but more beautiful. Ancient navigators found their way through the seas by looking at the stars. So maybe the experience of loss not only helps clarify what is important to us, but also helps us know where we are and the direction in which we want to go.

--Charles Beard

### The Sun Will Shine

I sat in the darkness in the living room, for dawn was only just arriving. Through the picture window I watched the trees slowly outline the opposite shore of our little lake. Then magically, a warm shaft of light appeared behind the trees, flooding the horizon with gold. "It will be a beautiful day for our picnic," I thought.

But as the daylight grew stronger, I saw that a thick, gray fog blanketed the lake and the lawn between it and the house. "Oh, no," I moaned, "I was so hoping for good weather." Then a ball of fire peeked over the horizon and rose majestically into full view. Within an hour it had burned off the mist, and the picnic day emerged bright and clear under the cloudless sky.

Life is like this, I thought, when grief ... darkens our days. It is then we must keep hope burning in our hearts. We must believe that if the sun is not shining at the moment, it will shine again, and we will have a richer appreciation of the bright days for having experienced the darkness.

--Madeline Robinson, *Twin Lakes WI*

*I am a father who lost his only child to a drunk driver. Following are a few thoughts this Dad has for his beautiful son. I am sure that some of this makes sense to bereaved parents. I will continue to seek a meaning for all that has happened in my life. I really felt*

*singled out, but I know that what happens to people just happens. We are not being punished for something we have done.*

### The Last Cry

When you were taken, it became so dark. I could not believe it happened to us. I loved watching you grow, and you never knew why I was watching you. It was a father's love. There is no force greater in my soul. I tried to protect you from harm as best I could, but I could not protect you from another. It was not in your hands or mine.

As I live each day, I can't understand how life could have allowed us to be separated. If there is a God in the air, I wish to breathe fully. I think about you often—not daily, but hourly, sometimes by minutes or seconds. Sometimes I cry, missing your presence. I love your wit, your smile, and most of all, being your Dad.

I told you so many times to be careful and you were. But on that November night your actions were directed by others, and the outcome has caused so much sadness and pain. I wish I could just change one second of your life, and that is all it would take to save this LAST CRY.

I am not saying as I write this letter and cry that this will be the last cry. When my time comes, you will have gotten the LAST CRY. I will always save it for you. Someone said that tears flush out the toxins and poisons from the body, so I should live a long time. Rest assured when the last hour comes, you will have THE LAST CRY.

I love you so much, Dad

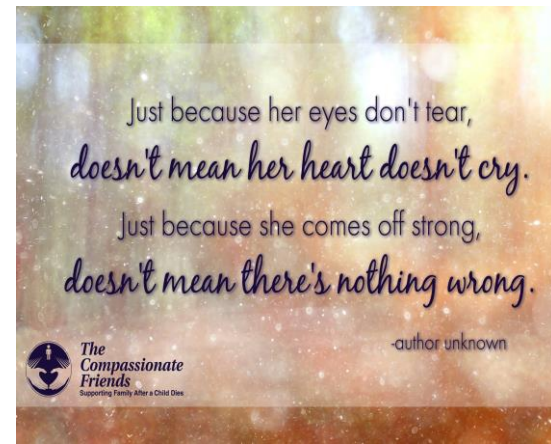
--By Mark Warren Sr., in memory of his son,  
Mark Jr. (5/1/85-11/2/08).

*When you walk through a storm,  
keep your head up high  
And don't be afraid of the dark,  
At the end of the storm is a golden sky  
And the sweet silver song of a lark.*

*Walk on through the wind,  
walk on through the rain,  
Though your dreams be tossed and blown.*

*Walk on, walk on,  
with hope in your heart,  
And you'll never walk alone...  
You'll never walk alone.*

--"You'll Never Walk Alone"  
by Oscar Hammerstein II



### Beach Havens

As the tide of grief goes down,  
New beaches are revealed.  
Their sand, it's true, is wet,  
And barnacles protrude.  
But wear your rubber shoes  
(hot pink would be preferred).  
Step dainty on the shore:  
A storm thrown log will give you rest.  
Now sit and sun yourself,  
And dream of those you love.

--Cathy Sosnowsky, TCF  
*North Shore, North Vancouver BC*

### It Might Have Been

I saw a red scooter go up the street,  
And I rushed to the window,  
tripping over my feet.  
Neat, blonde hair blowing in the wind,  
Then I knew it wasn't you, but...

*It might have been.*

Bicycles are parked in the yard below,  
Not a one of them is yours, I know.  
Still, I look to be sure again & again,  
All the while my heart says,

*It might have been.*

I passed a car cruising, out in the sun.  
It looked like yours,  
they were all having fun.  
But the driver I can see;  
my thoughts must end,  
But for a few moments...

*It might have been.*

The footsteps on the porch,  
the knock on the door  
Sound just like yours, but not anymore.  
Still I run through the hall & into the den,  
Looking out through the window...

*It might have been.*

All plans for the future,  
all dreams in the past,  
Are gone now forever,  
they just couldn't last.  
Fate came to visit, then death walked in,  
Now all that can be said is...

*It might have been.*

## A PRAYER FOR THE CHILDREN

We pray for the children  
Who sneak popsicles before supper,  
Who erase holes in math workbooks,  
Who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those  
Who stare at photographers from behind  
barbed wire,  
Who never "counted potatoes,"  
Who are born in places where we  
wouldn't be caught dead,  
Who never go to the circus,  
Who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for the children  
Who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls  
of dandelions,  
Who hug us in a hurry and forget their  
lunch money.

And we pray for those  
Who never get dessert,  
Who have no safe blanket to drag  
behind them,  
Who watch their parents watch them  
die,  
Who can't find any bread to steal  
Who don't have any rooms to clean up,  
Whose pictures aren't on anybody's  
dresser,  
Whose monsters are real.

We pray for the children  
Who spend all their allowance before  
Tuesday,  
Who throw tantrums in the grocery store  
& pick at their food,  
Who like ghost stories,  
Who shove dirty clothes under the bed,  
Who never rinse out the tub  
Who get visits from the tooth fairy,  
Who don't like to be kissed in front of  
the carpool,  
Who squirm in Church and scream in  
the phone,  
Whose tears we sometimes laugh at and  
whose smiles can make us cry,

And we pray for those whose  
nightmares come in the daytime,  
Who will eat anything,  
Who have never seen a dentist,  
Who aren't spoiled by anybody,  
Who go to bed hungry and cry  
themselves to sleep,  
Who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for the children  
Who want to be carried and for those  
who must,  
Who we never give up on,

And for those who don't get a second  
chance.

For those we smother and . . .  
For those who will grab the hand of  
anybody kind enough to offer it.

## MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON AMERICA'S CHILDREN

*In memory of the children and teacher killed  
in the shooting on Tuesday, March 24,  
1998, in Jonesboro, Arkansas*



## Summer Thoughts

Summer is a time when things  
naturally slow down, a time when many  
are waiting for the orderly routine of  
their lives to begin again. For those of  
us in grief whose lives are already in  
limbo, it can seem endless if we let it.

Seeing children, babies, and  
teenagers is not easy for us, & we see  
them everywhere from shopping centers  
to beaches. Everyone is out living,  
loving, enjoying carefree activities with  
their children, and we want to scream,  
"It's not fair!"

I was sitting on my patio one  
evening at dusk recently listening to the  
shouts of children playing, and I was  
crying as I remembered the sounds that  
my child used to make. I became very  
depressed as I thought what a long  
summer this was going to be. In my  
reverie, I remembered a recent comment  
that I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My  
child was such a loving, giving person.  
He would not want me to waste my life  
being bitter."

I also remembered a good friend  
telling me to "count my blessings" and  
naming all the things I had to be  
grateful for. I was furious at the time.  
Nothing I had to be grateful for could  
compensate for the fact that my child  
was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this  
early summer evening, I began to see  
things differently. I determined that this  
summer would not be an eternity: I  
would not let it be. I decided first of all  
to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to  
do if I only take the time to look. I am  
also going to try to enjoy the simple  
things that used to give me so much  
pleasure, like flowers, and working in  
my garden. I then decided to try to be  
truly grateful for the blessings that I  
have, like my husband, my surviving  
children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me,  
and I know that last year this would not  
have worked. Of course, I still have  
times of sadness; I know I always will.  
But I have decided that in the process of  
grieving we close so many doors, the  
only way to recovery is to reopen them  
gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same  
person I was before the death of my  
child, but I hope eventually in some  
ways I will be a better person because  
suffering can be beneficial if we learn &  
grow through it. A year ago I didn't  
feel that way, and I know I still have a  
long way to go. But in the meantime, I  
know the greatest tribute to my child  
will be to enjoy this summer as he  
would have done.

--Libby Gonzalez, TCF, Huntsville, AL

## Sometimes

Sometimes

Memories are like rain showers  
Sparkling down upon you  
Catching you unaware  
And then they are gone  
Leaving you warm and refreshed

Sometimes

Memories are like thunderstorms  
Beating down upon you  
Relentless in their downpour  
Leaving you tired and bruised

Sometimes

Memories are like shadows  
Sneaking up behind you  
Following you around  
Then they disappear  
Leaving you sad and confused

Sometimes

Memories are like comforters  
Surrounding you with warmth  
Luxuriously abundant  
And sometimes they stay  
Wrapping you in contentment

-- Marcia Updyke



## Memories

Time can never erase,  
The memory of your face;  
Nor the passage of the years,  
Stem the volume of my tears.

You are with me for always,  
In my heart throughout all days;  
Then in my dreams nightly,  
Your star shines ever so brightly.

I want your spirit to remain,  
Inside of me, despite the pain.  
To forget you would be a curse,  
Because no memories would be  
much worse.

You were born a part of me,  
Now you live within the heart of me;  
Forever precious, forever young,  
My beautiful, darling little ones.

*Jacquelyn M. Comeaux  
In Memory of my angels, Michelle, Jerry  
and Danny  
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## NO VACATION

There is no vacation from your absence.  
Every morning I awake I am a bereaved  
parent.  
Every noon I feel the hole in my heart.  
Every evening my arms are empty.  
My life is busy now, but not quite full.  
My heart is mended, but not quite  
healed.  
For the rest of my life  
Every moment will be lived without you.  
There is no vacation from your absence.

*Kathy Boyette  
TCF, Gulf Coast, MS*

—  
Whenever I think of Lisa,  
I remember sun and sand and sea.  
The beach, her favorite place by far,  
She is there with me.  
I remember her gently now.  
The crippling pain is gone.  
I've come to enjoy the beach again.  
She lingers there in the sun.

*--Gina Calvert, TCF, Louisville KY*

You'll never ever be the same  
after the trauma, after the pain  
After some time and after the grief  
after forever, and after belief  
You'll never know why you lived  
through this  
How did you do that? How can you  
exist?

But I think I can tell you and hope you  
don't mind  
that you have a choice you must make  
down the line  
You can lie dormant and be dead  
inside  
Or you can keep going, keep living  
your life  
Yes, you've changed forever but it's up  
to you  
to be there for others who still need  
you too!  
Your life can have meaning and you  
can feel pride  
right there by the sorrow and pain  
that's inside  
You can feel loved and glad you're  
alive  
and you know your loved one is there  
by your side!

*by Jenny Donaldson Chad's mom South  
Kansas City TCF*

I carried you for nine long months  
looking forward to your birth  
Little did I ever know  
you'd never breath on earth

I'd made such plans for your life,  
looking forwards to bringing you home  
I never thought for one second  
When I came home I'd be alone

They said there been some  
complications,  
they said that you had gone  
I couldn't understand their words  
What had happened? What had gone  
wrong?

Now they don't want to talk of you  
the people who drop by  
They think that I should just accept  
my baby's in the sky.

I'll keep a part of you with me  
and everywhere I am you'll be  
I know we'll meet again someday  
Then in my arms you'll always stay

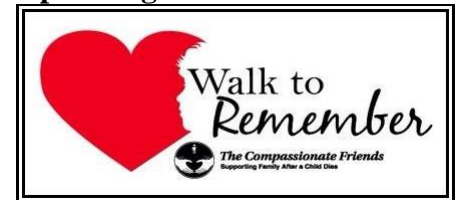
Every day I'll think of you  
think of you with love  
My precious little baby,  
my angel up above.

R.I.P. Landon Shane Matthews  
Every day is becoming more and more

and different and mommy is numb in  
one place frozen with pain and hurt held  
inside while the world just passes by!!! i  
love you baby boy and can't wait until  
I'm heaven with you to stay!! Rest easy  
my precious little angel!!!

*Ivory Jade Matthews*

## Upcoming events



**Save the date for our Fifth Annual  
The Compassionate Friends  
Walk to Remember  
September 23, 2017 at Waterfall  
Park, Independence, MO  
Registration will start at 8:30 AM  
Walk will start at 9AM  
Watch your emails and the website  
[www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org](http://www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org) for  
more details.**

*For Remembrance dates please visit our  
website at*

[www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org](http://www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org)

*Find us on Facebook at*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1582699755290182>

*We have several volunteers who write  
remembrance cards to families on  
birthdays and death dates. Just a  
reminder if you have an address change  
please email [phillipsplace@aol.com](mailto:phillipsplace@aol.com) or  
mail a note to TCF, C/O Theresa  
Phillips 6200 Kentucky Raytown, MO  
64133 so the roster can be updated.*

*Please remember that you can give to  
The Compassionate Friends through  
your United Way pledge at work or as a  
single gift, but you MUST WRITE IT IN.*

*TCF asks for donations in memory of  
our children who have died. Our  
activities support the grief work of many  
families. We also work to educate  
members of our community about the  
grief process & how they can support  
bereaved parents.*

**Please help us help others. Make a  
LOVE GIFT today. Tax deductible Love  
Gifts may be sent to: TCF C/O Carol  
Cavin 214 E Hansen Ct, Independence,  
MO 64055**