



# *The Compassionate Friends*

Supporting Family After a Child Dies  
*Lubbock, Texas Chapter*

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SEPTEMBER 2013

VOL. 1, NO. 3

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## The Compassionate Friends (TCF): Online Resources Available for Grieving Families

### **TCF National Website**

The Compassionate Friends national website is at the top of the list of best resources on the Internet for people experiencing grief and loss. TCF's national website can be found at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).

TCF's national website includes a wide range of support information and materials for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. It features an Online Support Community with trained moderators; a Spanish language sub-website; a leadership website; 28 TCF English language brochures on different areas of grief for download, as well as 9 Spanish language brochures; webinars on demand; and information about TCF initiatives such as its Worldwide Candle Lighting and Walk to Remember, as well as the annual national conference; and much more.

### **TCF "Online Support Community" Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing**

In addition to over 600 chapter listings across the U.S., the Compassionate Friends national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends - friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "No Surviving Children," "Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for surviving siblings.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" section.

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## **LUBBOCK CHAPTER MEETING INFORMATION**

**NEXT MEETING:** Oct. 1, 2013

**TIME:** 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

**TOPIC:** **Coping Strategies for  
Stressful Times**

**DATE:** First Tuesday of each month

**LOCATION:** 21st & Dover Ave.  
Behavioral Sciences Bldg. Room 105  
East side of LCU Campus



### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Isabel Villa, Chapter Leader:

806-218-2397

Deneis Arriaga, Co-Chapter Leader

Sharon Kohout, Newsletter Editor

[TCFLubbock@gmail.com](mailto:TCFLubbock@gmail.com)

For more information, click on these [Frequently Asked Questions about Chapter Meetings](#).



**OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED**  
 Remembrance Days

Felysha Villa Sept. 26

**OLDER GRIEF**

Older grief is gentler. It's about sudden tears swept in by a strand of music. It's about haunting echoes of first pain at Anniversaries. It's about feeling his presence for an instant one day while I'm dusting his room. It's about early pictures that invite me to fold him in my arms again. It's about memories blown in on wisps of wood smoke and sea scents.

Older grief is about aching in gentler ways, rarer longing, less engulfing fire.

Older grief is about searing pain wrought into tenderness.

*- Linda Zelenka  
 TCF, Jacksonville, FL*

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**COMPASSIONATE LISTENERS**

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Should you need to speak with someone and cannot wait until the next meeting, please feel free to contact one of the following volunteers.

<b>Cause of Death</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Motor Vehicle	Isabel Villa	806-218-2397	<a href="mailto:villagirls04@yahoo.com">villagirls04@yahoo.com</a>
	Deneis Arriaga	806-549-6476	<a href="mailto:deneis.arriaga@yahoo.com">deneis.arriaga@yahoo.com</a>
Suicide	Beverly Colbert	806-773-1375	<a href="mailto:bevcobert@aol.com">bevcobert@aol.com</a>
	Sharon Kohout	806-392-1886	<a href="mailto:sharon.kohout@gmail.com">sharon.kohout@gmail.com</a>
Sudden Death	Yolanda Moore	806-535-6551	<a href="mailto:yomoore@yahoo.com">yomoore@yahoo.com</a>
*Father to Father (support for grieving fathers)	Charles Peek	806-698-1803	<a href="mailto:JPeek91474@aol.com">JPeek91474@aol.com</a>

## THE FALL OF FALL

What is it about the season  
That takes me back in time.  
Everything I do,  
I find you are on my mind.  
Haunting dreams find me  
At night when I try to sleep  
And every little detail is replayed,  
And the sadness falls so deep.  
Something about the close of summer  
Seems to bring it back  
Making it so hard to move onward and stay on track.  
Something about the dying and fading of the trees  
Brings my heart to sorrow, with the falling of the leaves.  
How I long to stop it, to keep the fall away  
But time marches on, and summer just won't stay.  
I know with the fall, winter's not far behind  
Another lonely season, and the memories flood my mind.  
I cry my tears of sorrow, and pray for spring to come  
A rebirth of the earth, and the warmth of the sun.  
It makes the memories softer and gentler to recall  
But now my life is saddened with the nearing of the fall.

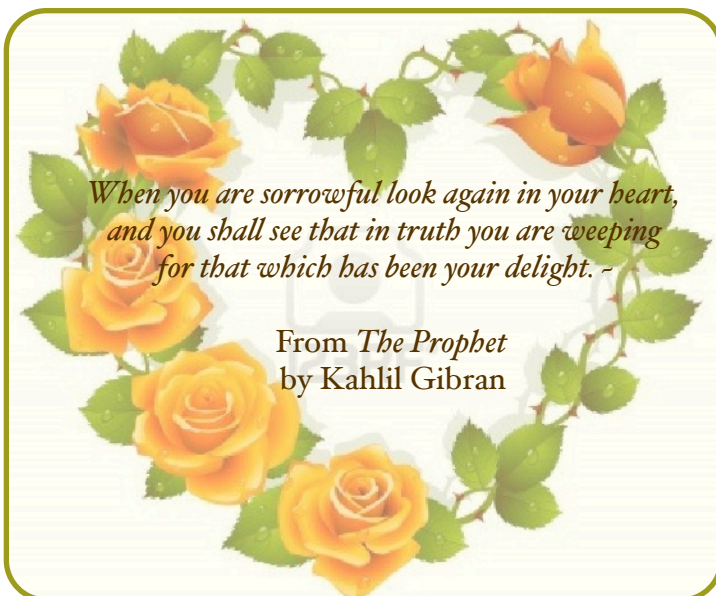
*-Sheila Simmons  
In memory of her son, Steven  
TCF Atlanta Online Sharing*



### ALL I NEED TO KNOW

I'm beginning to know your children  
From the things I've heard you tell,  
From the pictures that you've  
brought here  
I think I know them well.  
Our hurt and sorrow are immense  
I'm not sure where to start.  
Compassion after all is  
Your pain in my heart.  
My thanks to you for listening  
To words wrung from my soul.  
We are The Compassionate Friends  
That's all I need to know.

*-Jack Brown  
TCF, Louisville*



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## SIBLINGS: THE FORGOTTEN GRIEVERS

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Two weeks after my 16-year old twin daughter, Sarah, died, I found a newsletter from my local Compassionate Friends Chapter in my mailbox. Before Sarah's accident, I didn't know who Compassionate Friends were. Eight years later, I know them well.

So when the request came to speak to a local chapter about "The Forgotten Griever," our children who grieve the death of a sibling, that was a topic near to my heart. I had overlooked my son's grief when his sister died. Fortunately, not too much time had passed. I put pen to paper and began writing...

The sibling bond is often overlooked when a sibling dies...and siblings do have a very special relationship. When considering grief, it's the familial relationship least studied. It's most unfortunate because our children who live often become the "forgotten grievers." And yet, just like us, their lives are not the same because relationships change when a child dies.

Losing a sibling has a special grief all its own. It's as if they've lost part of their past and their future. When one child dies, the surviving sibling must grow up faster than anyone should, losing the innocence of childhood. Most often they find themselves in a new role--taking care of others, and their identity is gone. Sometimes they feel they've lost their parents to the overwhelming grief because we, as parents, do not function as before our child died. And watching us grieve can be harder than their own grief.

Unbeknownst to us, fear sets in and consumes their thoughts. Will someone else they love die? Loneliness can overwhelm with the realization that there is no shared future, only memories to recall. And often-times, friends do not know how to respond. When an important event occurs, the grief gets reprocessed. It comes back in waves. Anxiety, panic attacks, sleeping issues, and depression are common. Medication and sleeping aids can help. Sleep is very important in the healing process. Suicidal thoughts are not far away.

Isolation from the lack of attention and support can also lead surviving siblings down this path. They may want to be with their sibling again. Some will attempt suicide at least once. But thankfully, lingering in the back of minds is the hurt it would inflict on parents and others they love. Professional therapy can help, if the sibling is open and willing. Sometimes the surviving sibling just needs someone to talk to. Sometimes the therapist can offer insight that their feelings are normal. Sometimes therapy isn't productive.

And that's okay. Or maybe the child who lives believes that Heaven awaits them, where their sibling is now. In either case, hopefully the attachment to immediate family awakens and strengthens with more appreciation, openness and love.

In the early days, if possible, focus on your children who live. Children are often more resilient than us. As I found my daughter, Sarah, alive within, I discovered more grace to confront my own grief. And as I watched my surviving children navigate their days with more depth and return to the joys and pleasures of life before their sibling's death, then my daily routine became more manageable.

Just as we find ourselves struck with denial, anger, guilt, and regrets, so do our children who live. I learned from my children who live that these three actions were most important to them when grief set in:

- LISTEN...because I will hear.
- BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT and PATIENT. I cannot eliminate their pain. But my presence and my caring response let them know that they are not alone. I schedule one-on-one time with each of my children just as I schedule a date with a friend. I am learning to truly embrace their unique qualities.
- SAY THE NAME OF THE DECEASED SIBLING frequently. I weave Sarah's name into everyday conversation. It lets my family know that Sarah is not forgotten. We share stories and memories. I am learning to keep communication open. I ask my children to be open to signs from their sister. Those signs offer great comfort.

Each of us grieves, and each griever must find his own way. Grief doesn't necessarily coincide with any stages. We must honor the uniqueness of grief. It's a life-long process of jumping back and forth and every place in between. And in our darkest moments, we look to the love and spirit of our children who live. I have found that the love and resilience of my four children who live heals me in ways I'd never know before my daughter Sarah died. Today we all walk together.

*-Caroline Flobr  
Mother of Sarah Anne Gillette  
Author of Heaven's Child*

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

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

888-333-2377

**CONTACT LUBBOCK'S Heartbeat:**

**Support Group for survivors of suicide victims**

806-765-8393

**MISS Foundation (pregnancy/infant loss support)**

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

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

800-273-TALK (8255)

**Parents of Murdered Children**

[www.pomc.com](http://www.pomc.com)

888-818-7662

**SHARE (pregnancy & infant loss support)**

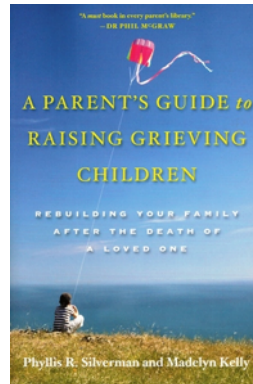
[www.nationalshare.org](http://www.nationalshare.org)

800-821-6819

**Other helpful websites:**

- ❖ [www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)
- ❖ [www.thebereavementjourney.com](http://www.thebereavementjourney.com)
- ❖ [www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)
- ❖ [www.journeyofhearts.org](http://www.journeyofhearts.org)
- ❖ [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)
- ❖ [www.healingheart.net](http://www.healingheart.net)
- ❖ [www.childrenofdome.com](http://www.childrenofdome.com)
- ❖ [www.spacebetweenbreaths.com](http://www.spacebetweenbreaths.com)
- ❖ [www.holdingontolove.com](http://www.holdingontolove.com)
- ❖ [www.griefhaven.com](http://www.griefhaven.com)
- ❖ [www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com)
- ❖ [www.survivorsofsuicide.com](http://www.survivorsofsuicide.com)

***A Parent's Guide to Raising Grieving Children: Rebuilding Your Family After the Death of a Loved One*** by Dr. Phyllis Silverman and Madelyn Kelly.



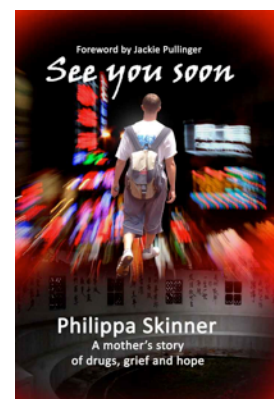
In this deeply sympathetic book, the authors offer wise guidance on virtually every aspect of childhood loss, from living with someone who's dying to preparing the funeral; from explaining death to a two year old to managing the moods of a grieving teenager; from dealing

with people who don't understand to learning how and where to get help from friends, therapists, and bereavement groups; from developing a new sense of self to continuing a relationship with the person who died. Throughout, the authors advocate an open, honest approach, suggesting that our instinctive desire to "protect" children from the reality of death may be more harmful than helpful.



***See You Soon.....A Mother's Story of Drugs, Grief, and Hope*** by Philippa Skinner.

The author tells the story of her son Jim who died of a heroin overdose at age 21. In addition to the pain of losing Jim and the years of sorrow that followed, the author struggled with feelings of shame, stigma and subsequent isolation. This book is a result of the author's determination to honor her son by attempting to lift the stigma of drug death - to challenge commonly held preconceptions about drug users, and to help a wider group to understand.



### **TCF National Magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone* Available Free Online!**

The Compassionate Friends announces that you can now receive its award-winning national magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone*®, for free online thanks to the desire of the National Organization to make it readily available to anyone seeking support after the death of a child.

Previously the magazine, winner of the Apex Award for Journalistic Excellence, had been available only in print and it remains available in that form free with any patron donation or when ordered by paid subscription through TCF's online store.

*We Need Not Walk Alone*, for almost 14 years, has provided comfort and support to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents as the country's premier magazine providing stories, poems, advice columns, and much more for families devastated by the death of a child. It has been referred to as "a support group in print" and is published three times a year.

If you [sign-up](#) for a free online subscription, you will receive your own link to the current edition. It can then be read online or downloaded to your computer for personal use.

At the same time you sign up for *We Need Not Walk Alone*, you also have the opportunity to sign up to receive The Compassionate Friends monthly national e-newsletter which provides information about what is currently happening within the organization.

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### **TCF Regional Chapter Leadership Training Program offered in Midland, TX on Saturday, Oct. 26**

This FREE one-day training on Saturday, October 26th (8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) is open to anyone who is interested in becoming more active in the local TCF chapter. Besides learning about what makes a chapter “tick,” you will have the chance to meet with other TCF chapter members from the West Texas area.

**Registration deadline for the training is October 11.** Please send an email to [TCFLubbock@gmail.com](mailto:TCFLubbock@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending the training program and would like to become more involved with the TCF Lubbock Chapter.

*When I grieve, when I stand by others as they grieve, even in the  
midst of seemingly unbearable sorrow, grief becomes a way to honor  
life — a way to cling to every fleeting, precious moment of joy.*

- Courtney Davis,  
Nurse Practitioner

## The Compassionate Friends National Office

PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
877-969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### Regional Coordinator:

Bill Campbell  
972-935-0673  
[willied53@sbcglobal.net](mailto:willied53@sbcglobal.net)

## The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us.

Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We Need Not Walk Alone.

We are The Compassionate Friends.

## TCF Mission Statement

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

## Calendar

### October 1, 2013

7:00 pm TCF Lubbock Chapter Meeting

### October 26, 2013

TCF Regional Chapter Leadership Training  
Midland, TX

### November 5, 2013

7:00 pm TCF Lubbock Chapter Meeting

### December 3, 2013

7:00 pm TCF Lubbock Chapter Meeting

### December 8, 2013

7:00 p.m. Worldwide Candle Lighting  
Children's Memorial Garden, LCU Campus

### *From the Editor:*

Due to the wonders of technology, I am compiling this September newsletter while sitting on a deck in central Maine - looking out over a vista of incredible beauty and color. I will miss seeing my fellow friends and "strugglers" at our October 1 meeting, but my heart will be there.

It's at special times like this that I am attuned to my many blessings, but intensely aware of the ache in my heart and in my arms for Shayne. So much beauty to be experienced, yet she's not here...and won't ever be here again. It's a stark reality that still brings me up short.

Still...I will relish these beautiful moments - for the both of us. And fortunately I have found other Compassionate Friends who understand these feelings.

Please forward this newsletter to others who might need The Compassionate Friends! We can be reached at 806-218-2397 or [TCFLubbock@gmail.com](mailto:TCFLubbock@gmail.com).

- Sharon K.  
(Shayne's Mom)

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**WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE**

The Compassionate Friends (TCF), Lubbock Chapter has no individual membership fees or dues, and all bereaved family members are welcomed. However, donations are encouraged to support the monthly chapter meetings, the monthly newsletter, and outreach activities to families on the South Plains who have lost a child.

Please consider a love gift to continue the work of TCF Lubbock.  
All donations are tax-deductible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to:        TCF Lubbock Chapter

Mail check to:                    Joe Froelich, Treasurer, TCF Lubbock  
    3505 77th Drive  
    Lubbock, TX 79423