



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Fort Worth Chapter | Phone: (682) 201-0837 | tcffortworth@gmail.com

CHAPTER WEBSITE:

www.thecompassionatefriendsfw.com

STEERING COMMITTEE

Charles & Genie Dean

Jeff & Marty Martin

Lydia Moore

Jaye Sanford

Hospitality

Christine Anderson

Jerry & Sharon Austray

David & Suzanne Wilkinson

Librarian

Donna Tusan

New Member Registration
and

Newsletter Editor

Lisa Jo Adkison

Secretary

Becky Long

Treasurer

Steve Roberts

Welcome Bags

Janet DuPertuis

**The next meeting of the
Steering Committee will be
Saturday, August 12, at 10 AM, in
Room 271 of Arborlawn UMC,
5001 Briarhaven Rd., Ft. Worth
(same location as monthly meetings)**

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Bill Campbell

(972) 935-0673

jojobill@sbcglobal.net

Reopening of School and No Child!

Summer ends, and across our nation, from the middle of August to the week after Labor Day, schools open for another year. For those parents surviving a child of school age, be that from nursery school to college or university, this can be as trying a time as the holidays.

School buses travel again the busy highways of our cities and the quiet lanes of our countryside. Anxious parents stand with children about to make the first ride to school. Gaggles of youngsters play at countless stops across our land. America's most precious and costly activity is renewed. The children are off to school.

I remember well the silences of the September mornings of those first years. The bus no longer stopped at our home. It simply drove casually by, the people within never realizing it once carried the focus of my love, the repository of my dreams. The drone of its wheels marked anew the mind-numbing dullness of my fragmented senses as it moved its way down the tree lined lane once alive with my son's comings and goings.

It was always possible to avoid "back to school" sales. Seeing young people and their weary parents gather school supplies and clothing was just too much in those earliest years. Somehow, the perfect notebook, the brilliant sweater, the odd-shaped erasers were simply unendurable. The stream of vehicles heading for Cape Cod for that final Labor Day weekend, the last family outing to end the summer, was another scene to avoid. It was a ritual from which we seemed excluded. Could we still be a family without him?

Those years are gone now. Having returned to education, I now have "back to school" buying to do myself. I see the buses arrive to unload their treasured passengers, no longer feeling the emptiness of a bus that drives on, barren of hopes and dreams. But I do and will forever remember the pain of those unhappy years and sometimes I reflect on the many parents who now feel as I did.

If you are such a parent, if you mourn a child who leaves a school desk somewhere unfilled, I promise that you are not alone in that pain. But even though you are not alone, you know that you are forever marked, that the death of your child or children has altered you in some basic manner.

Perhaps time and much grief work remain before your spirit can yield up the agony and permit a new self to emerge. That time and work was necessary for me, as it actually is for all of us. For me, grief resolution finally recalled me to my original work. I teach. I no longer administer or direct. The need for that fled before bereavement's assault.

Continued on page 2

Need to Talk?

Listed below are parents, grandparents and siblings who have walked where you are today. If you are having a difficult day and just want to talk, please call. *It isn't necessary to call someone who has suffered a loss identical to yours.*

Addiction

David (214) 686-1901

Auto

Jeff & Marty (817) 475-9141

Drowning

Debi (817) 602-4018

Drowning/Young Child

Stacy (817) 656-7540 or
(817) 845-3433

Grandchild/Multiple Loss

Lydia (817) 829-3801

Homicide/Only Child

Steve (682) 583-0125
sjroberts1216@hotmail.com

Long Term Illness

Marty (817) 636-5645

Premature Infant(s)

Amy (817) 944-1710
amylori12@hotmail.com

Siblings

Jaye (817) 475-9363

Suicide/Only Child

Joy (817) 453-2227

Middle of the Night Calls

Liz (817) 726-3999

Reopening of School and No Child! continued

I teach math, science, and social studies to sixth grade children, ages 11 to 12 over the course of a year. In wondrous ways they have restored love to my living. There is nothing of an intellectual character with enough value to equal that, so I have given them the love and caring that was mine, evoked by and for Olin. Thus do Olin's gifts live on, called forth and given new lift through the innocent and selfless love of schoolchildren.

All who walk this road realize this is not substitution. Such is not possible. But it does reflect qualities of successful reinvestment, something each of us sorely needs.

Today as schools prepare for another year, I look forward to a new group of children. But cautions arise within as well, the legacy of that time over 12 years ago, when the world came to a sudden halt, when the laughter of lifetimes ceased, when dreams evaporated with a morning mist.

For those of us who dare live and love again, for those fortunate enough to have found a reinvestment encouraging the same, there is always risk. After all, tragedy can strike again. Our present or past pain grants no immunity. Students, the children within the school, invited me, albeit unknowingly, to take that risk again, although certainly not at the rich and deep level of father and son. Nevertheless, it feels right, and though I will never again know the depth of love which belonged to Olin and me, I welcome the chance to live once more on its margins.

So schools, which were once just another manifestation of hurt, have helped me to restore purpose and balance to daily living. There is surely such a reinvestment awaiting all of us, but we must seek the circumstances and create the opportunities for it to occur. I pray that all of us who have not yet had such good fortune may soon do so. All of our children would want this for us as well. With that thought in mind, it is indeed worth striving for that dimension in life once more.

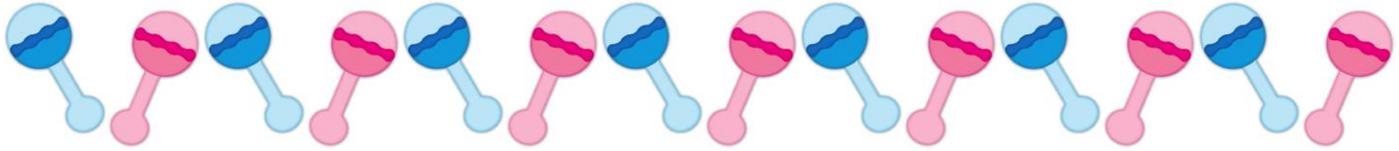
*Don Hackett
TCF Kingston, MA
In Memory of my son, Olin
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TCF National Office —The Compassionate Friends, P. O. Box 3696 . Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

Call toll free: (877) 969-0010 9 AM-5 PM, CST, Monday-Friday. Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org The website contains links to TCF's national and regional conferences, brochures, e-newsletter, online support community, We Need Not Walk Alone magazine, "Healing the Grieving Heart" and "The Open to Hope Show" radio program archives, webinars, chapter websites, and other resources. Facebook: The Compassionate Friends/USA In Spanish: Los Amigos Compasivos/USA Twitter: Text follow TCFofUSA to 40404



Little Baby

Little baby who was not to be,
You were a person . . . at least to me.

Would your eyes be blue?

Or hazel and dark?

Would you caw like the crow?

Or sing like a lark?

Would you have ten little fingers and ten tiny toes?

A rosebud mouth, a turned up nose?

Would you be laughing and happy,

Or somber and quiet?

Would you run and jump or rather be still?

Would you like to read, or prefer to play?

None of my questions will have an answer.

Your chance to live will never be.

The only thing I truly know . . .

Little baby,

We would have loved you so!

Joan D. Schmidt
TCF Spotswood, NJ

November Holiday Memorial Details

If you would like your loved one's picture included in our Holiday Memorial program, please send an email to tcffortworth@gmail.com by October 15th, even if you just want to use the same picture as last year.

Please put November Memorial in the subject line of your email, and attach a picture if you are sending a new one. Emails will be responded to within 24 hours, so if you do not receive a return email, please resend or call the chapter phone at (682) 201-0837.

LOVE GIFTS

Please consider donating financially to your chapter. All local chapters function on donations to provide information and special events in our efforts to help families grieving the loss of a child.

Tax-free donations to our chapter in the memory of your loved one are accepted at our chapter meetings, received ONLINE through our local chapter website or mailed to:

Steve Roberts
P.O. Box 734
Euless, TX 76039

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

August 8th - Chapter Meeting, 7:00 PM

Guest Speaker: Jane Avila, bereaved parent, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Board Certified Art Therapist and founder of The Art Station. For more information about the Art Station visit www.theartstation.org.

August 12th - Steering Committee meeting

Those interested in serving/volunteering with our local chapter please meet at **10:00 AM** in room 271 at Arborlawn United Methodist Church.

September 12th - Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM

Guest Speaker: Lacey Camp, bereaved parent, will speak on after death communication.

October 10th - Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM

October 20-21 - Regional Conference "Memories of Love/Melodies of Hope in Music City" hosted by the Nashville Chapter.

November 14th – Annual Holiday Memorial and Potluck, 6:30 PM – friends and family members of all ages are welcome to attend - see details to the left

December 10th - World Wide Candle Lighting, 6:30 PM



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The mission of The Compassionate Friends: 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.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Fort Worth Chapter Meeting

August 8th, 7:00 P.M.

This Month's Special Guest

Jane Avila

Bereaved parent, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Board Certified Art Therapist and founder of The Art Station
Jane will share the role of art in dealing with grief.

Snacks are provided by volunteers.
Have you helped in this way yet?
Please bring snacks with no nuts.
Drinks and paper goods provided.

Meet in room 271
ARBORLAWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth

A Special Message

To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly welcome you to The Compassionate Friends. We are a self-help organization of parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the death of a loved one. We offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings, a lending library, support materials and loving telephone listeners. Please do not be afraid to come to a gathering. Every other person in the room has lost a child, grandchild or sibling. They come because they feel the need to be with someone else who understands. We know it takes courage to attend that first gathering, but those who do come find an atmosphere of understanding from others who have experienced the grief that you have now. Nothing is asked of you. There are no dues or fees and you do not have to speak. There is a special feeling at meetings of The Compassionate Friends.

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month.