

Contact and Chapter Information

TCF National Office

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Tel: (877) 969.0010
Fax: (630) 990.0246
Website:
www.thecompassionatefriends.org

GA Regional Coordinator

Muriel Littman (404) 603.9942

Marietta Chapter

Contacts:

Karen Chambers (770) 565.8360
Kathy Kelcourse (770) 579.3512
www.tcfmarietta.org

Marietta Chapter Steering Committee

Karen Chambers, Co-Leader
Kathy Kelcourse, Co-Leader
Madeline Flores
Ken Minor
Clare Rovin
Erica Beltz
Lorna Kennedy
Donna Davis
Sharon & Cliff Hower
Louise Hoefler

Marietta Chapter Meetings

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 - 9:00 PM First Baptist Church of Marietta in the Main Building on the 3rd Floor, 148 Church Street, Marietta, GA

Sandy Springs Chapter

Contact:

Muriel Littman (404) 603.9942

Sandy Springs Chapter Steering Committee

Muriel Littman, Leader
Ilana Zalkin, Facilitator
Pat Perkins
Mary Natelli
Helen Weathers

Sandy Springs Chapter Meetings

Fourth Wednesday of each month, 7:30 PM at the "House Next Door," The Link Counseling Center, 2nd Floor, 348 Mount Vernon Highway, Sandy Springs, GA.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
CHAPTER OF MARIETTA, GA
P. O. BOX 1892
MARIETTA, GA 30061

August - September
2008

Volume 4 No. 3



The Compassionate Friends Newsletter

TCF National Conference and Walk to Remember



The 31st TCF National Conference was held on July 18-20 in Nashville, TN. The attendance at the 3-day conference was overwhelming, consisting of bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It was a time of learning, sharing and healing. There were many workshops to choose from with a variety of topics and speakers. The more popular workshop rooms were overflowing with people eager to hear ideas and suggestions for dealing with their grief. Some were designed for the newly bereaved, others were geared for those whose loss has been several years or more. There were creative workshops such as butterfly gardening, creating collages, writing and music. The common thread in all of the workshops was finding positive ways to live after experiencing the death of a child, while finding wonderful ways to remember them.

The Walk to Remember was held on Sunday morning, the last day of the conference, with nearly 1400 participants proudly displaying our children's names and pictures. Thanks to Erica, Lorna, Kathy, Madeline, Ria, and Louise for representing those who were not able to attend, and to Lakin for representing the sibling group. We would especially like to thank everyone who generously donated to The Compassionate Friends Walk to Remember in honor and remembrance of our children. It was a powerful affirmation that they will live on in our hearts forever.

Louise Hoefler, TCF Marietta

The closing ceremony featured the sibling group singing the song by Bill Withers, "Lean on Me". They did a great job and touched many hearts with the words of the song which seem to say just why we do what we do here at TCF.

Kathy Kelcourse, TCF Marietta

*Sometimes in our lives we all have pain
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's always tomorrow*

*Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on*

*If there is a load you have to bear
That you can't carry
I'm right up the road
I'll share your load
If you just call me*

*So just call on me brother, when you
need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem that you'd
understand
We all need somebody to lean on.*





TCF National Conference Reviews

Personally for me at the conference, with a full weekend of activities, meeting lots of new people and hearing their stories, and how we all can heal as parents was very inspiring. As the sibling group sang the song "We are all in this together" I felt that was so very true. I think Lakin did the most courageous thing by singing in front of over 1400 people, that totally was the best part for me. She was great and I know Erica is so proud of her, she did a great job. (GO LAKIN)! There were so many memories to cherish. It was the most wonderful healing weekend and I know I will keep everything I have learned there. It was a great experience and I am happy I attended. Even if I did have my shorts on inside out. Mark would have been proud and his words would have been Oh- Mom :)

Lorna Kennedy, Mark's mother



Last weekend I attended the National Conference of The Compassionate Friends in Nashville, TN. I've attended their meetings in Marietta, GA since the beginning of this year. My counselor told me about TCF right after our daughter Anke was murdered but silly me, I told her that I'd never do that. Later when I was ready for it I finally 'listened' to her and went to my first TCF meeting.

I can't begin to describe what a relief it was. A relief to talk to parents who had lost a child too. TCF is for bereaved parents/siblings/grandparents - no matter how the child died. For us as parents it's very important to keep on talking about our children, to mention their names. We don't want "the world" to forget our children. I know firsthand that when people tell me "it's horrible what happened, but you have to move on".....my answer usually was and still is "hey, I'm moving on, but unfortunately all the shit is moving on with me".....this throws them off most of the time...."they" have no clue.... "they" say they understand....We all know that "they" don't. The TCF people really understand - we're walking in the same shoes.

The conference offered many workshops, I attended the ones for the "what if's" (meaning parents asking themselves constantly "what if.....we did this, or we did that different") and the one for the "troubled child" which for me was the rehab, counseling, juvenile jail, boot camp, counseling, rehab, adult jail merry-go-round life we had. Then I decided to attend the one on homicides - this was a very small group, not many people. For some of them their cases were already over, some of them were "in the middle" and then just a few more just like me, cold cases. People told what happened to their child and their experiences with the homicide dets, followed by their experiences with the courts. I have to tell you it was not really an eye opener for me - I realized that a murder which is drug or maybe gang related isn't "talked about" - even in this group there was a stigma.....and so, so very unlike me.....I didn't say anything in that particular workshop....just didn't want to.

The workshop presenter said that a homicide death takes more time to "work on" - because "we" put our grief aside, in the fridge so to speak, in order to go "after" things, like the "who did this" and stuff dealing with the homicide cops etc. He actually said "we tend to put our grief on a shelf". I know for myself I've put it in the fridge - maybe even in the freezer.... This session was also the first time I heard other homicide "victim-survivors" (which are the parents and siblings) say that it was so hard to understand about the violence, the violence which took place. Anke was shot and burned beyond recognition, or maybe she was set on fire first, maybe raped, we don't know - but that's the kind of violence people talked about and it's beyond us how a person can do this to another person. Then, besides the violence of the crime we talked about the violation of it all - meaning how "our lives" are violatedit's a horrible thing to even think about. This of course doesn't mean that my grief is more important than your grief. I know that for any parent/sibling/grandparent who lost a child/brother/sister/grandchild, no matter how that child died, we all grieve but we all grieve in a different way.

Sunday was the "walk to remember" and some 1300 people walked, "carrying" about 14,000 names !!!!! It was an awesome thing to do- we all got t-shirts to wear and paper tags on which we could write the names of the people we wanted to "carry".....I had Anke, Christi and Danielle clinging on my back.....I decorated the signs with hearts and butterflies for all three, it looked so pretty that I got lots of remarks.....which was great. I'm very honored to have been the "legs" for them. It was a very emotional experience - not just for me, but for all the "walkers".

I am very glad I've made new friends - friends who're walking in my shoes - and yes, I plan to attend the next National Conference.

Ria Coesel - mom of Anke Furber.

TCF Marietta Butterfly Picnic 2008

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making our 4th Annual Butterfly Picnic and Balloon Release a special and memorable event for everyone who attended. We especially appreciate Charlie Walton for giving his time and efforts to come and share with us lessons he has learned from his own grief journey. If you would like to know more about Charlie or read more of his published and unpublished material, you can visit his website www.freestufffromcharlie.com.

It was a special day of fellowship for bereaved parents, siblings, and our families as we all shared stories, good food and inspiration. Special thanks to Lakin Beltz, who read the poem she wrote for her brother, Luke, and to Madeline Flores who sang the beautiful song "To Where you Are", a touching tribute to our beloved children. The song below was also played while the colorful balloons with our heartfelt messages written on them floated through the sky.



Dear Brian,
 Did you get the balloon I sent you today?
 Did you snatch it right out of the sky?
 The weather was good, the wind was just right
 I've never seen balloons go so high...
 I could feel you tugging at your balloon
 Before they said to let them go.
 When the time came, I released the string
 With the note that said "I love you so"
 I chose a purple balloon for you
 For I knew that's what you'd like
 As tears fell softly on my face
 I cried as the balloons took flight...
 I pray you got my message today
 Attached to the purple balloon
 I love you always, forever...
 And hope to see you soon.

Joyce P. TCF, Fredricksburg Chapter, VT

Pretty Balloon

I am sending you this pretty balloon
 And hoping you receive it soon
 From my hands to yours let the breeze help it soar
 Watch it rush through the skies
 Finding joy in your eyes.

I am sending you kisses and hugs
 New blankets and shoes and a heart full of love
 A crayon so you can draw your own star
 And I'll follow you wherever you are.

Let it go, let it fly
 As colors touch the sky
 Soaring free, soaring high
 With family and angels nearby
 There is time to heal
 To be with all I feel
 As I reach beyond the veil
 You are there.

And I know that you're with me
 Just a thought away
 A rainbow out of nowhere
 The words someone may say.
 A butterfly that hovers
 A flock of birds on wing
 The tingle in my skin
 A song somebody sings....

Words and music by Paul Alexander c1995 all rights reserved.

For more info on Paul Alexander visit www.griefsong.com

August - September Birthdays



Birthdays are given special recognition at our monthly meetings. We have a birthday table set up where parents and siblings are invited to bring in photos and other memorabilia to share with the group. There is also an opportunity to share a short story or memory of your child with the group before breaking up into our smaller sessions. Many also like to bring in a cake or other favorite snack to celebrate the birthday of their child or sibling.

We also invite you to share a special story, picture, or both for the Birthday Tribute section below if your child's birthday is in the upcoming months. Think of it as a birthday present to your child.

August Birthdays

Johnathan E. Holiday	Anna Elizabeth Chambers
Andres H. Cardenas	Alexis Nichole Grubbs
Laura Kelcourse	Nicolas Lee Werhofnik
Jeffrey Lee Powell	Ashley Nelson
Ashley Nelson	Patrick Ellery Rice
Luke Edward Jordan	Lewis Fish
Cody Randall Ellsworth	Evan Bozof
Kerry Michael Suglia	Mindy Lea Shelton
Brett Mims	Brian Keith Davis
Moore Hallmark III	Adam Bingham
Gary Ryle Minor	Jason Lorsower
Conner Glenn Caracappa	Ward Baron
Kobe Tyler Newnan	Adam Scott Cole
Wade Bennett	Sam Eisen
Julianne Marie Riske	Jay Woodruff Willis

September Birthdays

Terry Lebron Cates	Holt Garrison
Tim Daniel Kincaid	Marquis Jenkins
Tiffany Marie Sisson	Steven Craig Levy
Brian Hoefler	Darren Craig Westerman
Patrick Malone Jr.	Jay Johnson
Lucas Robert Barrett	Marc Ashley Javetz
Jimmy Mitchell	Jennifer Bleisch
Mia Marie Dowling	
Joshua Klug	
Brian Thompson	
Marina 'Lelu' Slama	
Alexander Torres	



~~~~~ Birthday Tributes ~~~~~

Anna Chambers

August 1988 – July 2000

Anna was a smart, witty, creative and talented 11 year old girl with a bright sparkle in her beautiful brown eyes, the sweetest smile there ever was and a heart of endless compassion, especially for those left out. She has been such a blessing in our lives and that blessing continues.

Happy Birthday sweet Anna,
We love you always.
Mom, Dad and John



Brian Hoefler

Sept. 1984 - May 2006

Brian would have been 24 this Sept. Brian was bright, funny, athletic, hard working, handsome, caring and driven to achieve success. His life was an inspiration to all those that knew him. I wish my friends here at TCF could have met Brian but I feel as though you all know him already, by allowing me to share my stories with you. Thank you for helping me to keep Brian's memory alive.

Happy Birthday, Brian!



If you would like to place a birthday tribute to your child in the newsletter, you may do so by emailing it to Louise Hoefler at louiseh831@comcast.net. Please limit your paragraph to a few sentences, so we can include as many as are submitted.



August - September Angel Dates



August Angel Dates

Alexander Douglas Lambert	Andrew Pacpaco
Marina 'Lelu' Slama	Adam Scott Cole
Pamela Barnett Buck	Joseph Drysdale Lee
Jivoni Alexander Quinones	Kelly Smentek
Madison Paige Frey	Kathleen Darko
Lauren Careen Cooper	Marquis Jenkins
Patrick Malone, Jr.	Felipe Machado
Robert James Rovin	Melissa Lee Ballenberg
Penny Marie Hall Collins	Emily Wyatt
Suzanne Marie Burgoyne	William Dante Zenoni
Frankie Brohm	



Love Gifts

A love gift is a donation to help carry on the work of our chapter. The Marietta TCF would like to extend our gratitude to the following for their generous gifts, which allow us to reach out to the newly bereaved and give needed support to the bereaved parents and siblings in our community.

George and Judy Barrett in memory of their son, Captain Rob

Donna Adams in memory of her son, Johnathan

Arline Hall in memory of her daughter, Penny Marie

Louise Hoefler in memory of her son, Brian

Jane King in memory of her daughter, Laurie

We also would like to thank those who contribute cash to our monthly meetings.

Thank You

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our members and their family and friends who so generously donated to the Compassionate Friends through the Walk to Remember website, in honor and memory of our children. Your love and support is truly appreciated.

September Angel Dates

Tiffany Marie Sisson	Anke Marjon Furber
Michelle Massey	Andrew Powell
Jeremy Daniel Nieves	Marc Ashley Javetz
Ashley Nelson	Aunita Guman
Brian Edward Carney	Ashley Nelson
Aundrea Alexis Humphrey	Adam Gundling
Robert Tufts	Jeffrey Lee Miller
Jarrod Mitchell Norman	Brian Keith Davis
Moore Hallmark III	Michelle Reeves
Christopher Williams	Bill Hawley
Sadie Ruth Barrett	David Mothershed
Rhonda Blount	Maxim Eydelman
Michelle Ala Reeves	Andrew Witherell
Steven Mark Grimm	

Keep your face to the sunshine and
you will not see the shadows.

Helen Keller



To our new members:

We are truly sorry for the circumstances that led you to us, but we would like to welcome you to our group. Coming to the first meeting is a very difficult thing to do, and coming back again may be just as hard for you. Try not to judge on the first meeting whether Compassionate Friends will work for you. We encourage you to try several meetings, and you will begin to feel comfortable with the compassionate and understanding people that you meet there. Maybe at the next meeting you will meet someone who you can relate to, or something will be said that is just what you needed to hear to help you in your healing. Though some of us may be "further along" in our grief, we are all on this journey together, and we continually learn from one another and gain strength from our friendships.



Announcements

Kennesaw Mountain Hike

Join us for a hike up Kennesaw Mountain in memory of our children on Saturday, August 23. We will meet at the base of the mountain by the Welcome center at 9:30 AM and walk up to the top, or as far as you'd like to go. If you have never done this hike, it is a great experience and not as difficult as you might expect. There is a wonderful view from the top and beautiful scenery on the way up (there are a lot of butterflies up there, too). The best part is getting out there with good friends and nature and burning off all the stress from the week. Contact Louise at 770-529-9381 or Lorna at 770-505-0697 to let us know to expect you or if you have any questions.



It Won't Happen To Me

In Memory of Walk-A-Thon 2008

September 20th Chastain Park in Atlanta

Registration 8:30am Walk 10:00am

The purpose of this Walk-A-Thon is to bring about awareness to the number one cause of teen deaths - **CAR CRASHES**. We lose over 6000 teens a year in this country to teen driving related car crashes. We strive to impress upon teens and their parents the serious nature of teen driving and the consequences of making wrong choices and bad decisions. Another purpose behind the Walk is to help parents keep the memory of their teen alive. There will be a Memory Lane where we will have pictures of fallen teens along the course. Families and friends are encouraged to lay flowers at the picture of the teen they are walking in memory of.

For more information: <http://www.itwonthappentome.org/events.asp> or contact Bill Richardson at: bill@itwonthappentome.org



Book Review by Kathy Kelcourse

TCF Marietta, GA

One of the most helpful aspects of TCF is sharing our stories about surviving the worst that can happen to a parent. In her book, Saving Graces, Finding Solace and Strength from Friends and Strangers, Elizabeth Edwards is sharing her story and many will get solace and strength from this book. At times it will painfully remind us of those first months after losing our child but on the whole I found it inspiring. She expresses the anguish that we all feel and tells how she turned to various grief websites and The Compassionate Friends. The most inspiring part for me was when she spoke of "wrapping herself in her cloak of grief" which we all have to do occasionally. As she was falling into the abyss of grief she came to the realization that she was viewing her son only as a "dead boy" and denying his life and the laughter and memories. As we travel on our grief journey it does get easier to celebrate our child's life and not dwell on the fact they are dead. Elizabeth was an "army brat" and lived for some time in Japan. She describes a ceremony they have for honoring the dead on a special day by lighting candles and putting them into little boats where they float off together and all the souls of the loved ones float down the stream together. That reminded me of one of our butterfly picnics when we released the balloons at the same time and the sun sparkled and glowed on them as they happily danced higher into the sky. It gave me a vision of all of our children together, at that time, looking down on us and smiling.

Grief Materials--Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you're looking for-or they'll be able to tell you where to find it. Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at 402-553-1200 or visit their Web site at www.centering.org. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.

Lending Library

Our chapter offers a lending library with a variety of books on grief and bereavement. Some books are general in nature while others are specific to certain types of death. Some books are written specifically for siblings while others are written specifically for fathers, mothers or grandparents. Some of the categories of our books include: For siblings, Children's Grief, Children's books about death, Grandparents grief, infant death, suicide, murder, traumatic death, death resulting from long term illness, religious, metaphysical and others. If you have read a book that was comforting to you and would like to share it with others, donating that book in your child's name is a wonderful way to honor them. Bookplate/stickers are placed in these books to note whose memory they are given in.

WHERE ARE YOU

I missed you yesterday
 And looked for you
 Among all the artifacts of your life-
 Your room with pictures,
 The clothes that still carried your scent,
 Your favorite tools and books,
 The tapes you loved to hear.

The very walls echoed your vitality
 And carried faint memories of riotous laughter.
 And so I sat there, comforted for a while,
 But forced at last to confess
 That although beautiful memories lingered
 You were not there,
 Not then and not ever again.

If I could not find you yesterday,
 Where, then, can I look today?
 Who can I talk to, implore, beg
 To show me the way?
 Where are the hidden doorways
 to the signs and wonders
 others claim to see?

My musings bring no answers
 So I take a walk to clear my mind.
 Ahead, I see children playing,
 And their laughter floating on the wind
 Reminds me of your own carefree approach to life.
 Their running mirrors your own abandon
 And the way you always found joy in simple things.

Can this be the answer
 To the riddle of finding you again?
 Can it be that I will hear you
 In every moment of laughter?
 That I will see you
 In the actions of a mischievous friend,
 That I will feel you in every touch of compassion?

I've always heard
 That if you seek, you will find.
 Perhaps the corollary to that is that
 You must seek in the right places.
 I've been looking in the scrapbook
 Of all that used to be
 And found only momentary solace.

So let me look for you anew
 In all the wonders and blessings of life
 I believe you are reflected there
 In every instance of fearless exploration
 And with every act of unconditional love.

*In loving memory of Lance Porter Hopkins
 July 20, 1975 – November 30, 1999
 TCF Lawrenceville, Ga.*

INSPIRATIONS

Down, down I go into
 A swirling abyss
 Of liquid darkness.

My mouth so dry
 Opens to scream but
 There's only silence...

My hands are shaking
 I cannot believe my child
 From this world is
 gone...GONE.

Second by second
 Minute by minute
 Hour by hour
 I try to go upward.

I gasp and fight for air
 A hand grabs me
 And pulls me along.

My compassionate friend
 Has been where I am
 And can help me see
 There is a future for me.

And my friend continues
 To help me hang on for the
 Long, long wait until
 I see my child again.

Sharon Hower

TCF - Marietta, GA

The Price

It is not really a question
 of whether I could have wanted
 never to have you with me,
 if I had known
 how deeply your dying
 would break my life today.
 There is only one certain truth:
 Even if I had known
 That there would come to me
 The cruel grief I suffer today,
 I would endure it all again
 For the wonder of
 Having had you in my life.

By sascha

**Summer's End**

Always at summer's end
 there comes that moment
 when
 memory brings to me
 gifts from the past
 I see your face then,
 glistening in the sun.
 I hear your laughter then,
 shared by the wind.
 and in that glint of time
 I feel you near again,
 as you were, long ago,
 at summer's end.

By sascha

Kind words can be short and easy to
 speak but their echoes are endless.

Mother Theresa

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

We know the heartache that you bear
 We've felt the pain cause we've been there.
 We've shared a bond of infinite sorrow
 A hope for peace, strength for tomorrow.
 A time will come when you'll seek relief
 Solace and comfort to ease your grief.
 We welcome you-we shall be there
 We understand. We've much to share.

TCF, Scranton, PA

A Special Thank You

**The Marietta and Sandy Springs
Chapters of The Compassionate Friends
wish to thank Hall Printing Inc.
Of Marietta, GA for printing the**

TCF Newsletter

Contact: Abbott Hall

Hall Printing, Inc.

480 Roswell Street

Marietta, GA 30060

Tel: 770-427-1338

CELL: 770-595-5075

FAX: 770-422-6391

Email: Labbotthall@aol.com



TCF 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 a 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©2007

**The Compassionate Friends
Chapter Newsletter
For Marietta
And Sandy Springs
c/o**

**Marietta TCF
P. O. Box 1892
Marietta, GA 30061**

**Vol. 4, No. 3
August - September 2008**