



The Compassionate Friends ***of Northwest Houston*** **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

Welcome to The Compassionate Friends. We are sorry for the reason you are here, but are glad that you found us. You Need Not Walk Alone, we are The Compassionate Friends.

APRIL 2025

HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER

www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org

We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. Our next meeting is

April 8, 2025

at

Trinity Lutheran Church

Family Life Center #116

5201 Spring Cypress Rd.

Spring, TX 77379

The Church is located on the corner of Spring Cypress Road and Klein Church Road. Please enter off Spring Cypress Road. The meetings are held in the Family Life Center, Room #204

Chapter Leader:

David Hendricks

936-441-3840

dbhhendricks@hotmail.com

South Texas Regional Coordinator:

Gene Caligari

gcaligari7@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Linda Brewer 936-441-3840

llbrewer67@hotmail.com

National Headquarters, TCF

P.O. Box 3696

Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696

1-876-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS 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.

To the Newly Bereaved

As the years pass, we see new members come into the chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again, I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) I have seen them struggle and suffer and try to find meaning in their lives again. And they do! Through all the anger, pain and tears, somehow the human spirit is able to survive and flower again in a new life – perhaps a changed life and possibly a sadder one, but a stronger one nevertheless.

We feel so weak and crushed when our beloved children die, but I know because I have seen it countless times in the years I've been involved with The Compassionate Friends that we can make it together. When you walked through the door for the first meeting, you were frightened and nervous; but with that step you made a statement about your life. With that first step through the door, you said you wanted to try, you wanted to find a reason for living again, that you weren't willing to be swallowed by your grief. You wanted to go forward, and those first steps into The Compassionate Friends began your journey.

The journey will be a long one, for you loved your child with all your heart and soul. When that child died, a part of you was ripped away. It takes a long time to repair that large hole. The journey will not always be steady or constant; there will be many setbacks. Those of us who have taken the journey before you can assure you that, while there may be no rainbow at the other end, there is indeed "light at the end of the tunnel."

We want to help you as we were helped, but in the beginning and in the long run, you must help yourself. You have to want to get better, to talk about your loss, to struggle through the grief. We will listen, suggest, share and laugh and cry with you; and we hope, at this time next year, you'll be several steps along in your personal journey through grief. Then you can begin to help others.



Our Children, Siblings, and Grandchildren Remembered

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1980-Gregory Lynn Meier, Son of Gary Meier
1983- Justin Fletcher, Son of Karen Fletcher
1985- Chance Williams Son of Lynn Williams
1987- Ryan Matthews, Son of Frances Matthews
1990- Derek Ford, Son of Jackie Ford
1988- Stephen Cage, Son of Melanie Cage
2005- Sanai Caden Johnson, Daughter of Octavia Johnson
2012- Hamzah Zubair, Son of Farah Zubair
1979- Tracey, Daughter of Anita Sutphin
1988- Travis George, Son of Kathy George
1990- Kayanna, Daughter of Shari Lancaster
1991- Iman Had, Daughter of Naila Qureshi
1982- Joshua Hucklebridge, Son of Elaine White
2010- Zy'Air Stovall, Son of Jerome & Dora Stovall
1983- Crystal Garza, Daughter of Marta Garza
1982- Tiffany Driscoll, Daughter of Dan & Cindy Driscoll
2014 - Giavanna Calista, Daughter of Nicole Kelley
2014 - Korie Joiner, Daughter of Julie Joiner
1989 - Lindie, Daughter of Beth Shelton
1994 - Hunter Smith, Son of Lee Smith
1995 - Brandon LaFavre, Son of Teresa Kobs
1994 - Ryan Francis, Son of Greg and Anne Francis
1991 - Bonnie, Daughter of Eve Baszkiewicz
1992 - Brittany, Daughter of Kimberly Swan
1989 - Christopher, Son of Margie Caswell
1982 - Stephen Offenburger, Son of Mary Raub
2004 – Morgan Ascencios, Son of Lisa Ascencios

Your life was a blessing
Your memory a treasure
You are loved beyond words
And missed beyond measure.

APRIL ANGEL DATES

2005 - Chance Williams, Son of Lynn Williams
2008- Samantha Dawn Quesada, Daughter of Albert & Dawn Quesada
2009- Sandra ReNae Southerland, Daughter of Vivian Southerland
1993- Karen Crawford, Daughter of Kim Crawford
2010- Keegan Dade Coggon, Son of Kellie & Gavin Coggon
2007- Andrew Rininger, Son of Philip & Ellen Rininger
2009- Nicole Berrow, Daughter of Rosie Berrow
2009- Anthony R. Boras, Son of Walter A. Boras
2005- Dillon R. Howland, Jr., Son of Rachel Howland
2010- Alex Flood, Son of John & Alice Flood
2009- Matthew Peterson, Son of Sharon Peterson
2009- Bryan Belveal, Son of Linda Belveal
2006- Michael Beshara, Son of Mike & Elaine Beshara
2006- Shannon Stovall, Daughter of Charlie & Liz Stovall
2008- Eric Reiland, Son of Kimberly Crawford
2010- Staci Kendall, Daughter of Larry & Tami Kendall
2011- Iman Had, Daughter of Naila Qureshi
2012- Samual Johnson, Son of Tim Johnson
2012- Lauren Ovelgonne Tenney, Daughter of Steve & Carol Ovelgonne
2012- Tracey, Daughter of Anita Sutphin
2011 - Justin McHan, Son of Ronnie & Linda McHan
2014 - Angel Joseph Vasquez, Son of Mary Vasquez
2014 - Kyla, Daughter of Ron O'Farrell and Monica Reynolds
2013 - Wolfgang Jones, Son of Phillip Jones
2016 - Radley Moon, Son of Melissa and Daniel
2021 - Dylan Guy, Son of Gavin & Rachel Wheeler
2021 - Parker , Son of Tim & Amy Coogan
2022 - Jonathan Boyd Chapa, Son of Jessica Chapa
2021 - Jacob Hamburg, Son of Faith Hamburg
2010 – Melissa Zingelmann, Daughter of Cindy Zingelmann
2024 – Andrew Madden, Son of Margaret Madden

CHAPTER NEWS

Our next meeting is Tuesday, April 8th. at 7pm.

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members - We're Glad You Found Us

We offer our warmest welcome to our new member, **Vickie Pace, lost her daughter Daniela Raynes in August of 2024.** If you have walked through the door to a TCF meeting, we understand how traumatic and difficult that is to do...we have all taken that step and reach out to you in friendship and support.

If you have recently attended your first meeting, you may have left feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you may feel that you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared in meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return.

These feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel".

Please give us at least three tries before you decide if these meetings are for you.

We hope you will find our meetings and newsletters to be a source of comfort, a place where tears are allowed, no judgments are made and the support which will help you travel this journey of grief, and we can once again find hope and meaning in our lives.

Mother's Day Special Remembrance

Mother's Day is next month, please consider submitting a short story about your child for our newsletter. Tell us about your child's life, his/her hobbies, the school they went to or where they worked, did they have siblings. Include a picture of your child. Or you may consider sharing your grief journey so newly bereaved parents will know there is hope after the darkness. Email your articles to me at llbrewer67@hotmail.com.

TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE July 11-13, 2025 in Bellevue, WA



Only Two Weeks Left to Save \$95!

The Special Opening Registration Rate ends April 18th for The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 48th Annual National Conference! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

Hotel Reservations

This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue. **Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated [reservation link](#).** Our discounted room rate with the Hyatt is \$165 per night plus applicable taxes and fees. Please note that each attendee can reserve a maximum of two rooms. Many attendees arrive on Thursday since the conference begins early on Friday morning. We also have pre-conference activities that are offered on Thursday evening, that attendees find beneficial. We look forward to seeing you in Bellevue

Registration Includes:

- Friday Morning Opening Session
- Friday Luncheon Banquet & Keynote Session
- Friday Evening Special Session
- Saturday Evening Banquet, Keynote Session, & Candle Lighting Program
- All General Sessions
- Workshops
- Sharing Sessions
- Special Performances
- Sibling Sunday
- All Activity Rooms

Registration Rates:

Adult Registration ~~\$360~~ special opening rate \$265

(special opening rate ends April 18th at midnight, PST)

Active Military/Student Registration ~~\$285~~ special opening rate \$190

(special opening rate ends April 18th at midnight, PST)

Child Registration (9-17 years old) ~~\$240~~ special opening rate \$145

(special opening rate ends April 18th at midnight, PST)



Inside These Walls: TCF National Conference (Arlington/Washington, D.C. 2001)

Outside my window,
the rush of life goes on.
Airplanes glide effortlessly on the runway,
Pyrotechnic stars of red, white and blue
blaze over the Potomac.
The Capitol dome beams on the horizon.
Yes, outside my window
life roars on for those untouched,

unaware of the sadness looming
inside these walls.

Inside these walls,
where parents at times catatonically walk,
their lives tainted by the sting of death.
Mothers, hollow eyes etched with sorrow.
Fathers, whose shoulders' quake
attempting to stifle their choking sobs.
Brothers and sisters, looking for answers to their emptiness.
Grandparents, questioning the broken chain,
"Why them and not me?"

Yet, inside these walls,
lies a protective and supportive cocoon,
part of "The Club" we'd prayed never to belong,
where others share our grief and loss,
for they also have been there.
They say, "I know how you feel" and truly do.
Always ready with a reassuring hug
given by a stranger,
yet not a stranger,
for they too have walked in our shoes.

Inside these walls, our children are remembered
as paramount in our lives, as they are and should be.
And I will return to these walls
year after year,
taking my precious child with me,
as I reach out to those,
here for the first time,
inside these walls...

The above were my observations looking out my hotel window toward Washington, D.C. while attending the TCF National Conference in Arlington on the 4th of July, 2001. Little did I know that in barely over two months the "pyrotechnics" I spoke of would not be the fireworks I observed that rainy 4th of July evening, but the fire in the sky after a hijacked plane slammed into the Pentagon. What was written innocently back then took on new meaning after September 11th; that fateful day thousands around the country would also become members of "The Club" as well.

I have attended the past three National Conferences, first in Portland, then Chicago, and the above last summer. I have met many bereaved parents from all around the country, who, like I, have experienced some incredible "happenings" while there. For example, in Portland, in the Reflecting Room, a quiet place away from the crowds, parents can spend time to peacefully reflect on their child. In this room, a recorded voice continually spoke the names of the children whose parents were present at the conference. There were approximately 900 names said repeatedly over that weekend. Somewhere near the end of the first day, I decided to stop there, feeling a need for quiet time. Just as I entered the room, the very first name I heard spoken was "Nina Westmoreland"! I remember gasping...I just couldn't believe that at that exact moment, when I decided to walk into that room, of the 900 names being read, my daughter's name was said! After I regained my composure, I thought about what had just

happened. Previously, I had questioned whether I should have made that trip at all. After all, it was the first trip I had taken since Nina died and I felt apprehensive (it was on that trip that my Nina died) and even guilty about it. But because of what had just happened, I felt that she was making her presence known to me; to tell me that even though I could not see her, she was very much with me in spirit and glad that I had made the trip to the TCF National Conference that year.

Another happening in Portland was told to me by a lady from New York, who has become a friend. She and her husband were on a plane seated next to a small baby who was fussing. She didn't really like plane rides as it was and also questioned why she had chosen to come all this way. She even thought about going right back home. The mother of the child asked my friend if she would mind holding her baby for a minute while she went to the restroom. Not wanting to be rude, she agreed. The baby smiled up at her. She then asked her mother what the baby's name was, to which the mother replied, "Julia." My friend could not believe her ears...Julia was also the name of her daughter who died! From that moment, she felt that her own daughter, Julia, was telling her she was doing exactly what she should be and brought a sense of peace to the rest of the trip.

I would urge anyone who is able to attend one of the National or Regional TCF Conferences. Even though you may not experience a "happening" as those mentioned above, you will derive much benefit from the many workshops, the inspirational speakers, and, more than anything, being around others who "have walked in our shoes." It is always difficult for me to leave that protective cocoon. There, I didn't have to explain my tears. I could speak of my daughter and others would listen. I felt safe; I felt understood. I promise to keep you apprised of upcoming conferences so that maybe someday you too might experience the peace and acceptance of being "inside these walls."

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN
In Memory of my daughter, Nina



Self Help

For many of us, the monthly meeting of our Compassionate Friends Group is the only real healing time we give to ourselves. Helping ourselves on a daily basis is critical to our journey in the grieving process.

Many of us find solace in books. Others find it in movies, music, time with friends, meditation or intense spiritual conviction. Each day we should take some time to center ourselves, to find a place of peace.

If you haven't already done so, start with a quiet time of reflection and search your soul for the key to your own solace. There will still be bad, even terrible, days. The effort to help ourselves begins with knowing ourselves and finding the unique activity that soothes our broken hearts for just a little while.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

Filling In Holes

Today, my husband and I went to the plant nursery and bought some flowers and bedding plants to go in our gardens. Spring is here, and the weather is beautiful. Not cold at all... but also not so hot that the thought of puttering in the garden brings a groan of dismay.

I remember my first spring in this house. We were so excited. Our family was nearly complete. Our third son was on his way, and we had just had a house built. We were at the plant nursery at least once a week. Our life was busy, bright, untainted by grief.

I remember our second spring in this house. How winter hung on, tenacious, unyielding, both outside, and in our hearts. I remember the first warm spring day. I came home from work early, determined to make SOMETHING grow in my life. Maybe I couldn't get my son to live, but I was going to make something live.

Grief was a raw, open wound then, and my anger was deep. I was angry at the world, at God...at everything. And so I approached my yard, shovel in hand. I decided I had to have a garden in the middle of my yard. I began furiously digging out the grass, making an oval in the center. It took me hours digging out that oval. But I wasn't through. I then decided I wanted a garden right by my doorway, so I dug out that area too. And then I made big holes, and tore out all the roots and stones and other junk.

I made big holes in my yard that day. And in the weeks to come I DID fill them with things. Funny thing, as I dug those holes and pulled on the grass, my anger drained away. My salty tears mixed with the sweat of exertion and the dirt, and ran off my arms undetected to the outside world. Digging those holes provided an outlet for my anger and my hurt.

Today I dug some more holes. But this time, my holes were smaller. And I filled them. With small, delicate flowers, purple and white. I put bulbs in the ground too, filling other small holes. And I reflected back on another hole. The hole in my heart. No, I can't ever fill it with what "should" be there... my son "should" be almost seven now, full of energy, and wanting to plant flowers with Mom. But I have filled that hole with other things. With love and healing and memories. And with the lessons and the gifts my son gave me. I never saw those gifts that spring, as I was digging out holes in my yard. And though I would rather have that hole filled with my son's presence, I am grateful for the gifts he gave. And so I will go on, filling holes.

Lisa Sculley, March, 1999
TCF Jacksonville, FL



No You Don't Need "Closure"

By: Stephen J. Forman

There are few among us who have not experienced the loss of a friend or loved one. Often it comes without warning, in an accident or, as we've seen all too often recently, an act of terrorism. The experience of loss after a lingering illness like cancer, though more expected, is just as deeply felt. As time passes, we often hear how important it is to gain closure-a way of tidying up to help us move on with our own lives.

The reality is that closure is a myth. My personal and professional experience with those who have lost friends and family, including children, has taught me that going on with life is not the same as gaining closure. The wound of loss is a part of each person's life forever. We continue to think about those dear to us, though perhaps not every day or with the same intensity. Recollection is sometimes provoked by a date on a calendar or, less predictably, by a sight, sound, aroma, melody or place that evokes the missing person.

These personal moments, seemingly forever paused in time, can cause us to feel alone, especially during sentiment-filled holidays. The danger of the idea closure is that it heightens this aloneness, by giving us a false expectation that these experiences should and will at some point end. They won't.

No matter how much time has passed, memories remain. To deny them is to deny precious moments of love, fellowship, gratitude and inspiration. Grieving changes the experience of loss, but does not eliminate it, and is not intended to do so. To close the memory does not sustain the healing or help in proceeding with life. Such echoes from the past are voices in the present and are sometimes warmly felt.

As humans we all yearn to remember. Nearly every culture has its way of preserving the past. We build memorials to perpetuate collective memory, whether it is the Vietnam Memorial or Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., the field of empty chairs in Oklahoma City, or the 9/11 Memorial in New York.

Cemeteries offer a communal "safe space" where grief is openly welcomed and expected, forever. Visitation rights to a plot do not suddenly expire six months after a burial, a time that some in the medical community suggest is the "normal" grieving period. In the Jewish tradition, the acknowledgement of the annual yahrzeit, the anniversary of the death of a family member, is always done in the presence of others, provoking a collective memory of the person.

These occasions sometimes formal, but more often spontaneous are not about closure. Rather they are about the fullness in each of our lives that came from our family, loved ones, and friends, as well as others who were touched by that person's presence.

In my work as a cancer physician, I often write to the family of a loved one who was under my care, months after the death. It is a time when most of the people who helped support them through the days and weeks immediately after have gone back to the busyness of their own lives. The bereaved are left alone with their own feelings and thoughts. The letters are a chance to remain connected, but also a way to convey that their loved one is an important memory for us, too. These words of acknowledgement are always welcome, reassuring those whose lives have become interwoven with ours that their loved ones are alive within us, as they are in their own families.

A few months ago, I ran into a woman who many years ago had, at a very young age and early in her marriage, lost her husband to cancer. Since then she had moved away, met another man whom she adored, married him and had a family. Together they raised their children. She had built a successful career. Seemingly she had found closure from the tragedy of her early life. As we finished talking and

she began to walk away, she turned around, and with eyes full, and said: "I think of him almost every day."

*Taken from the Wall Street Journal
Dr. Forman leads the Hematologic Malignancies
and Stem Cell Transplantation Institute at City of Hope.*



The Anticipation of Spring

Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter.

It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we'd drive down the road.

That's the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing.

And then . . . ***IT*** happened.

Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed.

My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world.

The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with "spring." If H.G. Well's time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring.

As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn't fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn't go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It's much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis.

A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that spring somehow wasn't going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer. And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.

Pat Loder
TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI
In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen Loder
Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, 2003.



My April Child

When our daughters were growing up the arrival of springtime was a favorite time of the year, filled with anticipation of the coming of special days of family fun. The freshness of the air, the brilliant colors of spring time trees and flowers, and the song of the birds returned from their winter retreat resounded the message of hope and that life was good. We had survived another cold, snowy Michigan winter and were soon to be rewarded with blue sky, sunshine and temperatures well above freezing!

Birthdays in our family were a time of celebration together. Each year Larry, Anna, Debbie and I, and perhaps a friend or two, would celebrate Anna's April birthday by dining at her favorite Mexican restaurant. There would be lots of silliness and laughter. During her teenage years, Anna would always forewarn us not to have the staff come to our table to sing their crazy birthday song. Of course, since we always insisted that our role as parents was to embarrass our children, her threats and warnings could not stop our tomfoolery. I believe she secretly enjoyed the attention.

As Mother's Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories... That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. My April child died. How could those special days of love and

togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away on her birthday. For several years we did just that. With hearts filled with the numbness of fresh grief, our restructured family of three would hop in the car and head out-of-town. We would spend the day busying ourselves with whatever it took to survive. We would laugh half-heartedly, share memories, or cry together as we struggled to discover our new identity as a family without Anna's physical presence.

As always, only a few short weeks following Anna's birthday Mother's Day would arrive right on schedule. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by "intact" families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

It seems impossible that it has been nine birthdays and nine Mothers' Days since Anna died. In my heart it was only yesterday. I can still see her smile and hear her laugh. I can feel the warmth of a quick hug as she heads out the door. With each passing year comes a new reality of what it means to be a bereaved parent, of what it means to find a new normal for our lives. The pain continues to occasionally catch me off guard, but it is softer now. The tears still come, but less frequently. Warm memories bring joyful moments to the emptiness. I smile quietly to myself, reassured that Anna lives on in our hearts and lives, as well as in the hearts and lives of those around us. Once again each April we celebrate the day of her birth, for her life has been a gift of unimaginable joy. Our traditional Mother's day rituals have changed to new ones. There is more laughter now, fewer painful tears. I rejoice that I can celebrate that I am Debbie's Mom, and now Scott's mother-in-law, as well! Life is good.

The winter has been long and cold, as has been the winter of our grief. Springtime has arrived. The sunshine and blue sky, the purple crocus and yellow daffodils pushing through the warming earth bring hope of renewal and reassurance that life continues. Although there is an irreparable hole in my soul and an emptiness in my heart that will never leave, I am forever grateful that Anna lived with us for 23 years. I am eternally thankful that I am and I always will be Anna's Mom. May the warmth and brilliance of springtime fill your hearts with times of peace and hope and love.

Paula Funk
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI
In loving memory of my daughter, Anna



One

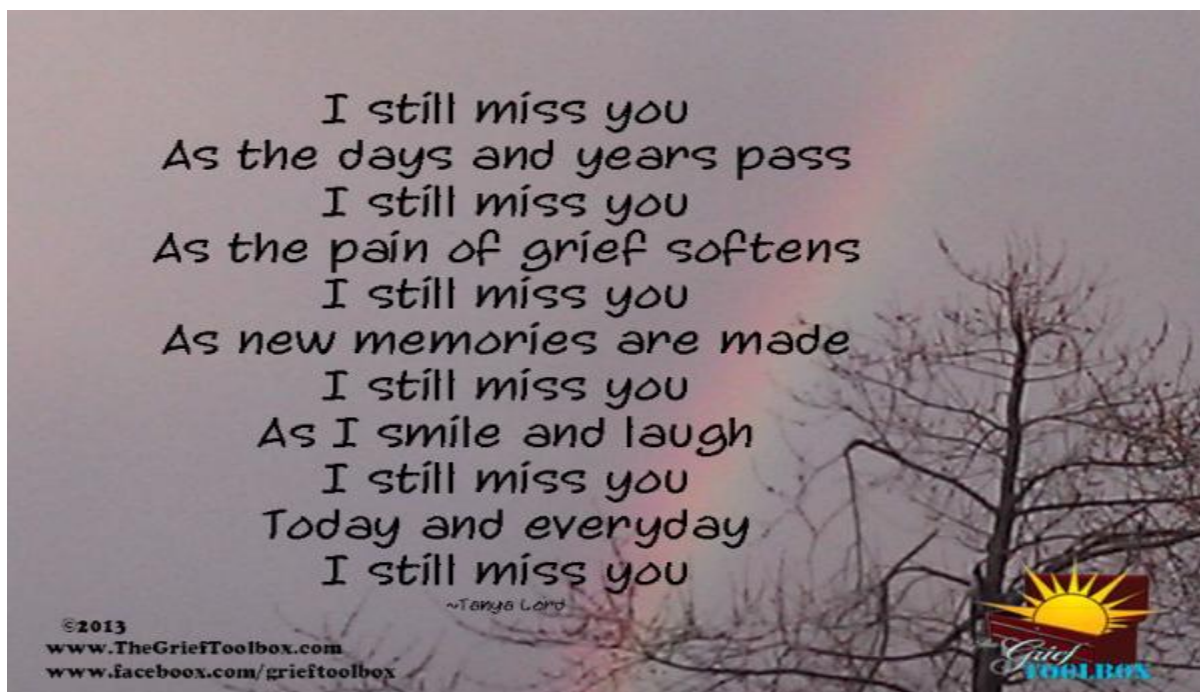
It was only 1 second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action in a lifetime of seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions. It was so fast, so permanent, so irreversible, so hopeless. This moment, this thought, this decision, this action do not define him, do not honor him, do not immortalize him. It is the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that define him, that honor him, that immortalize him.

I remember my brother in all of the other seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that preceded this *one*. I remember him coming home from the hospital, lip synching in the basement, falling out of the tree, biking across campus, coming home from school, from boot camp, from war... I remember him hiking, and skiing, and running, and laughing, and crying. I remember how safe I always felt when he was around. I knew he would take care, protect, defend.

I don't remember exactly when my brother became an amazing human being – I just looked at him one day and knew he was. I knew that nothing would make him change his mind about me. He was without judgment, without prejudice, without preconception. I knew my brother because we talked and he listened. I respected my brother most for his humanity – for being so sensitive, so vulnerable, so honest. I loved my brother for sharing the load when it was too hard for someone he loved to carry alone. I knew my brother because he left so much of him in me.

I trusted and respected my brother's decisions in the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, I have to trust and respect this *one* decision the same. I honor my brother by honoring myself. I do not dwell in that *one* moment, instead I celebrate and cherish all of the others. In that 1 second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action, I found the strength he had given me and I will not let him down. I will not let that *one* moment be the only *one*.

Michele Mallory



Phone Friends

All of the people on the following list are bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. They understand what you are going through and have all wished to be included in this list in the hope that anyone who needs to talk will reach out to them. They are willing to talk with you at any time you need their support. Some have listed the specific area in which they have personal experience but they do not intend to imply that that is the only topic they wish to talk about. We all have experienced this journey through grief and it encompasses much more than the specifics surrounding our individual loss. Having a compassionate person to listen when you are having a bad day or just need someone to reach out to when you feel overwhelmed can make the difference in getting through one more day. We have all been there and understand, please feel free to contact any one of us.

Laura Hengel
281-908-5197
linnemanl@aol.com
Auto Accident

Pat Morgan
713-462-7405
angeltrack@aol.com
Adult Child

Connie Brandt
281-320-9973
clynncooper@hotmail.com
Auto Accident

Beth Crocker
281-923-5196
thecrockers3@comcast.net
Multiple Loss
Heart Disease

Julie Joiner
832-724-4299
dtjb19@gmail.com
Infant Child
Multiple Loss

Loretta Stephens
281-782-8182
andersonloretta@sbcglobal.net
Auto Accident

Lisa Thompson
713-376-5593
lisalou862@yahoo.com
Auto Accident/Fire

Pat Gallien
281-732-6399
agmom03@aol.com
Organ Donor

Leigh Heard-Boyer
281-785-6170
boyerbetterhalf@yahoo.com
Substance Abuse

FOR FATHERS:

Nick Crocker
832-458-9224
thecrockers3@comcast.net
Multiple Loss
Heart Disease

David Hendricks
936-441-3840
dbhhendricks@hotmail.com
Auto Accident

Glenn Wilkerson
832-878-7113
glennwilkerson@thearkgroup.org
Infant Child