



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.

JUNE 2025

HOUSTON NORTHWEST CHAPTER

www.houstonnorthwesttcf.org

We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.

at

**Trinity Lutheran Church
Family Life Center, Room #116
5201 Spring Cypress Rd.
Spring, Texas 77379**

The Church is located on the corner of Spring Cypress Road and Klein Church Rd. Please enter off Spring Cypress Road. The meetings are held in the Family Life Center Room 116.

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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

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1990 - Megan Kathleen Ratcliff, Daughter of Ann & Garvon Ratcliff
1990 - BreAnna Brashear, Daughter of Julie Jones
1976 - Adrian Jay, Son of Helen Jay
2010 - Alexandra Kenley Newhart, Granddaughter of Dave & Carol Bell
2008 - Keegan Dade Coggon, Son of Kellie & Gavin Coggon
1982 - Robbie Hill, Son of Ann Hill
1990 - Melissa Ellen Blackbird, Daughter of Will & Pam Blackbird
1990 - Ryan Kirby, Son of Cherlynn Kirby
1988 - Meredith Iris Wheelock, Daughter of Carey Wheelock
1991 - Cody Ryan, Son of Christy Welch
2008 - Leah Elizabeth Davis, Daughter of Ron & Laura Davis
1973 - Christopher Birken, Son of Elizabeth Birken
1985 - Sloan Nagy, Son of Tammy Johnson
1990 - Alan James Stokes, Son of Kellie Harris
2004 - Aaron Fontaine, Son of Doug & Tina Fontaine
1989 - Danielle Spivey, Daughter of Mark and Donna Spivey
2013 - Judah Levi Brown, Son of Mark and Christi Brown
1987 - Corey Cole, Son of Tim and Cheryl Cole
1999 - Austin Balogun, Son of Yokima Whittake
1985 - Rachel Livingston, daughter of Beth Rosler
1985 - Darryl Allen, Son of Sandra Allen
2000 - Lucy Schaefer, Daughter of Amy Croston
1975 - Russell Johnson, Son of Sue Johnson
1994 - Michael, Son of Kimberly Douglas

*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.*

JUNE ANGEL DATES

2009 - Samantha Campos, Daughter of Amy Arrant
2008 - Robert Elizeus, Son of Joanne Wycoff
1998 - Molly Long, Daughter of Carolyn Long
2010 - Joselito C. M. Boquilon, Son of Raulito & Kim Boquilon
2004 - Felipe Danny Sanchez, Son of Lupe Sanchez
2010 - Tristen D. Hopkins, Son of Howard & Denise Hopkins
1993 - Robbie Hill, Son of Ann Hill
2009 - Maxwell B. Heath, Son of Carrie & Dirk Heath
2010 - Alexandra Kenley Newhart, Granddaughter of Dave & Carol Bell
2004 - "Bo" Jared Valdez, Son of Irma & James Valdez
2009 - Michael Brent Police, Son of Jack & Sally Police
2011 - Erin Johnson, Daughter of Rebecca Johnson
2011 - Meredith Iris Wheelock, Daughter of Carey Wheelock
Sister of Mariah Moon
1995 - Cody Ryan, Son of Christy Welch
2013 - Matthew Allen, Son of Jay and Linda Allen
2013 - Lhwhyh Yhshrhal, Son of Taneshia Carey
2012 - Crystal Garza, Daughter of Marta Garza
2015 - Race Killen, Son of Wendy Killen
2016 - Brandon LaFavre, Son of Tersa Kobs
2017 - Sean Michael Gonzalez, Son of Rick and Jazmin Gonzalez
2018 - Elijah James Knight, Son of Stephen and Courtney Knight
2018 - Justin Moyer, Son of Valli Moyer
2021 - Elijah Tsafarides, Son of Gerri Tsafarides
2019 - Brittany Swan, Daughter of Kimberly Swan
2022 - Mary McDonald, Daughter of Brian and Milly McDonald
2021 - Christian A. Carr, Son of Ivonne A. Carr
2020 - Joshua Bell, Son of Jamie Bell
2023 - Bruce Young, Son of Barbara Young

A Father's Day Poem

Bittersweet is the word I would use
Happy and sad both at once and confused
That is the feeling I get every June
On Father's Day and it's coming up soon
I will do my best to partake in the fun
Maybe barbeque and take in some sun
But a part of me will be very sad
Cause I won't hear you say
Happy Father's Day dad

CHAPTER NEWS

Our next meeting is Tuesday, June 10th at 7pm.

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

We offer our warmest welcome to our new members. **Matt & Jen Shaunty lost their son Gavin in 2025; Kimberly Douglas lost her son Michael in 2023; Stacy Raines lost her daughter Reagan in 2017.** 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.

Still Time To Register

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



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 Rates

Pre-Registration \$330 begins June 1st, ends July 7th at midnight (PST)

Onsite Registration \$360 begins July 8th

Registration fees 50% of your registration fee will be refunded if canceled between 6/1/2025 and 6/20/2025. Special order items such as Walk To Remember signs, conference mementos, and sponsorships are non-refundable.

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

A Sampling of Workshop Topics Include

- Parent's Grief
- Sibling Loss
- Grandparent's Grief
- Loss of Only/All Children
- Workshops specific to the type of loss such as suicide, homicide, miscarriage, substance-related causes, and more
- Creativity in grief
- Early grief experiences as well as long-term grievers
- Grief with or without spiritual or religious beliefs
- Spanish-speaking Workshop
- and more

Daddy's Love"
By: David Hendricks
In loving memory of my son David B. Hendricks II

I may not always be there to catch you when you fall
But I'll always be there when I can
There will be moments when we don't see eye to eye
One day I know you'll understand

Chorus

DADDY'S LOVE
IS HIGHER THAN A MOUNTAIN
DADDY'S LOVE
IS DEEPER THAN THE SEA
IT'S ONE THING I CAN GIVE YOU...UNCONDITIONALLY
DADDY'S LOVE IS A WHOLE LOT STRONGER
THAN A HUNDRED YEAR OLD OAK TREE
THE LOVE I HAVE TO GIVE YOU
IS THE LOVE MY DADDY GAVE TO ME

When you were a baby, and I would hold you in my arms
What a joy it was to watch you grow
As the years pass by, I still hold you in my heart
And if I haven't told you lately
I want you to know

Chorus

When I'm there to help you in times when troubles come
Don't be surprised to know I really care
I can't solve all your problems
But I can give you what you need
Cause you and I have such a love to share

Chorus

Knowing you're a part of me has been my biggest thrill
And when you have children of your own
You will know just how I feel

For three years after David died, in 1997, I worked on a project that included a music CD and an elaborate photo album. It kept me busy, and I felt like I was honoring David with all the effort. When it was over, there was a definite void for a while, but as veterans of this process know, you work through it.

The music CD included original songs like "Daddy's Love". It was professionally produced with musicians, singers and technicians. "Daddy's Love" was my attempt to show a father's unconditional love over

time for his child. It was also my way of being the man in the middle between my father and my child. Thus the line in the song, "The love I have to give you is the love my Daddy gave to me".

I hope all you Dads have a gentle Father's Day, with a little laughter, some joy and lots of good memories. I hope someone says your child's name and tells you a story about your child. Be easy on yourself, and keep your love ones close.



Father & Son 1993

HOPE

Momentarily hidden by grief's agony

HOPE

Not the absence of pain and sorrow

HOPE

The belief in joy and laughter's return

HOPE

Whispers the promise of tomorrow

Hope changes as we do and it can be so disguised that we may not recognize it, but it can be found in the moments of our memories - Darcie Sims

A Father's Love Is Priceless

This will be my husband's third Father's Day without my son, Todd. My husband and I married when Todd was eight years old. Todd's biological father had little in common with him; my son desperately needed a role model who also provided guidance and structure. One of the reasons I decided to marry John was his real concern and love for my son.

As Todd grew, he and John took many trips together....fishing in Canada and meeting Jimmy Doolittle, skiing in Colorado together, going to car shows, car parts swap meets, always attending Autorama in Houston. Todd confided in John that his dream was to rebuild a GTO and enter it in Autorama. John took Todd to the "Pac Man" Tournament in Houston where Todd placed in the top 10 in the city. These were excursions that Todd and John shared.

John taught Todd how to change the oil and other fluids in a car, rebuild an engine, handle a hammer, measure twice and cut once, use a Shopsmith and other electric tools, lay a solid ceramic tile floor, read a blueprint and so much more that every boy should know.

But most of all, John showed Todd how to love a woman and children with his heart and soul. He never actively gave instructions....his example of gentleness, small gifts, sweet compliments, thoughtfulness, cheerful attitude and perpetual optimism helped to shape the man that my son became.

At Todd's wedding rehearsal dinner, each family member was asked by my dad what they would like to say to the bride or groom. John tried to express his feelings to Todd but his tendency to wear his emotions on his sleeve overcame him. He ended up in tears. After the speeches, Todd came over and hugged John; I snapped a picture of that moment. It will always be a treasure to John and to me.

After he married, Todd and John continued to do things together. They went to car shows, worked together on projects in Todd's home and our home. At family gatherings they would sit and talk about the world, business activities, career goals and their optimistic dreams for hours at a time.

The last project that Todd and John did together was put up signage for a company that I had inherited from my Dad a few years earlier. They drove 1,000 miles to get there. Those five days were great for them both. Todd worked hard helping John get the signs mounted and winterizing the company's building. He picked out memorabilia that was my dad's to bring home and keep. It was a sentimental journey.

On the trip home, the unthinkable happened. The cruise control was set at 70 mph; a vehicle in the right lane suddenly swerved into John's lane, tapping the Dodge Durango's right front quarter panel. John's automatic reaction was to swerve away from the drifting vehicle. For reasons yet unknown, the airbag deployed, the Durango launched across the median at 70 mph, skidded into the oncoming traffic, slammed into a semi trailer, rolled over and landed on its wheels. Todd suffered massive head injuries and injuries to the right side of his body. John was bruised from the airbag but refused medical treatment.

And so after heroic efforts on the part of an angel nurse who witnessed the accident, Todd was transported to a hospital. The doctors worked feverishly to bring him back. He was stabilized and loaded on a life flight helicopter, but he died a minute later. John was still standing at the heliport when the helicopter landed. "He's gone", they told him. John screamed and cried as he walked alongside the gurney into the hospital. John stayed with Todd for a long time after he died. He talked to him. He called me. He talked to Todd some more. He continued to ask Todd "Why? Why did you die? Why wasn't it me?" This question still haunts him.

So this Father's Day I will remind John how much he did for Todd, how much he contributed to shaping the man that Todd became and how much Todd loved him. There is little else that I can say to this gentle man who wears his emotions on his sleeve, contributed so much to the formation of a very special man and loved my son with all his heart.

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

Father's Day Is Still a Time for Celebrating . . .

A long time has passed since I've enjoyed a holiday—or for that matter any special occasion.

With Father's Day coming up shortly, I've decided that this year I'm celebrating.

The kids used to love when special occasions came along. I can still remember Stef's eighth birthday, only three months before her death, and how proud she was when we told her she could invite her best friends over for a birthday party. She wore her prettiest blue trimmed party dress with the lace ruffles.

The games they played still stick in my mind. There was "pin the tail on the donkey" and then "Simon Says." I remember clothes flying everywhere in a contest to see which child could put on a complete set of clothes fastest over her party clothes. I remember the hotdogs, punch and cake, the party favors. I remember Stef's giggles.

The memories also wander back to the party our family threw for Stephen's fifth birthday, only three days before the accident which also claimed his life. I still have the picture in my mind of that goofy orange cap someone had given Steve. He loved it, but it was at least two sizes too small. When he tried to put it on, the bill of the cap was up and Stephen flashed us one of those impish grins that reminds you of Spanky and Our Gang.

As I'm writing this, the tears are flowing down my cheeks remembering the good times we had together.

A lot of things changed when the kids died. Christmas, Easter, birthdays all became days other people celebrated. But not us.

I've done a lot of thinking since then. I know Stef and Steve are in a better place than I could ever imagine and that every day is a holiday for them. In my mind, I think Stef and Stephen would be sad if they felt their Mom and Dad couldn't celebrate life anymore.

Pat and I now have another son, Christopher, plus we have our fourth child on the way. We're trying to rebuild our lives and I feel we have been blessed along the way. Of course, Christopher is too young to understand Father's Day, but even without him here, I would still consider celebrating Father's Day.

I can still remember the Father's Day a couple of years before Stef and Stephen died. With their mom, they had searched all over for something special for me, finally deciding on a T-Shirt that said "World's Coolest Dad." I still wear that now faded shirt occasionally despite the many grass stains and grease marks.

When Father's Day arrives, I think I'm going to pull out that old T-Shirt and wear it. I'm going to lay down out in the grass, letting the warm breeze hit me. And I'm going to pretend I'm being caressed by Stef and Steve. I'm going to remember . . . and I'm going to celebrate!!!

Wayne Loder

TCF Lakes Area, MI

In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen Loder

How Dad Copes

It will be four years on May 31 this year since our son Nicholas passed away. Wow. I never imagined in a million years this would happen to us. It is difficult to deal with the aching pain I still feel in my heart. Nicholas's friends are getting married and having children. Though we are happy for them, our sadness deepens with the thought of how different it could be if he were still here.

The anxiety that begins to build in the latter part of April in preparation for the anniversary of Nicholas's passing gets stronger and stronger as the day comes near.

Past years were shock years. I couldn't figure out how to deal with it all. I would listen to other parents that are further along in their grief for coping strategies, but it did not seem to help. How could anyone help me heal my heart after it was broken into a trillion pieces?

I have found that speaking about Nicholas to friends, family, and new acquaintances helps me tremendously. At first it was difficult to do because it does make some people uncomfortable. The more I do it, the easier it gets, and the better I feel. Talking about my son has been like a pressure relief valve for me.

I also make time to think about Nicholas and release my emotions. This time alone to reflect and weep brings overwhelming, though temporary, relief. Dads tend to hold back tears and feelings. We like to think we can maintain control. My advice is don't try. Instead, let your feelings go in private at a time and place of your choosing.

Thinking back to the beginning of this tragic event in our lives, I should have sought counseling from a grief therapist. My wife and I both should have done this. I truly believe this would have helped us develop better coping skills. At that time I didn't think private counseling would help. I was wrong.

Finally, The Compassionate Friends (TCF) volunteers are available to us all. TCF volunteers understand your loss and the dual problem of "maintaining control" for the sake of our family. Our chapter newsletter lists names and telephone numbers of other fathers and mothers ready and willing to assist us. I am one of the parents who volunteers to talk with grieving fathers. I have even become active in the administrative aspects of our chapter. Now, I tell parents, "we sincerely regret the circumstance that has brought you to this group." This is a club none of us dreamed we would ever join. I thank TCF for helping my family and me and for allowing me to help others.

Albert Tapia

TCF Katy Chapter,

In Memory of my son, Nicholas Albert Tapia

A Fathers Day Like No Other

In June, 2000 it was my third Fathers day without my son Christopher. He died in an industrial accident on September 28, 1997. This was such a lonely day for me as my only surviving child had been out of the country for over a year. I had no one to celebrate being a father with. It started as a very dark and dismal day indeed.

After trying to avoid the trip to the cemetery for most of the day, there was nothing left to keep me away. So my wife Robyn and I went to the cemetery to visit Chris' grave.

While deep in emotion and feeling like I had nothing to look forward to, we were sitting by Chris' headstone remembering how much fun he was and how terribly sad it was not to have him to hold and tell him that I loved him. I was wishing so badly that he could be here to spend the day with me.

I had put my head down to let the tears run off my face. I felt a small breeze come up; it was an unusual breeze in that it came from the northeast, which in June is not a common occurrence. I looked up and noticed this balloon with a lead weight dragging behind it, dancing ever so slowly towards me. We watched it dance across the grass and then the balloon bounced directly into my chest. The balloon had a message that I **know** was from my son Chris. It said "World's Greatest Dad". I was so surprised and happy to have received this "Father's Day Gift". I thanked him for the wonderful gift and for cheering me up. There was no one else around or near us; we were not sure where the balloon had come from. I did not notice it at the time but a woman and her 2-year-old son had come to visit her father's grave, which was about 150 yards away from Chris. Robyn and I sat around for another fifteen minutes or so and then decided to leave.

When we left to go to our car Robyn noticed that the lady visiting her Father was frantic and screaming that her son had locked himself in the car. We went over to see if we could help. The son had locked the doors to the vehicle, the windows were rolled all the way up and the mom had left the keys inside. The outside temperature was very warm and the little boy was starting to sweat. The police had been called to come and open the door but they were not sure that they could get there very soon. I was just about to break out the back window when Robyn said let's try to get him to open the door. She took the balloon and tried to coax the little boy to open the door. She told him through the glass that she would give him the balloon if he would just push the button. She kept pointing to the button that would release the door lock. Suddenly the lock popped open, we didn't notice it at the second the lock popped up, but later we realized that the boy's hand was no-where near the lock when it opened. We got the boy out and Robyn gave the little boy my Fathers day gift from Chris. The boy's mother looked at the balloon and asked where we had gotten that balloon because she had left a balloon just like it on her dad's grave the day before. We looked for his balloon and it was gone. It turned out to be the same balloon that had bounced across the grass and bumped into my chest earlier. The balloon was now in the hands of his grandson.

The events of that day have been with me ever since. First of all, I know that my son sent that balloon to me to help me through my sad and lonely Father's Day, and that he also helped to save that boys life.

Mark Kingery
TCF Salt Lake City, UT
In Memory of my son, Christopher

That Anniversary

All our lives we've known about anniversaries.
Our parents celebrated their Anniversary.
The school we attended marked its Anniversary.
The company honored your Anniversary when you started your career.
The Lions Club held a gala to remember its Anniversary.
But there is one Anniversary that we're never eager to recall.
It's **That Anniversary**.

When a child dies we retain vivid memories of that fateful day. Time cannot rob us of the memory and the grief of that awful and confusingly sad day. Unlike your wedding date or your first day on the job or when you graduated from school, which may have become hazy over time, the circumstances and ticks of the clock of **That Anniversary** remain etched in our minds.

Some of us do special "things" on **That Anniversary**. We pray. We cry. We grieve. Some make an effort to try to distract the intense sadness that **That Anniversary** brings. Some walk on the beach or take a ride in the country. We look at old photos or other memorabilia to remember and to ward off anything that might cloud the memory of our daughters and sons.

Friends and relatives also remember **That Anniversary** and may send a card or ask you out to lunch or choose not to visit you showing respect for your need for solitude. Regardless of how you deal with **That Anniversary**, you cannot avoid it. Sometimes even the days leading up to **That Anniversary** bring apprehension and uneasiness. That's OK. **That Anniversary** will always come (and go) as will the days before and after, too.

The Compassionate Friends understands that on **That Anniversary**, as when it occurred, your heart is heavy yet empty at the same time. It can be a confusing time. There may be guilt or remorse or simply confusion. But it is up to you to sort it out and move ahead because after **That Anniversary** there will be another and another. Surely your heart may not feel as heavy or as empty as time passes, but **That Anniversary** will always be there. How you face it, how you mark it, how you remember it and how you caress it is the key to moving forward and conditioning yourself for the next time **That Anniversary** occurs.

Michael Tyler
TCF Lighthouse Chapter Lewes, DE

From My Heart . . . To Yours

The newly bereaved parents looked around the group at the meeting and hoped and prayed they wouldn't still be attending TCF meetings 20, 30, and 40 years from now. Well actually, we at TCF hope you will be.

You see, the bereaved parents who answered the call in their hearts to continue to open the door for monthly meetings and to go each and every month with arms open for hugs and tissue

boxes passed around, are the one reason why you had a place to go and pour your hearts out, cry your eyes out, and feel justified in what you were experiencing since your child died.

If it were not for these bereaved parents who buried a child decades ago, there might not be anyone there to sit around and take the time to care about you, to listen with understanding, to offer support, to know what you are going through. It might have been many years ago, but those shoulders were dragging at one time, too.

Forty years ago, burying a child hurt just as much as it does for you today. Twenty years ago, the pain of loss was no different than it is for you today. These parents know. They understand. That's why they are still here. It is not because they can't move on with their own grief. It is because they want to help you move on with yours.

Thank goodness someone in your area listened to the voice in their heart to start a TCF group, to organize meetings, to put out a newsletter, to answer your phone call, to share their own story. Because of that, you feel safe to share your pain. And every time you share your feelings, every time you cry with someone, every time you work through your pain, healing is slowly and silently creeping into your heart.

One day you might feel you don't need to attend any more TCF meetings. We know that time will come. We will be happy for you. But if it should happen that a little voice in your heart continues to whisper . . . "Now it's your turn to help someone else," be sure and listen, because someone else is going to have to take the place of those who have been there for so many years before you arrived.

So, look around at those who have opened the doors for you and helped you. Then listen to your heart . . . always listen to your heart.

Cathy Heider
TCF North Central Iowa Chapter

Thought for the Day

It is not easy returning to the world of normalcy when your world is so upside down. It is not easy to stop being a mother or father to your child that has died. The thought for the day is a word — **patience** — patience with yourself who suddenly and powerlessly has been thrown into this horrid nightmare; patience with your spouse who always seems to be having an up day when you are having a down day; patience with relatives and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt with hollow advice and logical words; and patience with time, for it takes time to adjust, and time can move so slowly. **PATIENCE!**

Rose Moen
TCF Carmel-Indianapolis, IN

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.

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