



The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

January 2023

Chapter Leaders: William and Millie Hunton 504-265-0581 Email address: tcfnola@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE

TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Butterfly Release

Our Annual Butterfly Release Ceremony will be **Saturday, Apr. 22, 2023.**

Greater New Orleans Chapter of the Compassionate Friends conducted its Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting.

Our Greater New Orleans Chapter is very proud that we have participated in the **26th Worldwide Candle Lighting**. Over 100 people joined us at Lafreniere Park to light candles in remembrance for all children who have died too soon. As we lit our **Candles of Love**, we joined with hundreds of thousands of bereaved families who lit candles at 7 PM in every time zone around the world creating a “wave of light” that encircled the earth in memory of all children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters who died **“That their light may always shine.”** Thanks to our chapter members who participated in the setup, readings, and teardown. Members and their families brought picnics and shared in fellowship. The presentation of poems, songs, and our children’s pictures were projected on two large screens. If you have not attended a **TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting**, we hope you’ll consider joining us next year. Next year’s event will be presented at the Lafreniere Park Foundation Center Patio with larger screens and an improved sound system. We’d also like to encourage you to volunteer your time for this special event that can help so much with healing.

See Photos on Page 3

Save the Date!

46TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 7-9, 2023 – DENVER, CO
Compassionate Friends is currently seeking workshop presenters for the 45th TCF National Conference.

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

BIRTHDAY RECOGNITION: Birthdays can be found on “Our Children Remembered” page. We do encourage both you and your family to come when it is your child’s birthday month, to share your child with all of us with photos and memories. You will receive a special birthday gift in memory of your child. Bring that treasured picture of your child that always makes you smile so we may smile with you. Refreshments in honor of your child, grandchild, or sibling are welcomed.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:

January 9, 2023

**Lafreniere Park Foundation
Center Conference Room**

7:00 – 9:00 pm

2nd Monday of every month

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

9 Jan 23	13 Feb 23	13 Mar 23
10 Apr 23	8 May 23	12 Jun 23
10 Jul 23	14 Aug 23	11 Sep 23
9 Oct 23	13 Nov 23	11 Dec 23 ZOOM

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Denise St. Pierre
504-460-2970
denisestp12@gmail.com

NATIONAL OFFICE

The Compassionate Friends
48660 Pontiac Trail # 930808
Wixom, MI 48393

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
www.compassionatefriends.org
877-969-0010

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Butterfly Release

April 2023 – held in the Children’s Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

Memorial Walk and Auction

October 2023 – held in the Children’s Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

WorldWide Candle Lighting

December 10, 2023 – Held in the Foundation Center Patio in Lafreniere Park

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. **You are not alone in your grief.**

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at the Foundation Center Conference Room in Lafreniere Park at 7:00 P.M. We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with us at a meeting.

Grief support after the death of a child

The Compassionate Friends is a national non-profit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Big Thanks to Our Steering Committee

Contact:

Phone: (504) 265-0581
Email: tcfnola@gmail.com
www.tcfneworleans.com
1104 Colony Rd
Metairie, LA 70003

Chapter Leader	William Hunton
Chapter Co-Leader	Millie Hunton
Special Advisor	Denise St. Pierre
Treasurer	Linda Provance
Facilitator	Millie Hunton
Newsletter Editor	William Hunton
Webmaster	William Hunton

Steering Committee: William Hunton, Millie Hunton, Denise St. Pierre, Isabel Miranda-Vigne, Jan Dutilh, Linda Provance, and Dena Peters.

Denise St. Pierre, Regional Coordinator

(504) 460-2970

TCF National (877) 969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

The Meeting Agenda

7:00 p.m. - The meeting will begin with a short introduction followed by lighting of candle and then reading of the Credo. Remembering our children's birthdays of the month. Then followed by smaller groups of sharing.

8:45 p.m. - Meeting will close by recognizing our children's names. Feel free to visit with each other and check out a book from our library.

Newsletter Submissions: TCF Greater New Orleans welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to: **TCF GNO, 1104 Colony Rd., Metairie, LA 70003.** You may also text photos and messages to 504-251-1938. As our chapter is only funded by your donations, we ask for a donation of **\$15** or more for a dedication for our newsletter. This is tax-deductible. We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is listed below. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source. Errors and Omissions: Please notify me if any of your information is incorrect. Thank you!

Newsletter Dedications to be put in our newsletter are due the 20th of each month.

A Newsletter Dedication: is a special page dedicated in memory of your child with a poem or writing that you submit.

A Love Gift: is a short one or two sentence message in your child's memory.



BIRTHDAY CAKE: Our child's birthday is still such an important day to us bereaved parents. In TCF this is where we can celebrate our child's birthday and remember the love we still have for them no matter how long it has been since they died. Our members are welcomed to bring a cake or individual snacks to recognize their child's birthday. Notification is not necessary, but you are welcome to inform me, **William Hunton (504) 265-0581.** Please bring necessary utensils as the facility does not offer any items in this matter.

TCF Greater New Orleans Memorial Candles and 3" Photo Buttons

We are asking for donations of \$20 per candle. Candles will have 3 photos, name, dates, and an LED insert.

We are asking for donations of \$5 for each button or \$12 for three buttons.

Email Your Child's Photo to tcfnola@gmail.com or call William Hunton (504) 265-0581 for info.

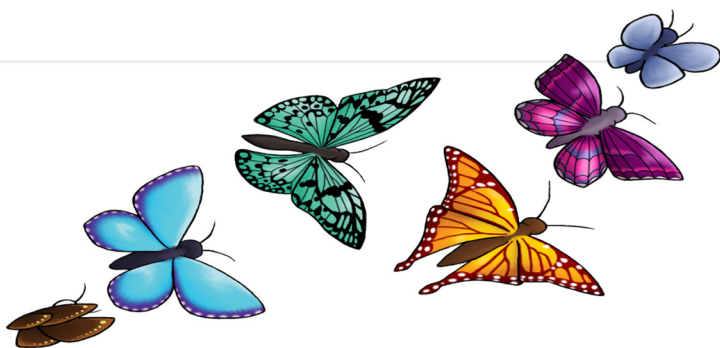
Candles and/or photo buttons will be delivered to the next meeting if info is received 72 hours before meeting.

Please make checks payable to: TCF – GNO, 1104 Colony Road, Metairie, LA 70003.

The TCF-GNO 26th Worldwide Candle Lighting



Thank you to our many Readers !!



Worldwide Candle Lighting.

We have a new Facebook Page. This new page will allow us to post events, activities, and grief related material, which will be beneficial to all of our members. If you have not joined us yet on Facebook, please do. This is a PRIVATE group. Only the members invited and accepted can see this page. Please see the link below to join our page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/246693646774570/?ref=share>

WE JOURNEY TOGETHER

When we grieve a loss, it breaks open our hearts.

And in that vulnerability, it makes us more aware of the brokenness of the hearts around us.

And amazingly, in that very brokenness, we can reach our hand out to other hurting souls. We know we can't fix anything, but we can simply say, "I am here too. I am hurting with you."

Loss awakens the empathy in our hearts as we embark on painful grief journeys. It reminds us that there are other travelers here, and it reminds us that we aren't alone.

While we wish we didn't have to meet this way, there is a comfort found in joining together and walking alongside one another in this space.

So if you're grieving today, may this be a hand reaching out for yours. I see you. I'm so sorry. And I know we have individual grief journeys to take with different processes and paces, but I hope you see that there are others around you too, who will hurt with you and walk with you or sit with you in a moment you desperately need it.

You're not alone here. We journey together.

-Liz Newman

GRIEF HAS TAUGHT ME

Grief has taught me
To honor and acknowledge love
With supreme gratitude and urgency,
Whether that's through new moments
Or long-cherished memories.

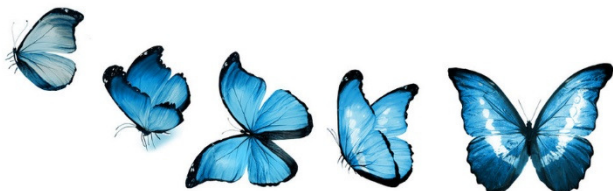
Grief has taught me
That love is our
Most valuable currency
May we invest in our chances
To share it, often and willingly.
Overflow it into the hearts
Of the people we love steadily.

Grief has taught me
That this life is marked
By love, by its ability
To make a home within
Even the most broken
Of hearts as it shines
Into the darkest

Seasons so vividly.
Grief has taught me
that when I'm ready
I have the opportunity
To carry loves and legacies
Within me
To honor the tension
Of love and loss courageously.
A keeper of stories
A guardian of memories,
A witness of
Love persisting, beautifully
And boldly.

-Liz Newman

Liz Newman is a grief poet. Her newest book is: "I Look To The Mourning Sky: A Book of Poems and Writing" Her book is available on Amazon. Our Chapter has purchased a copy, which will be available in our Lending Library. You also can follow her on Facebook.



*Memorial Newsletter Dedication in Memory of
CHESTER "TOOTIE" REEDER, III*

Jan 5, 1984 - May 26, 2009

IN LOVING MEMORY ON YOUR BIRTHDAY



**We're sending doves to Heaven
With parcels on their wings
Be careful how you open them
They're full of lovely things**



**Inside are loads of kisses
Wrapped up in many hugs
To Wish You Happy Birthday
To send you all our love
We hold you close within our hearts
And there you shall remain
To walk with us each and every day
Until we meet again.**

**Missing Our Beloved Tootie
Forever in Our Hearts**

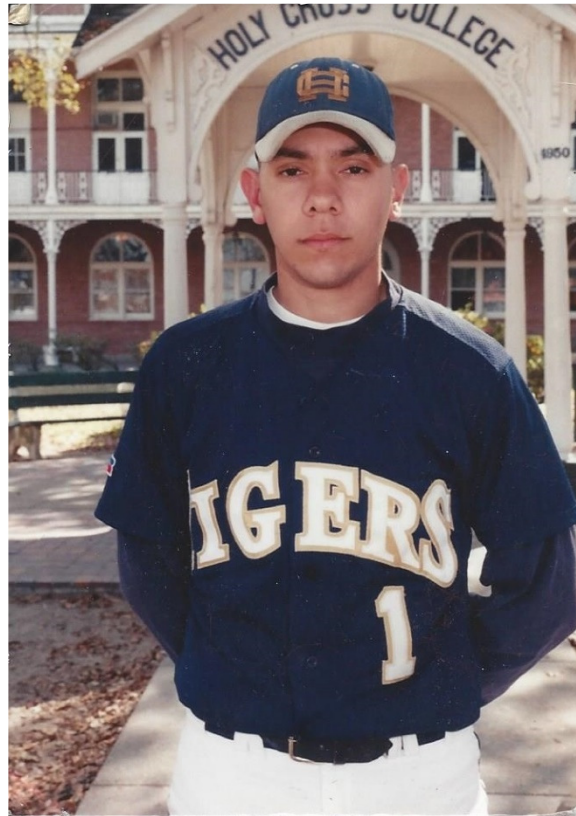
Mom, Drew, & Kayla



Newsletter Dedication In Loving Memory Of My Son

Jonathan Richard Wallace

January 7, 1981 – June 9, 2003



My Dearest Jonathan, Happy 42nd Birthday!

I want to wish you a very happy birthday in Heaven!!

It's been 20 years now since I've last seen you. I miss you so much!! You were 22 years old when you left our family. I often imagine how you would look right now!! Would I recognize you!! I imagine all the wonderful things we would be doing!! I have so many happy thoughts of you, Jonathan. You always brought so much laughter to our lives.

Today I'm wishing you God's best on your birthday and always!! May the laughter that you brought to our lives extend to all who surrounds you!! I thank God for you and the lifetime we shared. Thank you for the memories Jonathan. Thank you for your love.

Until we meet again, I'll keep you forever in my heart...

Wishing You A Happy Heavenly Birthday

love you always...Mom, Dad & Jessica



*Memorial Newsletter Dedication in Memory of
Jennifer Marshall*

January 31, 1985 – November 23, 2018



Happy 38th Birthday Baby Girl!

It's hard to start your birthday without calling you to sing Happy Birthday! I know you looked forward to it as much as I looked forward to doing it. Our celebration of you and your life has changed since you left, but the love is as strong as ever. We think about you and miss you more and more everyday but even more on your birthday.

Love you to the moon and back, to infinity and beyond forever, and more than Cookie Monster!

Mom, & Dad



Dedication sent in by Cindy & Brian Marshall



Summer Days

No one can really give us the comfort we crave that could only be achieved by getting our Chelsea back. There is nothing we want more than to hold Chelsea in our arms: to hug her, to kiss her, and to hear her sweet voice again. However, I found some solace in completing a project she started months before her passing.

On our inner yard fence, she had begun painting flowers on the fence boards adding color and décor to our backyard. Summer soon got hot, and we suggested giving it a break. But before she could resume the project, she had passed. Following the shock and turmoil of this horrible event, I had it in the back of my mind of returning to her project. But the thought of it would break me down in tears. I put it aside, but soon I continued to ponder it.

And finally, I built the courage, the courage to face the challenge of completing Chelsea's project. I gathered paints, brushes, and sketches. I knew what I needed to do, but I knew it needed one thing that was not in the original plans. Besides the floral designs she had painted on the fence, it now called for butterflies! So, I got started. The first attempts were devastating; brush in hand, I would just look at the fence and start crying. So, I would have to pack it up. But I knew I wanted to do this more than anything to honor our Chelsea. I knew we could look at the finished project and reflect that this is what Chelsea would have done had she been here. So, I pushed on continuing the project with tears flowing from my eyes, and salty sweat burning my eyes so severely that I had to continually wipe them.

The heat was intense, the sun was beating on the back of my neck, but I was feeling accomplishment in the project. I couldn't stop. I just couldn't put the brushes down. Days passed, and those days turned to months, as I would add to it day after day. It was growing bigger and bigger, covering the full-back fence and the side fence as well. The butterflies and flowers were blending together in a beautiful orchestration of harmony. I knew this little girl, and I knew how she would draw. Her expressions of art were flowing through me with such vibrance that I could feel her in every stroke. It was indeed a labor of love for the child I loved so much. I know she is looking at that fence. I know she was part of it. I think I have honored her in a way only I could. I love you, Chelsea.

There are many different ways of coping with the loss of a loved one, such as in memorial functions, lighting a candle, reading books, writing letters or journals, or even planting a garden. All of these can be part of the healing process but never of forgetting the love of your deceased child.

By Millie Hunton, Co-Leader, TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter
Chelsea's Mom

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

TRADITIONS: WHAT TO KEEP AND WHAT TO LET GO

Traditions are very important to our families, and we may share large and small ones throughout the year. Some may be in conjunction with significant events like a graduation or a wedding, and others occur annually on birthdays and holidays. Traditions are passed down through generations, creating comforting experiences and memories that provide a sense of belonging. After our child, grandchild, brother, or sister dies, however, what once was comforting can be painful and intolerable.

This holiday time of the year is often particularly hard for managing different needs within our bereaved families. Whether a few months have passed, a few years, or decades, the empty chair that belonged to our child, sibling, or grandchild, requires us to re-evaluate how traditions feel. Trying to keep a tradition that fit our “before” family may not feel the same or good.

It is especially important to recognize the differing needs of siblings and parents when deciding what to keep and what to let go. For a parent, trying to continue a tradition as it was but with one less child can be very heartbreaking. For a bereaved sibling, losing a tradition that they came to depend on can feel like they’re losing even more and have less to count on than ever. When one sibling remains, it can feel overly burdensome to be the sole daughter or son who carries those traditions.

What can we do to manage such deep and personal needs that differ in a family after substantial loss? Here are some steps that can help.

- Sit down together and discuss how everyone is feeling about the upcoming holidays.
- Allow everyone to share how continuing each tradition makes them feel and which may be prohibitively distressing this year.
- Listen compassionately to one another, understanding that needs can vary widely within any loving family unit.
- Work hard to compromise. Try to differentiate what might be difficult for a family member to continue from what would be unbearable.
- Eliminate the ones, for now, that would bring more harm than benefit to any family member.
- Reduce holiday expectations so that each family member has a chance to cherish a tradition that is meaningful and grieve what has been lost.
- Keep traditions that are too upsetting for anyone until another year. Individual and family needs change year to year, and there may be room for those another time.

Having these challenging discussions can be surprisingly valuable as they prompt deeper sharing that can bring us closer. Even long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings can find decision making about what to keep and what to let go of painful at different stages. Allow the flexibility to change when something doesn’t feel right since we may be surprised by painful triggers. As we remain open and flexible through each year that passes, we help our families keep some traditions, modify others, and cherish what remains.

By SHARI O'LOUGHLIN, TCF CEO

Connor’s Mom



Our Children Remembered



Angel Birthdays

Grace Tompkins	Jan 4	Daughter of Amy Tompkins; Brother of Landon; Granddaughter of Gloria St. Pierre
Dustin Houston	Jan 4	Son of Miriam Ruiz
Chester Joseph Reeder, III	Jan 5	Son of Deborah and Chester Reeder
Keith J. Schexnayder, II	Jan 7	Son of Debbie and Keith Schexnayder
Jonathan Richard Wallace	Jan 7	Son of Claranecia and Stanley Wallace; Brother of Jessica
Rene Michael Ford	Jan 8	Grandson of Kelly and Jack Ford
Ronald A. Johnston	Jan 9	Son of LaShanda Johnston
Julie Elizabeth Durr	Jan 10	Daughter of Ginny and Hank Durr
Dustin St. Romain	Jan 13	Son of Dennis and Yvette St. Romain
Randall Miester	Jan 21	Son of Adrienne Miester
Brian Jones	Jan 26	Son of Laura Porter
Joshua P. Keller	Jan 29	Son of Jerry and Dana Keller
Jennifer Marshall	Jan 31	Daughter of Cindy Marshall

Angel Anniversaries

Dennis Duhon	Jan 1	Son of Melva and L.J. Duhon; Brother of Bruce and David
Seth Michael Piazza	Jan 3	Grandson of Mary Ann Piazza; Son of Jonathan Piazza
Nicholas Joseph Giarratano	Jan 7	Son of Debi Giordano; Brother of Jeff
David Joseph Sisolak, Jr.	Jan 7	Son of Janell and David Sisolak, Sr.
Margo Kiefer	Jan 10	Daughter of Linda Kiefer
Jane O'Neal Dixey	Jan 11	Daughter of Rusty Dixey
Jason Lynn	Jan 14	Son of Nalani Lynn
Dustin St. Romain	Jan 17	Son of Dennis and Yvette St. Romain
Jeffery Rodrigue	Jan 18	Son of Cary and Pati Rodrigue; Brother of Cari Serpas
Timothy Moreau	Jan 23	Son of Penny and Mike Moreau
Stephanie Link	Jan 25	Daughter of Kalila Smith
Dionne Marie Louise Estrade	Jan 28	Daughter of June DeJong
Jessica Talley	Jan 31	Daughter of Cindy M. Lacour
Lori Ann Rholdon	Jan 31	Daughter of Linda Clement
Brooke Anne Matlock	Jan 31	Daughter of Teresa Johnson



Phone Friend List

Our listeners are willing to listen, understand, and share.

504-454-3293 – Melva Duhon, son, 41, suicide
 504-456-8248 – Patsy Ashton, son, 24, drug overdose
 504-559-2438 – Jaimie Kimball, sibling, 12, vehicle accident
 504-265-0581 – William and Millie Hunton, daughter, 30,
 accidental overdose