



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

SAVE THE DATE – OCTOBER 14TH Memorial Walk and Auction

To be held in the Children’s Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park – See Page 5
 See attached flyer for full details and Business Donation letter.

DO IT FOR BRIAN

The quality of one’s life is not determined by length but by depth...what that person brought to this world while they were here. I can proudly say that in the 17 years that my son Brian was here on earth that he brought so much to so many.

My story began on August 29, 1997, the day I was blessed with this beautiful brown-haired, blue-eyed baby boy...the happiest day of my life. Fast forward 17 years later to November 7, 2014, the day my son was in an auto accident and did not survive. The day my life, as I knew it, would be changed...forever.

The day started off like any other morning. I woke up, got ready for work, and woke up Brian for school. Brian came downstairs while I was drinking coffee, all wet in his towel, asking me to iron his clothes for school that day. I, as usual, said “okay.” As I was ironing his clothes, I had a package sitting on the kitchen counter that was delivered the prior evening. New black boots. I told Brian, as I was ironing, that he could open the box for me. He opened the box and started laughing and says, “Mom, really...these are ugly.” I came into the kitchen and, my God, they were. We are both laughing and I burst out into song and sang, “These boots are made for walking, and that’s just what they’ll do. One of these days these boots are going to walk all over you,” and as I’m singing I’m poking Brian. We’re laughing.

Continued on Page 3 – See BRIAN

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:

August 14, 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 Jun23
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 22, 2023 – held in the Children’s Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

Memorial Walk and Auction

October 14, 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	Isabel Vigne-Miranda
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 sponsor our cake to recognize their child's birthday. Please notify me if you wish to sponsor our Birthday Cake, **William Hunton (504) 265-0581.**

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.

Cont. from Page 1 – BRIAN

As he is laughing, he hugs me and says, “I love you.” Looking back now at that morning, I cherish that hug, as it was the last time I would ever hug my son. I get in my car, Brian gets in his car, and as I look at him he signs, “I love you” with his hands. I signal back. Little did I know that a few hours later Brian would be gone.

The following weeks and months, I just did not know how I was going to do this; how to live my life without him, as if I even wanted to. Each day was filled with endless crying and the why him and how could this happen to such an amazing young man with his entire life in front of him. He was supposed to be getting ready to graduate high school in June, not be gone! Brian is my world...my life...my purpose. What is life without him?

And then it happened about six months later... the first time I laughed. I paused and thought to myself, how can I be laughing? My son is gone and I'm laughing. I felt guilty. But then I realized my laughing didn't mean I have forgotten he was gone. It didn't make the pain in my heart hurt any less. It didn't make me not miss him any less. What it did mean is that I was still alive and that I could miss him, be heartbroken and in pain, but still experience joy. Brian had a mother who was full of life. Who was ditzy, funny and who didn't take life or herself too seriously. What kind of mother would I be if he was looking down from heaven watching me deteriorate? Brian hated when he saw me upset. I know he would not want me to live the remainder of my life in sorrow, every single day. I had to accept joy and happiness again, just like I had to accept the sadness and pain. I had to accept that while I was sad and crying that at the same time it was okay for me to laugh and enjoy life. Not an easy task to do hand in hand.

It literally is like being on a roller coaster, which is funny because I hate roller coasters. Brian, for years, tried to get me on one, but that's what this journey is like. One minute I can be laughing having a good time, and a couple hours later be on the couch crying because I miss my son so much. It took time to accept and truly understand that for me, in my life now, that sadness and happiness go hand in hand with each other and that's okay. It was okay for me to cry, but it was also okay for me to laugh. I wasn't betraying my son or his memory by still enjoying life. Because of the relationship I have with my son, the opposite would be true. I would be dishonoring him, our relationship, the bond and love we have, if I chose to crawl into a ball, hide in a dark room, and let what is the remainder of my life pass me by.

Our love is too deep for me to allow that to happen. The first day I laughed after Brian's passing was the day I realized there was HOPE.

I have learned so much about myself, about death and about love. Prior to that horrible day, I had thought I knew all I needed to know about life, love, relationships, and heartbreak. I was wrong. The funny thing about death is that it really does not tear two people apart. It never wins.

Here I am, 28 months later, living this life without Brian physically here with me. For 28 months, I have taken deep breaths, holding onto the strength he left behind for me.

When people ask me how have I made it this long, how have I been able to still be moving forward without Brian, my answer is simple.....I don't know. I know that isn't the answer they want to hear, but it is the most honest one.

There are no easy answers after we lose our child. There are no simple directions to follow. You do not go through the “stages of grief” after you lose a child and miraculously wake up after the last one and say, “Hooray, I made it; I am healed.” This will last a lifetime.

What I can tell you is that I have made it 28 months without Brian because I had no other choice. I made a choice to rise. I made a choice to take the tragedy of his death and not have it mean everything. His death shakes me to the core. But his life—his life—brings me so much joy and smiles. Seventeen years of being his mom is the greatest gift I was ever given. The joy he brought to me, the laughs, and the fun memories; the tears, the chats, just everything. There are so many moments that could never be taken away from me; they are what I try to focus on daily.

I have shed tears each day for 28 months. In the midst of my pain, I have learned to laugh again. I have learned to accept joy, in spite of the pain. I am continuously learning how to navigate through this world without my son. I fall...a lot. But I always get back up.

If someone would have told me that I would still be here 28 months later after losing Brian in that car accident I would have told them they were crazy. But I am here. I am living; not just going through the motions each day.

My dad was right, I would find a new purpose. My purpose was Brian when he was alive. My purpose now, funny enough, is still Brian. The greatest lesson that I learned was that I may not be a mom in the typical sense as I was before when Brian was here, but I definitely have not stopped mothering Brian in the spiritual sense. Death could not change that; through me, he lives on...through all that I do for Brian in his name, memory, and honor. This makes me a mom. It makes me Brian's mom.

Because I am Brian's mom I choose to embrace the laughing, the smiles, and the joy.

Today, like every day, I choose to #doitforbrian.

By Lisa Heath

46th TCF National Conference – GNO Chapter Memory Board



Memory Board Photos were Hand Carried during the Walk to Remember.

Millie and I had the honor of attending The Compassionate Friend's 46th Annual Conference representing our Greater New Orleans Chapter. Many of our children were represented and displayed on a beautiful Memory Board at the conference in Denver, Colorado, July 7-9, 2023. On that Sunday morning, the pictures were taken down and were hand carried on the two mile "Walk to Remember" through downtown Denver.

The conference had nearly 900 attendees from all across the United States and from several different countries. The pictures were viewed by many of the attendees passing by the main entrance way into the conference.

Millie and I were very honored to be able to bring our children's photos and to be able to display these beautiful photos for so many to see. We shared the feeling that those beautiful children, grandchildren, and siblings were looking upon us as we shared our memories with bereaved families from so many "Walks of Life."

If you did not send me a photo of your child, grandchild, or sibling for this year's conference memory board, please ensure you do send their photo to me for next year's conference.

The 2024 Conference will be held in New Orleans at the Marriott Hotel on the foot of Canal Street. Photos will be collected in June 2024 via text, email, or hard copy.

*William and Millie Hunton
Parents of Chelsea M. Hunton*



*Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of
Brady Michael Palmer*
August 9, 2003 - May 17, 2021



Empty Places

I drove the old way yesterday.
It'd been a while, you see.
And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait
to summon up the tears,
to say remember yesterday,
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.
These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.



Genesse Gentry, TCF Marin County, CA, In Memory of Lori Gentry

Love you, Mom

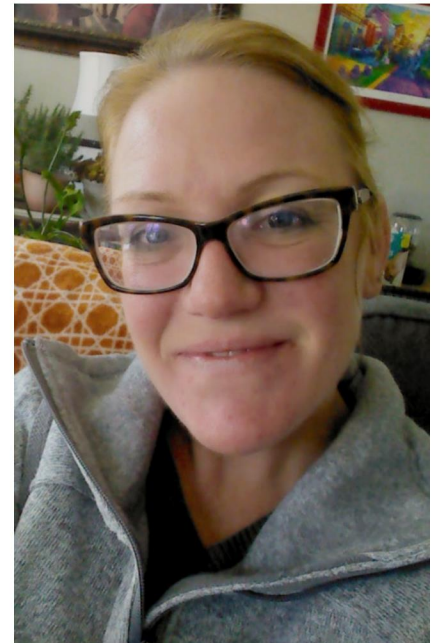
Dedication sent in by Kerri Palmer



*Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of
Ayme Mills Hopkins*
August 30, 1972 - March 23, 2021
My last moment with my daughter.



I was going to be with her that Wednesday because she wanted me to be there with her and the girls, just till Friday after the school bus headed out. I was going to bring a new hula-hoop to play "Hula-Hoop Tag," a game my granddaughter Scarlet (12 at that time) made up. She and her sister Sailor (8 years old then) said you had to get "hooped" to get caught. I was good at being "It." Ayme smiled and looked at me when she asked. As I was headed out from our visit, I remember how she turned and looked to her right to ask me to come back. I will never forget the look of love in her eyes for me when she asked. She had such a sweet smile on her face. Especially, I suddenly recalled how our last hug was the longest we ever had. The feel of love – "daughter to mother to daughter." When she went to let go I was not ready and pulled her in for a few seconds more. Hugging and Loving my Heart. My last moment, my best moment with my beloved, my daughter. Thank you, my Heart. For loving me and giving me so many years of your love.



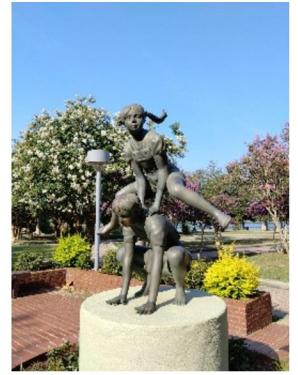
Loving you forever, Momma

Dedication sent in by Susan Monroe

OUR BEAUTIFUL STATUE

I took this photo yesterday and just really looked at it today.
Our gal is looking right straight at us. Encouraging us onward.
She knows who we are. We are the ones who "need not walk alone."
She who stays and plays in perpetual peace. Brother supporting, uniting us.

-by Susan Monroe



TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Memorial Walk & Auction

The Greater New Orleans TCF Chapter is sponsoring a Children's Memorial Walk followed with an Auction on October 14, 2023 at Lafreniere Park in Metairie, LA to raise funds for the operating expenses of our chapter.

We are encouraging you to contact any vendors you may know who will be willing to donate merchandise or gift cards. We will also welcome any items you may wish to donate. This can range from anything old or new. If we are going to have a successful fundraiser this year then we are going to need your help.

This letter is to ask YOU, our MEMBERS, to help us make our Children's Memorial Walk a great success. We are asking for a donation. All donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged. For cash donations please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends GNO. Non-cash items donated will be auctioned off at our auction following the Children's Memorial Walk.

*We greatly appreciate any help you can give us.
Please feel free to contact me to arrange a donation.
William Hunton – 504-251-1938*

Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of Eric Soroe

August 23, 1966 - November 23, 2016

Happy Birthday to my dear Brother in Heaven



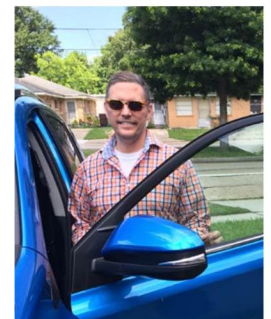
*Thank you for all you did for me,
all the times we spent together bro
And for just being my brother,
Means more than you'll ever know.*

*Today is the day you were born,
I'm sure Heaven is celebrating you
Cause all that makes you so special
is everything you do.*

*Remembering you is so easy.
I do it everyday.
It's just the heartache of losing you
that will never go away.*

Always loving you,

Raree



Dedication sent in by Robin Soroe



*Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of
Selena Smith*



August 8, 1966 - February 11, 2016

My Sister Selena

Growing up, we were raised to be inseparable

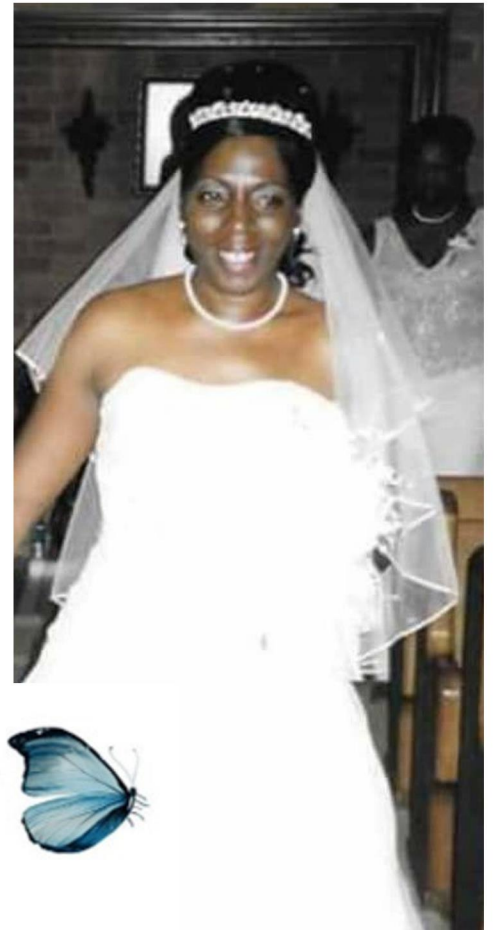
We went everywhere together and always wore the same outfits
We fought, we laughed, we cried, and oh my gosh we fought a lot;
we didn't always show the love, we both had inside.

We shared all of our deep secrets, plans and dreams of the future too.
All of those distant memories we shared, is what now bonds me forever to you.

Although you are gone in body, your spirit still lives on
Because every time I think of you, you are right here in my arms.



*Love Always,
your baby sister,
Dena*



Our Children Remembered



Angel Birthdays

Melissa Rein Banderet	Aug 1	Daughter of Wendy & John Rein
Selena Smith	Aug 8	Sister of Dena Peters
Brady Michael Palmer	Aug 9	Son of Kerri Palmer
Kim Mark Kimble	Aug 10	Son of Nancy Kimble; Brother of Baron
Kerry A. Degeyter	Aug 12	Daughter of Dee Arnold
Joshua Louis Matranga	Aug 14	Son of Jodi Caronna; Brother of Jaclyn and Joseph
Grayson Breaux	Aug 14	Son of Marilyn Breaux
Patrick O'Neil	Aug 15	Son of Kathy O'Neil
Jeffrey Hergert	Aug 17	Son of Donald & Roxanne Hergert
Keith Howard Reppel	Aug 18	Son of Keith Reppel
April Blossum Duran-Wills	Aug 19	Daughter of Mark & Martha Duran; Sister of Autumn Moore; Mother of Gina Wills
Bryan Anthony Eiserloh	Aug 20	Son of June DeJong
Jenna C. Keller	Aug 21	Daughter of Jerry and Dana Keller
Eric Soroe	Aug 23	Brother of Robin Soroe
August Bertoniere, Jr.	Aug 24	Son of Christle & August Bertoniere
Milan Arriola	Aug 27	Daughter of Imani Ruffins
Eric Lanus	Aug 28	Son of Linda Lanus
Terrance J. Mascaro	Aug 28	Brother of Melanie Boudreaux
Ayme Mills Hopkins	Aug 30	Daughter of Susan Monroe
Zayd James	Aug 31	Son of Nyla James; Grandson of Nia Woods

Angel Anniversaries

Denise Olga Gorman	Aug 3	Daughter of Charlene Gorman
Aimee Lauren Wood LaDuke	Aug 4	Daughter of Cheryl Przgocki
Alex Newchurch	Aug 4	Brothter of Julie Henderson
Jonathan Reid Caluda	Aug 5	Son of Faith Caluda Andries
Frankie Matto, III	Aug 9	Son of Beth O'Neal and Frank Matto, Jr.
Joshua William McNulty	Aug 9	Son of Pam McNulty
John Michael Smith	Aug 10	Son of Carole A. Clark
Bobbi Cade Anderson	Aug 10	Daughter of Lynnrose Cade
Jason Butler	Aug 12	Son of Marilyn Strecker
Randall Miester	Aug 20	Son of Adrienne Miester
Jenna C. Keller	Aug 21	Daughter of Jerry and Dana Keller
Kim Mark Kimble	Aug 27	Son of Nancy Kimble; Brother of Baron
Beau Charles Tedesco, MD	Aug 28	Son of Madelyn and Ted Tedesco
Damion NcCall	Aug 28	Son of Shannon McCall
Charles Kirklon III	Aug 29	Son of Ida Warfield
Monroe Aubrey Cassagne	Aug 31	Son of Tammy and Mack Cassagne



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