



The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1

January 2024

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

SAVE THE DATE – July 12 - 14, 2024 47TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

New Orleans Marriott, 555 Canal Street

See Page 9 for Volunteer Information

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 **TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting**. Nearly 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. 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

In The Quiet

And in the quiet, I hear the echo of your absence.
In the stiffness, in the silence, my heart aches with emptiness.
Loss is so loud. Oh, loss is so loud.

By Liz Newman

BIRTHDAY RECOGNITION: Birthdays and Anniversaries 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/Annv 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.

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.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:

January 8, 2024

Lafreniere Park Foundation
Center Conference Room

7:00 – 9:00 pm

2nd Monday of every month

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

8 Jan 24	12 Feb 24	11 Mar 24
8 Apr 24	13 May 24	10 Jun 24
8 Jul 24	12 Aug 24	9 Sep 24
14 Oct 24	11 Nov 24	9 Dec 24 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 27, 2024 – held in the Children’s Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

Memorial Walk and Auction

October 19, 2024 – held in the Children’s Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

WorldWide Candle Lighting

December 8, 2024 – 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	Jason Vicari
Database Management	Jerrie Vicari
Coffee Hostess	Patsy Ashton

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.

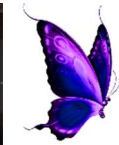
We are asking for donations of \$5 for each button or \$12 for three buttons.

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 7000

The TCF-GNO 26th Worldwide Candle Lighting



Thank you to our many Readers !!

We have our own Facebook Page. This 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>

Also visit us at our Website – www.tcfneworleans.com.

OUR NEXT EVENT IS OUR ANNUAL BUTTERFLY RELEASE
Saturday, April 27 at 10:30 a.m.
SAVE THE DATE!

THE NEW YEAR: A TIME OF HOPE

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories....sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin; In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

*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**

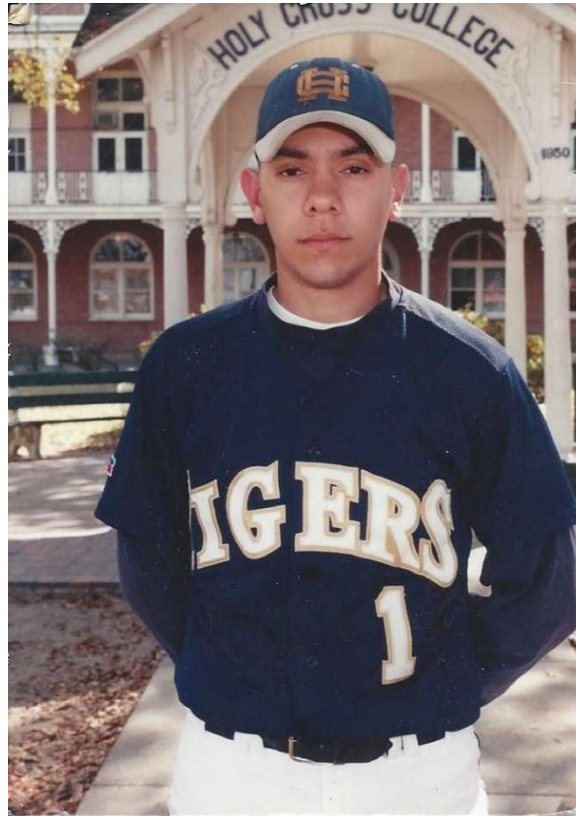
Mom, Drew, & Kayla



Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory Of My Son

Jonathan Richard Wallace

January 7, 1981 – June 9, 2003



My Dearest Jonathan, Happy 43rd Birthday!

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

It's been 21 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 39th Birthday Baby Girl!!!

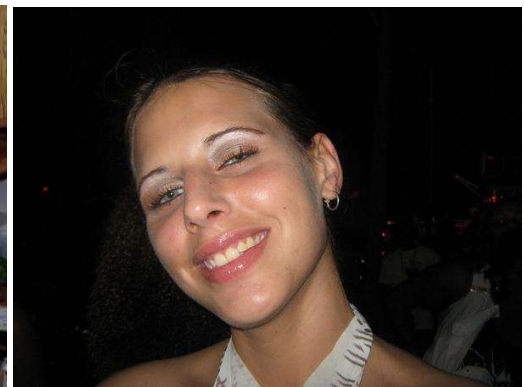


Jennifer,

Although I mourn your loss every single day, I cherish the 33 years we had with you. You brought so much beauty, understanding, kindness, friendship, and love into my life. You still teach me to be a better person just by remembering you, talking things out with you, and remembering the person you were and how you handled things. I will always celebrate the awesome person you were. I miss you with every fiber of my being. I will forever cherish the relationship and friendship we had. Although I never thought I would be walking this journey of grief, I am blessed and forever thankful for the time we had with you.

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

Mom & Dad



Dedication sent in by Cindy and Brian Marshall



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.

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GARDEN BRICKS: The chapter takes orders for engraved brick twice a year, for the Butterfly Release in April and then again for the Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony in December. The next deadline to order bricks will be on **March 1, 2024** for the Butterfly Release to be held on **April 27, 2024**. Brick Forms can be found on our Website www.tcfneworleans.com or request one via email at tcfnola@gmail.com.

THERE WILL BE DAYS

There will be days when your grief is deep and consuming, dark and lonely.

I hope you find refuge in supportive friends, family, and counselors on the days when you most need someone to sit beside you in that darkness.

There will be days when your grief is a bit more subtle and silent, content with buzzing in the background instead of being center stage.

I hope you don't feel guilty for the days when this allows you to feel joy or hope. These days are so deeply important as you move forward at your own pace.

There will be days when your grief turns on a dime, demanding different things from you moment to moment, giving you emotional whiplash as you try and keep up.

I hope you are gentle with yourself on these days. Your heart is looking for ways to process a love that has changed due to loss (a love that is still present, but in a different way). That is a lot of work on a weary soul.

There will be days when your grief softens enough to allow your mind to wander in memories, to rejoice in remembering, to allow the light to trickle in to the most painful spaces.

And on those days, I hope you let the comfort wrap around you like a warm sweater. I hope you let the light in and feel it surrounding you.

Because grief will bring about many different kinds of days.

May we take them one day at a time, one moment at a time, and make room for the tension that it brings. ✨🌹

-Liz Newman

SEEKING LEAD VOLUNTEERS FOR THE 2024 TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2024 TCF National Conference will be right here in New Orleans at the Marriott Hotel at the foot of Canal Street. While many people will be volunteering to work during the event, Local Volunteers will be needed to assist in the Lead Roles of several events. If you would like to volunteer for one of these Lead Role Committees please contact me at your earliest convenience. This is a wonderful opportunity to volunteer for a wonderful cause and to be able to do so in honor of your child, grandchild, or sibling.

Local volunteers needed for the following Committee Lead Roles:

Centerpieces

Centerpiece committee members and volunteers will place centerpieces and cards on tables prior to the Friday lunch or the Saturday dinner.

Comfort Support Committee

The Comfort Support Committee is a group of volunteers who are available during registration and throughout the conference for new attendees, newly bereaved, and anyone who needs extra support during the conference. The Comfort Support Committee is especially important during heavy registration times, including when registration first opens.

Fundraising

Conference co-chairs and committee are an important and integral part of fundraising efforts for the national conference. Conference donations can come from local or national corporations, local businesses, family members, and friends.

Gathering Place

This is a room or area for conference attendees to relax and gather throughout the conference weekend. The Gathering Place typically has soft furniture (couches and chairs), as well as several round tables with chairs. There is typically a long table along one wall for attendees to share chapter newsletters or other items of interest to conference attendees.

Reflection Room

The Reflection Room is a small, cozy room located in a quiet area of the hotel. It is decorated with comfortable furnishings to allow a “quiet zone” for attendees who need a break from the activity of the conference. The reflection room may include Soothing items, Table-top fountain, Soft music, Memory stones

Registration Bags

The Local Committee solicits donations for items to include in the registration bags. A team of volunteers help to fill the bags at the conference.

Silent Auction (Local Lead to work with Silent Auction Chair)

The Silent Auction Lead will work with local volunteers to secure and organize silent auction items. Local volunteers will help the Silent Auction Lead with receiving and organizing silent auction items.

Walk to Remember

The Walk to Remember Lead will work with volunteers to coordinate the Walk to Remember. As a group, they will plan the walk and ensure that there are enough volunteers along the walk route. They will also secure a water sponsor for donated water bottles. Additionally, they will help to organize and hand out Walk Signs that will be carried by walkers.

Feel free to contact William or Millie Hunton at tcfnola@gmail.com or at 504-265-0581.

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
Jackelyn Angilee Campbell	Jan 16	Daughter of Rebecca and Keith Campbell
Randall Miester	Jan 21	Son of Adrienne Miester
Thernell Simon	Jan 22	Son of Dena and Errol Peters
Kevin Lamar Minchew	Jan 22	Son of Joseph and Sharon Meyers
Brian Jones	Jan 26	Son of Laura Porter
Joshua P. Keller	Jan 29	Son of Jerry and Dana Keller
Michael Troy Rognes	Jan 30	Son of Alyson Carriere
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
Jayson Hardesty	Jan 15	Son of Shirley Hardesty
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
Robert Joseph Coates, Jr.	Jan 20	Brother of Stacie Coates
Thomas C. Hand, Jr.	Jan 22	Son of Bev Hand
Timothy Moreau	Jan 23	Son of Penny and Mike Moreau
Susan Lacava	Jan 23	Sister of Debbie Schexnayder
Dionne Marie Louise Estrade	Jan 28	Daughter of June DeJong
Nathaniel Freedman	Jan 28	Son of Robin Freedman
Darlene Theresa Mayeux	Jan 29	Sister of Dana Keller
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 & Millie Hunton, daughter, 30, accidental overdose