



The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 5

May 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 See Page 7 for more Information

A BEREAVED MOTHER IS...

A Bereaved Mother Is someone who stands at a grave wondering how she is going to live the rest of her life without this child.

A Bereaved Mother Is someone who thinks she will spend the rest of her life with this horrendous feeling inside.

A Bereaved Mother Is someone who has to learn how to live all over again.

A Bereaved Mother Is someone who wishes they would take Mother's Day out of the calendar.

A Bereaved Mother Is someone who has to learn to accept the loss of her beloved child and uses what she has learned to help others.

A Bereaved Mother Is someone who can again learn to smile, to look forward to the future and get excited again because her Compassionate Friends were there when she needed them.

Zel Hester TCF Atlanta, GA.

TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Picnic and Butterfly Release

Our 2024 Picnic and Butterfly Release was truly a successful event with great weather for the day and excellent support from our members and community. It was heart-warming to see so many members, friends, and families. Thank you to all the readers and performers who truly put their heart into the event. So many people were taking pictures throughout the event. If you have photos you would like to share please send them to us at tcfnola@gmail.com. We will add them to our website photo section. **See page 4 for photo highlights.**

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 May Birthday Cake will be sponsored by Stacie Coates in honor of her brother Bobby Coates.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:

May 13, 2024

Lafreniere Park Foundation
Center Conference Room

7:00 – 9:00 pm

2nd Monday of every month

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

8 Jan 24	19 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

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.

Our Monthly Meetings

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
Memorial Park Director	Jacques Bitoun

Steering Committee: William Hunton, Millie Hunton, Denise St. Pierre, Isabel Miranda-Vigne, Jan Dutilh, Patsy Ashton, 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 700

MAY: THE UNUSUALLY DIFFICULT MONTH

For the bereaved parent, May is frequently the cruelest month. The month of May offers the rest of the world a promise of another carefree summer, swimming, family vacations, relaxation, reading, cook-outs and picnics, trips to the lake and so much that is inherent in our culture.

Yet May also brings memories of our children. The common denominator for mothers (and fathers) is Mother's Day. This tradition was wonderful when our children were alive; now the direct mail and newspaper advertising, sentimental television spots, in-store promotions, cards and letters and the countdown to the day itself are very cruel reminders of our lost children. Who will remember us on Mother's Day?

This will be my fourth Mother's Day without my son. I miss him terribly all year long, but May and December are the worst months for me. First we have Mother's Day, then my son's birthday and throughout the month I am bombarded with invitations for high school and college graduations.....each one reminding me of what once was.

My son finishing grade school, high school, college, graduate school. Each was accompanied by a ceremony. All the ceremonies rush into my mind as I realize how much of myself is my memories and those memories are very entwined with my son's life. A big part of me died with him that night in December.

Three years ago I was overwhelmed, sobbing, still occasionally in deep shock. My mind was mush, my heart was crushed and I did not have the will to do much more than quietly weep. It was my first Mother's Day without my son, the first birthday that he wasn't here, the first Memorial Day Weekend without him. I was paralyzed. May would never be joyful for me again.

What to do....what to do. I ask myself this question each April as we begin the ramp up to the longest month. This year, I am counting out the last days of April and wondering how I will handle it. I am not worried about it; I am just wondering. I have gotten used to the transformation that has taken place in my mind, heart and soul. I experienced a slow spiritual awakening which accompanied a deep, deep sense of loss over which I have no control. I go with it.

There are questions that we must ask ourselves. The answers are unique to us. Collectively we know this is a month to dread; individually we have our own memories and our own methods of coping. Collectively we lean on each other for hope, comfort and support. Individually, we each walk our own road depending on how many circumstances of life are in our month of May: Mother's Day, Memorial Day, birthdays, death anniversaries, graduations, weddings, baptisms, first communions, confirmations, how we handled the beginning of summer, the end of the school year.....all of these events can bombard us in May.

The memories float into our minds like a mist that thickens into a heavy fog. We are enveloped in our fog of memories; the before death years come to us in a hodgepodge of the happiest times and clash with the reality of now. These are our memories, our children and ultimately our choices. And there seems to be little joy we can take from this month of memories.

Once again, we make the decision. If we are not ready to acknowledge Mother's Day, we shouldn't do it. If we are facing other days in May that will tear at our hearts, we must plan for it. Some of us prefer to be alone and isolated. Others of us prefer to be with friends or family. Some of us go to the cemetery, others go to the park. Some read, watch movies, sit on the deck or simply rest. Others take a weekend trip which puts them into a different state of reality.

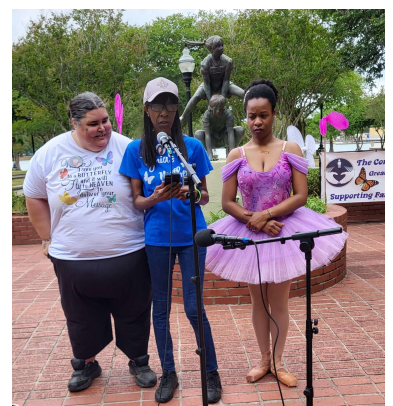
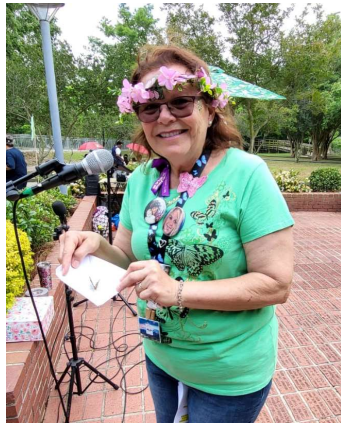
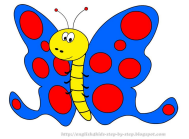
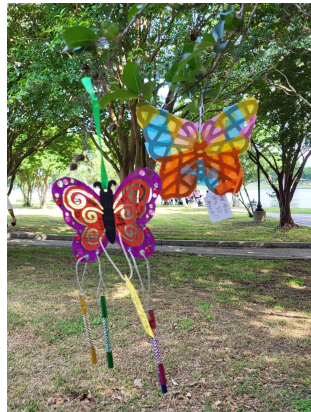
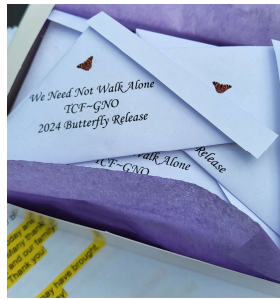
There are as many choices as there are parents who have lost their children. Consider your options. Be honest with yourself. Don't be pushed into anything. Take control. We each move forward toward hope at a different rate and in a different way. This is not about meeting the expectations of others; this is a personal journey toward peace and hope. It is your journey.

I will always miss my son. I will always feel deep sorrow at his uncompleted life. But I know that he would want me to move forward, move back into the sunshine that is life on this earth. I'm working on it. Be patient with me. This is the most difficult road I have ever walked, but I am in motion, moving mostly forward and seeking something akin to peace, hope and tranquility. I will always be a work in progress.

Annette Mennen Baldwin (Deceased)
TCF, Todd's Mom

TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Picnic and Butterfly Release Photos

Our butterfly release on Sunday, April 27th was a beautiful remembrance of our children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters – loved ones gone too soon. Nearly 200 people attended. The Painted Lady butterflies put on a great show – flying up in the air or landing on people’s hair, clothes, arms, hands!! Seeing them reminded us that butterflies are “signs of new life” and “symbols of hope” that our children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom.



NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Lauren Ann Brocato

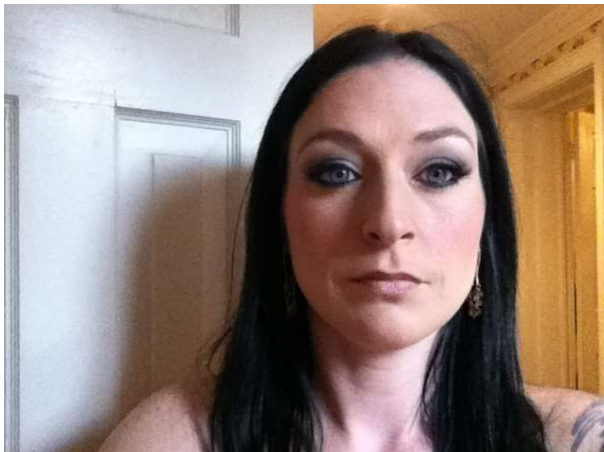
May 30, 1985 – February 27, 2016

Happy Heavenly Birthday Lauren!

Your birthday month is here
It was your favorite time of year
I cannot remember how many times you would say,
“It’s my birthday month, how are we going to celebrate today?”
My heart breaks a little more each year
My memories are still so very clear
Some people only remember the happy times
I remember the good and the challenging times
You had all my love at all of these times
I treasure every moment of your lifetime



Love Mom



Dedication sent in by Eileen Brocato

NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Robert J Coates, Jr.

May 25, 1981 ~ January 20, 2018

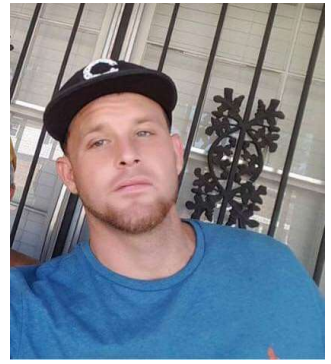
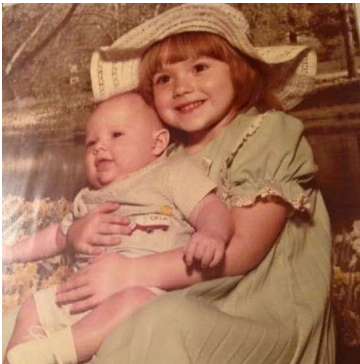
Always in my Heart



Sometimes in life there are losses. Losses that can never really be replaced. Losing you has been the hardest thing I've ever had to live with. I wasn't ready to say goodbye. I wasn't ready to let you let you leave. I would give anything for just one more day, just one more second. But I've learned to trust in unconditional love. Because the one profound thing about death is that love never dies. Some bonds cannot be broken. Because even though you're not physically here, your heart is - it lives on within me. I carry your heart inside mine. I carry it on days when I discover something new. I carried on days when beauty unfolds in the most unexpected places. I carry it on days when I find courage to heal and to grow. I carry it with me – always. Someday we will meet again - and we will no longer be separated by time or space. But until that day, I'll find comfort in knowing you are still with me. Your heart safely tucked inside mine. Some hearts just belong together and nothing will ever change that. I loved you then. I love you now. Always did. Always will. Forever in my mind. Forever in my heart. I will carry you.

Bobby, You will always be a part of everything I do. No passage of time will ever change that. You are loved & missed, beyond measure.

Love, Your Big Sis, Taylor, Chloe & Ryan



Dark & Light

That grief sneaks up on you when you least expect it.
It doesn't care what you're doing or where you are or who you're with.
It surprises you when that darkness seems to be in every corner of your vision.
That darkness knows when you're seeming to have a good day.
It becomes an old friend that you see once in awhile out of the blue.
That darkness we all feel is like a dark passenger just waiting in the shadows for us to slip up.
But we're afraid to completely let it go.
We're afraid because if we do will we lose all those memories?
Grief is just as strong as happiness.
Darkness is just as needed as the light.
Some days we can squint through the brightness and the light.
But the bad days we can barely see a sliver of the light.
Just keep breathing.
We can't let the darkness envelop us.
We won't let the grief swallow us.
Grief is alive but so is LOVE and so are we.
Let's live in the LOVE for them.
You are not alone.

Jerrie Vicari, Mother of Zane Rainier Vicari, TCF-Greater New Orleans Chapter

Compassion
FILLS THE AIR



TCF 47TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024
✿ New Orleans, LA ✿

2024 TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The 2024 TCF National Conference will be right here in New Orleans at the Marriott Hotel. While many people will be volunteering to work during the event, Local Volunteers will be needed to assist our Local Leads. If you would like to volunteer for one of these 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.

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

47th TCF National Conference Silent Auction

TCF National Staff has asked if our chapter would like to donate a basket to this year's Silent Auction/Raffle at the 47th TCF National Conference here in New Orleans for July 12-14, 2024. We are welcomed to come up with your chapter's own original idea of what to put in the basket. My plan is to use a New Orleans Theme with a hand crafted pirogue. Members can volunteer to donate an item such as a souvenir. (Of course, New Orleans souvenirs with a butterfly on it would be ideal.) I hope this will give the opportunity for many of our members to be involved with something for the conference, even if they cannot make the conference.

Once the items are collected then we will place the items in the hand-crafted pirogue for the final presentation. Millie and I will transport the basket to the TCF National Conference and present it from the Greater New Orleans Chapter. Some suggestions for the basket are:

Cafe Du Monde Beignet Mix	Cafe Du Monde Coffee and Chicory
New Orleans Souvenir Coffee Mug	New Orleans Souvenir Coasters
New Orleans Souvenir Fridge Magnets	New Orleans Souvenir Oven Mitt
New Orleans Souvenir Spoon Rest	New Orleans Souvenir Hot Pad
New Orleans Souvenir Glasses	Fleur-de-lis Wine Stoppers
Hurricane Drink Powder Mix	

(Any other creative item, which would match the theme.)

Please feel free to bring items to the meetings. You may also contact me at 504-251-1938 and I will arrange to pick it up from you.

Our Children Remembered



Angel Birthdays

Timothy Moreau	May 3	Son of Penny and Mike Moreau
Damion McCall	May 5	Son of Shannon McCall
Brandon Sensebe	May 6	Daughter of Patricia Sensebe
Rene James Rachel	May 8	Son of Kathy Rachel
Geri Lynn W. Cheatham	May 8	Daughter of Linda Wilson
Chelsi Hampton Gourrier	May 9	Daughter of Audrey Duncan Hampton
John "Buddy" Kemna Jr.	May 9	Brother of Donna Marie Smithey
Jarrold Christopher	May 11	Son of Myra Santos
Beau Charles Tedesco	May 21	Son of Madelyn and Ted Tedesco
D. Conrad Dyer	May 22	Son of Linda Doussan
Richard "Ricky" Smith	May 24	Son of Carole A. Clark
Ronald J. Wroten	May 25	Brother of Melanie and Jim Boudreaux
Robert J. Coates, Jr.	May 25	Brother of Stacie Coates
Gabriela "Gabby" Hebert	May 28	Daughter of Rachel and Todd Hebert
Mario Anderson	May 29	Son of Trinetta and Herbert Anderson
Blake Bassil	May 30	Son of Debbie Bassil
Lauren Ann Brocato	May 30	Daughter of Eileen Brocato
Dennis George Wedge	May 30	Son of Lori Wedge; Grandson of Jeri McMullen; Nephew of Patti Goens; Cousin of Jennifer and Stefany Goens

Angel Anniversaries

Mary Lee Bonura	May 1	Daughter of Judy and Dominick Bonura
Ty'shaunda Riles	May 6	Daughter of Hishaunda Riles
Gertie Marie Beauford	May 8	Sister of Kathy Beauford
Niva Rosa Murillo	May 10	Sister of Millie Hunton
David Allen Ashton, Jr.	May 10	Son of Patsy and David Allen Ashton, Sr.; Sister of Julie
Ana Maria	May 11	Daughter of Carmen Sanchez
Jarrold Christopher	May 12	Son of Myra Santos
Tynia C. Alexander	May 14	Daughter of Charlene Alexander; Sister of Rickie, Jr. and Tiphane Alexander
Kerry Arnold Degeyter	May 17	Daughter of Dee Arnold
Luke Joseph Orgeron	May 17	Son of James Orgeron, Jr.
Brady Michael Palmer	May 17	Son of Kerri Palmer
Rachel Marie Scillitani	May 19	Daughter of Samuel Scillitani
Connor Nicholas McKeithen	May 24	Son of Chris McKeithen; Grandson of Barbara & Terry McKeithen
Blake Bassil	May 25	Son of Debbie Bassil
Dennis George Wedge	May 25	Son of Lori Wedge; Grandson of Jeri McMullen; Nephew of Patti Goens
Chester Joseph Reeder, III	May 26	Son of Deborah and Chester Reeder
Ray Keith Constantine, Jr.	May 29	Son of JoAnn Giovingo
Kevin Michael Flock	May 31	Son of Janice and Jim Flock



**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