



The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 8

August 2024

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

SAVE THE DATE – OCTOBER 19TH

Memorial Walk and Picnic

To be held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park
See Page 7 for more details.

AUTUMN MEMORIES

My son and I always enjoyed the autumn season. Yes, when we lived in the cold zone, we knew that winter's winds and snows were on the way. But, yet, we took time to enjoy the beautiful array of colors that nature gave us as a final salute to the growing season.

Todd and I raked leaves in the autumn. I had purchased a home in a town on the Mississippi River bluffs; the home had been built in the 1860s and I am sure some of the trees were well over 50 years old. The leaves would fall and we would rake. We made a game of it. Sometimes his best friend, Allen, would come over and help. The boys would jump into the piles and laugh with delight. We'd create a big pile and rake it to the concrete so that it could be burned. I can still see Todd laughing and dancing around that fire. His pure childhood joy was contagious.

Continued on Page 3 – See AUTUMN

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. The July Birthday Cake was sponsored by Rosan Springman in memory of her grandson Kendall Oliver Springman. The August Birthday Cake will be sponsored by Kerri Palmer in memory of her son Brady Palmer.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:

August 12, 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
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Wixom, MI 48393

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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.

"What we once enjoyed and deeply loved, we can never lose. For all that we love deeply becomes a part of us." - *Helen Keller*

There is no time limit on grief. Grief is the price we pay for love. - *Unknown author*

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
Treasurer	Isabel Vigne-Miranda
Facilitator	Millie Hunton
Newsletter Editor	William Hunton
Webmaster	Jason Vicari
Database Management	Jerrie Vicari
Outreach Committee	Denise St. Pierre Dena Peters
Hospitality	Jan Dutilh
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

Autumn (cont. from Page 1)

Todd and I loved to look at the changing leaves along the bluffs of the river. We would drive on weekends and find the best view. Then we'd park and marvel at nature's wonder. The big bluffs, the turning leaves, the eagles soaring above us. Ducks flying south....even the occasional group of geese overhead...honking, honking as they journeyed to a warmer climate.

The light is different in the autumn...it's diffused somehow. It's different than the light in any other season. Autumn sun was our favorite light. It seemed less harsh, more forgiving, gentler in a strange sort of way. That was another time and another place.

Now in the autumn I remember all the special times I shared with my child. Looking at leaves, collecting leaves, raking leaves.....we did this together, just the two of us. "Mom, when are we going to go look at leaves?" Todd would ask. That was my cue to load up some soft drinks and sandwiches and head out on the first sunny Saturday. We'd repeat this ritual until the leaves had all fallen and it was time to rake.

When we moved to the Houston area, Todd was 12, and we talked about the seasons. He told me about his great memories of leaves and drives and time together. He said he would miss autumn with me. That made me feel good. These were memories that we shared, of a time when it was just Todd and me for those special moments. Looking back, I am so glad that I spent the time to make memories. I thought I was making memories for my child, but in fact, I was making memories for us both. And now those memories are my memories.....good memories....memories that I will cherish always.

Here it is autumn again. Soon Todd will be gone five years. The memories are flooding back: the first day of each school each year, the changes as he grew to become a man. High school, college, graduate school....all began in the autumn. Autumn marks the beginning of many good memories for me. I listen as the school bus stops in front of our house to pick up today's children. Once in a while I go to the door and watch them load up, chatting with each other as they take their seats. I think of my 12-year-old son, getting on that bus in front of our home for the first time: the first day of school in Houston. And for a moment, just a fleeting moment, I think I can see him sitting at a window seat, waving at me. Waving goodbye.

Annette Mennen Baldwin is a long-time business owner and active volunteer within her community in Houston, TX. Her only child, Todd Mennon, died in 2002. She has been a member of The Compassionate Friends and served in various roles, one as Regional Coordinator for the Southern Texas chapters.

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sound familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouches" can compare with the hurt we now feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet, most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have. So...we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few commonly recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guide-lines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable... some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don't have that measure anymore. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, and to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember.

Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and their moments... but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable.

Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost – try thinking the good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE/SHE DIED. We didn't lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very, very glad I loved.

Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

- Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS

A BIG THANKS TO OUR 2024 TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEADS

The 2024 TCF National Conference was a HUGE success. So many people came together and volunteered to help in so many aspects. Thank you to all of our volunteers and Committee Leads who made this conference truly unforgettable.

Local Committee Leads:

Conference Co-Chairs: William & Millie Hunton

Centerpieces: Peggy & Roger Boardman

Reflection Room: Eileen Brocato

Silent Auction: Patsy Ashton

Comfort Support Committee: Deborah Reeder

Gathering Place: Christi Vercher

Registration Bags: Jan Dutilh

Walk to Remember: David Ashton

47th TCF National Conference – GNO Chapter Memory Banner



Over thirty of our members had the honor of attending The Compassionate Friend's 47th Annual Conference representing our Greater New Orleans Chapter. Many of our children were displayed on a beautiful Memory Board. Photos were printed and assembled by Millie and William Hunton on a banner. On that Sunday morning, the picture banner was taken down and was hand carried by Carmen Snow and Susan Monroe on the two mile "Walk to Remember" along the New Orleans Riverwalk.

The conference had over 1000 attendees from all across the United States and from several different countries. The pictures were viewed by many of the attendees at the conference.

Millie and I were 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 2025 TCF National Conference will be held in Bellevue, Washington. Photos will be collected in June 2025 via text, email, or hard copy.

2024 TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE PHOTOS

Compassion
FILLS THE AIR



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



Additional photos can be found on our chapter website, tcfneworleans.com.

If you have photos you would like to include on our website please email them to tcfnola@gmail.com.



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



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

Memorial Walk and Picnic

The Greater New Orleans TCF Chapter is sponsoring a Children's Memorial Walk followed with a Picnic on October 19, 2023 at Lafreniere Park in Metairie, Louisiana. We have decided not to do an auction this year. We would like to take this opportunity to have our Children's Memorial Walk followed by a Chapter Picnic to spend time together in friendship and fun.

The event will be a fundraiser as usual. We encourage members, family, and friends to register for the "Walk to Remember." We encourage members to solicit sponsorship from families and businesses. We are encouraging you to contact any vendors you may know who will be willing to donate merchandise or gift cards.

Any merchandise or gift cards collected will be used as door prizes. 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 used as door prizes 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*

This is my wish for you:

Comfort on difficult days, smiles when sadness intrudes, rainbow to follow the clouds, laughter to kiss your lips, sunsets to warm your heart, hugs when spirits sag, beauty for your eyes to see, friendships to brighten your being, faith so that you can believe, confidence for when you doubt, courage to know yourself, patience to accept the truth, love to complete your life.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our Children Remembered



Angel Birthdays

Melissa Rein Banderet	Aug 1	Daughter of Wendy & John Rein
Selena Smith	Aug 8	Sister of Dena Peters
Josephine Benz	Aug 8	Sister of Susan Viener
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
Jenna C. Keller	Aug 21	Daughter of Jerry and Dana Keller
Brady Caillouet	Aug 23	Son of Brad & Sammi Caillouet
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
Reinaldo Armas	Aug 10	Son of Yolanda Lundsgaard
Jason Butler	Aug 12	Son of Marilyn Strecker
Eileen Lacrouts	Aug 13	Daughter of Michael and Kelly Lacrouts
Josephine Benz	Aug 18	Sister of Susan Viener
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 McCall	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.

504-456-8248 – 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