**VOLUME 6, ISSUE 9** 

September 2024

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

# SAVE THE DATE – OCTOBER 19<sup>TH</sup> Memorial Walk and Picnic

To be held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park See Page 4 for more details.

#### **New TCF-GNO Chapter Sibling Entity**

For more information on our new Sibling Entity please see Page 4.

# **Lessons on Living with Grief**

Here's the thing about grief. You can't really know it completely until you experience it firsthand. It's like visiting the Grand Canyon for the first time. Before I ever visited it I imagined what it would be like from pictures I'd seen and what I'd been told. Ultimately, when I got to the rim of the canyon that first time and began hiking down one of its trails, it was nothing like what I had imagined. Grief is like that, too.

My husband and I lost our 28-year old son Andrew in 2018 to a rare and aggressive kind of cancer. While I have lost aging parents, the kind of grief experienced after losing our son took me to an entirely different place altogether. I've found that even though it's only been three years since our son died, time has helped soften the edges of my sorrow and allowed me to look back at some of the preconceived ideas I had about losing a child and about grief in general.

Continued on Page 3 – See LESSONS

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 August Birthday Cake was sponsored by Kerri Palmer in memory of her son Brady Palmer. The September Birthday Cake will be sponsored by JoAnn Giovingo in memory of her son Ray Constantine, Jr.

**NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:** 

September 9, 2024

<u>Lafreniere Park Foundation</u> Center Conference Room

7:00 – 9:00 pm

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

8 Jan 24	19 Feb 24	11 Mar 24
8 Apr 24	13 May 24	10 Jun24
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

national office@compassionate friends.org www.compassionate friends.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.

There's this place in me where your fingerprint rests, your voice still lingers, and your laughter softly echoes. It's a place where a part of you will forever be, a part of me. – *Author unknown* 

Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. - 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 be eaved 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, Jan Dutilh, Dena Peters, Isabel Miranda-Vigne, Patshy Ashton, and Christi Vercher.

> 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.

<u>8:45 p.m.</u> - 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.

<u>A Newsletter Dedication:</u> 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**.

TOP C A N OL M CLC II LANDIA DA

#### TCF Greater New Orleans Memorial Candles and 3" Photo Buttons

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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 tefnola@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

#### **Lessons (cont. from Page 1)**

I know a number of parents who have lost children. Before Andrew died, I had always thought of these parents as being forever sad and unable to enjoy life ever again. I couldn't imagine how they could get up in the morning and complete their day, being so injured by the loss of their child—how could they possibly go on?

Through no choice of my own, I've learned how they go on. Like the Grand Canyon, I've gone to a place that I could never know without visiting it firsthand. And in going there, deep into a canyon of sorrow, I've learned not only what it's like to lose someone who is so dear to me, but I've discovered so much more.

Having traveled to the depths of mourning has given me a different understanding of life. I'm able to connect with others who have experienced this kind of grief. We recognize each other, speak the same language and exist in a vaguely different reality. Having faced a place of profound sadness has enabled me to experience life more fully. It's like when you travel deep enough into the canyon, you find the river. The Dalai Lama says that without experiencing great grief, you can't know great happiness, and I've found that to be true. While I will always grieve the loss of my son, I can also find incredible happiness when I hear the peepers first thing in the spring, when I visit a beautiful garden or when I hear from a close friend from far away.

In the past, I have tiptoed around parents who have lost a child. I was afraid that I'd say the wrong thing. Or worse, I'd remind them of their loss and ruin their day. As if! Trust me when I say that there's nothing you can say that will remind me that Andrew is no longer alive—that knowledge is always there. Even when it's not at the front of my mind, the loss of my son isn't something I will ever forget. I've also hesitated to talk to other people about their loss because I've assumed that they just don't want to discuss it. However, most of the time it helps me to share memories of my son, and I've discovered that other parents welcome talking about their lost love one, too.

The Grand Canyon, like grief, is made up of many different pathways. Some trails stay close to the rim and others crisscross deep into the inner gorge. Each visitor to this place has a different experience, which is also true of grief. There is no right or wrong way to process a devastating loss. After Andrew passed, my husband buried himself in his work while I wanted to go deep and rehash everything that happened. Both ways of coping got us through.

The Canyon is also made up of many geological layers, from the white Kaibab Limestone at the rim to the deep purple Vishnu Schist deep in the inner gorge. These varied layers are thick in some places, thin in others and non-existent in many stretches. In a perfect world, these bands of rock would stack up evenly, one on top of the other, but they don't. When it comes to the phases of processing, grief is like that too. Researchers have identified stages, such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, that grieving people experience. However, one stage may last a long time, another briefly, and others may not happen at all. These stages may also come and go out of order, can repeat and are often nuanced. Again, every person grieves differently.

I was surprised to find that grief does some really weird stuff to your body and your brain. I know that because in the months after we lost Andrew I had tons of migraines, smell hallucinations and disabling vertigo. I was so achy that I thought I had developed fibromyalgia—until I came across a grief website that told me flat out that it was grief, not fibro. And my brain! In the first few weeks after Andrew died, I was numb. It was amazing that I could function as well as I did at the time, but was later told by a grief counselor that your brain only gives you as much shock as you can handle. As the weeks went on, more grief got though, and I couldn't think straight. There were moments driving when I had absolutely no clue where I was. I was forgetful and couldn't concentrate. The counselor said, "Be careful out there, this is your brain on grief." And so it was.

In experiencing Andrew's passing I learned that grief is universal, and the death of my son doesn't diminish anyone else's loss. More than a couple of times I've had interactions with people who hesitated to talk about losing a parent or a beloved pet fearing that their loss might sound insignificant compared to the passing of my child. Grief isn't a contest. Just because my loss was devastating, it doesn't make your bereavement any less painful, and I'm capable of acknowledging your grief. I n fact, I'm more capable now than I ever was.

We're all meant to visit the deep canyon that is grief. Loss is a part of life, and we're meant to experience loss in order to learn and grow. But it's painful. Traveling deep into that canyon can feel endless and scary, but just when you feel like you can't go any deeper, you come across a tiny creek of clear water passing through a grove of willows.

by Lynn Jaffee \*\*\*\*\*

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

#### **Growing a Butterfly Garden**

In the middle of the Covid crisis, we had a beautiful thing happen to us. The family of a three-year-old named Molly presented us with a tray of plants. Molly was a student in Millie's PK2 class and loved butterflies. And shortly after that other dear friends of ours, Paul and Karla, also gave us a tray of plants. All these plants were given to us for one purpose. They were given to us to build a beautiful Butterfly Garden. How kind was that? So, Millie and I prepared containers and arranged them to allow easy relocation. Once finished I was asked, "So, what is the importance of the butterfly?" I explained how their metamorphous enables them to carry messages to our children. Many members of The Compassionate Friends embrace the butterfly as a symbol--a sign of hope to them that their children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom - a comforting thought to many. Beginning a butterfly garden can be as simple as choosing flowering plants that will invite adult butterflies to your garden to feed. But if you want to create a butterfly garden that will act as a sanctuary, attracting a wide variety of butterflies while also providing a place where butterflies can grow and multiply, you will first need some simple planning. By considering which plants to grow and evaluating your garden site, you can plant a butterfly garden that will help with the creation of more butterflies. Once you have combined careful plant selection with the details of site selection, you will have created a butterfly garden that is a microhabitat providing a unique location where a wide variety of butterflies can live and grow.

By William Hunton, Chapter Leader, TCF Greater New Orleans, Father to Chelsea

## **Steering Committee Member Change**

After several years of assisting the TCF-GNO Chapter Steering Committee, Denise St. Pierre has decided to step down so she can focus on family time. Thank you Denise for all you did for this chapter in honor of your son Nicholas. Denise played a vital role in steering this Chapter through its daily operations and long term planning. Christi Vercher was offered the vacant position and she has accepted. Thank you Christi for coming on board in honor of your son Jay Lawson.

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#### TCF-GNO Children's Memorial Garden Brick Orders

Our next Dealine for Brick Orders will be November 1<sup>st</sup>. Brick order forms are available on our Chapter Website, <a href="www.tcfneworleans.com">www.tcfneworleans.com</a>. You may also request a copy via email to William or Millie Hunton at <a href="tcfnola@gmail.com">tcfnola@gmail.com</a> or by calling 504-265-0581. Peggy Boardman will be managing the Brick Orders for the TCF-GNO Chapter. If you have any questions regarding brick orders please contact Peggy Boardman at <a href="pabnurse@cox.net">pabnurse@cox.net</a> or call 504-487-1386.

### **TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Memorial Walk & Picnic**

The Greater New Orleans TCF Chapter is sponsoring a Children's Memorial Walk followed with a Picnic on October 19, 2024 at Lafreniere Park in Metairie, LA. We are taking this opportunity to raise funds for our chapter through our Memorial Walk and by our Corporate Sponsorship Program. Due to all the hard work during our recently National Conference, we have decided NOT have an Auction this year. Instead, we plan to have a relaxing "Family" style picnic with door prizes.

We encourage everyone to register for our Memorial Walk and then enjoy some fellowship time with our TCF family. Bring you picnic items. Tea and lemonade will be available. Everyone will get a free ticket for door prizes. So come out and enjoy yourself and you may certainly go home with a prize

Memorial Walk Registration Form can be found on Page 7.

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## **New Sibling Entity**

Jaimie Kimball has taken on the task of gathering our Siblings for information and meetings. She is working with the National Sibling Staff to coordinate Zoom meetings. Our next GNO Siblings Zoom Meeting will be held 9/19/24, 7:00pm - 8:30 Click <a href="https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4763266796?pwd=2DLsESGSudSNzyGK18zITDRFwnkVE7.1&omn=79175929177">https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4763266796?pwd=2DLsESGSudSNzyGK18zITDRFwnkVE7.1&omn=79175929177</a> to start or join a scheduled Zoom meeting. Meeting ID # 4763266796; Passcode: K2EntH

For more information please contact Jaimie Kimball at <a href="mailto:jkimball88@hotmail.com">jkimball88@hotmail.com</a> or call (504) 559-2438.

# Memorial Newsletter Dedication in Memory of Cody Martín

February 27, 1989 ~ September 22, 2006



I tried to hide my tears
when I say your name.
But the pain in my heart
is still the same.
Although I smile and seem carefree,
There's so many that miss you....
Just like me.

Love, Mom, Dad, Katie, & Meaux

**Dedication sent in by Betty Boudreaux** 



Memorial Newsletter Dedication
Pearson Sung Pratt
September 14, 2000 - July 9, 2019

Happy Heavenly "24th" Birthday, Pearson!

I don't know what grief
will look like tomorrow.
But I'll face it.
I'll feel it.
As your memory
washes over me.
One day at a time.
One wave at a time.
For such a love,
Grief is the price of admission.
The cost of the human condition.
So, I'll pay it over and over again
Until I see you again.
The love was worth it.
-Liz Newman



Love you forever, Andrew, Kelly, & Abigail... and all who walked across his kind path.

Dedication sent in by Andrew and Kelly Pratt

# Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of Carídad Rea

September 4, 1971 - June 23, 2016



Although I'm sad without you And wish that you were here, Within my heart your lovely smile Still shines bright and clear. I treasure all those memories Of growing up with you, The secrets we would always share The childish things we'd do. And as the years passed quickly by We grew closer still, I miss you, Dearest Sister, And you know I always will.



# Your loving sister, Isabel

**Dedication sent in by Isabel Miranda-Vigne** 

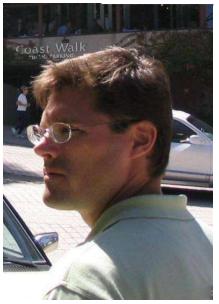


Memorial Newsletter Dedication Kevin Flock September 15, 1973 - May 31, 2009



My only regret is that if I had known that the last time I saw you, would be the last time I saw you, I would have hugged you a little tighter, told you I loved you a little louder, and stayed by your side a little longer. My mind knows that you are gone, but my heart will never accept it. I miss you so much.





Love always and forever, Mom, Dad, Denise, Harrison, Jordan, & Reesi

**Dedication sent in by Janice Flock** 

# Memorial Newsletter Dedication Ray Keith Constantine, Jr. September 28, 1978 ~ May 29, 2021



With all my heart
With every inch of my soul
With every breath I take
I promise to love you forever.



Always Missed, Always Loved
Love Mom & Stepdad

Dedication sent in by Mom, JoAnn Giovingo

# REGISTRATION – TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Walk to Remember SATURDAY, October 19, 2024

Registration begins at 8:30 AM Walk starts at 10:00 AM in the Children's Memorial Garden at Lafreniere Park Our chapter is NOT offering T-Shirts this year. We will have Walk style Bibs to write child's name that you are remembering.

All monies raised go to fund TCF chapter expenses

Make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends GNO. Mail to: 1104 Colony Road, Metairie, LA 70003

Name:		
Address:		
City, State, Zip:	_Phone No	

# REGISTRATION IS <u>\$15</u> BEFORE OCTOBER 1<sup>st</sup>, AFTER OCTOBER 1<sup>st</sup> THE DAY OF THE WALK REGISTRATION IS \$20

LIABILITY WAIVER MUST BE SIGNED BEFORE MAILING: Please copy and complete this section for each person walking.

In consideration of being accepted as a participant in the TCF Inc., Walk to Remember, I hereby affirm, acknowledge and agree to the following: 1. That I assume all responsibility for any and all damages to, or theft of, my personal property or any bodily injury (including death) that I may occur to me, and further, I assume responsibility for property damage and bodily injury (including death) that I may cause to others, in each case arising or resulting from, incidental to, or as a consequence of, my participation in the TCF Inc., Walk to Remember; 2. That I, for myself, my heirs, my executors and administrators, release and hold harmless from and waive all claims, damages, and rights of action, present or future, whether the same be known or unknown, anticipated or unanticipated, foreseen or unforeseen, arising or resulting from, incident to or as a consequence of, my participation in the TCF Inc., Walk to Remember, which I may now or hereafter have against The Compassionate Friends, Inc., any business or companies along the route and any and all sponsors and volunteers for said event, and the respective directors, employees and agents of all of the foregoing; 3. That I grant the permission for use of my name and/or picture in any broadcast, photograph, video, or other account of The Compassionate Friends, Inc., Walk to Remember; and 4. That I am aware of the physical demands and hazards of participating in a two mile walking event such as The Compassionate Friends, Inc., Walk to Remember.

Signature: (Parent or Guardian if under 18	)	_Date: _	
	Children 12 and under are free!		

# Our Children Remembered



# **Angel Birthdays**

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f Cari Serpas

#### **Angel Anniversaries**

Aliger Alliliversaries		
Ashley Code	Sep 1	Daughter of Cassi Code
Gerry Provance	Sep 3	Son of Gerry and Linda Provance; Brother of Deena
Clay Hubble	Sep 3	Brother of Shannon Andrews
Terrance Peter Anderson	Sep 6	Son of Beulah S. Anderson
<b>Charlette Marie Simmons</b>	Sep 7	Daughter of Betty LeBlanc; Niece of Cheryl Jones
Brady Caillouet	Sep 7	Son of Brad and Sammi Caillouet
Barry James Boudreaux	Sep 7	Son of Melanie Boudreaux
Aaron Stephen Lopp	Sep 7	Son of Sonya Batten
Cameron Calamari	Sep 11	Son of Angie and Kevin Calamari; Brother of Megan Flettrich
Laura Whittaker	Sep 11	Daughter of Karen Whittaker
Adam L. Perret	Sep 11	Son of Kenneth M Perret
Bessma Hendawi	Sep 13	Daughter of Diane Hendawi
Gilgamesh "Gil" Homan	Sep 17	Son of Dr. Michael Homan
William John Smeltz	Sep 18	Son of Janice and Victor Smeltz; Brother of Nicholas
August Bertoniere, Jr.	Sep 19	Son of Christle & August Bertoniere
Hudson Williams	Sep 19	Son of Willis Williams
Cody Patrick Martin	Sep 22	Son of Jill & Rob; Brthr of Kaitlyn; Grandson of Betty & Charles Boudreaux
Hughy Davis	Sep 23	Son of Beanie Davis
Matthew Boudreaux	Sep 23	Son of Julie and Ronnie Hemenway
Zayd H. James	Sep 23	Son of Nyla James; Grandson of Nia Woods
Joseph P. Traina	Sep 24	Son of Cynthia Blache; Brother of Nicole Traina
Dominic Avella	Sep 24	Son of Maria Nicholson and Francisco Avella
Alina Ezzo	Sep 24	Granddaughter of Sahar Chifici
Jeremiah Palmisano	Sep 25	Brother of Amanda Palmisano
Adam Paul Orgeron	Sep 26	Son of James D. Orgeron
Gabriela "Gabby" Hebert	Sep 26	Daughter of Rachel and Todd Hebert
Jonathan Miller	Sep 28	Son of Darwin and Dawn Miller



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