

Huntsville Area Chapter – Update

Time – Last Year, This Year

Herb

Co-Leader

Time! I've always preferred country music but when my son Ben died one of the first songs I could listen and relate to was written and performed by rock singer and bereaved mother, Cindy Bullens. The title is, *As Long as You Love*, but the lyrics grabbed my attention from the start, "Time has a different meaning now...Forever seems like yesterday...."

Time! Another year has gone by and it does seem like forever since we've seen our child's smile; it does seem like yesterday.

Time! Last year, our first year, TCF Huntsville met 9 times. From flyers to newsletters to web sites to balloon launches, we worked hard and tried different ways and tools to help our bereaved community. We concluded a great year, joining HOPE of Hospice, with a moving candle light ceremony in memory of our children. I hope that our efforts helped in some small way to reflect the philosophy that "We need not walk alone".

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Personal Contacts

We have all experienced the pain of losing a child. We understand and would like to hear from you. If you can't reach a particular person, please call another and make contact.

We Need Not Walk Alone

Illness..... Sharon & Jerry
(256) 882-0642
illness@tcfhuntsville.org

Accident Pam
(256) 534-1873
accident@tcfhuntsville.org

Substance Abuse..... Jane & Herb
(256) 883-0997
substance_abuse@tcfhuntsville.org

Suicide Ray
(256) 650-0381
suicide@tcfhuntsville.org

Website..... <http://www.tcfhuntsville.org>
Email tcf@tcfhuntsville.org

Additional Area Resources:

Hospice HOPE Huntsville
(256) 650-1212

TCF National Office
(877) 969-0010



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Time! Another year has started too. What am I going to do this year? Are there any changes I want to make? What's in store for the rest of this year? We know that the normal world is getting ready for the usual tax season, another round of holidays, summer vacations, school terms, sport schedules, family get-togethers and the usual assortment of activities that can bring back both painful and good memories.

Time! At TCF Huntsville we started the new year with some resolutions and changes. During our January meeting we had lively discussions about New Year's resolutions; our best are included on page 3 of the newsletter. We also made some changes to our meeting place, day, and time in order to reach more people throughout the Huntsville area. We will no longer meet on the second Tuesday of every month at HOPE Presbyterian but will begin meeting at the Multicultural Center – UMC on the third Sunday of every month at 4 pm. The center is located at 604 Jordan Ln. in Huntsville and our first meeting there will be February 17th.

Time! At TCF, we are anxiously awaiting July for the National Conference to begin in Nashville; that is the closest it will be to Huntsville for the foreseeable future. Locally, we solicit your help for 2008. Send in your ideas, suggestions, topics, material, photos, likes and dislikes. Help us help you.

May your memories never fade - Herb

...From the Heart

...a compassionate friend speaks

"...**From the Heart**", is a regular feature that will give a local member the opportunity to share a tip, suggestion, or experience of what has helped or hurt in his personal grief journey. As always, remember that we all grieve differently and it's OK to accept what makes sense and reject the rest.

Tammy M.

Member TCF Huntsville Area

It's been a long time getting from there to here. Even after 2 years I still have THOSE days. Sometimes I can hardly think of little more than the loss of our son, Gregory. Then there are the days when the world, even without him, is somewhat bearable.

I find myself having fun. I can function ok. I enjoy my nephew and grandchildren, and my daughters and my husband. The road is not an easy one, and I know

none of us would have chosen it, but here we are. Now what?

On special days I do something adventurous. Sometimes I do things he never got to do and sometimes I do things that make me overcome one of my own fears that I think he would find funny. I do these things for him, in his memory. I look for ways to include him in my adventures, for myself more than for anyone else.

I have been told by others who have walked this path that it gets easier with time, but the pain never goes away and I believe they are right. For myself, after the holidays are the worst. When it's over and I have the time to think of him, I MISS his laughter and funny antics. After allowing myself to bathe in sorrow, I must find a way to look forward again to something. I lost a ray of sunshine in my life, but I still have many more rays of sunshine left. And that is where I am today.

Love and hope to all others in our walk.

Tammy

The Breath of Winter

The breath of Winter
painted fragile stars
on all the windows
of my quiet house.

And there I found
your face,
more fragile even
than the season's art -
a wonder to my eyes.

How can it be
that Winter paints
such secret things
in white-and-silver sheen
for those who cry alone
at frosted windows?

Sascha Wagner TCF - Des Moines



New Year's Resolutions for 2008:

I resolve to:

- Let others know when something said is hurtful and no longer keep the pain unspoken.
- Give myself permission to ignore persistently insensitive people.
- Forgive professional care takers including pastors, counselors, and doctors, for the lack of help, success, caring, or understanding.
- Forgive family members who never mention the existence of my child.
- Mention my child and speak about him even if it causes others to be uneasy.
- Let go of my anger toward my child who made bad decisions.
- Keep hope in my heart and mind.
- Readjust to my new normal without the rest of the world adjusting.
- Stop worrying about what other people think of me.
- Focus on the positive, the better times of my child's life, instead of the "downward spiral".
- Do a better job of informing our community about Compassionate Friends.

January 2008 monthly chapter meeting -TCF Huntsville Area

Sascha Wagner

Ed Note: Sascha was a twice-bereaved parent, and her writings provided much support for fellow bereaved parents. The estate of the grief poetry and prose writer, has assigned all copyrights of her writings to The Compassionate Friends, which she so greatly supported during her lifetime.

Spring

Spring is not far away -
there is a smell of growing things about.
The snow looks somehow
even more perishable now.

Spring is not far away -
And memories move to another place,
Remembering: a squeaky swing
in the garden, going back and forth,
back and forth...
Remembering a bicycle taken out
for its first ride...

Remembering: incredibly wet boots,
cold hands, kissing-fresh face...
So many things remembered,
How many lost?
Not one, not one.
The heart remembers always.

Spring is not far away.

Sascha

February Question

Is this our season more than some
other turn of the year?

Is it?

With winter dancing out and in,
freezing and melted snow one more time....

Is this the season between death and life?

Is it?

With sorrow struggling in and out,
killing the torch of hope one more time...
(Be patient, spring is certain.)

Sascha

A Sibling Perspective

Brothers and sisters speak

SIBLINGS

Ed Note: Don, the brother of Ray, our TCF Webmaster, died in December, 2007. At Ray's request, his surviving brother Jim provided his personal reflections about growing up in a family with 10 siblings.

by Jim

January, 2008

I would like to share some thoughts about the special relationship of siblings in this arena that we call life. To set the stage I am one of 10 siblings that span almost 2 decades in age and that still could not be closer in the heart. I am sure that the very thing that makes siblings so special in their relationship is the recipe that put them together.

We share the interesting closeness of having the same parents, which if nothing else makes the same genetic makeup. If that were the end of that we would all look the same and act the same. Truth is, we don't all act the same and even though we have similarities we don't look exactly the same.

I don't pretend to speak for all our brothers and sisters but am confident that we do come together more often than we come apart. It seems that no matter how much we may get angry with each other there is no room for anyone to come between us. I believe that each of the sexes have a distinct place in the makeup of our sibling relationship. **Sisters**, and there are four (4), have the unique position of **Instructing** all others in the family. This is also based on the order of birth but is fully recognized by all in the family. **Brothers**, in our case six (6), are given the responsibility of

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making a Life for themselves, and the family at large. We all look to the closeness of our relationships as an Inspiration for our aspiring to greater things. Together we seem to ensure, and encourage each other that we will Never quit, loving, caring and Giving to one another.

S = Sisters
I = Instruction
B = Brothers
L = Life
I = Inspiration
N = Never quit
G = Giving

I'm convinced that the relationship shared by siblings has no equal in life because of ties that are shared. We share some of the most meaningful parts of our existence, that is, birth, marriage and now, even death. We as a group of ten have experienced all of these things and have still maintained our dedication to the group that we are a part of. We are siblings and we do share a common spirit forever.

Jim



Hospice 2007 Memory Tree – Huntsville Parkway Place Mall

Grief Quotes

Thoughts to Ponder

"As long as I can I will look at this world for both of us. As long as I can, I will laugh with the birds, I will sing with the flowers, I will pray to the stars, for both of us".

Sascha

"Next time you feel lonely, take a walk under the stars and feel the magic of not being alone".

Joe A. Perez

"I've seen what a good laugh can do. It can transform tears into hope."

Bob Hope

"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break".

William Shakespeare

Sympathy sees and says, "I'm sorry."
Compassion feels and whispers, "I will help."

unknown

Sorrow makes us all children again - destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest know nothing.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives meant the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares."

Henri Nouwen

If we're always guided by other people's thoughts, what's the use of having our own?

From the film "A Good Woman", Lionsgate Production 2004

Note: Our Huntsville newsletters are available online at <http://www.tcfhuntsville.org/Newsletters.html>

We Remember Them

...on their Birth Dates, on their Death Dates, and always...

Rebecca L.

Daughter of Lillian

Feb. 5 – June 19

Brian G.

Son of Steve & Dorothea

Nov. 25 – Mar. 12

Peter T.

Son of Jerry & Shari

May 20 – Jan. 26

Ben S.

Son of Herb & Jane

Mar. 24 – Apr. 10

Paul J.

Son of Tom & Sandra

Jan. 15 – Jan. 10

Daniel J.

Son of Lawrence & Bambi

Sep. 14 – Mar. 29

Our Stars of HOPE

Perhaps they are not stars, but rather openings in Heaven where the love of our children shines down to let us know they are with us



Gifts of Love and Remembrance

The following donations will help The Compassionate Friends to be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

In loving memory of

Brian

Steve & Dorothea - Parents

In loving memory of

David

Chris & Jeanne --Parents

In loving memory of

Paul

Tom & Sandra - Parents

In loving memory of

Gregory

Greg & Tammy - Parents

In loving memory of

Candace

Mark & Sheila - Parents

In loving memory of

April

Murray & Iris - Parents

Donations are tax deductible and may be sent to :
TCF Huntsville Area
c/o Pam Riddle
2010 East Arbor Drive
Huntsville, AL 35811

Calendar of Events

2008

February	February 15 -17 National Leadership Training - Atlanta February 17; Monthly meeting: "Winter of Continuing Discontent"
March	March 16 – Monthly meeting: TBD
April	April 16 Hospice Teleconference "Living with Grief, Children & Adolescents" April 18-20 National Leadership Training – Oak Brook, IL April 20 – Monthly meeting: TBD
May	May 18 – Monthly meeting: TBD

**** Note **** Don't forget the TCF National Conference Nashville, TN; July 18 – 20, 2008

The meetings of the Huntsville Area Chapter are held at 4:00PM on the third Sunday of each month at:
Jordan Crossing
Multicultural Center - UMC
604 Jordan Lane (Homes & Jordan)
Huntsville, AL 35816

TCF Huntsville Area
C/O Larnerd
7801 Chadwell Dr. SW
Huntsville, AL 35802

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Mailing Address
Street Number and Name
City, State 98765-4321

"Remembering: incredibly wet boots, cold hands, kissing-fresh face...So many things remembered, how many lost? Not one, not one. The heart remembers always"



Stars Around the World

BULK RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.
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This Newsletter is published by the Huntsville Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and may be sent to newsletter@tcfhuntsville.org.