



The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Healing Hearts Newsletter

2211 Jones Road, Paragould, AR.

Up on the hill at Southside Community Church, in the Conference Room.

Email: tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com Webpage: tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcfofnea/>

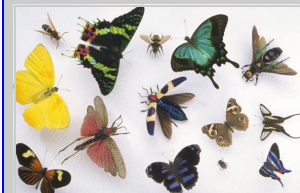
Our next meeting is April 9, 2015 at 7:00 P.M. — 9:00 P.M.

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The Circle of life; Love Never Dies

By Linda Lenox

Very often in this time in society, babies who were miscarried or were stillborn are hardly considered to be child loss. My mother seldom spoke to me about my daughter, Melissa, who died when she was 15 years old. Melissa was her 1st grandchild, and I know my mother loved her dearly. Child loss was so common in older days that it was often just not spoken about. Both of my grandmothers lost a child, and I remember us being at the cemetery when I was a child and seeing my paternal grandmother searching for her baby's grave; it was unmarked, but although she never spoke about it, she also never forgot. My maternal grandmother also lost a child. She never mentioned him to me, but my mother told me about the brother she'd lost. The same grandmother started to say something about my lost daughter one day, and instead said, "I just can't stand to think about it." My mother also lost a child to miscarriage, and she told me about it one time; that's all.

I had a miscarriage at 3 months in 1968, and I thought I was fine. I'd never felt movement, and didn't show; most people didn't even know I'd been pregnant. Still, I remember the date after all these years; February 17th, 1968. Two of my 5 daughters have also had miscarriages. I say all this to say that in our culture, many people think that children who were miscarried or stillborn don't count as the actual death of a child. We know that they do count; they did exist; we had dreams and plans for these children. You can explain to your children that that they did have a brother or sister who died, and that you love and miss him or her. You can light a candle on the anniversary. You can make your own family tree and include him or her, or have one professionally made.

I once received a plaque showing a house with a tree on the right that had 8 branches. The saying painted on the plaque says, "'Tis a small house, but God knows the address." I painted my husband's my and name on the top branches, and our children-his 2, my 2, and our 2, by age on each lower branch. On the other side of the house was a small tree with 5 small branches. I painted my daughter, Melissa name at the top branch, and her birth and death dates on the space below that. I just had to include her. No matter how long a child lived, or how they died, they did exist, and they were loved and are missed. We now have 14 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. I feel in my heart that my Melissa held and loved each of these children in heaven before they came to earth; Melissa always loved babies. I'm sure that she knows and loves the baby I lost, as well as those babies of her 2 sisters who never made it to earth.

The circle of life continues.



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Healing Hearts Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

Note from our Chapter Leader, Toni Baker

My Dear Friends!

Spring has Sprung--beauty of new life. Colorful flowers will begin to bloom, green grass, leaves turning green, new born calves and love abounds.

Our next meeting on Thursday, April 9th at 7 pm we will have a special guest speaker you all will want to hear. I am hoping we can have a great turn out to welcome her. Anyone attending, please bring a picture of your child for a free 3" button pin for you to wear.

In May we are having a Mother's Day Banquet for all bereaved mothers and grandmothers who have lost a child or grandchild. There is no charge but you will need to RSVP so we know how much to prepare. A nice program is being planned for you and there will be lots of door prizes. This banquet will be held at Southside Community Church at 6pm on Thursday, May 14th.

The Annual Balloon Release will also be held in May at the Arts Festival (previously the Loose Caboose). We will have a booth and if you are willing to help please contact me. More info next newsletter.

My heart goes out to all of you who have lost a child of any age, any cause. The Compassionate Friends are here to help each other along this long grief journey. WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. For more information on The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas please visit our website at: www.tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com

See you on Thursday, April 9th at 7pm to hear a wonderful speaker on "Grief". Thank you.

Love and Hugs!!

Toni Baker, Chapter Leader



We'd love to have your feedback!

Join Us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/>

Join Us on the Web!

tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com

Our next 3 Meetings!

April 9, 2015

May 14, 2015

June 11, 2015

Mark Your Calendars!



The Compassionate Friends does not espouse any religious ideologies. Southside Community Church has graciously offered the use of it's conference room as a meeting place for our chapter.

Thank You
Southside Community Church!

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter with an original poem or story you wrote, or If you wish to stop receiving this newsletter, contact me at:

linda@thelenoxfamily.com



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Upcoming Events:

April

We will have a guest speaker at our April 9th meeting, Grief Counselor, Nena Burbette.

Those attending, please bring a picture of your child to receive a free 3 inch button of your child that you can wear. Pictures must be 4X6 to fit the pin.

May

On May 14th, at 6:00 P.M., we will host a Mother's Day Banquet at Southside Community Church for bereaved mothers and grandmothers. There is no charge, but please let us know if you can come in order that we can prepare enough food. We have a program planned and will have a lot of door prizes. R.S.P.V. tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com, or message Toni on facebook, or call 870-476-6025 by May 1st.

May 16th will be our 3rd annual Balloon Release at The Paragould Arts Festival. If you can help out at our booth, please let us know. For more information concerning either event, contact Toni: email tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com, or on facebook, or call 870-476-6025

June

There will be no meeting in June.

We are excited to participate in @ArkansasGives Day April 2,

a great way for Arkansans to show support of nonprofits!

[#arkansasgives](https://twitter.com/arkansasgives)

To donate on April 2nd go to:

<http://www.arkansasgives.org/search-nonprofits/...>

Help Support The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas!



ArkansasGives.org
GROW THE LOVE

Save the Date
April 2, 2015

Advisory Board Members

Associate Pastor Pat Graham, LMSW
Crystal Baldwin, MSNFP-BC
Mariah Bryson, General manager of Zaxby's
Rick Nunn, Owner of Swirlz

Thank you all for being on our board!

She is the same, and yet she different.
She is here, but at the same time, a
part of her is elsewhere for eternity.
She stands in the sunlight, yet she
walks within the shadows of what
was and what now can never be. ©kfp

She is a grieving mother.

Out of the Ashes/FB



Telephone or email Friends

Toni Baker, 870-476-6025 or baker2205@msn.com
Toni's son Jayson died in a motorcycle accident.

Linda Lenox, 870-573-6920 orlinda@thelenoxfamily.com
Linda's daughter Melissa died in a flooded creek.

Jo Cook, 870-249-1290

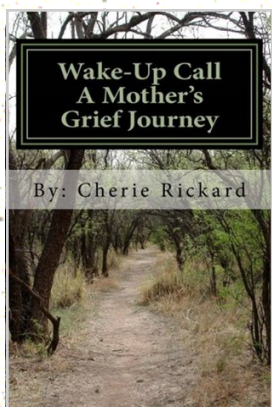
Jo's daughter, Jennifer died in an accident with a train.



New Book by Cherie Rickard!

Healing Your Wounded Spirit By Sherry Rickard

You're about to discover the #1 guide for healing your wounds after divorce, death of a loved-one or a broken friendship. Millions of people around the globe experience some type of loss due to turmoil, conflict or tragedy in their lives. Suffering through grief and loss due to catastrophic events that happened in your life can be extremely difficult to recover from. Most people realize how difficult this can be, therefore attempt to reach for anything to comfort themselves. Most will have the inability to fully recover due to the lack of knowledge and strategies needed in order to be released from their hurt and suffering. In this book, Cherie has a passion and purpose to guide you through grief after divorce, death of a loved-one and broken friendships. She also helps to set in motion the healing process. This book will provide you a deep understanding of your pain and how to heal as well as give someone a guide to help others in their tragedy and suffering. The truth is, if you are struggling to break free from overwhelming grief it is because you lack the guidance needed; which is key to understanding the problem before attempting to recover. Along with knowledge, you may also lack an effective plan of action needed for overcoming, healing and living once again. This book will educate you, guide you and enlighten you on the many stages of grief along with providing proven strategies, tips and advice to overcoming pain through loss, ultimately releasing you from the excruciating bonds of grief and suffering.



The author Cherie Rickard RN CGC is an advocate for those in need of healing from tragic loss and life changing events. Her advice not only gives us the tips and guidance we need to begin the journey we have in front of us but to also dispel the myths that confuse those that don't understand grief and loss after, Divorce, Death and Broken Friendships. In addition to Cherie's RN title she is a Certified Grief Counselor, Internationally known Published Author & Speaker. She is President & Founder of the Triumph in Tragedy Foundation, Medical Professional and business owner. She serves in honor of her son on the Bryant Kite Scholarship Foundation Committee and member of the NAPW (National Association of Professional Woman). Cherie shares her heart in her first book *Wake-Up Call....A Mother's Grief Journey* after the loss of her 17 year old son in a tragic auto accident. Featured in newspapers, NBC, FOX and numerous social media sites she will launch her third book in 2015. "We begin to heal when we help others and become blessed when we are a blessing." - Cherie

Wake-Up Call....A Mother's Grief Journey-Cherie's First Book: A true story and blunt voyage into the mind of a grieving mother who turns tragic grief & loss of her teenage son into triumph after tragedy is amazingly insightful. Although Rickard is candid and enlightening in relating the events of that call and the aftermath, the book doesn't begin there and it certainly does not end there.

Pastor and Deputy/Chaplain Ken Spivey has seen more than his share of families struck by the sudden onset of grief because of the unexpected and tragic death of a family member, loved one, or child, but Spivey says he's not the least bit surprised by first-time author Cherie Rickard's inspiring and refreshing story as she tells it in "Wake-Up Call....A Mother's Grief Journey



Available Now on Amazon



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The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Dallas, Texas, will be the site of the 38th TCF National Conference on July 10-12, 2015. "Hope Shines Bright ... Deep in the Heart" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national Conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. We'll keep you updated with details as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.



**The Compassionate Friends
of Northeast Arkansas**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Keynote Speakers

Kay Warren (*Opening Ceremony*) The cofounder of the mega Saddleback Church in Orange County, California along with her husband, Rick (*Purpose Driven Life*), Kay is an international speaker, best-selling author and teacher who has a passion for inspiring and motivating other to make a difference with their lives. Additionally, Kay has also written for *Christianity Today*, *Purpose Driven Life*, CNN.com, *The Washington Post*, and has been featured in *Newsweek* and *Reader's Digest*. In April of 2013 Kay's son, Matthew died by suicide at the age of 27.

Gary Mendell (*Friday Afternoon BBQ*) Gary Mendell is the founder and CEO of Shatterproof, a national organization committed to protecting our children from addiction to alcohol or other drugs, and ending the stigma and suffering of those affected by this disease. Mr. Mendell founded Shatterproof to honor his son, Brian, who lost his battle with addiction in 2011.

Christopher Jones (*Saturday Evening Dinner*) Chris Jones is the author of Mitchell's Journey, a popular Facebook blog which has nearly 300,000 followers. Chris began his blog a few years prior to his 10-year-old son's death from heart failure caused by Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. What started out as a place for family and friends to find updates on his son's condition, has continued on into a personal journey of reflection and discovery about Mitchell's life, death, the grieving process and the transformative effects it has had on the lives of his family and himself.

Kris Munsch (*Sunday Closing Ceremony*) There was never a project too big for Kris until his son, Blake, was killed in a car accident December 23rd of 2005. Kris spiraled out of control, selling his businesses and entering into a world of depression. Soon, he realized that if had the talent to rebuild almost anything, why couldn't he rebuild his life? That's what he began doing, and he did it in a high school classroom teaching woodworking. The authenticity of the teens he worked with inspired him to start The Birdhouse Project.

Register soon if you want to go to the National Conference in Dallas, Texas

Conference Pricing is as follows:

Adult registration - \$90, Child registration (ages 9-12) - \$40, Full-time college student (College ID required at check-in) - \$40

If you are unable to register online or prefer to mail in your registration form.

Please call the National Office at 877.969.0010.

Please go online at www.companionarefriends.org to view the registration booklet which includes a registration form that can be printed and mailed to the National Office.

Questions? 877.969.0010.



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Alan Pedersen

This past week I hosted several radio programs alongside Dr. Gloria Horsley as part of a grief resources partnership between The Compassionate Friends and Open to Hope. These programs are part of 20 we are producing which will air throughout 2015 and each features a guest sharing the story of how they have survived and thrived after the death of a child, grandchild or sibling.

Our guests have included; a dynamic bereaved mom from Pomona, California who started a foundation in her community focused on helping single moms in grief. A Hollywood documentary film producer who chose to turn the camera around and focus on himself by writing and producing a movie based on his own personal struggles since the death of his son. An introverted woman whose two sisters died many years ago who decided to face her grief by stepping outside her comfort zone and performing an ice skating routine to in front of a large crowd to raise money for a local hospital in honor of her siblings.

All of our guests chose a different path, but each of them ended up in a similar place. With each of them it began with a conscious decision that they were going to do whatever it takes to survive. They each came to this decision in their own way and in their own time. While each struggled and felt overwhelmed at the challenges they faced in grief, they also came to a point where they wanted to use their pain as a catalyst to honor their loved ones.

In the end, they each took an action to create something that kept them connected to the love and the memories they held onto. The single mom created a foundation to benefit those most vulnerable in society who struggle everyday just to pay the bills and survive. She wanted to give them more than simply support for their grief; she wanted to give them tools that she didn't have access to when she was new in grief. Her foundation helps empower these grieving moms to better themselves and their surviving children.

The Hollywood producer who was always telling someone else's story took the chance of telling his own. It took years to complete his labor of love, but the catharsis of the project has helped him heal and has had an impact on thousands of others who have connected to the movie. The introverted woman who ran from her grief for 20 years decided raise money around an enjoyable activity shared by her and her sisters, ice skating. Hardly a professional skater, she touches the hearts of those who attend her fundraiser by her emotional performances. She is finally finding healing and feels more connected to her sisters with each routine she performs.

The common theme from all those I interviewed is that grief isn't easy, it is work. Grief also is a blank canvas which is waiting for each of us to paint with the beautiful colors of our children, grandchildren and siblings. I am inspired daily by the amazing people I meet and the stories I hear about the transformational power of grief. The Compassionate Friends is here to provide you with support in your grief, friendship in your struggle, and inspiration to move forward in your life without leaving any of the love or beautiful memories behind. What an amazing organization. Thanks for allowing me the honor of being your Executive Director.

Blessings,

Alan Pedersen

alan@compassionatefriends.org

916-367-7865

If your area does not have a TCF Chapter and you're interested in helping start one, write Director of Chapter Services, Terry Novy at terry@compassionatefriends.org or call 877-969-0010. For Chapter meeting information on our current chapters, visit our Chapter Locator.

The Compassionate Friends national magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone* is now available free through an online subscription. TCF is also archiving past editions at [TCF National Magazine and Archive](#).

Those who do not wish to subscribe can view the magazine in the archive once the next issue has been published. Past issues of *We Need Not Walk Alone*, starting with Winter/Spring 2011-2012, are available



Our Children Remembered

Melissa Noel Wilkinson

Jayson Baker

Cooper Catharine Porter

Nathan Kidd

Haylee Kidd

Nicholas Zurosky

Jennifer Cook

Timothy Lee Fitzwater

Samantha Cook

Shane Mathew Fitzwater

Jennifer Lee Hancock

Aaron Scott Boyer

Ashlyn Dunn

Aidyn Isaiah Queen

Annaya Marie Edwards

Shane Palmer

Tabitha Marsh

Steven Charles Garland

Stephanie Sluder

Timothy House

Julie Ellen Amick

Carter Smith

Olivia Jurkin

Tyler James Tritch

Mattie Bryant

Terry Brown

Shayla Jo Miller

Jayden Wilkinson

Jasmine Sierra Miller

Caiden Billups

Blake Howerton

Andrew Wayne Myers

Jon David Penn

Joseph "Chase" Jackson

Tyler James Troutt

Matthew Russo

Brent Hawkins

Nathan Swafford

Daryl McWilliams

Billy Ray

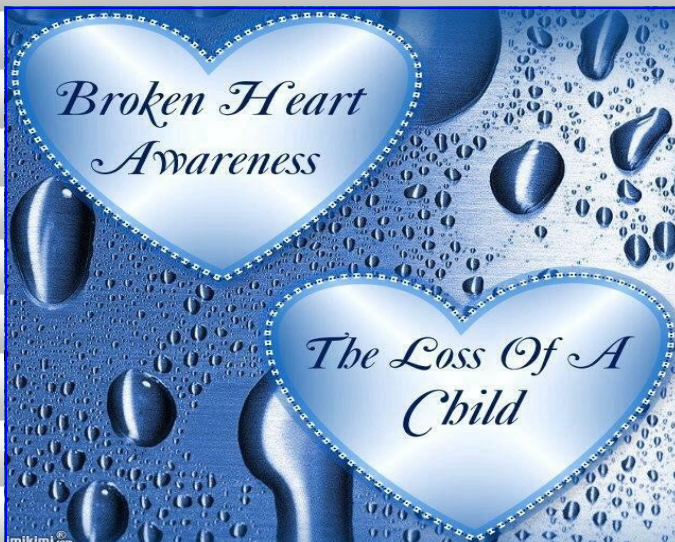
Noah Spencer Boyd

Brian Nelson

Richard Petty

Michael Dickerson

*If you would like your Childs name added
to this list, contact me!
linda@thelenoxfamily.com*



The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas
2703 Stonegate Drive
Paragould, AR 72450

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IF YOU ARE MOVING, Please send us your change of address.

Expenses of our newsletter and meetings are covered by monetary donations given by those who want to help in our outreach. It may be given in memory of your child, a loved one or a friend. Contributions are tax-deductible.
Make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends of NEA
Send to: TCF of NEA, 2703 Stonegate Drive, Paragould, AR 72450

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We truly appreciate your love gifs.

The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas is a support group for those who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild, brother or sister. Parents whose sorrow has softened and who have found fresh hope and strength for living offer friendship, understanding and hope to others through monthly meetings, "telephone friends," a library table, and a newsletter. Attending your first meeting does take courage, but our parents who do attend find a comforting network of support and friendship that only friends ho have "been there" can give. **COME JOIN US!!**