

# The Compassionate Friends Of Northeast Arkansas

## Healing Hearts Newsletter

2211 Jones Road, Paragould, AR.

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

Email: [tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com) Webpage: [tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com](http://tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com)

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

Our next meeting is February 13th, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. — 9:00 P.M.

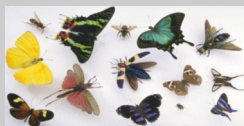


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## Grief Healing: Remembering Our Loved Ones on Valentine's Day

By Marty Tousley, CNS-BC, FT

We've barely made it through the holidays of December and January, and now the stores are filled with hearts and flowers and candy, all of it in celebration of the gift of love. But February 14 can be a difficult day for those of us who are grieving, and for some it will be the first Valentine's Day since our precious Valentine died. For us there is no celebration; there is only grief.

Sometimes, for fear of "letting go," we may find ourselves "holding on" to our pain as a way of remembering those we love. Letting go of what used to be is not an act of disloyalty, and it does not mean forgetting our loved ones who have died. Letting go means leaving behind the sorrow and pain of grief and choosing to go on, taking with us only those memories and experiences that enhance our ability to grow and expand our capacity for happiness.

If our memories are painful and unpleasant, they can be hurtful and destructive. If they create longing and hold us to the past, they can interfere with our willingness to move forward in our grief journey. But it doesn't have to be that way. We can choose which parts of life we shared that we

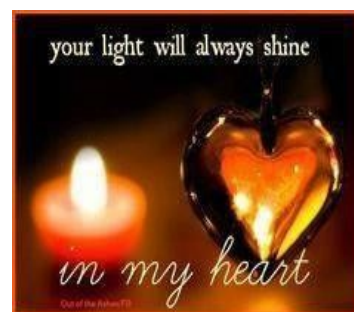
wish to keep and which parts we wish to leave behind. We can soothe our pain by thinking of happy as well as sad memories. The happiness we experienced with our loved ones belongs to us forever.

If we decide to do so, we can choose to embrace Valentine's Day as a special day on which to commemorate our loved ones and to celebrate our love for them. Death ends a life, but it does not end the relationship we have with our loved ones who have died. The bonds of love are never severed by death, and the love we shared will never die either. For Valentine's Day this year, we can find a way to honor our loved ones, to remember them and to show them that our love is eternal.

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our loved ones, to remember them and to show them that our love is eternal.

We can build a piece of "memory time" into that particular day, or we can pack the entire day with meaning. Think of it this way: *It's much easier to cope with memories we've chosen than to have them take us by surprise.* Whether we are facing Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, an anniversary or birthday, or any other special day of our own choosing, we can immerse ourselves in the healing power of remembrance. We can go to a special place, read aloud, or listen to a favorite song. We can celebrate what once was and is no more.



Continued on page 3

### The Sun Will Shine

*I sat in the darkness in the living room, for dawn was only just arriving. Through the picture window I watched the trees slowly outline the opposite shore of our little lake. Then magically, a shaft of light appeared behind the trees, flooding the horizon with gold. "It will be a beautiful day..." I thought. But as the daylight grew stronger, I*

*saw that a thick, gray fog blanketed the lake and the lawn between it and the house. "Oh, no," I moaned, "I was so hoping for good weather." Then a ball of fire peeked over the horizon and rose majestically into full view. Within an hour it had burned off the mist, and the...day emerged bright and clear under the cloudless sky. Life is like this, I thought, when*

*grief...darkens our days. It is then we must keep hope burning in our hearts. We must believe that if the sun is not shining at the moment, it will shine again, and we will have a richer appreciation of the bright days for having experienced the darkness.*  
--Madeline Robinson

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## Healing Hearts Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

*Message from  
Chapter Leader,  
Toni Baker*

A Note From Chapter Leader Toni Baker:  
Wow!! The first month of 2014 is gone already!!  
Our next meeting is Thursday, February 13th at 7pm at  
Southside Community Church Conference Room--up the  
hill from the church, 2211 Jones Road in Paragould.



We invite you to come join us as we all are walking the grief journey.  
We will be showing the slide show of our children whose families sent pictures and info of their loved one--we were going to show this at our Candle Lighting but it was cancelled due to weather.

We will also start a short series with video on "The 5 H's of a Grieving". And we will be celebrating Valentine's Day--showing love for our children!!! And I believe there is going to be a beautiful snack made for us by a very special lady, Patti Hawkins. Thanks Patti!!

Anyone out there who has been walking this journey at least 18 months or more and is now interested in giving back some love, hope and encouragement to newer bereaved families, please let us know--we have opening on our Steering Committee and we sure could use your help!!! It's a great tribute to your loved one to help another now.

The National Conference is coming up in July and will be held in Chicago!! If anyone is interested in going, let me know.

We've made some changes to our website--if anyone ever has any ideas for it please let us know. We list our children on "The Butterfly" page--if your child is not listed and you would like he/she listed please drop me an email at:

[tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com](mailto:tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com)

Also if you would like it listed in our newsletter!! Looking forward to seeing you all on the 13th. Love and hugs to you all!!

Toni

The Compassionate Friends does not espouse any religious ideologies. Southside Community Church has graciously offered the use of it's conference room as a place for us to hold our meetings Thank You Southside Community Church!

**Join Us on the Web!**

[tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com](http://tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com)

**Join Us on Facebook!**

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

*We'd love to have your feedback!*

**Our next 3 Meetings!**

February 13, 2014

March 13, 2014

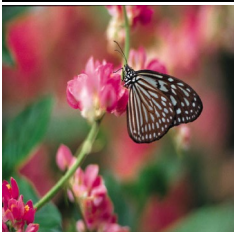
April 10, 2014

**Mark Your Calendars!**





# Healing Hearts Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas



## 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 or linda@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.

### Upcoming Events:

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Chicago, IL will be the site of the 37th TCF National Conference July 11-13, 2014.

"Miles of Compassion through The Winds of Hope"

The 2014 conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare right near the airport. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience!

The agenda for the conference:

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

[http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Libraries/PDF/37th\\_National\\_Conference\\_Workshops.sflb.ashx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Libraries/PDF/37th_National_Conference_Workshops.sflb.ashx)

Chapter Leader, Toni Baker is looking into transportation, conference, and hotel costs. Please let her know if any of are interested in attending. This is one of the closest conferences to us and they are amazing!



### Grief Healing: Remembering Our Loved Ones on Valentine's Day

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Personal grief rituals are those loving activities that help us remember our loved ones, and give us a sense of connectedness, healing and peace. Creating and practicing personal grief rituals can also help us release painful situations and unpleasant memories, freeing us to make our memories a positive influence in our lives.

What follows are just a few examples of personal grief rituals. (See also the Memorials ~ Funerals ~ Rituals page on my Grief Healing Web site.) The ideas are as unique and as varied as the people who invented them; think of ways that you can adapt them and make them your own. You are limited only by your own imagination.

1. If you're a writer, write. It could be an article, an anecdote, a

story, a poem, a song, a letter, an obituary or a eulogy. If you don't want to write for someone else, keep a private journal and write about your feelings as you journey through your grief.

2. Buy a very special candle, decorate it and light it in honor of your loved one.
3. Purchase a book - perhaps a children's book - on coping with the loss of a loved one, and donate it to your local library or school. Ask the librarian to place a label inside the front cover inscribed "In memory of your loved one's name."
4. Plant a tree, bush, shrub, garden or flower bed as a permanent growing memorial to your beloved. Mark the site with a memorial plaque, marker, bench or statue.
5. Memorialize your beloved in cyberspace by lighting a virtual candle at [Light a Candle Online](#).

6. Write a special note, letter, poem, wish or prayer to your beloved, go outside, attach the paper to a balloon and let it go - or place it in a vessel and burn it, and watch the smoke rise heavenward.
7. If you are harboring bad feelings or regrets, gather symbols to represent those hurtful or painful situations, events, or feelings from your past, place them in a container and hold a private burial or burning ceremony, saying goodbye and releasing them as you do so.
8. Ask relatives, friends, co-workers and neighbors to gather their contributions, and put together a scrapbook or box of memories containing mementoes, letters and photographs of your loved one.
9. Celebrate the life of your loved one by continuing favorite traditions or eating favorite foods.

10. Select a Valentine card that you wish your beloved would have picked for you, and mail it to yourself.
11. Give yourself a gift from your loved one that you always wished he or she would have given you, and think of your beloved whenever you use it or wear it.







# Healing Hearts Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

## The First Meeting



I first heard of The Compassionate Friends at the Grief and Grieving Seminar at Sacramento City College in 1989. I sat in the auditorium, in the very last row, in the very last seat, sobbing, hoping to muffle the sounds by holding a bandana to my mouth.

My only child, Joe, 21, was killed on December 6, 1988 in a truck/auto accident. He was coming back to work from lunch. A rock truck made a sudden left turn and my son, my best friend, was dead. Two minutes, that's all it took to find myself crying in the dark at •Sac City. I wasn't ready to reach out yet, but I took the brochures home.

A year and a half later, I thought I was ready. I arrived at the church on H Street. I sat in my car asking myself what I was doing here. Talking about Joe's death was so painful, even with friends who loved me. How could I talk about the death to strangers? And why would I? I stood by my car for two minutes and took a deep breath. I walked to an open door and announced to a dance class I was here for The Compassionate Friends meeting. Four couples turned around, the music stopped and so did I. I finally found the right door and walked in and introduced myself to the woman by the guest book. She said the meeting was beginning for the "new" members and showed me to the room. Darlene Johnson was there, talking about the cards we were to fill out with our names, the name of our child, or children who had died and when they died. I looked at the blank card and lines erased themselves with my tears. My hand shook and I felt the familiar anxiety attack symptoms and I glanced across the room and my eyes were met with another pair of tear-filled eyes. In that instant, pain recognized pain and I felt kinship with him, and my anxiety attack drifted away, not to claim me that night again.

I relaxed a little and listened to women and men communicating the loss and agony and the fearful topsy-turvy roller coaster ride of emotions that battered us day and night. We shared our losses if we chose to do so. When it was my turn, though, I said, "Pass." And it was fine - no questions, no pushing. And then we talked, cried, admitted to anger, confusion, outrage, sadness, depression and sobbing in public. I talked and I listened. I hugged and I let people give me a hug. The agony was real within us, but together we told it to step back a little that night. The meeting ended with our standing in a circle, holding each other's hands, a circle of courage, relief and strength.

I walked to my car and thought what a difference those four hours made. I found solace and relief. The Compassionate Friends meeting won't make the pain go away, but it is a place where you can honestly and truly believe when someone says, "I know how you feel." They mean it and their eyes prove it.

—Janice Lopez TCP, Sacramento Valley



Time is FREE,  
but it's priceless.  
You can't OWN IT,  
but you can use it.  
You can't KEEP IT,  
but you can spend it.  
Once you've LOST IT  
you can never get it back.



—Harvey MacKay

### Funding for The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

There are no individual dues or fees of any kind. The Compassionate Friends depend entirely on voluntary contributions from individuals, businesses, and the philanthropic community. TCF is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization; all donations are tax-deductable. Please help us help others!



Meeting Time and Place  
Southside Community Church,  
2211 Jones Road, Paragould  
At the conference room, up on the  
hill from the church  
7:00 P.M.—9:00 P.M.  
2nd Thursday of the month



## Healing Hearts Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

### *Our Children Remembered*

Melissa 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

Terry Brown

Jayden Wilkinson

Caiden Billups

Blake Howerton

Andrew Wayne Myers

Jon David Penn

Joseph "Chase" Jackson

*If you would like your child  
added to this list, contact:  
[linda@thelenoxfamily.com](mailto:linda@thelenoxfamily.com)*



## In Loving Memory...

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. We have all paid the ultimate price; the loss of our loved ones.

Through "Love Gifts," parents and others who wish to help, may provide financial to support our chapter.

We appreciate these gifts and use them in our chapter's work to be there to help other people who have lost a precious a child, or grandchild, or brother or sister.

**The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas**  
We ask for donations in memory of our children who have died. Our activities support the grief work of families in our area. Our work is also used to educate the community about the grief process and how everyone can help and give emotional support to bereaved families. Please help us help others by making a "love gift"

Tax deductible love gifts may be sent to:

TCF of Northeast Arkansas, c/o Toni Baker, chapter leader  
2703 Stonegate Drive, Paragould, AR 72450

Donations can also be made through our web page or through our online store:

[tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com](http://tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com)

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This page can be printed to form an envelope for your love gift. Fold as directed,

I would like to give a love gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

From (relationship) \_\_\_\_\_

If you choose to give a love gift, please add your return address to receive your tax deductible receipt

May we acknowledge your love gift in our newsletter: Please Circle YES NO

If you would like your loved one's name added to our memorial page, "Our Children Remembered" in our newsletter, Please submit the following information:

Child's full name \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship \_\_\_\_\_

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please check this box and return it to us.

Or email: [linda@thelenoxfamily.com](mailto:linda@thelenoxfamily.com)

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

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