

# The Compassionate Friends Of Northeast Arkansas

## Healing Hearts Newsletter

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

2211 Jones Road, Paragould, AR.

Our next meeting will be on May 9th, 2013, at 7:00 P.M.

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The Compassionate friends of Northeast Arkansas will hold our 1st annual Balloon Release on May 18th, 2013, at noon, At the Loose Caboose Festival, in front of the main stage.

The Festival will be at the Greene County Fair Grounds, in Paragould, Arkansas this year. TCF of NEA will have a table set up for the Loose Caboose on May 17th and 18th,

The Balloon Release will offer the chance, to the public, to write a message to your lost child, grandchild or sibling, which will be placed inside of a balloon and released at 12:00 noon in front of the main stage at the fair grounds. We will begin filling balloons around 11:00; please be at our table by 11:00 so we will have an ample amount of time to get balloons filled with helium, the message inside, tied and connected to a ribbon.

We will also have information about The Compassionate Friends organization available at our table.

Several members of TCF or NEA attended the event in Lawrence County last year, at their "Beatles on the Ridge" celebration, and it was a beautiful sight to see the balloons soar into the sky, with well wishes and love to our lost children of all ages. If you've lost a child, a grandchild or a sibling, of any age and at any time, please plan to join us!



**Balloon Release in Lawrence County**



### Advisory Board Members

David Lange, Executive Director of The Paragould Housing Authority

Pat Graham, Associate Pastor LMSW

Melissa Phillips, Owner of Bren's Flowers

Crystal Baldwin, MSNFP-BC

Mariah Bryson, General manager of Zaxby's



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*Note from Chapter Leader, Toni Baker: Another month has rolled by and we are approaching Mother's Day, Graduations, Proms, Weddings and Father's Day--all important dates to us. Jayson died the day after Mother's Day, so when it rolls around my emotions run high but I am so grateful I was privileged to have 20 wonderful years with him. My thoughts and prayers are with each and everyone of you. I'm sending you love, hope and hugs!!*

*Hope to see you at our next meeting which is Thursday, May 9th.*

### **Mother's Day...**

Graduations.....Proms.....Weddings. Spring comes—and with it comes the uneasy awareness of difficult days ahead. We have many special days that come with Spring. We always are happy that families and friends can enjoy these events, for the bereaved parents these events are often very hard for us. We are sad for we remember the “prom” that our child attended or never got to attend. The last Mother’s day gift or that special Father’s day. The graduation that our child never got to attend, the wedding you will never get to plan.

We want to enjoy all these events and we will, it is that we just have to find a new way to enjoy these. For a sibling that will not have his brother as his best man or the sister that will not have her sister as her maid of honor. We will find a way to honor our siblings at these special days. This all may seem strange to a parent the still have their children, but please, just understand that we have lost ours and we do all of this because they are still a part of our lives.

The Compassionate Friends helps parents learn to live again; we never get over the death of our children, and we just learn to go through the grief. We find ways to honor our children that have died to soon. We will someday learn to smile and laugh again, but we will always miss our children. We want to hear their name and stories about them. So we ask for your patience. Whatever the "special day" that lies ahead for your family, try to focus on doing something meaningful and tangible in remembrance of your child. Share as a family, thoughts and suggestions about planting a tree or starting a rose garden, donating a book to the library or school, putting flowers on the altar, lighting a special candle or taking that long talked of vacation. Tears and moments of sadness are okay, for they are expressions of love.

#### **Remember:**

- Take one day at a time.
- Keep things simple by playing down the holidays and special days, while they are so painful.
- Change your routine from past years.
- Make plans to be "busy" during at least part of the day (go out to lunch or to a movie, or visit friends).
- Give your older children some "space." They not only feel your extreme sadness at these times; they also have their own feelings to deal with.

**The anticipation is often worse than the day itself!**



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

TCF of Northeast Arkansas is in need of some volunteers to help with events, librarian, newsletter mailings, gathering info from referrals and obits, etc. If you are interested or know someone who may be interested in helping our Chapter, please contact me at 870-476-6025 or [tcf northeastarkansas-](http://tcf northeastarkansas.com)

**Telephone or email Friends**

**If you need someone to talk to.....**

Toni Baker, 870-476-6025 or [baker2205@msncom](mailto:baker2205@msncom)

Toni's son Jayson died in a motorcycle accident.

Linda Lenox 870-573-6920 or [linda@thelenoxfamily.com](mailto:linda@thelenoxfamily.com)

Linda's daughter Melissa died in a flooded creek.

*The Biggest Piece Of My Heart  
Will Always Be In Heaven!*

**Adjusted**

"It's been several years since your son died," They say, "Surely, you must have adjusted by now."

Yes, I am adjusted—

Adjusted to feeling pain

And sadness and grief and guilt and loss.

Adjusted to hurting and unexpected tears.

Adjusted to seeing people made uncomfortable upon

Hearing me say "My son died."

Adjusted to losing my best friend because I'm not always "up."

Adjusted to people acting as if grief is contagious.

And TCF meetings are "morbid."

Adjusted? Oh, yes, to many things.

Knowing I won't hear his voice, but listening for it still.

Knowing I won't see him drive his Toronado,

But staring at every one I see.

Adjusted to feeling empty on his birthday And wishing for just one more time with him.

Adjusted: As life goes on— To realizing I cannot expect everyone I meet

To wear a bandage—just because I am still bleeding.

Shirley Blakely Curle ~TCF, Central AR



### *"The Forgotten Griever"*

our children who grieve the loss of a sibling

an essay by Caroline Flohr, author of *Heaven's Child*

Two weeks after my 16-year-old twin daughter, Sarah, died, I found a newsletter from my local Compassionate Friends Chapter in my mailbox. Before Sarah's accident, I didn't know who Compassionate Friends were. Eight years later, I know them well. So when the request came to speak to a local chapter about "The Forgotten Griever," our children who grieve the death of a sibling, that was a topic near to my heart. I had overlooked my son's grief when his sister died. Fortunately, not too much time had passed. I put pen to paper and begin writing. The sibling bond is often overlooked when a sibling dies...and siblings do have a very special relationship. When considering grief, it's the familial relationship least studied. It's most unfortunate because our children who live often become the "forgotten griever." And yet, just like us, their lives are not the same because relationships change when a child dies.

Losing a sibling has a special grief all its own. It's as if they've lost part of their past and their future. When one child dies, the surviving sibling must grow up faster than anyone should, losing the innocence of childhood. Most often they find themselves in a new role—taking care of others, and their identity is gone. Sometimes they feel they've lost their parents to the overwhelming grief because we, as parents, do not function as before our child died. And watching us grieve can be harder than their own grief.

Unbeknownst to us, fear sets in and consumes their thoughts. Will someone else they love die? Loneliness can overwhelm with the realization that there is no shared future, only memories to recall. And often times, friends do not know how to respond. When an important event occurs, the grief gets reprocessed. It comes back in waves. Anxiety, panic attacks, sleeping issues, and depression are common. Medication and sleeping aids can help. Sleep is very important in the healing process. Suicidal thoughts are not far away. Isolation from the lack of attention and support can also lead surviving siblings down this path. They may want to be with their sibling again. Some will attempt suicide at least once. But thankfully, lingering in the back of minds is the hurt it would inflict on parents and others they love. Professional therapy can help, if the sibling is open and willing. Sometimes the surviving sibling just needs someone to talk to. Sometimes the therapist can offer insight that their feelings are normal. Sometimes therapy isn't productive. And that's okay. Or maybe the child who lives believes that Heaven awaits them, where their sibling now is. In either case, hopefully the attachment to immediate family awakens and strengthens with more appreciation, openness and love.

In the early days, if possible, focus on your children who live. Children are often more resilient than us. As I found my daughter, Sarah, alive within, I discovered more grace to confront my own grief. And as I watched my surviving children navigate their days with more depth and return to the joys and pleasures of life before their sibling's death, then my daily routine became more manageable.

Just as we find ourselves struck with denial, anger, guilt, and regrets, so do our children who live. I learned from my children who live that these three actions were most important to them when grief set in.

Just as we find ourselves struck with denial, anger, guilt, and regrets, so do our children who live. I learned from my children who live that these three actions were most important to them when grief set in.

**1. LISTEN**...because I will hear.

**2. BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT** and **PATIENT**. I cannot eliminate their pain. But my presence and my caring response let them know that they are not alone. I schedule one---on---one time with each of my children just as I schedule a date with a friend. I am learning to truly embrace their unique qualities.

**3. SAY THE NAME OF THE DECEASED SIBLING**. frequently. I weave Sarah's name into everyday conversation. It lets my family know that Sarah is not forgotten. We share stories and memories. I am learning to keep





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## Healing Hearts Newsletter



### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**TCF of NEA 1st Annual Balloon Release (See page 1)**

**The one Year Anniversary of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas will be in May!**

**In June we will have another fundraiser through Payne's Meats; we will sell Boston Butts and Ribs**

### Continued from page 4

am learning to keep communication open. I ask my children to be open to signs from their sister. Those signs offer great comfort.

Each of us grieves, and each griever must find his own way. Grief doesn't necessarily coincide with any stages. We must honor the uniqueness of grief. It's a life---long process of jumping back and forth and every place in between. And when in our darkest moments, look to the love and spirit of our children who live. I have found that the love and resilience of my four children who live heals and strengthens me in ways I'd never known before my daughter, Sarah, died. Today we all walk together.

*About Caroline:* A Seattle area native, Caroline is nourished on a daily basis by the natural beauty, wildlife and peaceful beaches in the Pacific Northwest. When she's not enjoying the outdoors with family, she is working on her second book, a humorous story about a family wedding...guess who is getting married? Caroline lives with her husband, children and faithful yellow lab, Lady Brooke, on Bainbridge Island.

Author of a true story, *Heaven's Child*

[www.HeavensChild.com](http://www.HeavensChild.com)

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#### Our mailing address is:

Caroline Flohr, author of *Heaven's Child*

P.O. Box 4625, Rolling Bay, WA 98061

**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 to hold our meetings.**

**Thank You Southside Community Church !**

#### **Our next 3 Meetings**

**June 13, 2013**

**July 11, 2013**

**August 9, 2013**

**Mark Your Calendars!**

**The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas has a**

**Facebook page!!**

**[www.facebook.com/groups/tcfofnea](http://www.facebook.com/groups/tcfofnea)**





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## Healing Hearts Newsletter

### Thought for the Day

It's not easy returning to the world of normalcy when your world is so upside down. It's not easy to stop being a parent to your child who has died. The thought for the day is a word—patience—patience with yourself who is suddenly, powerlessly thrown into this horrid nightmare; patience with your spouse, who always seems to be having an up day when you're having a down day; patience with relatives and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt with hollow advice and logical words; and patience with time, for it takes time to adjust, and time can move so slowly. PATIENCE.

--Rose Moen, TCF,  
Carmel-Indianapolis IN

### Webinars

The Compassionate Friends provides its webinars free of charge as a service to the bereaved. If you have questions about the webinars please email us at [webinars@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:webinars@compassionatefriends.org). **Note: If you are connecting to a webinar using an ipad, iphone or an android application please visit the GoToWebinar site for information on downloading an app**

<http://support.citrixonline.com/GoToMeeting/>

### Scheduled Webinars

May 22, 2013, 8:00 PM Eastern Time 5:00 PM Pacific -- Coping with the Aftermath of Suicide. Suicide can bring with it feelings of failure, disgrace, humiliation, shame, guilt, blame, dishonor, embarrassment and overwhelming pain that can plague the survivors for years. Not only do survivors have to cope with the sudden loss of a beloved son or daughter, but there is also society's stigma associated with suicide. We consciously or subconsciously face the false assumptions, bias, religious judgments, and prejudice against the person or the parents faced with death by suicide. As surviving parents of their son's suicide, the Jensens hope to add new light on this subject by #1 EDUCATING and #2 EQUIPPING people with information that helped them on their grief journey to cope with the aftermath of suicide. **Presenters: Dr. Doug and BJ Jensen**

**Dr. Doug and BJ Jensen** are authors, international speakers, dramatists, and sign artists with LOVE IN MOTION Signing Choir. They co-founded the Create Loving Relationships Ministry. The Jensens live in San Diego and have been married 25 years. They have two sons (one in San Diego and one in heaven) and three wonderful granddaughters.

Space is limited Reserve your Webinar seat now at

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/767450714>

For more information, go to:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas now has a web page! Check it out and sign our guest book!

[www.Tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com](http://www.Tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com)

Also see TCF National Web Page:

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

### Donation in April:

Toni and Larry Baker, in memory of their son,

Jayson Baker.

Jayson left his earthly home and joined the angels in heaven 19 years ago.

I heard your name today and my heart did not skip a beat, nor was my mind flooded with the emotion of losing you. I heard your name today and it did not bring back the terrible hurt feelings of when you first left me.

I heard your name today with a calmness that surprised me. Many another child carries your name, and it had been torture hearing it and seeing the smiling faces on those little girls. But today I knew— I found out — what others in my footsteps found out and tried to tell me. The hurt will ease; but the memories, the love, the good times will never go away.

—Phoebe C. Redman  
TCF Bradenton, FL

When a parent loses a child, it is a long and emotional process.

It starts on the day the child passes away and only ends when the parent joins them

[www.Daveswordoftruth.com](http://www.Daveswordoftruth.com)

The Compassionate Friends  
Regional Coordinators for the state of Arkansas

David and Dana Penn

870-759-1299

[www.djdp32@hotmail.com](mailto:www.djdp32@hotmail.com)



*Our Children Remembered*

Melissa Wilkinson

Jayson Baker

Cooper Catharine Porter

Nathan Kidd

Haylee Kidd

Nicholas Zurosky

Timothy Lee Fitzwater

Shane Mathew Fitzwater

Aaron Scott Boyer

Jennifer Cook

Samantha Cook

Tyler James Tritch

Ashlyn Dunn

Carter Smith

Jayden Wilkinson

Shane Palmer

Terry Brown

Stephanie Sluder

Caiden Billups

Timothy House

Tabitha Marsh

Jennifer Lee Hancock

Steven Charles Garland

Spring Thaws The Wounded Heart

That first Spring came too soon

Why did the daffodils show sunny faces  
around the gravestone?

Why did warm breezes blow clouds away?

My world, cold, gray, dismal had no room for the season.

Now, years later, the blossoms of love, hope and healing  
have broken through grounds of utter despair,

warmed by memories of you. I join the daffodils, bringing my  
own smile

—Alice J. Wisler



If you would like your child, grandchild or siblings name added here, contact me:

[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 many families. Our work also goes 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

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

insert your check. and tape the ends closed

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

If you choose to give a love gift, please add your return address to receive your tax deduction 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date month and year \_\_\_\_\_ Death date, month and year \_\_\_\_\_

**The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas**

**Toni Baker**

**2703 Stonegate Drive**

**Paragould, Arkansas 72450**