



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/>

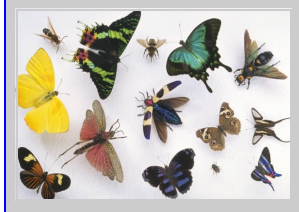
Our next meeting is June 11, 2015 at 7:00 P.M. — 9:00 P.M.

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Father's Day

A long time has passed since I've enjoyed a holiday—or for that matter any special occasion. With Father's Day coming up shortly, I've decided that this year I'm celebrating. The kids used to love when special occasions came along.

I can still remember Stef's eighth birthday, only three months before her death, and how proud she was when we told her she could invite her best friends over for a birthday party. She wore her prettiest blue trimmed party dress with the lace ruffles. The games they played still stick in my mind. There was "pin the tail on the donkey" and then "Simon Says." I remember clothes flying everywhere in a contest to see which child could put on a complete set of clothes fastest over her party clothes. I remember the hotdogs, punch and cake, the party favors. I remember Stef's giggles.

The memories also wander back to the party our family threw for Stephen's fifth birthday, only three days before the accident which also claimed his life. I still have the picture in my mind of that goofy orange cap someone had given Steve. He loved it, but it was at least two sizes too small. When he tried to put it on, the bill of the cap was up and Stephen flashed us one of those impish grins that reminds you of Spanky and Our Gang.

As I'm writing this, the tears are flowing down my cheeks remembering the good times we had together. A lot of things changed when the kids died. Christmas, Easter, birthdays all became days other people celebrated. But not us. I've done a lot of thinking since then. I know Stef and Steve are in a better place than I could ever imagine and that every day is a holiday for them. In my mind, I think Stef and Stephen would be sad if they felt their Mom and Dad couldn't celebrate life anymore.

Pat and I now have another son, Christopher, plus we have our fourth child on the way. We're trying to rebuild our lives and I feel we have been blessed along the way. Of course, Christopher is too young to understand Father's Day, but even without him here, I would still consider celebrating Father's Day. I can still remember the Father's Day a couple of years before Stef and Stephen died. With their mom, they had searched all over for something special for me, finally deciding on a T-Shirt that said "World's Coolest Dad." I still wear that now faded shirt occasionally despite the many grass stains and grease marks.

When Father's Day arrives, I think I'm going to pull out that old T-Shirt and wear it.

I'm going to lay down out in the grass, letting the warm breeze hit me. And I'm going to pretend I'm being caressed by Stef and Steve. I'm going to remember . . . and I'm going to celebrate!!

Wayne Loder, TCF Lakes Area, MI

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Healing Hearts Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

Note from our Chapter Leader, Toni Baker

We had a wonderful Mother's Day Banquet and I truly hope all who came enjoyed it. A BIG THANK YOU goes out to the Sisters of Strength, all our donors of door prizes, Southside Community Church, Mike Stallings and Craig Barnes, all who attended and all others who I may have forgotten.

I am not going to be around this summer but will be on my iPad, etc so if you need to reach me please do so. We will still hold the three monthly meetings and Linda Lenox will be hosting them with the help of others in our chapter. I ask that you all support and help her and attend the meetings--if new people attend they need us. If you would like to volunteer to help in some way please contact either myself or Linda. Our Walk to Remember/Family Picnic will be held at Crowley Ridge State Park at the lake Pavilion on September 12th. Mark your calendars and plan to attend--it's a great event and we walk in Memory of Our Children Gone To Soon But Never Forgotten!! All are welcome.

I will be walking The Walk To Remember in memory of all our children, grandchildren and siblings in Dallas, TX at the TCF National Conference in July this year. Let me know if you would like me to carry your child's name. The Fundraiser for the walk is for our chapter--please repost on your page, email, join the team. All donations support our chapter. The direct link to our team page:

<http://www.kintera.org/faf/donorReg/donorPledge.asp?ievent=1136737&lis=1&kntae1136737=A11AEADEFD334F49B29DA626DB85E223&supId=423628033&emaillogid=>

I am encouraging members of our Chapter to join the team. This is to raise funds for The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas Chapter. I, Toni Baker, will be walking in July in Dallas, TX at The Compassionate Friends National Conference in memory of all our children gone to soon but never forgotten. I hope you will support our team.

On September 19th in Walnut Ridge is Beatles Festival and Lawrence County Compassionate Friends hosts the Balloon Release in memory of our children.

We now have 3" button pins that we can put your child's picture on it--they are \$2.50 each. They are shown on our website. If we are missing your child's name on our Butterfly page, please don't hesitate to drop us a line so we can add them--seeing and hearing our children's names is very important to each of us. I hope you all have a good summer and I will be staying in touch. Love and hugs to each of you.

Toni



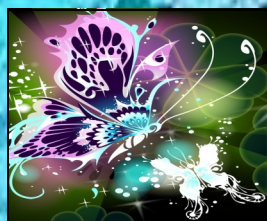
We'd love to have your feedback!

Join Us on Facebook!

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

Join Us on the Web!

tcfofnortheastarkansas.weebly.com



The mission of The Compassionate Friends: *When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.*



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Upcoming Events:

June

We will have our regular meeting on June 11th at 7pm. Bring pictures and mementos of your loved one so we can get to know and understand about each others loss. We will take turns, with each attendee given an allotted amount of time, which will depend on how many are here, to tell us about their lost loved one

JULY

Our Chapter Leader, Toni Baker, will be at The National Conference in Dallas Texas this year. She will be walking in the National Walk To Remember. If you would like for Toni to carry your child, grandchild, or sibling's name, please contact Toni:

870-476-6025 or baker2205@msn.com

There is a link on page 2 in Toni's note that leads directly to a webpage for our own Team Page for the National Walk To Remember fund raiser. Toni's note explains about the team page. It is also on our facebook page.



August

We will have a regular meeting in August.

Our own chapter Walk to Remember/ Family Picnic will be held on September 12th at the Crowley Ridge State Park at the large pavilion. This will be our 3rd year for this event and it's always a good time. More information will be posted closer to the date.

September

Our friends in Walnut Ridge from the Lawrence County Chapter will have their Balloon Release on September 19, 2015. It will be part of the Beatles on the Ridge Annual Celebration. This is a beautiful way to remember our children, and a fun day.

Announcements: *Love gifts and donations*

A big thank you goes out to Heath Funeral Home. They have offered to run our printed newsletters for us.

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Thank you for your donation to help support the work of TCF of NEA. We appreciate you very much!! Love gifts can be given in memory of a loved at anytime. Hugs to you all!!



If you would like to contribute to the newsletter with an original poem or story you've written, or if you wish to stop receiving this newsletter, please contact me at:

**[linda@thelenoxfamily.com](mailto:linda@thelenoxfamily.com)**

You may see families interacting with each other by laughing and playing as though there is not a care in the world and you wonder if you will ever be able to do that again. Life is so very different after the death of a child, grandchild or sibling but it can be good again. It will never be the same as we will never "get over" the death but we can learn how to cope. You will always see this message woven throughout the post on this page. It is a difficult journey but there are those that have walked this path before us that continue to set an example for us and we are thankful.

Karen Cantrell, Frankfort, KY-TCF

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!**

#### 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!**

#### Our next 3 Meetings!

June 11th, 2015

July 9th, 2015

August 13, 2015

#### Mark Your Calendars!





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

### A FATHER'S GRIEF

"When asked, as fathers frequently are, about how his wife is doing, he is amazed that no one realizes he is barely holding himself together." How does a father grieve? Is the process different from that of a mother? I believe we fathers feel the same emotions, but it is how we experience these emotions and how we deal with them that can differ greatly from a mother's grief experience. Men may be articulate, even garrulous, but women are expressive. Many men prefer talking about ideals; women feel comfortable discussing feelings. Yet grief is about emotions and feelings and how to work through them; it is not about ideas... Men are conditioned not to show feelings but to stifle them. We build a shell, layer after layer as a defense against the bumps and bruises of boyhood, the hurt limbs, and the hurt feelings. For many of us, this is the perspective from which we must confront our grief. What do men do with pain they cannot shrug off?...Men of my generation may try to ignore the pain, but the death of a child results in a level of pain that is impossible to ignore. So we acknowledge it, and then we try to carry on. Even in the business world, men are not granted leave to recover from a loss. We're expected to observe the rituals of mourning and then throw ourselves back into our work, put up a good front, and continue to function at a high level of concentration and dedication. I carried this expectation to a ridiculous level. When I learned my son died, I flew out to the city where my son was attending college and made the necessary arrangements. Then I called my boss to let him know that we would be staying over one night and I would be back to work the next day! Grief is a label attached to such a myriad of emotions that it is impossible to identify all of them adequately, or describe their intensity. For me, anger was probably the most intense emotion I experienced. As a parent, I expected to protect my family; and as a man, I expected always to be in control. The sense of helplessness I experienced and the lack of control over events overwhelmed me. Anger was not the only intense emotion I experienced. Guilt consumed me. Why wasn't I a better father when Bryan (my son) was alive? Why didn't I spend more time with him? How could I have allowed my career to infringe on time with my children? I always seemed to be looking forward towards the future, rather than experiencing the present. Perhaps this issue is particularly significant for fathers who invest so much of their time and energy focused on the future, preparing a child's way, too often deferring activities with the family. In the five years since Bryan's death, grief has been like learning to climb a mountain. The slope is steep and often slippery, and the air is thinner the higher I venture. But as I work my way up, my muscles grow stronger. ...My perspective has changed. What drove me before, what seemed so God-awful important to me, has shifted in focus to my family, my work with The Compassionate Friends, and my work with children. How did I know when I was finally beginning to heal? It was simply this; when I first thought of the joy of Bryan's life, rather than the pain of his death. Maybe in a year or so I'll know what the other side of the mountain is like.

Reprinted in part from an article by Bob Rosenberg, National Compassionate Friends Newsletter, Summer 1992

*It hurts when  
you have someone  
in your heart,  
But you can't  
have them in  
your arms.*



The Compassionate  
Friends  
Supporting Families  
After A Child Dies



# Healing Hearts Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas

## *The Compassionate Friends of Northeast Arkansas Mother's Day Banquet*



*Catarina Lopez*





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

### *Our Children Remembered*

**Cooper Catharine Porter**

**Haylee Kidd**

**Jennifer Cook**

**Samantha Cook**

**Jennifer Lee Hancock**

**Ashlyn Dunn**

**Annaya Marie Edwards**

**Tabitha Marsh**

**Stephanie Sluder**

**Julie Ellen Amick**

**Olivia Jurkin**

**Mattie Bryant**

**Shayla Jo Miller**

**Jasmine Sierra Miller**

**Betty Luker**

**Stephanie Morgan**

**Rita Tritch**

**Joanne Hamner**

**Nathan Kidd**

**Nicholas Zurosky**

**Timothy Lee Fitzwater**

**Shane Mathew Fitzwater**

**Aaron Scott Boyer**

**Aidyn Isaiah Queen**

**Shane Palmer**

**Steven Charles Garland**

**Timothy House**

**Carter Smith**

**Tyler James Tritch**

**Terry Brown**

**Jayden Wilkinson**

**Caiden Billups**

**Blake Howerton**

**Andrew Wayne Myers**

**Jon David Penn**

**Joseph "Chase" Jackson**

**Tyler James Troutt**

**Matthew Russo**

**Brent Hawkins**

**Nathan Swafford**

**Daryl Ponder**

**Billy Ray**

**Noah Spencer Boyd**

**James Clapp**

**(continued on next page)**





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

### *Our Children Remembered*



**Brian Nelson**

**Richard Petty**

**Michael Dickerson**

**Ryan Bender**

**Bentley Tyler**

**Bobby Hall**

**Joshua Weaver**

*If you would like your Childs name  
added to this list, contact me:*

*[linda@thelenoxfamily.com](mailto:linda@thelenoxfamily.com)*

*If you find that there is a mistake in your child's name,  
please contact me.*

*I want these precious names to be perfect.*



#### **TCF of NEA Telephone or email Friends**

**Toni Baker, 870-476-6025 or [baker2205@msn.com](mailto:baker2205@msn.com)**

**Toni's son Jayson died in a motorcycle accident.**

**Linda Lenox, 870-573-6920 [orlinda@thelenoxfamily.com](mailto: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.**

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

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no longer wish to receive this newsletter.  
You **DO NOT** have to attend meetings to receive newsletter.

Address Label

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

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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**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ For: \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Expense \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Expense \_\_\_\_\_ Where Needed

IN MEMORY OF (state relationship) \_\_\_\_\_

GIVEN BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We truly appreciate your love gifts.

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 who have "been there" can give. **COME JOIN US!!**