



The Compassionate Friends

Fredericksburg Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**MARCH
2023**

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.

Chapter Leader's Corner

Happy Spring! Well almost Spring, hopefully the cold weather is gone for the season! When thinking of Spring we think of renewal, like a butterfly coming out of its cocoon. The days are beginning to get longer and hopefully it will begin to get warmer, let us focus on the bright new days ahead, the butterflies flying around and remember our children fluttering around us happy and carefree. Our children have died, but they are not gone from any of us. They will always be fluttering around.

Our meeting will be March 21, 2023, meeting will start at 7:00 PM at new Redeemer Lutheran Church, 5120 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg, VA in the Fellowship Hall.

The topic of our meeting will be Seasonal Grief where the traditions and memories of each season tug at the heart of a grieving person, reminding them of what was lost.

Alan Pedersen is coming March 11th and will be presenting a Healing, Guilt and Regret Workshop. Please see the next page for the invite. Invites have been sent out via Signup Genius and Email.

With Alan Pedersen Workshop coming we will not be having a **TCF Fredericksburg Chapter Diner for Extra Support & Encouragement** the 1st Thursday in March. We will have it again in April. Invites will be sent out via Signup Genius. We hope to see you there.

Hope to see you there.

Healing Hugs,

Kathie Kelly
Kevin's Momma/Thomas' Sister
Chapter Leader

Jill Medina
Tristan's Mom
Co-Leader

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Fredericksburg Chapter meetings are every 3rd Tuesday of each month 7:00 PM.

Redeemer Lutheran Church
5120 Harrison Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
(Fellowship Hall)

Next Meeting March 21, 2023, at 7:00 PM

MAILING ADDRESS

Compassionate Friends c/o Kathie Kelly
6001 Potomac Drive
King George, VA 22485

EMAIL – tcffred@gmail.com

CHAPTER LEADER - Kathie Kelly
(540) 220-4325

Chapter Leader Email – kellykathie@hotmail.com

CO-LEADER – Jill Medina
540-538-0112

Co-Leader Email: jillmedina8@gmail.com

CHAPTER WEB PAGE-
<https://tcffred.wixsite.com/tcffericksburg>

CHAPTER E-MAIL – tcffred@gmail.com

Compassionate Friends National Office

48660 Pontiac Trail
#930808
Wixom, MI 48393

Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

E-MAIL: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



Dinner for Extra Support & Encouragement

We will be having a **Dinner for Extra Support & Encouragement** on **Thursday, April 6th**. Below is the information:

Place: Dickey's Barbecue Pit

Located in: Southpoint Shoppes

Address: 10008 Southpoint Pkwy Ste 100,
Fredericksburg, VA 22407

Date: April 6, 2023

Time: 6:15 PM

We will send out a sign up later in March. We hope to

CHAPTER COOKBOOK FUNDRAISER

Hi everyone. We would like to ask that you send us your children, grandchildren and sibling's favorite recipes or their favorite meals. We would like to create a Chapter Cookbook to sell for a fundraiser for the chapter.

Please email them to tcffred@gamil.com.

Thank you.

ASK IT BASKET

Is there something you want to discuss? A theme you want to discuss?

There is an Ask It Basket set at the table where you can write what you want to discuss at the meeting or future meeting(s).

MARCH CHAPTER MEETING

Place: Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fredericksburg, VA 22407 (Fellowship Hall)

Date: March 21, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

The topic of our meeting will be Seasonal Grief.

Sign up <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094DA8AC2BA1FEC34-tcfmarch> so we know how many are coming for refreshments. Please **note** you do not need to sign up to come to the meeting. All are welcome.

We hope to see you.

Healing Hugs Kathie and Jill



Compassionate Friends Fredericksburg Chapter is Hosting Alan Pedersen's Healing, Guilt, and Regret Workshop

Alan Pedersen is an award-winning speaker, songwriter and recording artist. His inspirational message of hope and his music have resonated deeply with those facing a loss or adversity in their lives and have made him one of the most popular, in-demand presenters in the world on finding hope after loss. Since the death of his 18-year-old daughter Ashley in 2001, Alan has traveled to more than 1,500 cities speaking and playing his original music with Angel's Across the USA. This year is his final tour. Alan also successfully served four years as the Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends, the largest grief organization in the world.

Alan's message is simple...he believes that grief and loss offer the opportunity for ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. He believes that healing begins when we give of ourselves by helping others.

Date: 03/11/2023 (Sat)

Time: 3:00 – 6:00 PM

Location:

Redeemer Lutheran Church and Preschool

5120 Harrison Road, in Fellowship Hall

Fredericksburg, VA 22408

Sign up <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094DA8AC2BA1FEC34-alan> so we have enough refreshments.



CHAPTER INFORMATION PAGE

BIRTHDY TABLE

We have a ***Birthday Table*** at our local TCF meetings. This table is for you to share your child/children's birthday. If you would like to share, please feel free to display picture(s) of your child and/or bring your child's favorite cake, candy, or anything that you want to help share their birthday with others who are open to "celebrating" with you. You bring decorations that meant something to your child, or helps you remember that special day.

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Having a tough day (or night)? Need someone who understands and is willing to listen or talk, whatever your pleasure? Please call a telephone friend or write to an e-mail friend for a conversational "hug." It helps. We are only a phone call or quick e-mail message away.

Kathie & Keith Kelly (toddler) – 540-220-4325
Kristi Pruitt (young adult overdose/multiple children) – 540-498-7518
Jill Medina (sudden young adult) - 540-538-0112
Joan Brand-King (suicide)- (540) 288-3289

If you would like to be on this list to listen to someone who needs an ear, please email me and let me know.

Fredericksburg, VA TCF Chapter - Steering Committee

Chapter Leader: Kathie Kelly
Co-Leader: Jill Medina
Sibling Coordinator: Vickie Headley
Treasurer: Jill Medina
Remembrance Cards: Kathie Kelly

Greeters: Seasoned Members
Candlelight Coordinator: Vickie Headley
Facilitator: Kathie Kelly/Jill Medina
Hospitality: OPEN
Newsletter Editor: Kathie Kelly

OK...WE NEED HELP!!! We will be needing people willing to let the world know what we are up to with Publicity, people to reach out to Funeral Homes and present information to newly bereaved parents, a person to tend to our Chapter Library and a person interested in being our Newsletter Editor. Are you ready to help? We could really use the help. Our chapter is only as good as the volunteers who work to make it a safe and supportive place for our bereaved families. Please contact Kathie Kelly about anything you might be able to do at 540-220-4325 or tcffred@gmail.com.

Our Children Remembered

This month we remember the children on this page who are deeply and sadly missed on these special days in their lives. Please take a few moments, place them in your thoughts, and remember them on their day along with their parents. A phone call or note would be so special and kind. None of us ever forget our special days and the messages that say "I care" help us get through them. Our children's lives will go on as long as we remember them, as long as we celebrate their lives.

MARCH SPECIAL DATES

BIRTHDAYS

- 03/01 Jeremy, son of Dan & Debbie Hawley
- 03/08 Johnathan Rogers, son of Teresa Meggs
- 03/13 Amy Rebecca Wetmore Buckley, daughter of Mary Jane & Chris Wetmore
- 03/20 Lisa Dawn Butler, daughter of Patty Pryor
- 03/22 Matthew Lee Elder, son of Sharon Hauger
- 03/23 Erin C. Bosch-Fallon, daughter of Gordon Bosch.
- 03/27 Aubrey Corinne Morgan, daughter of Beth & Park Morgan

ANGELVERSARIES

- 03/04 D. A. Henry, son-in-law of Karen & Brian Dickerson
- 03/04 Thomas John Hancock, son of Tammy Hancock
- 03/04 Ryan Anthony Kessler, son of Roberta Kessler
- 03/14 J'haun Pendleton, son of Melissa Parks
- 03/14 Isaac Evans, son of Charlena Evans
- 03/15 Megan Carter, daughter of Diane Burgess
- 03/18 Matthew Lee Elder, son of Sharon Hauger
- 03/18 Steven Perry Landenslager II, son of Steve Landenslager
- 03/21 Ellen Urbanske, daughter of Nancy Urbanske

NOTE: if you do NOT want your child's name listed in the newsletter, PLEASE contact the newsletter editor immediately. If you find any mistakes and any names left off, please contact me at tcffred@yahoo.com or 540-220-4325. Thank you!

What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes part of us. – Helen Keller

TCF 46TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE DENVER, CO ~ JULY 7-9, 2023



REGISTRATION & HOTEL RESERVATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!!!

We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 46th Annual National Conference in Denver! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

MORE INFORMATION: <https://tinyurl.com/4796hwnd>

Adult Registration:

Special Opening Rate \$245

(Ends March 31 at midnight, MST)

Early Bird Registration \$280

(Begins April 1, ends May 31 at midnight, MST)

Conference Registration \$310

(Begins June 1, ends July 5 at midnight, MST)

Onsite Registration \$325

(Begins July 6)

REGISTER NOW <https://tinyurl.com/2up9wpj6>

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

This year's conference will be held at the Sheraton Denver Downtown. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated reservation link. Our discounted room rate with the Sheraton is \$159 per night plus tax. Please note that each attendee can reserve a maximum of two rooms. Many attendees arrive on Thursday since the conference begins early on Friday morning. We also have pre-conference activities that are offered on Thursday evening, that attendees find beneficial. We look forward to seeing you in Denver!

RESERVE A ROOM <https://tinyurl.com/2rjsn7hk>

WRITINGS AND POEMS PAGE

MEMORIES

Today I was walking
On a street in my town
| I came across a big white house
With a carefully manicured lawn
I saw a little boy
Playing in the sand
Running his trucks to and fro
My mind drifted to another land.....
The days when I once had a little boy
Who loved to play in sand
Who picked me little flowers
And placed them in my hand
Who loved to yell "Mommy"
When a butterfly landed near
Who looked to me for answers
A boy who had no fears
A child who loved life
As I had taught him to do
Who gave of himself
But left this world too soon
Tears slid down my face
As I watched the little boy
Remembering my own son
When my life was filled with joy
I sighed a big sigh
As the memories ran through my head
Of another sandbox long ago
And the many things my son said
Whenever I see a child
Around the age of five
I always get the "memories"
Of our life before he died
I touch a dandelion
| When it's white and turned to "fluff"
Remembering my birthday flowers
And how the weeds meant so much
I only have my memories
After all the years gone by
I still can't help my heart
I still sit down and cry

By Sharon Bryant Andy Dunbar
Reprinted with permission of author
January 22, 1972 – October 24, 1977
I'm his mom and he's my special angel ... forever

I Am Spring

I am the beginning. I am budding promise.
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels
creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play.

I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
With compassion, we feather nests
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream
I whisper truth – life is change.

I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

(Written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox, author of
'Finding What You Didn't
Lose' and 'Poetic Medicine'.)
Carol Clum

A Promise

The colors of life change as we go through grief.
We begin black and white;

Then gray settles over us, seeping into our pores,
surrounding us,

Smothering us for a long period of time; then slowly
the colors change.

We may not even be aware of their changing 'til one
day we see a rainbow,

And know it was meant for us.

Faye Harden
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

Tristan Medina

Did you know that over 80% of college students have at least one alcoholic drink over a two-week time? Of these college students, 40% are binge drinking (i.e., having four or more drinks) on occasion, which greatly surpasses the rate of their non-college peers. This discrepancy between college students and their non-college peers is largely due to the college environment. More specifically, college students must transition from depending on their parents at home to depending on their peers on campus. Peer interactions may be essential for college students in that peers provide the guidance and support needed to circumvent this transitional period. In addition, the freshman population is particularly reliant on peer groups because they are new to the college environment and are attempting to adapt to the college lifestyle. Although peers may be an essential coping mechanism during this transitional period, the increase of peer involvement in a student's everyday life may influence the increase of peer pressure as well.

Peer pressure, or the direct or indirect encouragement from one's own age group to engage in activities that they may or may not want to engage in is a major factor in the development of risk-taking behaviors (e.g., alcohol use, drug use.) Peers act as an influential model by introducing, providing, or pressuring risky activities (i.e., alcohol, drug use) to other peers. By modeling these behaviors to their peers, college students are viewing alcohol and drug use as a positive and socially acceptable experience.

For those who don't know me- my name is Jill Medina and I am Nicolas', Tristan's, and Tyler's mom. Let me say how excited I am to see what this season brings! I promised Nicolas I would not cry so he doesn't have to get up and out of his "comfy" seat- so I will try my hardest.

First off I'd like to thank all of you and your families for the love and support you showed last year when Tristan passed away. I cannot begin to tell you how much the outpouring meant to us. I can't believe it's been almost a year and I truly apologize for not speaking to you all until now.

I would like to honor Tristan by telling you the simple facts of what happened to Tristan and the dangers of joining a fraternity and/or using alcohol and drugs. Some of you will be heading off to college soon and the rest of you will still be deciding on what to do in the future. You will, undoubtedly, meet new people, travel to new places, have new experiences. High School is the steppingstone to Adulthood. I truly hope that this summary deters you from the same circumstances. If I get to at least ONE of you, I will feel I have honored Tristan!

Tristan was a home body in high school. He had an inner circle of close friends and never stepped out of that circle. He didn't go to school parties, drink alcohol, or smoke weed. That all changed when he went off to George Mason University. He was one on a campus that has about 20-30,000 students and he didn't know a single person there. He got through his 1st semester making friends with his suitemates. The 2nd semester his suitemates talked him into rushing for the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity. The fraternity promised socialism, community service, club sports, first in line for jobs, and most of all, brotherhood. It motivated him to make new friends-to become a brother again with those that were close to him because he longed for that closeness, he had with Ponax Football.

When Tristan told me he was rushing for a fraternity I did my research and immediately drove to GMU to discuss the dangers of alcohol and hazing. I never even thought about the drugs that were rampant. How stupid was I? In hindsight- I don't believe any mention of that would have changed what happened, but the guilt I feel is a huge weight on my whole being.

Tristan was not perfect. Nick is not perfect. Tyler is not perfect. I am not perfect- no one is. Tristan, however, as so many of you are, was vulnerable to peer pressure, negative influences, and sometimes acted without fully understanding the consequences. That's how teens brains are geared. Everyone in the frat drank, did drugs, partook in risky behavior and without consequence. Tristan thought he could too. Tragically- the FIRST and ONLY time he did- he paid with his life. You ask: How do we know it was his 1st time? His texts and calls to his friends said so, his roommates said so, his frat brothers said so. His one mistake ended his life- and ended our family's life as we knew it.

To express how I feel every minute, hour, day, week, month is impossible. The rollercoaster of grief is like a villain- it robs you of friends, life, happiness. You feel isolated. Any moment I will rage, or cry, or both. There are so many triggers, feelings of guilt, loneliness, helplessness. Just the other day I ran into the store (which is rare these days) and happened upon a pair of Vans. Tristan loved vans! I let out a high-pitched squeal and my eyes teared up. At that moment a man walked around the corner, looked at me, and looked horrified. I wanted to shout to him- you don't know what its like! He'll never wear these again-you see- I tried to bury him with his vans but was told he wouldn't need them where he was going.

Triggers- you don't know what they are until they happen- his favorite food in the grocery aisle, seeing pictures of graduation and those on the first day of school, passing his favorite restaurant, watching his favorite movie, sloths, all the things he loved. I'll never have those moments again - only continued heartbreak and learning to live anew with that empty chair by my side.

There is a loss of friendships/relationships we once knew- are they scared of us? Are they mad at us? Are we toxic because Tristan made a mistake? Are they afraid to mention Tristan? Do we seem standoffish? Do you look at us as being toxic/a danger? Are we an embarrassment because Tristan made a mistake? We don't mean to- we are trying to learn how to live with a huge void in our heart. We want you to mention Tristan-it helps know that you remember him. We want you to call and ask how we are doing-it shows us you remember.

Tristan didn't sign up for illegal acts when he joined the fraternity. He didn't engineer evil acts. They were already a fraternity standard-hazing, rape, fake id factory, stolen tests, drugs, alcohol. Unfortunately, Tristan made a mistake. He succumbed to allowing himself to do what those around him were doing without fully thinking of the consequences and the result has left us struggling to learn how to live this new life, this new family dynamic.

The guilt and embarrassment we feel cannot truly be expressed.

Please do not do this to your family. As you prepare to finish your senior year and get ready to "Adult" please remember the consequence of Tristan's mistake. **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT-AVOID SITUATIONS WHERE YOU ARE UNCOMFORTABLE-ADMONISH FRATERNITIES-ADMONISH PEER PRESSURE.**

To Our First-Time Readers and New Members And To Our Long-time Members

To Our New Members

If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time, it is because someone has told us that you might find it helpful or you asked us to send it to you. We cordially invite you to attend any of our meetings which are held on the third Tuesday of each month at Redeemer Lutheran Church, in the Basement, 5120 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg from 7:30 to 9:00 PM. Nothing is required of you. There are no fees or dues. You need not speak a word. Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. If you have never come to a meeting, you are probably wondering what this group of people that you don't even know can do for you. It is here that comfort and support can be given by those that "have been there". We've all had chunks of our hearts torn out. Yet those holes get smaller with the loving touches, friendly smiles and kind reassuring words from each other.

Try not judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. At your first meeting you were hoping that TCF could get you over your terrible pain and depression and loneliness and guilt and anger and all of the other faces of grief. You came expecting to go home, feeling "better, if not cured." Instead, you met other parents who are still coping with forms of grief after months or even years. Perhaps you didn't notice there were some parents who were doing "OK." But the bottom line is you may go home from the first meeting feeling worse than when you came. Give it another try you will probably find, that each meeting uncovers a piece of the puzzle of life after the death of a child. It may take several meetings, but, hopefully, you will find the road to recovery like we did.

To Our Long-time Members

"TCF gives me a sense of purpose. A good enough reason for you to consider sticking around a while after you feel you have reached an acceptance or at least worked through your grief. Others need you. Pass the love on—adopt a bereaved parent!"

Fay Harden, TCF - Tuscaloosa, AL

CAN YOU HELP? Do you remember your first meeting of The Compassionate Friends, those first months of your grief journey? You desperately needed someone to talk to, someone who knew the pain of losing a child, someone to hug you, cry with you, listen to you. And there are newly bereaved parents who now need your help. Are you willing to be there for them? If two years or more have passed since the death of your child, and you feel that you are ready to give back some of the support that was shown to you, please consider a place of service in our chapter. There is a job for everyone. Don't wait call me at 540-220-4325. If you can't serve, please, at least, come to meetings to lend your support and understanding to our newly bereaved families. We have had so many new members join us the past few months. We need all the help we can get to help them. Thank you from all of our children.





Find the Support you Need Online.

Being a member of Sibling loss can be challenging at any phase of life. Our world has physically pulled us apart from getting the connection we need the most. Join our online community of Siblings that understand what you are going through. Regular meetings, art, writing, yoga and book clubs help you to feel connected and realize that you are not alone.

Please click on this link [TCF SIBS \(mailchi.mp\)](https://mailchi.mp/tcf-sibs)



Your Siblings

A First-Timer's Perspective: *Thoughts on the 2005 National Conference*

When my father began going to the national Compassionate Friends meetings several years ago, I thought it was wonderful. When my mother joined him a few years later, I was ecstatic. The idea of the two of them being surrounded by other bereaved parents in an environment that allowed them to share their experiences seemed nothing short of brilliant. My sister Lynn and I agreed that it showed definite progress on their part in dealing with the loss of our older brother Rich. We were their cheerleaders, taking care of the house and the dogs while they did their thing in Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Hollywood, CA. For our part, we wanted nothing to do with it. We always managed to find an excuse not to attend...the meetings were too far away. We had to work that weekend. We just weren't ready to go yet. Last summer we learned that the 2005 National Conference was to be held in Boston...a mere twenty minutes from our house. We were stuck; we had to go.

If I had been hesitant to attend the other conferences, the sudden death of my sister this past November did nothing to increase my desire to go. I had no problem helping in *preparation* for the conference, but I tried to think of every possible way out of actually going. However, the bottom line was that Lynn and I had agreed to go—if for no other reason than to support our parents—and so I went. Alone. And it was scary.

Having had literally no exposure to Compassionate Friends meetings, I didn't know quite what to expect. I knew that the men and women who flocked to our house in late November were extraordinary. They felt the pain of my parents as we stumbled blindly through Thanksgiving night and Christmas morning; they looked at me saw the pain of their surviving sons and daughters who had lost their brothers and sisters. I could take them in small doses, but disregarded them in part because they were there for my parents. No one really knew what it was like to lose a brother or a sister....let alone both. I dreaded going to the conference because I didn't want to deal with the consequences of opening the door. I worried that once I started dealing with all my grief I wouldn't be able to stop. And I was right. From the outset of the conference, I was overcome with sorrow and sadness for all the people who had suffered losses as bad, if not worse than my own. I couldn't see past the sadness and senselessness of all the loved ones who had been lost.

As the weekend progressed, however, I came to see that while it is indeed overwhelming, the very essence of this beautiful support system is found in its awe-inspiring numbers. While the workshops I attended ranged from slightly boring to extremely stirring and inspiring, no part of the weekend moved me as much as the Candle Lighting ceremony and the Walk to Remember. These two events embodied the TCF belief "We need not walk alone". Looking around the room at the hundreds and hundreds of candles that were lit in honor of those we have lost roused a feeling like no other I have ever experienced. It was sad and tragic, yet beautiful in the communality of the pain we all shared. Walking among the mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters, down the beautiful streets of Boston on Sunday morning was amazing. Each person displayed names and pictures of those they had lost, proud to have their loved ones be known. Perhaps most satisfying of all was to take part in this walk, not as the lonely trio my parents and I have become, but as part of a larger family. To see my father walking with his new friends, my mother a short distance behind with others she had recently met, and even me...walking not with my sister and brother as I would've liked, but rather *for* them, beside my new friend as well.

Throughout the weekend, I heard it said many times that TCF is a family, and though it's a family no one would ever choose to be part of, it is remarkable nonetheless. Are the conferences for everyone? No. I didn't want to go because I was scared and it was inconvenient. The truth is, there is no convenient time to fall apart. You will always be able to come up with an excuse that prevents you from dealing with things. While the weekend was hard at times and left me utterly exhausted at the end, it was worth it. For those of you who are too busy/too tired/too anxious to go to a conference, I hope for your sake you "get stuck" going like I did. It's an experience you'll never forget and one that cannot be conveyed through words.

Libby Mirabile
In Memory of my brother, Rich and my sister, Lynn



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

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There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events. If you feel you are now in a place in your grief journey where you can help and give back to the chapter in any little way, we would love your help. Most of us find that when we reach a point of giving back to those who come after us, we gain far more than we give.

I could really use volunteers to plan our special events (Picnic and Candle Lighting). Other areas of need are in Fundraising, Publicity, and Outreach.

If you would like to volunteer to help please contact me at tcffred@gmail.com or 540-220-4325.

LOVE GIFTS

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers interested in helping bereaved families, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations make it possible for us to mail this monthly newsletter, contact newly bereaved parents, continue our participation in TCF National, and meet other chapter expenses. Often, as they find hope and healing within the group, parents contribute, usually in memory of a child who has died, or a gift of thanksgiving for their surviving children. These contributions are our only source of funds. It is a meaningful way to honor our children and we are grateful to members who can contribute their generous support.

If you would like to donate to our chapter, you can do it in a few ways. ***You can drop it in the container at our meetings, donate online at <https://tcffred.wixsite.com/tcffredericksburg>, or you can mail it to us.*** Our mailing address is below:

TCF Fredericksburg Chapter
c/o Kathie Kelly
6001 Potomac Drive
King George, VA 22485
Make check out to TCF Fredericksburg Chapter

Thank you to the following who donated to our chapter:

All members who donated at the meeting and candle lighting.

RESOURCES

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Suicide Hotline - 988
Mary Washington Hospice – (540) 287-7231
Snowden of Fredericksburg – 540-741-9900
Capital Caring - Kristi DiFilippo, LCSW - 540-735-0972

HELPFUL WEBSITES

The Compassionate Friends National Office - www.compassionatefriends.org

Bereaved Parents USA - www.bpusanova.com

Capital Caring - <http://www.capitalcaring.org/>

Llost - www.llost.org/index.html

Grief Net - www.griefnet.org

Good Grief - www.goodgriefresources.com

The Bereavement Journey - www.thebereavementjourney.com

National Share Office - www.nationalshareoffice.com

Survivors of Suicide - www.survivorsofsuicide.com

Healing Heart - www.healingheart.net

MISS Foundation - www.missfoundation.org

Holding onto Love - www.holdingontolove.com

Comfort Zone Camp - <https://www.comfortzonecamp.org/>

Camp Rainbow - <http://www.marywashingtonhealthcare.com/services/hospice/351-grief-support/3347-camp-rainbow-grief-camp>

Mary Washington Hospice - <http://www.marywashingtonhealthcare.com/services/hospice/351-grief-support/2840-child-family-bereavement-hospice-support-care>

Teens Helping Teens - Ann Bernardi at ann.bernardi@mwhc.com or (540) 287-7231

Kids Helping Kids - Ann Bernardi at ann.bernardi@mwhc.com or (540) 287-7231

Grief 101 – Ann Bernardi at ann.bernardi@mwhc.com or (540) 287-7231

Grief Share - <http://www.griefshare.org/>

Compassionate Friends Online Support

The Compassionate Friends offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions.

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support/>

Private Facebook Groups

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of closed Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. A private message will be sent prior to approval, please be sure to check your mailbox marked "Other" if you do not receive one in your main mailbox. These pages were established to encourage connection and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings grieving the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling.

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/private-facebook-groups/>

TCF - Loss of a Child - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/407123299460580/> Moderators: Janet Ferjo, Karen Gieselman, Donna Goodrich, and Goody Tendall

TCF – Loss of a Stepchild - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1615569958699734/> Moderators: Babe Muro

TCF – Loss of a Grandchild - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/421759177998317/> Moderators: Debbie Fluhr, Jennifer "Sue" Hale, Helen Hill,

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings) -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/> Moderators: Tracy Milne and Keith Singer

TCF - Men in Grief - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1614661475452607/> Moderators: Gary Odle and Mark Rambis

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1515193738693712/> Moderators: Barbara Allen, Mary Lemley and Karen Zaorski

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1516508415263760/> Moderators: Andrea Keller, Kristy Flower and Barbara Allen

TCF - Loss to Suicide - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/100315106988458/> Moderators: Donna Adams, Donna McGrew Anderson, Leanna Leyes, Mary Ann Ward, and Barbara Reboratti

TCF - Loss to Homicide - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/924779440868148/> Moderators: Dawn Wassel and Rebecca Perkins

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/858226880883307/> Moderators: Michelle Arrowood and Robin Landry

TCF - Loss to Cancer - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/903539646362818/> Moderators: Rita Studzinski

TCF - Loss of a Child with Special Needs - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1150750608285413/> Moderators: Carla Gust Nordlinder and Donna Reagan

TCF - Loss to Long-term Illness - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/833665880062696/> Moderator: Debbie Gossen

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1511758585777339/> Moderators: Tiffany Barraso, Julia West and Deanna Wheeler

TCF - Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/976514755722145/> Moderators: Anne Arbalaez, Becky Barch, Joannie Kemling, and Tonja Knobel

TCF – Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1416535188654265/> Moderators: Libby Hall and Kelly Kittel

TCF – Loss to Mental Illness - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1481781792114726/> Moderators: Sherry Cox and Annette Swestyn

TCF – Crafty Corner - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/663193450477232/> Moderators: Gail Lafferty and Kathy Rambo

The Compassionate Friends Chapter Leadership (for anyone currently serving on a Chapter steering committee) Moderator: Debbie Rambis - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1422251371371148/>

TCF – Sudden Death: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/103330700152910/> Moderators: Dana Young, Carol Ladouceur and Bettie-Jeanne Rivard Darby

TCF – Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren (for grandparents who are raising the children of their child who died) Moderators: Diana Marie