



Katy, Texas Chapter Newsletter September 2017

**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Katy Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**Chapter Co-Leaders
Newsletter Editor
Treasurer**

**Jan Bigbee Weesner and Jo Wood
Annette Mennen Baldwin
Lisa Leonard**

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.

*****September Meeting *****

When: **Tuesday, September 12, 2017** **6:30 PM – Doors Open at The John Burns Building**
7:00 PM—Meeting Begins

Where: **Kingsland Baptist Church** 20555 Kingsland Blvd,
Katy, TX 77450
John Burns Building, east side of Church complex

Program: The Tapestry of Grief



Directions:

From East of Fry Road (coming from Houston): Go west on I-10 to Fry Road. Turn left (south) on Fry Road. Turn right (west) on Kingsland Blvd and travel 0.5 miles to Kingsland Baptist Church.

From West of Mason Road (coming from San Antonio): Go east on I-10 to Westgreen Blvd. Turn right (south) on Westgreen Blvd and travel 0.6 miles to Kingsland Blvd. Turn left (east) on Kingsland Blvd and travel 0.5 miles to Kingsland Baptist Church.



Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to all who attended their first meeting in August.

Karl & Jennifer Brueckner, whose son, Paul Thomas Brueckner, died in July 2017
David & Arlene Brunn, whose daughter, Alysa Gay Wiggins, died in August 2016
Mary Cook, whose son, Kasey Samuel Kamischke, died in August 1995
Jim & Susie Knepper, whose son, Eric Travis Knepper, died in February 2014
Tim & Cindy McDonald, whose son, Mark McDonald, died in May 2017
David & Rosie Pena, whose daughter, Stephanie Amanda Pena, died in May 2015
Annie Thompson, whose son, William Bundy Shouse, died in March, 2017

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.

The death of your child is probably the most traumatic, life-changing event that you will ever experience. The Compassionate Friends is an organization of parents who have also lost a child to death. Each of us has experienced the deep, searing pain that you are feeling now. Each of us has turned to other parents who were farther into their grief journey for guidance, support and understanding. This is done through our monthly meetings, our newsletter, our website, our phone-a-friend program, our library, our e-mail program and our referral program. Each month parents find our meeting to be a safe place where they can talk about their pain and problems with others who are uniquely qualified to understand; bereaved parents offer gentle suggestions or often simply listen. We invite you to bring a friend to your first few meetings until you feel a level of comfort with the group. Do not be surprised if we talk about the happy times with our children, the wonderful memories and the various methods we have created to keep our children close to us. It is here that many bereaved parents find hope as those who are more seasoned in their grief shine the light of experience to help illuminate each grief path. We have no dues. We are self-sustaining through donations and the generosity of so many in our community. You Need Not Walk Alone.

Our Children Remembered

Birthdays

September 2	Austin Joseph Becer, son of Joe & Cindy Becer
September 5	Nicholas Irwin Kenefick, son of Maureen Irwin
September 6	Jason Boyle, son of JoAnne Moudik, brother of Julie Hudson
September 8	Brian Wood, son of Michael & Jo Wood
September 8	Monica Anne Frederick, daughter of Dorothy Frederick
September 9	Troy David Murphy, son Kimarie Linehan
September 10	John Edward Nemeth, son of Betty Ann Davis
September 12	Jennifer Ann Roberts, daughter of Joe & Linda Roberts
September 13	Corey Demaro Renard Linwood, son of Clifton Linwood
September 14	Jaden Christine-Sue Ayotte, daughter of Bonnie Damstra
September 16	Stephen Paul Rider, son of Sharon & Don Sackreiter
September 18	Myron "Spencer" Kinley, son of Karl & Melinda Kinley
September 19	Roxanne Rene Rangel, daughter of Georgina Rangel
September 20	Katrina Marie Barth-McDonald, daughter of David & Michelle Barth
September 22	Laura Eliska Swails, daughter of Markey Swails
September 25	Iris Lee Jones, daughter of Mindy Garcia
September 25	Kelly Brianne Leasher, daughter of Brian & Joyce Dakin
September 27	Sonya Ann Cunningham, daughter of Jean McKinney
September 27	Christopher "Cole" Knight, son of Jan & Ken Knight
September 28	Ryan Bennett Elliott, son of Terry & Susan Elliott
September 29	Eric Travis Knepper, son of Jim & Susie Knepper
September 30	Travis Austin Welch, son of Kelly & Lance Golemon, brother of Kristen Hundley

Anniversaries

September 2016	1 Year	Casey Aren Chesson, son of Philip & Patty Chesson
September 2016	1 Year	Nancy Marie Dean, daughter of Paige & Carmella Dean
September 2016	1 Year	Jenna Davis, daughter of Jimmy & Linda Davis
September 2015	2 Years	Patricio Aguilar, son of Paul & Elisa Mora
September 2013	4 Years	Angel Batrez, daughter of Tony & Stephanie Batrez
September 2013	4 Years	Michael "Shaun" Witt, son of Marika Will
September 2013	4 Years	Stephen Michael Wall, son of Patti Wall
September 2013	4 Years	Trevor "Lovit-Bob" Brigmon, son of Richard & Shannon Simmons
September 2012	5 Years	Mark Robert Leal, Jr., son of Michelle Duncan
September 2012	5 Years	Ryan Anthony Cross, son of Mike & Charlotte Cross
September 2012	5 Years	Nikki Danielle Thelen, daughter of Teresa Tropeano-Wilson
September 2012	5 Years	Johnny "Bryan" Hoover, Jr., son of Bonnie Guillot
September 2010	7 Years	Isabella Ramirez, daughter of Natalie Ramirez
September 2010	7 Years	Christopher Charles Dunlap, son of Cindy & Lloyd Dunlap
September 2010	7 Years	Joe Michael Caballero, son of Rosie & Eddie Caballero
September 2007	10 Years	Jakob Heath, son of Dawn Levell
September 2006	11 Years	Sean Patrick McElroy, son of Jan & Pat McElroy
September 2006	11 Years	Gregg Lanier Holland, son of Carolyn Montgomery
September 2006	11 Years	Nicholas Christopher Sayles, son of Scott & Vickie Sayles
September 2004	13 Years	Gregory Jackson, son of Doug & Christine Jackson
September 2004	13 Years	Jennifer Ann Roberts, daughter of Joe & Linda Roberts
September 2002	15 Years	Christopher James Elder, son of Mike & Berni Elder
September 2001	16 Years	Rein Gregory Henderson, son of Rick & Kim Bozeman, Grandson of Greg & Cheri Hartford
September 1999	18 Years	Laura Bear, daughter of Don Cagle

Katy TCF Volunteers

Cards of Remembrance—Robin Conner
Welcome Cards to new members—Brenda Schmitt
Newsletter—Annette Mennen Baldwin
E-mail to group—Annette Baldwin—tcfkaty.messages@gmail.com
Publicity & E-Mail correspondence—Annette Mennen Baldwin
Picture Buttons—Annette Mennen Baldwin
Holiday & Craft Projects—Neela Sen
Welcome Packages—Sherrie Schurman
Library—
Web Site—Lee Schurman
Treasurer 2017—Lisa Leanard—lisleanard@sbcglobal.net
Snacks—Debbie Mercer
Facilities Coordinator: Melinda Ginter
Memorial Bench Maintenance—
Group Facilitators - Albert Tapia, Robin Conner, Lisa Leanard, Annette Mennen Baldwin, Jan Bigbee, Sherrie Schurman, Jo Wood, Viola Escanaro, Sherry Contreras & Brenda Schmitt, Ghislaine Thomsen, Debbie & Bill Mercer
Group Leaders: - Jo Wood & Jan Bigbee Weesner



National TCF Contact Information

TCF National Office
 P.O. Box 3696
 Oak Brook, IL 60522



Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

Mark Rambis
 Regional Coordinator, Southern Texas

Join Our Chapter E-Mail List

To join, send an email to: tcfkaty.messages@gmail.com

September Topic: The Tapestry of Our Grief

The September meeting topic is one of our favorite analogies: The tapestry of our grief. We will weave this tapestry of our grief for the rest of our lives as bereaved parents. That is the simplicity of life after our child dies.

How we choose to weave that tapestry and reflect those times before our child died, as well as our lives after our child died, is up to us. Knowing that the past is remembered as perfection, and the present is thought of as imperfection is enlightening as we work to rebuild ourselves and our lives after the death of our child.

The September meeting will be held on September 12, 2017, at 7 pm at the Kingsland Baptist Church on Kingsland Blvd in Katy. If this is your first meeting, please try to arrive by 6:30. The meeting itself will begin at 7:00 pm. We hope you can join us.



Summer's End

By Sascha Wagner, from Poems of Sascha Wagner

Always at summer's end
There comes that moment
When memory brings to me
Gifts from the past.

I see your faces then,
Glistening in the sun,
I hear your laughter then,
Shared by the wind.



And in that glint of time
I feel you near again,
As you were, long ago,
At summer's end.

Birthday Table

If your child's birthday is in September, please bring a picture or memento to our September meeting to share with the group. In April and December we ask that you bring your child's picture for the birthday table in the month before or after the actual event. We hold our balloon release in April and our Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony in December.



Loving Listeners.....Phone-A-Friend

TCF Katy has established a phone-a-friend list for parents who want to talk with someone who shares a similar loss. If you would like to volunteer to be a phone-a-friend, please contact Annette Baldwin.

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Accidental Death of Child Living at Home Jo (281) 795-3235

Loss of an Adult Child.....Annette (281) 578-9118

Only Child.....Annette (281) 578-9118

Murdered Child..... Robin (281) 851-5425

Neonatal Loss.....HAND (832) 752-1919

Death of Teenage Child..... Brenda (281) 804-7087

Jo (281) 795-3235

Accidental Death of Adult Child.....Annette (281) 578-9118

Death from long term illness.....Karen (832) 746-0279

Death of a Disabled Child.....Neela (281) 579-1262

Suicide.....Sherrie (281) 579-7741

Support for Fathers.....Albert (832) 885-4741

Newsletter Articles & Poems

If you would like to submit a poem, a writing or a brief article (no more than 800-825 words) for our Katy Compassionate Friends newsletter, e-mail your work to us at tcfkaty.messages@gmail.com

Special Small Group Meeting For Parents Whose Child Was Lost to Suicide

The Katy Chapter of TCF has a unique program for parents whose children died from suicide. All parents attend the opening of our meeting each month and then adjourn to their own private meeting for the remainder of the meeting. Death from suicide usually requires additional and unique group dynamics.

This program is offered only to parents who have lost children to suicide.

Tailored Small Group Meeting For Parents Whose Child Died From Addiction or Related Cause

By request we have established a group meeting for parents whose child died from addiction disorders, overdose or a cause of death related to the years of struggle with addiction.

You will still meet at the opening of our evening together with the entire group. Following opening remarks and special topical discussions, we will break into our small groups. If you would like to meet with this tailored group, you simply need to accompany the leader to the small group meeting room.

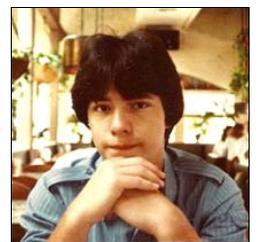
This is a unique group that was requested by our existing members. You are welcome to join this group and share your grief journey with others who have experienced a similar tragedy.

Parents of Younger Children Meet in Private Group

If your child was still a minor and living at home...whether your child was two years old or 17 years old, the experience of your child's death at this young age is unique. Many parents of younger children have requested their own group to discuss their loss and establishing a new normal without their younger child.

This group meets together after the opening group meeting. If you would like to participate with this group, you will be told by the leader which room is in use for this special meeting after the opening meeting.

Printed in Loving
Memory Of
Todd M. Mennen
1967-2002



The Trip

He's Taking this trip without us,
He's going on his own.
And though we aren't beside him,
I know he's not alone

For everywhere he ever went
He left a friend behind.
This journey's no exception,
So I know he'll be fine.

But tell that to our broken hearts
Who felt it wasn't time,
To take our ray of sunshine
And leave us all behind.

This time when he travels
He'll go on Angel wings,
A lifetime of eternal love
Is all he'll need to bring.

The love he shared is growing deep
Within your heart and mine,
He's taking this trip without us,
But I know he will be fine.

By Joanie Thompson Yust
In memory of Charlene

Celebrating Robin's Life

On August 10th this year we marked a sad event: the passing of our son and only child, Robin Kumar Sen, due to complications from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. And once again we are participating in the annual Muscle Walk which will be held at the University of Houston Main Campus on September 9th, 2017, and we are collecting funds to support yearly summer camp for youngsters aged five to twenty-one free-of-charge and free clinics for everyone. Monies collected also go toward life-saving research to find cures and treatment for the some forty diseases that come under the umbrella of The Muscular Dystrophy Association's philanthropic efforts at eradication.

Robin was not always confined to a wheelchair and walked with a side-to-side gait until he was twelve years old. When he was a year old he used to slide over the floor on his buttocks and his paternal grandmother predicted that he would become a cripple.

My parents suggested treating him with homeopathic medicines and massaging his legs with emollients to ease any discomfort. Our physician prescribed supportive shoes and he eventually walked when he was two and a half. We became concerned when Robin turned seven and couldn't climb the monkey bars at a local park and took him to a specialist, Dr. Ibrahim. He didn't tell us anything definitive for about a year, and then one day Robin tried to get up from the floor. Robin did this in his usual way by placing his hands on both knees, kneeling and rising. Dr. Ibrahim referred us to a neurologist, Dr. Sullivan, in Oakbrook some fifteen miles from Naperville where we were living at that time in 1989 and when we went to see him he said he suspected that Robin might have Duchenne MD. He also said that they would have to confirm with a biopsy: the diagnosis came back positive in October 1989.

Robin went for periodic check-ups at MDA's free clinics at TIRR in Chicago and he also attended the annual week of free camp in Yorkville, Illinois where he got to do things that he could never do at home. We remained in Naperville until 1994 and Robin got to live in his dream home with skylights and a family room with a cathedral ceiling for two years.

In August 1994 we moved to Katy, Texas and Robin attended Memorial Parkway Junior High, Taylor High School and the University of Houston Main Campus. He was three quarters done with his undergraduate degree and then the disease he was born with took his life on August 10, 2006. May God hold him in the palm of his hand until we meet again. We love you Robin and celebrate the twenty-five years we had with you.

*Neela Sen, TCF Katy, TX
In memory of my son, Robin Kumar Sen*

Remember Our Loving Listeners List

If your pain and anxiety overwhelm you, and you feel you need to talk with someone, please check our Phone-A-Friend list on page three of this newsletter.

You will find a member of our support team who will talk with you and help you discover things you can do to help you and your family.



Steering Committee Now Acts As Support Team At Meetings

Our steering committee will act as a support team at each Compassionate Friends Meeting. Each member wears a name tag with the words "Support Team" on it. Members of our steering committee are: Annette Mennen Baldwin, Jan Bigbee Weesner, Ghislaine Thomsen, Jo Wood, Sherry Contreras, Brenda Schmitt, Sherrie Schurman, Viola Escarena, Ghislaine Thomsen, Debbie & Bill Mercer and Albert Tapia.



You need not walk alone.

The LIGHT Program At Bo's Place

Bo's Place also offers the LIGHT (Looking Inward Grieving and Healing Together) Program, an eight week grief support program for families with children ages 5 to 18 whose parent or sibling has died in a traumatic or sudden way, such as by car accident or other accidental death, murder, suicide, or unexpected medical emergency. The program provides families with a specialized curriculum in which they confront the reality of their loss and the tragic circumstances that were involved.

TCF E-Newsletter

An E-Newsletter is available through the National TCF Organization. To subscribe, go to TCF's National Web site home page (www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on "Register for E-Newsletter" link.

Grief Share Offered in Houston and Katy

Grief Share, a Bible based grief program offered by many Christian churches in the Katy and Houston area, will begin in September and October. To gain information on a Grief Share program near you, go to the website: www.griefshare.org.

Kingsland Baptist church, where our TCF chapter meets, will be offering Grief Share on September 7—December 7, 2016, at 6:30 pm. Call Jessica Molinari at 281 675 7862 for information. The address is 20555 Kingsland Blvd, Katy, TX

Grace Fellowship United Methodist Church will be offering Grief Share from Sept 7 2015—Dec 7, 2016. The church is loc Call 281 646 1903 ext 134, Carmal Paholck, for more information. The church is located at 2655 South Mason Road, Katy, TX.

Check Out Our Library

Our TCF library has many books, tapes, CDs and DVDs for our members. Each one has been carefully selected by a member of our TCF Chapter. The library is available for browsing before, during and after our monthly meeting. Check-out is a snap. We encourage our members to use this wonderful resource. There is much from which to choose; check it out at the next meeting. We have relocated our library table to the hall next to our snacks for your comfort.

Webinar Archives- A Great Anytime of Day Resource

The Compassionate Friends national website offers resources that are available whenever you need them. One such resource is the archives of the webinars that have been recorded over the past two years. We have a list of what is available now. Simply go to compassionatefriends.org and click on the webinar archives under resources.



Grief to Greatness Website

Several of our members read this website daily. The message is transition to hope after the death of a loved one: <http://griegtogreatness.com/index.html>

Add A Page To Our Chapter's Memory Book

We encourage each of our members to add a page to Chapter Memory Book...a page devote to your child. If you would like to include your child in this album, the page size is 8 1/2 x 11. If you have questions, contact Annette Baldwin.



I Give You This

I give you this one thought to keep:
I am with you still; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not think of me as gone,
I am with you still, in each new dawn.

Native American Blessing



Grief and Anxiety Disorders

By Ghislaine Thomsen, *Andréa's mom*

I have been on this grief journey for almost 26 months, and I am still discovering the different stages of my grief. It is interesting how I am thinking that I have gone through the disbelief, the anger, the guilt and acceptance stages, but these stages are cyclical. They keep coming back at different periods of our lives. I am also closely watching how my family is coping, all 4 of us finding a different way to stay afloat and continue living. What I did not foresee was the extent of the post traumatic stress and anxiety disorders that it could cause a bereaved parent, sibling, grandparents, or spouse.



I did not understand fully how someone could be at such greater risk of anxiety disorders after the sudden loss of a loved one. That is until it touched our family.

Anxiety and panic disorders can make a perfectly healthy person very ill with no known reason. There are a wide range of symptoms, which can include palpitations, sweating, shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, and many more. They can make life absolutely miserable and overwhelming, as if the loss of the loved one was not enough.

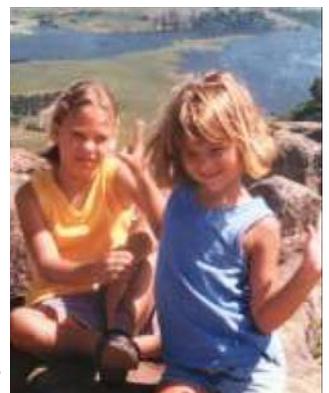


Recognizing what the symptoms are, and understanding that the person is not going crazy is a good first step. Taking action is difficult as the person experiencing these symptoms must want to receive treatment. Many young adults going through this grief journey may not want to get the treatment, for fear of being labeled. I think treatment could be explained as when someone has a broken leg, they get a cast on the leg until it is healed. The cast is temporary. Seeking treatment will most of the time help the person heal and feel good again. The family unit, the support team is so important to the person suffering.



Communication in a non-threatening or confronting way is key. Being there, truly being there for the person suffering, listening and loving unconditionally that child, parent, spouse will be of great benefit. My family and I are finding our way through all of this, through the stumbles, and through the breakthroughs.

This article is not intended as a cry for our family, but it made me think that other families are going through what we are going through, and perhaps we can open the dialogue on this topic. Anxiety and panic disorders can be debilitating, and perhaps we can help each other, perhaps we can help our children.



"Slow breathing is like an anchor in the midst of an emotional storm: the anchor won't make the storm go away, but it will hold you steady until it passes."

~Russ Brown



A Note to Our New Members

Attending your first Compassionate Friends meeting can be a frightening experience. Bereaved parents are vulnerable, lost, heartbroken and fearful of the unknown. Please remember, each of us was in this same place not so long ago. Bring a friend or your spouse for support to your first few meetings.



Someone from our group will talk with you and sit with you as well. We are here for you...the newly bereaved parent. We suggest that you attend at least three meetings before deciding whether or not TCF will help you on your grief journey. You need not walk alone.

A Request of Our Longer-Term Members

Take a moment of your time today to think back to the beginning of your grief journey. It's difficult even to recall the events surrounding your child's death, let alone remember your first Compassionate Friends meeting. Yet you came, and when you arrived a sweet voice soothed your shattered nerves, talked with you, welcoming you and explaining the chapter meetings so you would know what to expect.

Someone was there for you. Many "established bereaved parents" were ready to give you a hug, dry your tears, hold your hand and support you as you said your child's name for the first time in an open group setting. There was a gentleness and kinship in this room that you would find no where else in the world.

Your unique perspective is needed by the many newly bereaved parents who enter our meetings each month for the first time. Each of these parents deserves a gentle welcome, a kindred soul upon whom they can rely. Trust is a sacred bond that gets us through the first meeting and perhaps the second and third meeting as well.

Remember who you were and all that you have become since coming to Compassionate Friends. If you can find it in your heart to give back to those who need the security of our group now, please return for them. The gift of hope is such a precious treasure.

"Have you ever lost someone you love and wanted one conversation, one more chance to make up for the time when you thought they would be here forever? If so, then you know you can go your whole life collecting days, and none will outweigh the one you wish you had back."

~ Mitch Albom,
For One More Day

"She was no longer wrestling with the grief, but could sit down with it as a lasting companion and make it a sharer in her thoughts."

~George Eliot

Endowment

Hope gives us vision for regaining the tenderness of memories.

Hope carries us through to survival and healing.

Hope offers us courage for acceptance and overcoming.

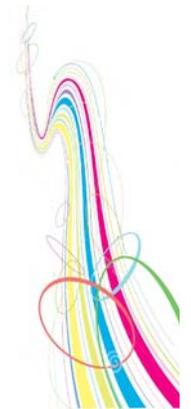
Hope gives us new spirit and new laughter.

Hope is among the greatest gifts to be found in time of sorrow.

But hope cannot restore on earth what is lost to death.

Hope can only go forward and make us new.

Give space to hope in your life.



Sascha Wagner

© The Compassionate Friends

From LARGO, Fall 2001

In Memory of Our Beloved Children

Memorials Given by:

Robin Conner

Brenda Schmitt

Ghislaine & Henrik Thomsen

In Loving Memory of:

Christopher Frederick Wilson

Dawn Marie Wilson-Shafer

Matt Schmitt

Andrea Mary Stottrap Thomsen

Thank you for your donation to The Compassionate Friends, Katy, TX Chapter

Our chapter is operated entirely by volunteers dedicated to furthering the work of TCF. Your voluntary, tax deductible donations honor your loved one in a meaningful way by enabling us to print and mail this newsletter and meet other expenses involved in reaching out to other grieving families. We hold no fundraising events, and we rely on our members to sustain our chapter.

Donations along with the name of the person being honored may be sent to:

Lisa Leanard
13814 Wheatbridge Drive
Houston, TX 77041

The Tapestry of Grief September Program:

**Meeting: Tuesday, September 12, 2017
Doors Open at 6:30 pm, Meeting at 7:00 pm**

Return Service Requested



13814 Wheatbridge
Houston, TX 77041

The Compassionate Friends