



Supporting Families  
After a Child, Sibling,  
or Grandchild Dies

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## TCF - KATY Chapter Newsletter Second Quarter 2022

Chapter Co-Leaders Allyson Edwards and Carolyn Porter  
Newsletter Editor Ghislaine Thomsen  
Treasurer Carolyn Porter



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.

**PLEASE READ:  
IMPORTANT  
MESSAGE**



### Second Quarter 2022 - TCF Katy Chapter SIBLING meetings

#### Join our Zoom Sibling Meetings

- **Thursday, April 14, 2022 @7:00 PM**
- **Thursday, May 12, 2022 @7:00 PM**
- **Thursday, June 16, 2022 @7:00PM**

ZOOM Meeting ID: 869 6606 7161  
Password: tcfsibs

**SIBLING MEETINGS hosted by Jill and Stephanie**

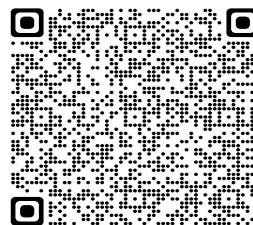


TCF 45th National Conference  
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

### **THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS 45TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**August 5, 2022—August 7, 2022  
Marriott Marquis Houston**

**Registration is now opened!**



Capture the QR Code on  
your phone and register  
on-line.  
You should also have  
received an e-mail from our  
national office with the link.

## *Welcome*

We extend a warm welcome to all our new members

### **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 - TCF Credo**

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, a sibling or grandchild to death. Each of us has experienced the deep, searing pain that you are feeling now. Each of us has turned to other parents, siblings, or grandparents 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 families 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, siblings and grandparents 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, siblings or grandchildren, the wonderful memories and the various methods we have created to keep them close to us. It is here that many bereaved families 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.*

BIRTHDAYS

April Birthdays

1	Jasmine Jisell Leon	Daughter of Marlon and Janet Cruz
3	Nancy Marie Dean	Daughter of Paige & Carmella Dean
4	Cameron Paul Housman	Son of Matt & Sheryl Greenwood
5	Brandon Alexander Boudoin	Son of Wanda Boudoin
6	Dustin E Mercer	Son of Bill & Debbie Mercer
8	Patrick Wayne McCracken	Son of Wayne & Connie McCracken
8	Jonathan David Nassar	Son of Sherry Nassar
10	Ryan Hunter Patrick Stegall	Son of Robin & Trent Stegall
11	Megan Marie Small	Daughter of Patti & Kevin Small
12	Sarah Eileen Magri	Daughter of Neal & Virginia Magri
12	Lisa Beth Wieder	Daughter of Dan & Becky Wieder
13	Kelly Rae Schmittinger	Daughter of Nancy Eisenhart
14	Jeffrey Matthew Cruse	Son of Sam & Patsy Cruse
15	Francisco "Frankie" Hinojosa	Son of Anastasia Hinojosa-Shaver
15	Vijay Kewalramani	Brother of Shoba Kewalramani
15	Mark Benjamin Roberts	Son of Ben & Diane Roberts
16	Andrea Mary Stottrup Thomsen	Sister of Elizabeth & StephanieThomsen
16	Andrea Mary Stottrup Thomsen	Daughter of Henrik & Ghislaine Thomsen
20	Benjamin R. Reed	Son of Michael & Roselle Reed
22	Matthew J. Schmitt	Son of Brenda & Steven Schmitt
23	Gonash Haghshenas	Son of Ali & Rubob Haghshenas
26	Sean Patrick McElroy	Son of Jan & Pat McElroy
27	Ryan Makanani Noriega	Son of Carlos & Wendy Noriega
29	Stormy Sean Beck	Son of Howard & Linda Beck
29	Daniel Steven Prampin	Son of Lynda and Archille Prampin, Jr.



Hand-painted with love in Memory of Colby by his beloved Mom, Mary

May Birthdays

1	Austin Michael Minks	Son of Leonard & Suzanne Minks
3	Michael "Shaun" Witt	Son of Marika Will
5	Scott Boykin	Son of Sandra & Tom Wright
7	David Cooper	Son of Skip & Melissa Cooper
9	Zoe Marc-Charles	Daughter of Sandro & LaVonde Marc-Charles
10	Josiah	Son of Maren Mixon
10	Sandy Lynn Schurman	Daughter of Lee & Sherrie Schurman
12	Wyatt	Son of Cindy Williford
13	Robin Kumar Sen	Son of Neela & Salil Sen
15	Jordan Alexander (Jody) Crawley-Edwards	Son of George & Tonye Edwards
15	Reagan Elizabeth Lee	Daughter of Anne Lee
16	Christopher Frederick Wilson	Son of Robin Conner-Larsen
16	Latashia Ann Scott	Daughter of Yvette Scott
17	Todd Michael Mennen	Son of John & Annette Baldwin
19	Kenny Lewis Beer	Son of D'Juanna Beer
19	Isabella Ramirez	Daughter of Natalie Ramirez
20	Joshua Adam Sinclair	Son of Gary & Lorelei Sinclair
20	Marijo "Colleen" Smith	Daughter of Denise Smith
20	Nicholas Roland Kaschik	Son of Rosalind (Roz) Turner
26	Misty Dawn Smith	Daughter of Terri DeMontrond
26	Christopher Jason Pierce	Son of Jason & Sherry Pierce
27	Wesley Wayne Bode	Son of Joyce Bode
27	William Bundy Shouse	Son of Annie Thompson
28	Eric David King	Son of Joe & Donna Gaggos
30	Evan Rajesh Gupta	Son of Andy & Barbara Gupta
30	Keven Lewis	Son of Mary & Richard Lewis
31	Joe Michael Cabellero	Son of Rosie & Eddie Caballero
31	Christopher (Mikey) Michael Johnson	Son of Chris & Kelly Johnson



June Birthdays

1	Elijah Chavez	Son of Bernice & Jose Chavez
3	Theodore W. Sedlar	Son of Theodore & Eleanor Sedlar
3	Theodore W. Sedlar	Brother of Tim Sedlar
4	Savannah Sue Norton	Daughter of Sheree & Paul Norton
6	Terrill Swafford	Son of Trent & Margie Wittmayer
5	Teresa Alyss Johnson	Daughter of Mark & Anna Apanel
9	Daniella Skyy Maddox	Daughter of Arie'anna & Cedric Maddox Carter
9	Daniella Skyy Maddox	Granddaugther of Tiffani Crowley
15	Billy Bryant, Jr.	Son of Billy & Gloria Bryant
15	Justin James Ownes	Son of Tom & Carol Owens
15	Brian Keith Randall	Son of Margie Randall
15	Brendan Urso	Son of Kathleen & Eric Urso
16	Tomarra Zenette Hopkins	Daughter of Tabatha Hopkins Jackson
16	Matthew Evan Larabee	Son of Cathy Larabee
18	Gage Daniel Geddes	Son of Terrie Dagley
21	Jacob	Son of Maren Mixon
22	Colby Patrick Brennan	Son of Patrick & Mary Brennan
26	Emma Key	Daughter of Sherry & Steven Key
27	Reagan Joseph Barton	Son of Shirley Barton
28	Daniel Garcia	Son of Juan & Ana Garcia
29	Phillip Michael Greczek	Brother of Jill Greczek
29	Phillip Michael Greczek	Son of Mike & Carol Greczek
29	William "Luke" Pritchett	Son of Bill & Emily Pritchett
30	Shannon Faye Hooker	Daughter of Janis Hooker



April Anniversaries

3 Years	Jerry Gilbert	Son of Diane & Norman Gilbert
3 Years	Tamera L. Bowser	Daughter of Brigitte & David Johnson
5 Years	Brandon Joseph Berzas	Son of Kathleen Blanchard
5 Years	Jessica Lee Finlayson	Daughter of Ray & Cheryl Finlayson
6 Years	William (Hunter) Huntington Wood	Son of David & Nada Wood
7 Years	Chrystophor Green	Son of Rodney & Ryver Green
8 Years	Terrill Swafford	Son of Trent & Margie Wittmayer
8 Years	Eric Tunnell Anderson	Son of Sue Anderson
9 Years	Kyle James Snyder	Son of Lori Snyder
9 Years	Savannah Sue Norton	Daughter of Sheree & Paul Norton
9 Years	Gabriela Amador	Daughter of Emery Bush
11 Years	Kelly Rae Schmittinger	Daughter of Nancy Eisenhart
12 Years	Janet Harrison	Sister of Sherry Stevenson
13 Years	James Ross King	Son of Tanya & Mike Janik
13 Years	Daniel Steven Prampin	Son of Lynda and Archille Prampin, Jr.
17 Years	Jacob	Son of Maren Mixon
17 Years	Anthony Spearman	Son of Doris Grantham
20 Years	Kelly Brianne Leasher	Daughter of Brian & Joyce Dakin



May Anniversaries

2 Years	Wyatt	Son of Cindy Williford
3 Years	Landon Elliott	Son of Abby & Steven Elliott
3 Years	Daniella Skyy Maddox	Daughter of Arie'anna & Cedric Maddox
	Carter	
3 Years	Daniella Skyy Maddox	Granddaughter of Tiffany Crowley
3 Years	William M. Robinson	Son of Bob & Lilly Robinson
5 Years	Mark McDonald	Son of Tim & Cindy McDonald
6 Years	Daniel Garcia	Son of Juan & Ana Garcia
6 Years	Justin James Ownes	Son of Tom & Carol Owens
7 Years	Abby Katherine Lee	Daughter of Trent & Julie Lee
7 Years	Derek Daniel Elko	Son of Daniel & Diane Elko
7 Years	Kevin John Agudelo	Son of Luis Fernando & Diana Agudelo
7 Years	Stephanie Amanda Pena	Daughter of David & Rosie Pena
7 Years	Heather Michelle Menzie	Daughter of Robert "Bob" & Janet Menzie
7 Years	Joshua William Freeborn	Son of Cynthia Scott
7 Years	Graeme McDaniel	Son of Robby & Stephanie McDaniel
8 Years	Paul Dee Baker	Son of Suzanne Kinsey
8 Years	Alex Ernesto Cienfuegos	Son of Adriana & Oscar Cienfuegos
8 Years	Alec Christopher Hilman	Son of Laura Boyd
9 Years	Whitney Ann Grissom	Daughter of Janet Johnson
10 Years	Brandi Leigh Rushing	Daughter of Tracy & Kim McCarty
10 Years	Jo Anna Kaitlyn Hanley	Daughter of Ann Marie Hanley
11 Years	Travis Austin Welch	Son of Kelly & Lance Golemon
11 Years	Larry Gene Young II	Son of Janis Halfin
11 Years	Travis Austin Welch	Brother of Kristen & Randy Hundley
11 Years	Brandy Alayne Westerfield	Daughter of Adell & Jerome Supak
12 Years	Emma Key	Daughter of Sherry & Steven Key
13 Years	Scott Boykin	Son of Sandra & Tom Wright
14 Years	Philip "Evan" Bigbee	Son of Jan Bigbee
16 Years	Ronald Howard McCall	Son of Jeri McCall/Esmi
19 Years	Nicholas Albert Tapia	Son of Albert & Valerie Tapia
19 Years	Ian Geoffrey Woodham	Son of Geoffrey & Pam Woodham
19 Years	Austin Joseph Becer	Son of Joe & Cindy Becer
23 Years	Monica Anne Frederick	Daughter of Dorothy Frederick



June Anniversaries

2 Years	Stella Danford	Daughter of Sara & Brandon Danford Kulser
2 Years	Stella Jean Danforth	Daughter of Sara Kulzer
3 Years	Tyler Homann	Son of Christine Homann
6 Years	Donald Joseph Byers	Son of George & Peg Byers
6 Years	Keondre Dillon Viser	Son of Traci & David Dugas
9 Years	Alexis Theresa Rinicella	Daughter of Randy & Lisa Rinicella
10 Years	Ryan Makanani Noriega	Son of Carlos & Wendy Noriega
10 Years	Ryan Bennett Elliott	Son of Terry & Susan Elliott
11 Years	Jorge Alberto Contreras	Son of Maria Amparo Castillo
11 Years	Bryan Andrew Lewis	Son of Carolyn Porter
12 Years	Jerod Adam Nixon	Son of Mark & Sharon Conti
12 Years	Aaron Carter Steffens	Son of Lynn Nickel
12 Years	Ashley Elizabeth Sutton	Daughter of Patty Sutton
12 Years	Angelica Rae "Angel" Cartwright	Daughter of Stephanie & Michael Cartwright
13 Years	Charles "Chad" Preston Jones	Son of Michael & Sheree Jones
15 Years	Christine Yvette Mazyrack	Daughter of Steve & Blanca Mazyrack
15 Years	Myron "Spencer" Kinley	Son of Karl & Melinda Kinley
17 Years	Mark Vincent Korenek	Son of James & Nancy Korenek
26 Years	Jessica Erin Loverich	Daughter of Joyce Margarce





Mother's Day Brings Joy and Pain

Mother's Day used to mean special times, great moments, sweet gifts and acknowledgment of the deep bond that Mothers share with their children. I have many happy memories of Mother's Days past. Their value is incalculable.

But that was before . . . everything now is measured in "before" and "after." When I lost my only child, Mother's Day changed. Now Mother's Day has a different meaning . . . one that is not as happy as it once was, but one that still reinforces the many years I shared with my son on this earth.

I was considering this strange paradigm, this shift in my thinking over the past six plus years, and I have come to the conclusion that eventually bereaved parents begin to accept the death of their children on a subconscious level. But before that happens, our subconscious minds wage war on our conscious minds and we experience such terrible emotional lows. It's an internal fight for each of us. Along with the fight to survive, to acquire the will to continue living, we are battling internal forces that must resolve themselves. Once that internal war ends, our healing begins. We will always love and miss our children. We will always shed copious tears for no reason. But something inside of us has shifted, shaping our perspective from this point forward.

So, this Mother's Day I will acknowledge my beautiful son, the wonderful life that he lived, the joy I received in raising him and the wisdom I acquired through the gift of my child. We learn unconditional love when we become mothers. We learn foresight, gentleness, joys in the simple elements of life. I will remember past Mother's Days and think of the wonder that is my only child. I will remember him with much love, more than a few tears and a special sense of thankfulness that his life graced mine for over 35 years.

I will honor the fact that I am a mother. Although my son does not share this earthly plane with me, he is forever my child and I am forever his mother. This is a bond that time, space and death do not alter. Quietly, with serenity and peace in my heart, I will mark this Mother's Day doing what I want to do. I will know what that will be when I get there. Live in the moment . . . that's another element of life that I learned from my son.

We are each unique on our grief journey, and we will each mark this Mother's Day in a different way. Whatever your choice might be, make it your day . . . your day to celebrate the eternal bond between mother and child. There is nothing more beautiful.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF Katy, TX  
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

LOOKING BACK ON THE GRIEF JOURNEY

It has been 151/2 years since our beloved son and only child passed away from complications due to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. At that time, we were utterly devastated by this tragic end to all our hopes and dreams for Robin. Although his health had deteriorated slowly but surely as his neurologist in Oakbrook, Illinois had predicted; we had envisioned that our move to Houston with its benign weather would prove beneficial.

All things considered, we must admit that living in a city renowned for its medical community and warm climate prolonged Robin's life beyond the 20 years that Dr. Sullivan had allotted for him, nevertheless it was terrible to watch him experience pneumonia and the ensuing sepsis that caused his death.

We do not know what would have happened if we had not discovered The Compassionate Friends through another couple who had just lost a child and accompanied them to a meeting. The Katy chapter has been our solace, comfort and shoulder to cry on since December, 2006. The meetings represented an arena to share our feelings about our loss without fear of being misunderstood and a place where we can talk about our children or loved ones freely. Only those who have gone through the excruciating loss of such a kind can sympathize and listen to others without judging them unfairly.

We have also found that we have grown and developed into better versions of ourselves by helping others who are not as long in this grief journey. It has not been easy, with many twists and turns along the way but we have persevered to a position when we can laugh again. Now, we concentrate on remembering Robin's optimism and his love for others. Robin always laughed "all the way to the Kasbah".

Lovingly written by Robin's Mom  
Neela Sen

National TCF Contact Information

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

Gene Caligari  
Ghislaine Thomsen  
Regional Coordinators, Region 15 South Texas  
tcfsouthtexas@gmail.com  
713-557-6637



This Newsletter is Edited in Honor of  
Andréa Mary Støttrup Thomsen,  
Forever 24,  
Forever Missed,  
Forever Loved

Katy TCF Volunteers

Cards of Remembrance - Mary Brennan  
Welcome Cards to new members - Mary Brennan  
Newsletter, Social Media &

E-Mail correspondence  
Website & Social Media  
Holiday & Craft Projects  
Welcome Packages  
Treasurer  
Memorial Bench Maintenance  
Sibling Coordinator -

Ghislaine Thomsen  
Ghislaine Thomsen  
Neela Sen  
Mary Brennan  
Carolyn Porter  
Neela Sen  
Jill Greczek and Stephanie Thomsen





SIBLINGS SURVIVING TOGETHER

We are the surviving siblings of  
The Compassionate Friends.  
We are brought together by the deaths of our  
brothers and sisters.  
Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.  
Sometimes we will need the support of our  
friends.  
At other times we need our families to be there.  
Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our  
memories with us, continuing to become the  
individuals we want to be.  
We cannot be our dead brother or sister;  
however, a special part of them lives on with us.  
When our brothers and sisters died,  
our lives changed.  
We are living a life very different from  
what we envisioned,  
and we feel the responsibility to be strong  
even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on  
because we understand better than many others  
the value of family and the precious gift of life.  
  
Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that  
we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our  
tomorrows as surviving siblings of  
The Compassionate Friends



11:11

At night before I fall asleep  
I lay in bed and pray.  
Thankful to have made it through another day  
But there's an ache that will not go away.  
It's a feeling of both loss and pain  
There are still times when I sit and stare.  
My happiness seems to have been misplaced,  
I can't find it anywhere.  
For most of your life, those number were there  
What was the meaning of those elevens?  
Since you're gone, I've found the answer.  
It's your way of saying "hello" from heaven.  
It continues to be sad and incredibly unfair  
To have buried a son of twenty seven.  
But what more could we want as parents  
Than to know our child has gone to heaven.  
For some time after you died, those numbers brought pain.  
Now I can't wait to see them again.  
When I'm lucky enough to see those elevens  
I place a hand to my heart, my eyes to the heavens.

Tom Murphy  
Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH  
In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy

Grief RESOURCES For Men

Bereaved dads often get overlooked when people offer comfort and solace after the loss of a child. Maybe it's because fathers tend to be more stoic and less demonstrative. But fathers grieve too. Dads miss their children just as much as mothers. Men, in general, seem to grieve more privately, mourning quietly. They may not reach out to others, whether on social media or in person, even when they are really struggling.

Helping Fathers Heal (HFH) is a "closed" support group that provides a safe, secure environment for fathers to share their struggles, challenges and successes in dealing with the loss of a child. We go a step beyond many other groups by allowing the open discussion of spiritual experiences and evidence for the afterlife, in a non-dogmatic way. All fathers are welcome, regardless of religious (or non-religious) background and we encourage very open, respectful dialogue.

In addition to a group Facebook page, HFH holds bi-weekly online Zoom meetings and membership to the facebook page is not required to attend. For more information, please contact: **Mike Edwards**  
**Affiliate Leader, Helping Fathers Heal**  
**mikeedwards.hph@gmail.com**  
**Links to more information:**  
**<https://www.helpingparentsh Heal.org/groups/helping-fathers-heal/>**  
**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HelpingFathersHeal/>**

HFH is an affiliate group of the Helping Parents Heal non-profit organization, dedicated to assisting bereaved parents to become Shining Light Parents by providing support and resources to aid in the healing process.

HFH welcomes the open discussion of spiritual experiences and evidence for the afterlife, in a non-dogmatic way. They welcome everyone regardless of religious (or non-religious) background. Helping Fathers Heal is not affiliated with The Compassionate Friends.

Loving Listeners...Phone-A-Friend



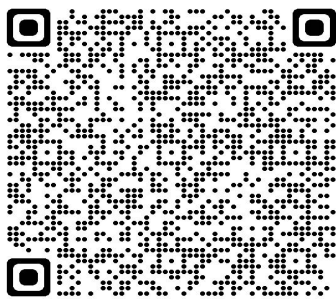
TCF Katy has established a phone-a-friend list for parents who want to talk with someone who shares a similar loss. If you would like to volunteer to be a phone-a-friend, please contact Annette.

Accidental Death of Child Living at Home and Loss of an Adult Child:	Ghislaine (713) 557-6637
Only Child:	Allyson (281) 795-1942
Murdered Child :	Ghislaine (713) 557-6637
Neonatal Loss:	M.E.N.D (405) 529-6363
Death of a child from Addiction or Related Cause:	Allyson (281)795-1942
Death of Teenage Child:	Jo (281) 795-3235
Accidental Death of Adult Child:	Ghislaine (713) 557-6637
Support for Fathers:	Bill (979) 709-7438
Special Needs Child:	Neela (713) 870-7296
Suicide:	Carolyn (281) 574-5715
Sibling Loss:	Stephanie (713)824-0873



TCF 45th National Conference  
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

**REGISTRATION  
IS NOW OPENED!!**



*Capture the QR Code on your phone and register on-line. You should also have received an e-mail from our national office with the link.*

**When:**

**August 5-7, 2022**

**Where:**

**TCF Annual Conference  
Marriott Marquis Houston  
1777 Walker St  
Houston, TX 77010**

We are very pleased to welcome back **The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 45th annual national conference** in person! TCF's annual conference is an important supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Those who attend find renewed hope and strategies for coping with grief while making friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled annually at TCF conferences.

Unique and cherished highlights of our conference include our heartfelt *Saturday evening Candle Lighting Program, sharing sessions, keynote addresses, Healing Haven, Butterfly Boutique, Crafty Corner, Silent Auction, and evening performances.* This weekend of inspiration, sharing, and learning is followed by the *Walk to Remember* on Sunday morning. *New for 2022, we will be offering TCF Sibling Camp, for younger siblings ages 9-17.*

This year's conference will be held at the [Marriott Marquis Houston](#). Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated reservation link. Our discounted room rate with Marriott is \$149 per night plus tax. Please note that each attendee can reserve a maximum of two rooms. Since the conference begins early on Friday and pre-conference activities are offered on Thursday evening, attendees usually find it beneficial to arrive on Thursday.

**OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

**Mindy Corporon** is the author of *Healing a Shattered Soul*. After Mindy's father and oldest son were murdered by white-supremacists intent on killing Jews, Mindy's life purpose changed from guiding people financially to creating space for people to learn about our differences and discover commonalities. Mindy is a Co-Founder of Workplace Healing LLC and innovator of the Human Recovery Plan™ Software Platform, which helps organizations embrace a collaborative corporate culture that balances a head-based environment with empathetic heart-based support for employees affected by life disruptions. Mindy also created SevenDays® Inc., a foundation dedicated to overcoming hate by promoting kindness and understanding through education and dialogue.

**Luci Rossi** is a registered nurse from Colorado. She has been a bereaved sibling since she was 9 months old, when her oldest brother Doug died at the age of 23. Her dad found a local chapter of TCF and later brought her to her first official conference in 2005. In 2009, loss struck again when 35 year old Tony died from cardiomyopathy. Luci was 19. Luci returned to TCF where she has presented a variety of workshops, sat on panels, co-chaired the sibling committee, and currently serves as a moderator for the TCF Sibs Facebook group. She has worked across the healthcare spectrum from the newborn nursery to hospice, and is board certified in ambulatory care.

**John Santoro** is President of TCF Foundation and the 2021 Simon Stephens Award recipient. His grief journey began on December 10, 2000, with the sudden death of his 10-year-old daughter, Paula, from a hyper-rare genetic syndrome. He and his wife Pam joined the Chatham, New Jersey, TCF chapter in 2001 and participated in their first national conference later that year. John was VP/chief speechwriter for Pfizer, where he enlisted his company as TCF's first major long-term corporate sponsor. He has written and spoken about his grief experiences in both conference settings and through the popular media, including an essay on grief published in the widely-acclaimed book on leadership, *What Is Your Life's Work?*

**Event Chairs:**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Patricia Scherer  | 832-541-4959<br>triciatcf@gmail.com       |
| Ghislaine Thomsen | 713-557-6637<br>thomsen.tcfkaty@gmail.com |

**We are looking for volunteers**, so if you are interested in giving some of your time to make this conference an amazing healing time for bereaved families, please contact [Patricia Scherer](#) or [Ghislaine Thomsen](#). Their contact information is listed to the left.

**Remember that to help others helps us heal**  
If you would like or if you know of companies that would like to help The Compassionate Friends financially, please contact Patricia or Ghislaine for the sponsorship levels and tax deduction information. We are a 501.3(c).





WALK SIGN

Walk Signs are full color and feature a photo of your child, grandchild, brother, or sister. During the Walk to Remember, Walk Signs will be carried by each walker in memory of beloved children, grandchildren, brothers, and sisters. You will be able to take home your walk sign as a precious memento of TCF's 45th National Conference and as a reminder that you need not walk alone. Each walk sign is 12" x 18".



CONFERENCE WATER BOTTLE

A treasure that you can carry with you everywhere! This year's conference memento is a 17 ounce stainless steel water bottle personalized with the name of your child, grandchild, brother, or sister. Made from 18-8 stainless steel with a dual wall construction, this water bottle features a stainless steel leak-proof, twist-off cap. It is lightweight and easy to carry. It will be ideal to use throughout the conference weekend, as well as during

The Walk to Remember, and you'll have it as practical and meaningful memento for years to come.



*If you are grieving and looking for additional community support, [Griefheal.org](https://www.griefheal.org) is another resource. They are not affiliated with Compassionate Friends, but also provide support to bereaved family. Their Actively Moving Forward (AMF) app is FREE to their users and designed to provide easy access to grief support resources.*

*If your family's life has been changed due to a birth injury, below is an additional resource that could be helpful. <https://www.birthinjuryguide.org/additional-resources/support-groups/>.*

### Grandparents' Remembrance

We are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives.

Our grief is two-fold and at times we feel powerless to help. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts.

We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild and we have lost a symbol of our immortality.

As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together.

We continue to be their guardians.

We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss.

We support the new ones which symbolize the small steps on their journey.

It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

TCF E-Newsletter

An E-Newsletter is available through the National TCF Organization. To subscribe, go to TCF's National website home page ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)) and click on Register for E-Newsletter link.

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. 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" 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 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.



Happy Birthday ma Chérie!

In a few days we will celebrate you as you would be turning 31. It will be an Andréa Day, dedicated to you. We honor you every day, but April 16 and July 4 are special dates where it is all about you and only you.

I talk a lot about hope and getting better and acceptance and the work that this relationship with grief takes!! It is all part of what we must do as bereaved families to continue living and getting better, but it can be so draining. There are times where I am totally exhausted by the toll that this grief journey is taking on all of us. I assume that I am now considered a seasoned griever, but seasoned grievers continue to grieve, and the wound never closes.

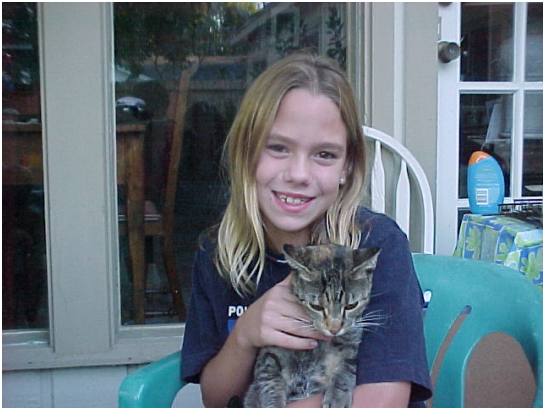
April 16 will be a good day, but a bittersweet one. So many milestones that you are missing, and there is nothing that any of us can do about it. Love truly never dies, and no matter how long it has been, milestone days are so difficult without you.

What comforts me is your spirituality, and what you have taught me and continue to teach me. The conversations that we had when you were on this earth, the energy you always referred to, the signs you continue to send us... There is no doubt in my mind and my heart that you are always with us. For the last 2,104 days you have been by my side, and you have given me the strength to get better for your sisters and your dad, but also for me. You have taken me on a path of gratitude for all the wonderful bereaved families that have carried us when we were lost. With gratitude, we can pay it forward and help those that need it the most. You have taught me to listen to others, a skill that I did not really have. You have led me to be who I am today, where love, hope, grief, acceptance are all intertwined, where it is ok not to be ok, and it is ok to be joyful and laugh.

Happy birthday in Heaven ma Chérie! There are a lot of people there with you. I hope that you have an amazing day surrounded by love, music, dance, and laughter! We will do the same here on earth! Jason Mraz will be singing in the background, while we cook out in our “Andréa’s Kitchen”, send balloons to the Universe (yes I know it is not green, but It’s your birthday!), eat a cookie cake and cookie’s n cream, drink a little whiskey in your honor and probably laugh a little!

Je t’aime avec tout mon cœur  
Maman

Written for my beautiful daughter, Andréa  
Ghislaine Thomsen



Self Care in *Early Grief*  
TIC TAC TOE

Choose three activities to do today to make a tic tac toe

 <b>ATE</b> the healthiest food I could manage	<b>HYGIENE</b> Bathed in some way, combed hair, and/or brushed teeth	 <b>Got some sunshine</b> —went outside or opened the drapes
 Drank at least <b>one</b> glass of water today	 Cuddled with pet, person or pillow	 Took a short break from Social Media
 Distracted myself with TV or book	 Put on different clothes than yesterday	 Got out of bed today

Self Care for the *Seasoned Griever*  
TIC TAC TOE

Choose three activities to do today to make a tic tac toe

 Wrote or spoke about my <b>Loved One</b>	 Moved my body in some meaningful way today	 Drank <b>plenty</b> of water today
 Interacted with other bereaved people or therapist	 Practiced <b>Self-Compassion</b> & was gentle with myself	 Laughed or cried & didn't feel guilty
 Completed a work task or household chore	 <b>ATE</b> A healthy meal or snack	<b>HYGIENE</b> Did 2 of the following: • Bathed • Styled Hair • Brushed Teeth • Make-up/Shaved • Perfume/Cologne



**The Compassionate Friends - Private Facebook Groups**

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private 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. Please go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) , click on SUPPORT, click on ONLINE COMMUNITIES, click on PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. Please note, all three questions need to be answered in order to be approved. If you are on a phone or tablet, you will need to scroll down before hitting “submit.” If you are still waiting approval after three days, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

- TCF – Loss of a Child
- TCF – Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth
- TCF – Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Loss of an Infant Grandchild
- TCF – Infant and Toddler Loss
- TCF – Loss of a Child 4 -12 Years Old
- TCF – Loss of a Child 13-19 Years Old
- TCF – Loss of an Adult Child
- TCF–Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children
- TCF – Loss of a Stepchild
- TCF – Loss of a Grandchild
- TCF – Sibs (for bereaved siblings)
- TCF – Loss of a LGBTQ+ Child
- TCF – Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a Child
- TCF – Multiple Losses
- TCF – Men in Grief
- TCF – Daughterless Mothers
- TCF – Sudden Death
- TCF – Loss to Substance Related Causes
- TCF – Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes
- TCF – Loss to Suicide
- TCF – Loss to Homicide
- TCF – Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver
- TCF – Loss to Cancer
- TCF – Loss of a Child with Special Needs
- TCF – Loss to Long-term Illness
- TCF – Loss After Withdrawing Life Support
- TCF – Loss to Mental Illness
- TCF – Finding Hope for Parents Through TCF SIBS
- TCF – Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren
- TCF – Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation Issues
- TCF – Inclusion and Diversity
- TCF – Grieving with Faith and Hope
- TCF – Secular Support
- TCF – Reading Your Way Through Grief
- TCF – Crafty Corner

The Compassionate Friends Chapter Leadership (for anyone currently serving on a Chapter steering committee)



**The Compassionate Friends**  
**Katy , TX Chapter**



**Remembering our beautiful**  
**Children, Siblings and Grandchildren**  
**Cherished Always**  
**Forever Loved**  
**You Will Remain**  
**In Our Hearts Forevermore**



**TCF - Katy Chapter**  
**[Www.Compassionatefriends-katy.org](http://www.Compassionatefriends-katy.org)**