



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

GALVESTON COUNTY CHAPTER  
August 2011

Support Meetings held on 2nd Monday  
of the Month (exception is December)

Mail:  
PO Box 568  
Texas City, TX 77592

Phone:  
(409) 996-9440  
(Calls to this number will be returned  
within 24 hours)

Website:  
[www.tcfgalvestoncounty.org](http://www.tcfgalvestoncounty.org)

Co-Chapter Leaders:  
Larry Oshel  
Bambi Oshel  
[grammy127@earthlink.net](mailto:grammy127@earthlink.net)

Treasurer:  
Dana Rogers  
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Newsletter:  
Lori Kelly  
For email submissions:  
[sabalo130@comcast.net](mailto:sabalo130@comcast.net)  
[grammy127@earthlink.net](mailto:grammy127@earthlink.net)



*Next Meeting*  
*August 8, 2011*  
*7:00 pm*

at  
First United Methodist Church  
317 Fifth Avenue N  
Texas City, TX 77590

National Office: The Compassionate Friends  
PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
(877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## Special Thanks

Texas City Terminal Railway  
For all your support of the  
Galveston County Chapter  
The Compassionate Friends

Manning Masonry Co, Inc.  
For the placement of the bricks  
In the Memorial Garden

Anniversaries and birthdays are difficult for bereaved parents. In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and support their families. Your child is listed here only at your request, with a signature on the response form in this newsletter. You need to submit it only once.

The Mission of the Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

## AUGUST REMEMBRANCES

**Thomas Cory Philips**

August 2nd  
Karen Philips, mother

**Michaela Lea Reed**

August 3rd  
Gracie & Mike Reed, parents

**Griffin Robert Weathers**

August 3rd  
Kathleen Bracken, mother

**Peter Barrientos Rodriguez**

August 4th  
Sophia Rodriguez, mother

**Nicole Ann Feske**

August 5th  
Robin & Theresa Feske, parents

**Nicholas Santa Maria Garland**

August 6th  
Aida Garland, mother

**C J Waddell**

August 7th  
Renee Hitchcock, mother

**Keith D Thorne**

August 11th  
Annie White, mother

**Jephrey Keith Vincent**

August 21st  
Billy & Janna Vincent, parents

**Casey Laday Sr**

August 29th  
Natha Laday, mother

**Toni Dunn**

August 30th  
Ruth Garner, mother

## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

**Griffin Robert Weathers**

August 3rd  
Kathleen Bracken, mother

**Michaela Lea Reed**

August 3rd  
Gracie & Mike Reed, parents

**Raymond Keith McCulloch**

August 4th  
John W. McCulloch, father

**C J Waddell**

August 5th  
Renee Hitchcock, mother

**Toni Dunn**

August 7th  
Ruth Garner, mother

**Tiffany Renee Garcia**

August 13th  
Vicky Jones, mother

**Michael Duane Massey**

August 14th  
Charles & Linda Massey, parents

**Squeaky**

August 18th  
Donna James, sister

**Nicholas Santa Maria Garland**

August 20th  
Aida Garland, mother

**Kevin George Auker**

August 20th  
Dolores Avalos-Corcoran, mother

**Robert 'Bert' Galvan Jr.**

August 21st  
Robert & Lucy Galvan

**Todd Thomas Bentley**

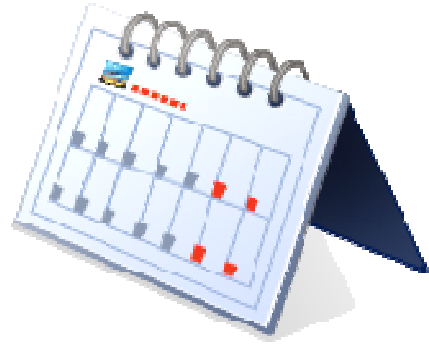
August 22nd  
Donna & Earle Bentley, parents

**George Mitchell Delany, Jr.**

August 31st  
Mary Etta Gulotta, mother

## ***Special Information***

Food King in Texas City makes a donation of 1% to our chapter for all purchases we make there. Just drop your receipts off at Rust & Dust, 1519 6th St Ave N., Thursday—Sunday



Our cookbooks, **Recipes of Times Remembered, Volume 2**, are now available. You can find them at Rust & Dust, 1519 6th St N, Texas City, Thursday through Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm. The cook books are \$10 each.



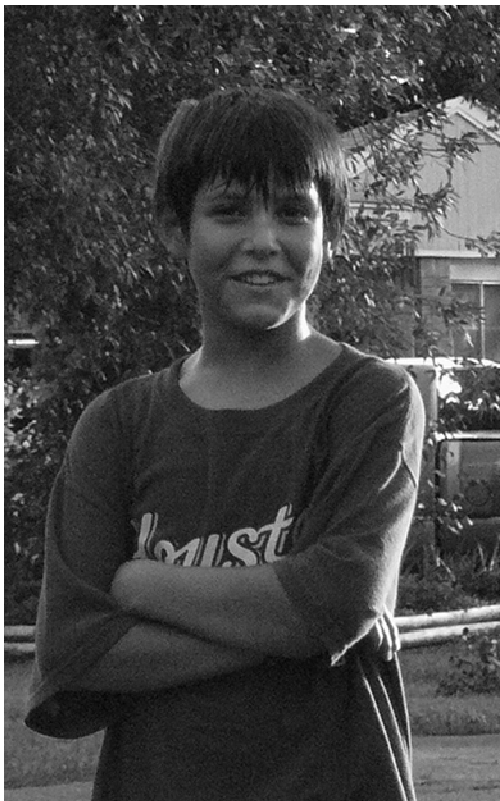
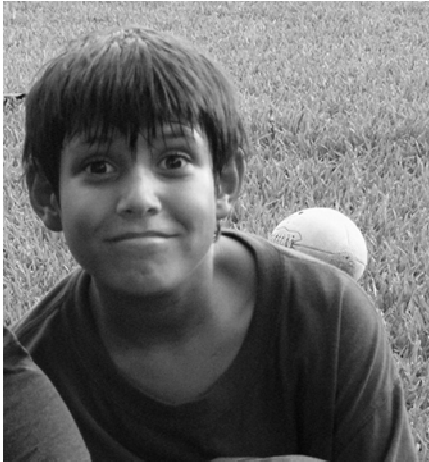
A Note from the Newsletter Editor:

When submissions are received we try extremely hard to place the submission in the newsletter exactly as submitted. However, there are times when this is not possible. You are always welcome to send the pictures and notes, poems, etc in without setting it up. I am always happy to lay out your page for you. Please email your submissions to [grammy127@earthlink.net](mailto:grammy127@earthlink.net) or [sabal0130@comcast.net](mailto:sabal0130@comcast.net) or snail mail it in to the po box. Submissions are welcome anytime!

Thanks,  
Lori  
Newsletter Editor

Jephrey Keith Vincent

3-20-97 8-21-08



Another year has come and gone, Yet I still feel as  
though I'm stuck in time.

I still find myself looking at the door waiting for you to  
come through.

As I see all your friends and all the changes they have  
gone through I sit and think what would You be like  
today.

My heart is broken beyond repair without you here,  
what do I do without you??

There is a song that every time I hear I wish was true.

**(If heaven wasn't so far away I'd pack up the kids and  
go for a day)**

**(Everyday Son)**

**I'D BE THERE EVERY DAY WITH YOU!!!**

We Love you so Much

Mommy, Daddy, Brothers

§

Family § Friends

# Love Gifts

In Memory of Sonny Henderson  
by his mother, Doris Henderson

## WELCOME

We would like to welcome a new chapter in our area:

#2383 TCF of Montgomery County, Texas,  
3326 Willie Way  
Spring, Tx. 77380

Phone contact 832-205-0411 - Rebecca

[MOCOTCF@gmail.com](mailto:MOCOTCF@gmail.com)

Chapter Leader: Rebecca Lee Jones

### I never believed...

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on...that it can still have meaning...that even joy can touch your life once more.

*Don Hackett, TCF*



## Did I Love Him Enough?

*I hope I did. It's sad that now I'm only able to look back and hope I did. There are no do-overs. There are no, "I'm sorry"s. There are no thoughts of "I'll do better next time" or "I'll spend more time with him today." The lesson I've learned is so valuable but it's a lesson you only learn when you lose a child. Oh, I wish I could tell him that it was OK that he lined his shoes against the entire wall of his bedroom when I sent him in there to clean his closet. In fact I should have said it was ingenious or adorable or maybe commented on how long it must have taken him to do this. Any of these things would have been better than the way it actually played out. I can't remember the exact words but I can remember the disappointment in his eyes. Oh, how I wish I could do this over. This is one of the guilts I can never undo. I can only whisper "I'm sorry, Rick" and hope he hears.*

*When he had fever and came and sat next to me to chase away the fever-induced villains, did I hug him or re-assure him that I would always be there to care for and protect him? Or did I continue to watch my soap opera knowing that this episode would never be shown again but they would continue with the next chapter of the story tomorrow? I wish I had realized then that life is the same. The words I spoke or the indifference I showed would be forever held in that slot of history. We are human and we tend to have a selfish side. A side of us that also wants what we want. However, when we have children that side is usually put up on a shelf to be taken out and dusted off and appreciated in the days after our children leave to begin their own lives. When it is brought down earlier we might use those times as learning experiences – teaching our child to share or to realize that as parents we have wants and needs also but then we put this selfish side back on the shelf to be enjoyed later. When the child leaves a parent has time to reflect and distinguish between our good memories and our bad. "Others" who haven't lost their children for good, the ones whose children are just away at college or starting a family of their own have a priceless opportunity to correct any wrongs that haunt them. The wrongs are slight in the eyes of many and would be in my eyes if my son were alive. But what could have been learning experiences are now my nightmares. I could say that those episodes were a part of life. I might even pride myself on my accomplishments as a parent, given myself credit for his wonderful outcome. What do I credit myself for now? That he didn't live? That it didn't turn out the way I had planned when he was born? Do I give myself credit for any of the good things I did? No, I can't remember many. What stands out in my mind are regrets, the things I wish I could do-over. If only I would have known that each day was a blessing. Each minute was priceless. Each smile was a gift from heaven. Each tooth lost was a step toward adulthood and ever closer to the orthodontist's office. I can only hope that he hears me and believes me when I say, "I'm sorry, Rick" and I can only hope that he knew how much I loved him because there are no do-overs in my life regarding my son. I asked myself daily, "Did I Love Him enough?"*

*Dana Rogers*

Last year we were contacted by the student nurses of The Butterfly Project at UTMB in Galveston. They are a volunteer group, with one of their main goals being to assist families who have lost a child, and they have given generously of their time helping our chapter with its activities. Thanks to our continuing affiliation with them we have recently been provided with some excellent opportunities to educate future doctors and nurses about the needs of bereaved parents in a medical setting.

In April our steering committee held a mock support group meeting for a group of graduate student nurses as an assignment for their psychology class. The only thing “mock” about it was the unusual time and place – we told our stories, shared our feelings, and the student nurses cried and laughed right along with us.

In June we were invited by a pediatric nursing instructor to speak at a special class that she holds every year called “End of Life”. It was a very large group made up of medical students as well as student nurses.

This month some of our group spoke to the student nurses of The Butterfly Project, sharing their experiences with medical personnel when their children died and explaining how they could have been better helped at the time.

Thanks so much to Irene Weedman, Shirley Mapps, Janna Vincent, Larry Oshel, and all of the steering committee for sharing your stories with these groups of students at UTMB. They learned from you what cannot be found in a textbook and there is no doubt that each of them will remember your heartfelt words when they encounter bereaved families in the future.



## Friend

Don't tell me that you understand,

Don't tell me that you know.

Don't tell me that I will survive.

...How I will surely grow.

Don't tell me this is just a test.

That I am truly blessed,

That I am chosen for this task

Apart from all the rest.

Don't come at me with answers

That can only come from me.

Don't tell me how my grief will pass,

That I will soon be free.

Don't stand in pious judgment

Of the bonds I must untie.

Don't tell me how to suffer,

And don't tell me how to cry.

My life is filled with selfishness,

My pain is all I see,

But I need you. I need your love

Unconditionally.

Accept me in my ups and downs,

I need someone to share,

Just hold my hand and let me cry

And say, "My friend, I care."

By: Joannetta Handel

## Choosing Hope

Robert Frost once wrote, "You have freedom when you're easy in your harness." I believe I read that in junior high school. It had no real meaning to me at that time. But many years and many tears later, I have come to realize what Frost was referencing.

Soon I will be marking the seventh anniversary of the death of my only child, Todd Mennen. Seven years seems, perhaps to some, a milestone. But it's not really. There are no "milestones" on this journey of grief after the death of our children. But we do change. We have no choice. We weep, we evolve, we change, we grow, we learn, we share, we ask for help, we give help, we reach out and finally we become someone different than we once were. That is the reality of this grief.

Becoming easy in my harness was no small task, nor did it happen in magical stages with epiphanies proclaiming, "here is a milestone, a moment you can remember for the wisdom you found."

Wisdom doesn't arrive with fanfare; wisdom seeps slowly into one's mind, forming an ever-changing perspective until, at last, we have come to accept our "harness." Our harness is the death of our child. Once we accept this fact, we move forward into the light of hope and we begin to feel hope and a different type of freedom.

Am I "easy in my harness?" Finally, I can say that I probably am most of the time. There are days when I find it chokingly restrictive and cruel in its pain. But these days are fewer as time passes.

I have found a new kind of "freedom in my harness." It isn't the joyful freedom from the days before my child died, but it is a freedom nonetheless. My freedom is the light of hope that shines from deep within my soul as I now hold my child in my mind and heart. My child is with me in my harness as I continue on the balance of my life's journey. For this mother, hope is knowing that death does not restrict me from my child's life. Death changes only the plane of our relationship, for I am his mother and he is my son. We will love our children for all eternity. That is the freedom in our harness that comes with consciously choosing hope.

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



# Chapter Information

## LOVE GIFTS

A love gift is a special way to remember a child.

The Compassionate Friends charges no dues, and your voluntary donations are our only source of income. All gifts are tax deductible. TCF is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization and 100% of all income is used to reach bereaved families through this newsletter, brochures, our grief materials library, and special events like our annual December Candle Lighting Remembrance and our Garden remembrance.

Checks should be made payable to  
The Compassionate Friends  
PO Box 568  
Texas City, TX 77592

## NEWSLETTER

In order to include your child's information in the newsletter written permission must be on file. If you would like to have your child's information included please send in the data sheet so that we can insure that we have the correct information.

Submissions for the newsletter are always welcome and can include short articles, poems & book reviews. Please include any authors or other sources if known.

All submissions are due for inclusion in the newsletter by the 20th of each month, some exceptions may arise but will be included as a note in the newsletter.

Submissions should be sent to either the PO Box listed under the love gifts or emailed to Bambi Oshel at [grammy127@earthlink.net](mailto:grammy127@earthlink.net) or Dana Rogers at [sabalo130@comcast.net](mailto:sabalo130@comcast.net)



***Note:** When you purchase a brick to be placed in the Memorial Garden be advised that they are placed randomly. The bricks are put in place by the generosity of Manning Masonry Co, Inc. While someone within the organization will be notified after installation of a set of bricks is completed, notification prior to the installation is not available.*

*Beautiful Memorial Garden Bricks*

***Acme Engraved Bricks @ \$50.00 each***

Please make checks payable to Compassionate Friends and mail to **P.O. Box 568 Texas City, TX 77592**. Should you have any questions regarding this order form please call **Louise Krone at (281) 534-3639** or email at [lak51757@yahoo.com](mailto:lak51757@yahoo.com)

To order an engraved brick: Fill the appropriate boxes below with desired inscription.

LINE 1														
LINE 2														
LINE 3														

LINE 1														
LINE 2														
LINE 3														
LINE 4														

Customer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: - Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for supporting the Compassionate Friends Memorial Garden

**Love Gifts**, monetary or  
Gifts-in-kind are a beautiful expression of our deep  
And never-ending love for our children, and help us "reach out" to bereaved families.  
Our expenses include postage, printing & special programs.  
TCF is a 501 ( c ) ( 3 ) Organization—donations are tax deductible.  
Time is also a wonderful gift, volunteers are always needed.  
**Thank You for contributing and supporting the work of our local chapter.**