



The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 8

August 2025

Chapter Leaders: William and Millie Hunton 504-265-0581 Email address: tcfnola@gmail.com

FALLING FEATHERS

Searching my bookcase, I chose a small book that had been there for years. "Hmm...might be worth a re-read," I mused, opening a page. And there it was, gentle as a feather falling to earth, "Dear Mom" – in her handwriting – "I hope you like this book as much as I did. Love, Robin." I sat in the nearest chair and with the memory came tears. How she loved sharing everything with me, her excited voice on the phone, "Guess what!" Her memory was with me all that day.

Cont. on page 3 – Feathers

SAVE THE DATE – SEPTEMBER 13TH

Memorial Walk and Auction

To be held in the Lafreniere Park Foundation Center
See Page 4 for more details.

See Page attached FLYER for registration and sponsoring.

And in this life we will constantly be pulled between love and loss, grief and gratitude, pain and purpose. But how brave it is to allow yourself space for the tension, to know that seemingly opposite things can all be true at once and to hold them all in your hand at once, in your heart at once.

BIRTHDAY RECOGNITION: Birthdays can be found on "Our Children Remembered" page. We do encourage both you and your family to come when it is your child's birthday month, to share your child with all of us with photos and memories. You will receive a special birthday gift in memory of your child. Bring that treasured picture of your child that always makes you smile so we may smile with you. **The July Birthday Cake was sponsored by by Kat & Darryl Hoxie in memory of their son Gustav Hoxie. The August Birthday Cake will be sponsored by Garrinell Southall in memory of her son Keishawn Southall.**

Please never forget how brave it is to continue to show up in a story that looks so different than what you thought it'd be. They were here, and it mattered. You are here, and it matters. - *Liz Newman*

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.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:

August 11, 2025

**Lafreniere Park Foundation
Center Conference Room**

7:00 – 9:00 pm

2nd Monday of every month

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

13 Jan 25	10 Feb 25	10 Mar 25
14 Apr 25	12 May 25	9 Jun 25
14 Jul 25	11 Aug 25	8 Sep 25
13 Oct 25	10 Nov 25	8 Dec 25

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Position Open

Nominee To Be Announced

NATIONAL OFFICE

The Compassionate Friends
48660 Pontiac Trail # 930808
Wixom, MI 48393

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
www.compassionatefriends.org
877-969-0010

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Butterfly Release

April 27, 2025 – held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

Memorial Walk and Auction

September 13, 2025 – held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

WorldWide Candle Lighting

December 14, 2025 – Held in the Foundation Center in Lafreniere Park

Our Monthly Meetings

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. **You are not alone in your grief.**

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at the Foundation Center Conference Room in Lafreniere Park at 7:00 P.M. We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with us at a meeting.

Grief support after the death of a child

The Compassionate Friends is a national non-profit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Big Thanks to Our Steering Committee



Contact:

Phone: (504) 265-0581

Email: tcfnola@gmail.com

www.tcfneworleans.com

1104 Colony Rd, Metairie, LA 70003

Chapter Leader	William Hunton
Chapter Co-Leader	Millie Hunton
Treasurer	Isabel Vigne-Miranda
Facilitator	Millie Hunton
Newsletter Editor	William Hunton
Webmaster	Jason Vicari
Database Management	Jerrie Vicari
Outreach Committee	Dena Peters
Hospitality	Jan Dutilh
Coffee Hostess	Patsy Ashton
Memorial Park Director	Jacques Bitoun
Memorial Brick Director	Peggy Boardman

Steering Committee: William Hunton, Millie Hunton, Jan Dutilh, Dena Peters, Isabel Miranda-Vigne, Patsy Ashton, and Christi Vercher.

Denise St. Pierre, Regional Coordinator

(504) 460-2970

TCF National (877) 969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

The Meeting Agenda

7:00 p.m. - The meeting will begin with a short introduction followed by lighting of candle and then reading of the Credo. Remembering our children's birthdays of the month. Then followed by smaller groups of sharing.

8:45 p.m. - Meeting will close by recognizing our children's names. Feel free to visit with each other and check out a book from our library.

Newsletter Submissions: TCF Greater New Orleans welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to: **TCF GNO, 1104 Colony Rd., Metairie, LA 70003**. You may also text photos and messages to 504-251-1938. As our chapter is only funded by your donations, we ask for a donation of **\$15** or more for a dedication for our newsletter. This is tax-deductible. We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is listed below. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source. Errors and Omissions: Please notify me if any of your information is incorrect. Thank you!

Newsletter Dedications to be put in our newsletter are due the 20th of each month.

A Newsletter Dedication: is a special page dedicated in memory of your child with a poem or writing that you submit.

A Love Gift: is a short one or two sentence message in your child's memory.



BIRTHDAY CAKE: Our child's birthday is still such an important day to us bereaved parents. In TCF this is where we can celebrate our child's birthday and remember the love we still have for them no matter how long it has been since they died. Our members are welcomed to sponsor our cake to recognize their child's birthday. Please notify me if you wish to sponsor our Birthday Cake, **William Hunton (504) 265-0581**.

TCF Greater New Orleans Memorial Candles and 3" Photo Buttons

We are asking for donations of \$20 per candle. Candles will have 3 photos, name, dates, and an LED insert.

We are asking for donations of \$5 for each button or \$12 for three buttons.

Email Your Child's Photo to tcfnola@gmail.com or call William Hunton (504) 265-0581 for info.

Candles and/or photo buttons will be delivered to the next meeting if info is received 72 hours before meeting.

Please make checks payable to: TCF – GNO, 1104 Colony Road, Metairie, LA 70003

CONTINUED From Page 1 - **Feathers**

Memories are as unpredictable as birds. For bereaved parents, memories can arrive as cheery guests or painful tormentors. In the years since cancer took our daughters, Robin and Sara, my memories are often mixed – both welcome and dreaded – firing up explosions of joy, gratitude, intense longing and sorrow. They come swarming in when I look at photos, hear a certain song or visit a favorite place. Other times they appear out of the blue, barging in uninvited like raucous ravens, catching me by surprise. Or as gently as a falling feather.

I believe that memories are blessings. They speak to the history of our love, as it seems they are all we have left. As mothers, we recall the moment when we first knew our baby was there, hidden away deep inside. And finally holding him in our arms, amazed at such beauty. Robin was the child I prayed for, having waited five years for her. How we loved her independence, her determined spirit, her happy nature. We miss that so much. In the hospital she often woke from her morphine haze to call out, “Is my mom here?” That is one of my mixed memories. Sara was the tail-end of four daughters, but she stood her ground with feistiness and wild red hair. She was also funny and sweet, and she gave us grandchildren. I remember the sad eyes of the hospice nurse, as I held Sara, weeping.

Though our children are gone from this world, our memories can help ease them back into our hearts and bring us hope. Emily Dickinson’s poem, Hope is the Thing with Feathers speaks of birds that “perch in the soul.” They are there to sing and keep us warm, “in the chilliest land and on the strangest Sea,” which is certainly where we are now. So, we hang onto our memories fiercely, gratefully, because they remind us of who we are and where we have been. And we need that now more than ever. We can be creative in holding those memories. We can write journals or make scrapbooks about our life with our child or write letters to him or her, expressing things we never got to say. One mother I know has a party to celebrate her son’s birthday, where his friends enjoy memories of their happy times with him.

Shared memories and stories keep our children with us and ease our grief. After Sara left, my heart was in added pain over her two children, now motherless at ages 8 and 12. I wanted desperately for them to remember their mom. But because we did not live nearby, I decided to make a book for them with stories of Sara as a girl, before they knew her. Her siblings and I wrote our memories—often humorous—in a large album with photos, mementos, and Bible verses, and gave it to Sara’s children. Hopefully, our storytelling has been a comfort and connection for them, and these memories will become part of their survival guide... and that in the telling and the hearing, we will all find strength. For those of us who wrote, the experience was incredibly blessed, allowing us to pour out our love for this amazing person of ours.

So when memories arrive, we can welcome them and all the emotions that tag along. Greet them with tears or smiles. Maybe even a good laugh. Gently hold these pieces of your life as you look back and remember. And in those memories, see all the love that has carried you and yours through past generations. In remembering the former years, we gain hope for the future—a hope that knows without doubt that even in the worst of times, love will not leave us. The little bird may fly off but will soon return to be shared with others. This sharing can be at a support group table with other parents who need our touch, our understanding, to hear of our hope. In this, we help keep many warm, and this is not the end of our story.

By Joan Moss

Some days, the bravest thing you can do is to continue. For every broken heart who is here to fight another day, I’m proud of you. You’re hurting, but you’re here. It doesn’t get any stronger than that.

Liz Newman

NOTE: PER TCF NATIONAL RECOMMENDATION – WE ARE REMOVING ALL YEARLY DATES OFF OF OUR DEDICATION ENTRIES

TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Memorial Walk & Auction

The Greater New Orleans TCF Chapter is sponsoring a Children's Memorial Walk followed with an Auction on **September 13, 2025** at Lafreniere Park in Metairie, LA to raise funds for the operating expenses of our chapter.

We are encouraging you to contact any vendors you may know who will be willing to donate merchandise or gift cards. We will also welcome any items you may wish to donate. This can range from anything old or new. If we are going to have a successful fundraiser this year then we are going to need your help.

This letter is to ask YOU, our MEMBERS, to help us make our Children's Memorial Walk a great success. We are asking for a donation. All donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged. For cash donations please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends GNO. Non-cash items donated will be auctioned off at our auction following the Children's Memorial Walk.

We greatly appreciate any help you can give us.
Please feel free to contact me to arrange a donation.
William Hunton – 504-251-1938

THIS IS A VERSION OF MYSELF

This is a version of myself
I never envisioned I'd be:
The version that walked
Through some of the darkest days
And most painful realities.
The version that lost
so many plans for the future
And mourned countless broken dreams.
The version that felt
Overwhelmed and unsure,
and unraveled at the seams.
The version that aged
A thousand lifetimes
Who wrestled with loss
And was weathered by grief.
The version that faced
The shifting waves,
the ebbs and flows
that no one else could see.

The version that changed
And will change again
Who's felt love, loss,
And everything between.
But, despite the changes,
There's so much more
to this unexpected version of me:
I see hope.
I see love.
I see parts of the old me.
I see the pieces coming together
Despite the uncertainty.
I see how much my heart
Continues to learn
And grow and beat
With such tender resiliency.
And I can say with renewed perspective
with appreciation and clarity:
This is a version of myself
I never envisioned I'd be.

-Liz Newman

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.

I AM OK

Life can feel so heavy sometimes: loss, disappointment, unexpected hardships, challenging relationship dynamics, and so much more can weigh on a heart and mind. And in the midst of pain and darkness, it can feel almost impossible to imagine that there could ever be hope or light again. Most of us will come face to face with a situation in which we've lost sight of hope. It's an isolating and lonely experience.

And while so much of what we face is part of our own personal journey, I truly believe that there are others we meet who can comfort and encourage us along the way: others who can be a hand reaching out for ours when we need it most.

And I think there are people who can hold on to hope for us and with us until we can feel it for ourselves again. These people stand in the gap for us and remind us that while things feel dark, the darkness does not have the final say. They remind us that light remains and that hope shines through it even if we don't see it today.

These people sit next to us and allow us the time and space to process in our own way. These people can be friends, therapists, coworkers. It could be someone you run into at the store or interact with in a comments section online. These are the people who lovingly say: "I see you. I see your pain. I see your heart. You're safe to process here. You're safe to rest here. You're safe to question and wrestle and heal here."

If you're reading this and you're hurting today, I hope you remember that your pain and your processing matter. Your heart and its hurting and healing matters. You so deeply matter. I know so many of us are hurting in our own way and trying to heal in our own way.

Even if we don't always talk about it, I'm rooting for all of us to be okay. 💖

-Liz Newman

48th TCF National Conference – GNO Chapter Memory Board



Many of our children were displayed on a beautiful Memory Board. Photos were printed and assembled by Millie and William Hunton. On that Sunday morning, the pictures were taken down and were hand carried on the two mile "Walk to Remember" through the Bellevue Downtown Park.

The conference had over 1000 attendees from all across the United States and from several different countries. The pictures were viewed by many of the attendees at the conference.

Millie and I were honored to be able to bring our children's photos and to be able to display these beautiful photos for so many to see. We shared the feeling that those beautiful children, grandchildren, and siblings were looking upon us as we shared our memories with bereaved families from so many "Walks of Life."

If you did not send me a photo of your child, grandchild, or sibling for this year's conference memory board, please ensure you do send their photo to me for next year's conference.

The 2025 TCF National Conference will be held in Baltimore, MD. Photos will be collected in June 2026 via text, email, or hard copy.

Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of Brady Michael Palmer



August 9 - May 17

Empty Places

I drove the old way yesterday.
It'd been a while, you see.
And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait
to summon up the tears,
to say remember yesterday,
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.
These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.



Genesse Gentry, TCF Marin County, CA, In Memory of Lori Gentry

Love you, Mom

Dedication sent in by Kerri Palmer



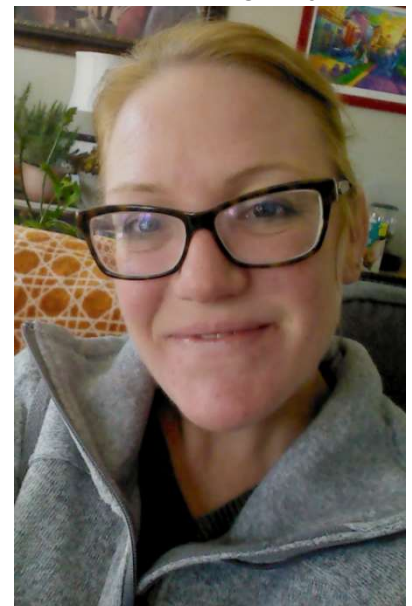
Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of Ayme Mills Hopkins



August 30 - March 23

My last moment with my daughter.

I was going to be with her that Wednesday because she wanted me to be there with her and the girls, just till Friday after the school bus headed out. I was going to bring a new hula-hoop to play "Hula-Hoop Tag," a game my granddaughter Scarlet (12 at that time) made up. She and her sister Sailor (8 years old then) said you had to get "hooped" to get caught. I was good at being "It." Ayme smiled and looked at me when she asked. As I was headed out from our visit, I remember how she turned and looked to her right to ask me to come back. I will never forget the look of love in her eyes for me when she asked. She had such a sweet smile on her face. Especially, I suddenly recalled how our last hug was the longest we ever had. The feel of love – "daughter to mother to daughter." When she went to let go I was not ready and pulled her in for a few seconds more. Hugging and Loving my Heart. My last moment, my best moment with my beloved, my daughter. Thank you, my Heart. For loving me and giving me so many years of your love.



Loving you forever, Momma

Dedication sent in by Susan Monroe



Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of *Eric Soroe*

August 23 - November 23

Happy Birthday to my dear Brother in Heaven



*Thank you for all you did for me,
all the times we spent together bro
And for just being my brother,
Means more than you'll ever know.*

*Today is the day you were born,
I'm sure Heaven is celebrating you
Cause all that makes you so special
is everything you do.*

*Remembering you is so easy.
I do it everyday.
It's just the heartache of losing you
that will never go away.*

Always loving you,

Raree

Dedication sent in by Robin Soroe





Newsletter Dedication in Loving Memory of *Denise Olga Gorman*

March 21 - August 3



On August 3rd 2021 my first-born beautiful sweet Denise left so many to mourn. I know you are happy to be in heaven with all our loved ones especially your sister. I am living proof that you can't die from a broken heart because in 2021 mine broke twice when I lost you and Sherrell. Michael O is playing summer ball and has your name and a heart on his gloves along with some others. You both would be so pleased with your great niece Leah Camille. She was born May 22nd in Hannibal, Missouri. Please give everyone my love in Heaven. I don't know why you had to leave but I do thank God for giving you to us for 61 years. I love you with all my heart and know someday we will be together again. But till then be in Heaven what you were on Earth, sweet, kind, and loving.

XOXO mom and family



Dedication sent in by Charlene Gorman

Our Children Remembered



Angel Birthdays

Melissa Rein Banderet	Aug 1	Daughter of Wendy & John Rein
Selena Smith	Aug 8	Sister of Dena Peters
Josephine Benz	Aug 8	Sister of Susan Viener
Brady Michael Palmer	Aug 9	Son of Kerri Palmer
Kim Mark Kimble	Aug 10	Son of Nancy Kimble; Brother of Baron
Kerry A. Degeyter	Aug 12	Daughter of Dee Arnold
Joshua Louis Matranga	Aug 14	Son of Jodi Caronna; Brother of Jaclyn and Joseph
Grayson Breaux	Aug 14	Son of Marilyn Breaux
Patrick O'Neil	Aug 15	Son of Kathy O'Neil
Andre L. Sicotte	Aug 15	Son of Barbara & Steven Sicotte
Jeffrey Hergert	Aug 17	Son of Donald & Roxanne Hergert
Keith Howard Reppel	Aug 18	Son of Keith Reppel
Keishawn Southall	Aug 19	Son of Garrinell Southall
April Blossum Duran-Wills	Aug 19	Daughter of Mark & Martha Duran; Sister of Autumn Moore; Mother of Gina Wills
Jenna C. Keller	Aug 21	Daughter of Jerry and Dana Keller
Brady Caillouet	Aug 23	Son of Brad & Sammi Caillouet
Eric Soro	Aug 23	Brother of Robin Soro
August Bertoni, Jr.	Aug 24	Son of Christle & August Bertoni
Milan Arriola	Aug 27	Daughter of Imani Ruffins
Eric Lanus	Aug 28	Son of Linda Lanus
Terrance J. Mascaro	Aug 28	Brother of Melanie Boudreaux
Ayme Mills Hopkins	Aug 30	Daughter of Susan Monroe
Zayd James	Aug 31	Son of Nyla James; Grandson of Nia Woods

Angel Anniversaries

Denise Olga Gorman	Aug 3	Daughter of Charlene Gorman
Aimee Lauren Wood LaDuke	Aug 4	Daughter of Cheryl Przgocki
Alex Newchurch	Aug 4	Brothter of Julie Henderson
Jonathan Reid Caluda	Aug 5	Son of Faith Caluda Andries
Frankie Matto, III	Aug 9	Son of Beth O'Neal and Frank Matto, Jr.
Joshua William McNulty	Aug 9	Son of Pam McNulty
John Michael Smith	Aug 10	Son of Carole A. Clark
Bobbi Cade Anderson	Aug 10	Daughter of Lynnrose Cade
Reinaldo Armas	Aug 10	Son of Yolanda Lundsgaard
Jason Butler	Aug 12	Son of Marilyn Strecker
Eileen Lacrouts	Aug 13	Daughter of Michael and Kelly Lacrouts
Jonathan C. Piazza	Aug 14	Son of Mary Ann Piazza
Andrew Elijah Davis IV	Aug 17	Son of Tamara Arnold
Josephine Benz	Aug 18	Sister of Susan Viener
Jenna C. Keller	Aug 21	Daughter of Jerry and Dana Keller
Kim Mark Kimble	Aug 27	Son of Nancy Kimble; Brother of Baron
Beau Charles Tedesco, MD	Aug 28	Son of Madelyn and Ted Tedesco
Damion McCall	Aug 28	Son of Shannon McCall
Monroe Aubrey Cassagne	Aug 31	Son of Tammy and Mack Cassagne