



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

June/July edition

## The Compassionate Friends Queensland *Annual Charity Golf Day*

Friday 3rd August 2018

**Where: Nudgee Golf Club**

1207 Nudgee Road, Nudgee

**When: Registration from 10am**

Tee-off at 12pm

**Sponsorship options:**

- Major sponsor – \$1000
- Minor Sponsor – \$600
- Individual Player – \$100

**What's included:**

- 18 holes
- Drink voucher
- Buggy hire
- Burger and chips

**Prizes to be won:**

- Teams 1st, 2nd, 3rd and wooden spoon
- Hole in one + nearest the pin
- Lucky door prizes
- Major raffle prize is a Hunter Valley holiday



For more information please contact us at [admin@tcfqld.org.au](mailto:admin@tcfqld.org.au) or call 07 3254 2657

### SUPPORT SERVICES

#### *National helpline*

We have a new national 24 hour line number for those in need:

**1300 064 068**

We also have a new email address:

**[admin@tcfqld.org.au](mailto:admin@tcfqld.org.au)**

### TCF NEW FARM OFFICE

#### *Thank you*

We would like to thank everyone who continues to support TCF throughout the year. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated by everyone at The Compassionate Friends.

### TCF NEW FARM OFFICE

#### *Office opening hours*

Monday to Fridays

9am to 3pm

If you would like support please call the office to organise a time with one of our compassionate volunteers on (07) 3254 2657

### CONTACT US

#### *If you need a friend...*

**New farm office:** 505 Bowen Terrace New Farm, Brisbane

**Office Phone:** (07) 3254 2657

**Email:** [admin@tcfqld.org.au](mailto:admin@tcfqld.org.au)

**Postal Address:** PO Box 1930

Find us on 

### SAVE THE DATE

#### *TCF Annual Seminar 2018*

**When:** Saturday 30 June, 8:45am to 3:00pm

**Where:** O'Shea Centre, 19 Lovedale Street, Wilston

Please join us for Grief as a Collective Medicine with keynote speaker Elham Day. For more information please see page 9 of the newsletter.

# President's Report

Hello to all. There are some issues that need to be covered to bring all members up to date with what your board has been up to in the past few months. The two big ticket items are the review of the constitution and the consideration of the fees for next year.

## Constitutional Review

This review is required for two reasons. The first is that it was written many years ago and was a copy of the then Victorian constitution with changes suitable for Queensland. This document is required under Queensland Law for all Not for Profit organisations (Associations Incorporation Act 1981). On reading our current document I realised that there were a number of inconsistencies with the Queensland Act. Rather than just try to make ad hoc changes to try and align it with current law, it was re-written using the guidelines laid down in the Act. This re-written constitution is now being reviewed by two independent reviewers so that we can have it ready for the AGM where the whole membership can vote on it. There are a few significant changes in the new document and I have listed them below for your perusal.

Board members will be elected for three year terms rather than one year as at present.

The rules of eligibility to join have been extended to enable membership by someone who has lost a child prenatally.

The Board may appoint a natural person as a Patron of the Association

The following delegations have been assigned to various members to enable TCF to carry out its functions without having to go to the board for every dollar it wishes to spend.

President/Vice President – \$2000

Treasurer/Secretary – \$1500

Board Member – \$800

Co-ordinator – \$300

Where expenditure is expected above \$2000, a resolution by the Board is required.

## Fees for 2019

The fees for membership are currently \$30 per annum. The current proposal is that they be lifted to \$50 per member. Any hardship rules under the current and future constitution have not changed. So where does your money go?

The total expense to run TCF Qld is about \$65000. Salaries and wages take up about \$35000. Rent is around \$11000. Postage exacts a heavy toll on us. Last year it was \$1800 and there has been a substantial rise in the cost of sending out newsletters in particular. There is a similar figure for stationery.

The cost of fundraising alone is around \$2000 a year while the drop in centre expenses amount to around \$6000. We still have to find money for Insurance, telephones, advertising and replacement for office equipment. If you do the maths, we don't have an awful lot left over.

What we do have is only achieved by the generous support of those members who take up tasks that we would otherwise have to pay for.

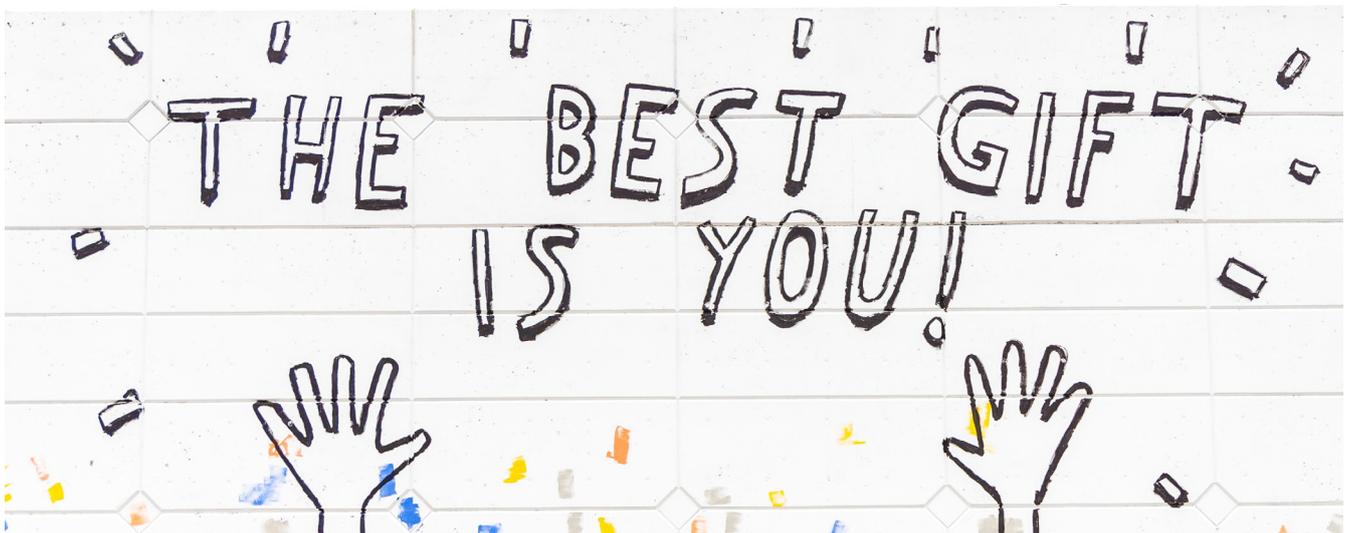
## Something a little more pleasant

We have been liaising more with our sister organisations interstate, especially TCF Australia. I believe that we can make real progress with all our goals by pulling together. One of TCFA's first projects is the printing of brochures. This has the potential to make substantial savings for all the states over the coming years.

We have also been having talks with similar organisations in Queensland, with a view to making combined approaches to government bodies when it comes to funding for our projects. This is still in the wait and see basket but I am hopeful of a successful outcome no matter how far down the track.

Amongst all this talk of business and budgets, we cannot forget the reason that we belong to this organisation. The price of membership is not really the dollars that we quote to receive a few newsletters or to attend an event each year. We all know it is club to which none of us wish to belong. We have all paid a heavy price. Many of our members continue to pay that price. I understand that, and I do not forget it, ever. TCF will always walk with you, no matter how far your journey or how long it takes. Our hand will always be extended.

*Kerry LeBoutillier, father of Aaron  
TCF President.*



## 2018 TCF Annual Walk to Remember

This is our second Walk to Remember by TCF for our youngest son Brendan. Though it's painfully sad and you wonder where you get the strength, it's a lovely way to remember and honour our children who were taken too soon, who are forever young...

Not only for their heartbroken parents, it's for their siblings, their partners, their friends, their extended families, their workmates it's for whoever knew them. We all come together to smile, to cry, to talk, to have a chug (chat and a hug) with others we have met on this lousy path...on this day, there is comfort, you know why, because it's about them! It's their day! We are doing this for them.

Somehow knowing it's for them and about them, it makes me feel a bit better and I wish there were more things like this in place for our forever young kids. Following the Piper with his music trailing on behind him flowing through the air is sad but beautiful ...and once you get walking you get talking with others and I wonder what my Brendan and your loved ones would be thinking.

I feel them all walking along with us...the double whammy... the most painful part but the most touching part, is throwing the flowers in the water for your loved one.... My boy's face flashes in my mind while I'm doing this...it's very powerful, and very emotional, but I wouldn't miss that for anything...because as a beautiful Mum told me "It is What It Is"

We soak the pain up...it's about remembering our kids, doing something grounding and peaceful for them in this way is symbolic and very meaningful to their memory, where all who knew them can come together on the Walk. As Brendan would say, Embrace the Journey you take yourself on...the walk is definitely that. We Thank-you TCF for creating this yearly event.

*Written by Erin Hobson*

*Mum to Beloved youngest son Brendan Hobson*



## Thanks for the offer, but I don't know what I need!

We've all heard it before, from the well-meaning, tilted-head friends at the funeral and in the weeks to follow: "Let me know what you need." It is, of course, a kind and often well-intentioned offer, but there is one fatal flaw: it assumes you know what you need. To be fair, on the surface, this isn't an unreasonable expectation. If a person hasn't experienced the depths of grief or some other pit of despair, it can be hard to imagine that sometimes you are just so overwhelmed you can't figure out what you need.

The reality is, no one can meet the needs that may be most pressing in your mind or give you the things you want the most. This is why you may find yourself internally screaming the response, "Yes, I need you to bring my loved one back!" or "Yes, I need you to take away this pain!" everytime someone asks you if there is anything you need or anything they can do. Thinking about any other needs can feel impossible and overwhelming. You may find that you feel like you're sinking, but it isn't clear what help would help you come back up for air.

We want to talk about this basic but complex challenge: how do you figure out what you need when you have no idea what you need?

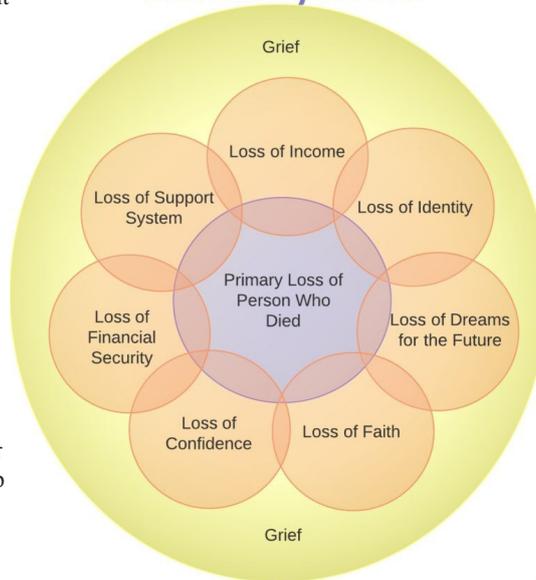
First, remember your needs might not all look directly like grief needs. When you lose someone, your life is shattered. One person disappears and it can feel like everything else falls out of place. We call those other things "secondary losses". Getting support from others is not always about that primary loss, often it is finding support for one of those secondary losses. In some cases, it may be practical, logistical support you need.

When you're feeling completely overwhelmed, it can be helpful to consider that you have needs in all the different areas of loss you are going through.

In others, it may be emotional support – someone to let you cry, remember and listen without judgment. Finally, it may be just support related to your general well-being — things and people who will help boost your mood and reconnect with yourself. As with many things in grief, it is helpful to take it step by step.

Each day we encourage you to increase your awareness around your greatest "pain points". These don't have to be grief specific. Anything in your life that is a stressor may be part of your grief or making it more difficult to cope with your grief, so it is important to consider any needs that can ease your overall suffering in a given day.

### Secondary Losses



To do this, you will need to become aware of the moments in your day that cause the most pain, bring up complex emotions, are the most physically taxing, the most mentally taxing, and create the most stress. Write them down during the day, either on your phone or on a sheet of paper. If it is helpful, you may want to look at your needs in three categories:

**Practical/logistical needs:** Whether it is childcare, grocery shopping, filing taxes, mowing the lawn, etc. there are often countless concrete needs we have. Knowing what these are can make it easier to ask people in your support system for the help or take them up an offer.

**Grief needs:** Though all needs may be connected to grief, some are certainly more explicitly so. You may realize your need is for people who you can share memories with, or someone to be comfortable with your tears. You may need someone who wants to help you memorialize your loved one or join you in advocacy work. Whatever the case, you may realize you are feeling very alone in honoring and remembering and it is time to reach out to others.

**Well-being needs:** These needs fall somewhere outside of just the grief experience, and are things that simply help with our overall well-being. This can be anything from needing that push to get off the gym to needing someone to be social with (or at the very least, grab a coffee). It can be anything from painting to writing to photography that you know would boost your mood and well-being, but that you keep avoiding.

The important thing is to slowly begin increasing your daily self-awareness about what is difficult. At moments that you feel stressed or overwhelmed, make a note of what is creating that experience. At the end of a day, rather than just saying "this day is terrible," instead outline what has made it so challenging. As you do this over time, you may see trends emerging, areas big and small where some small help from others could make your days just a little bit earlier.

Others are unable to provide support if you can't tell them what you need, so just knowing your needs is the first step to receiving support. First become more aware of your needs and second, identify who might help you meet those needs.

Whether your support system can or will meet these needs is impossible to predict, but identifying the need and asking for help is the first step.

*This article was lifted from  
whatsyourgrief.com*

## MESSAGES BEYOND THE VEIL

*A compassionate friend shares their story*

Four years and 10 months ago my world was forever changed when I found my son Elliott in his room and unresponsive.

There is a lot to be said about that day and the ensuing weeks, months and years of court cases regarding the people responsible for my beautiful sons death.

However there is also so much more to Elliotts story than his passing and I focused on that for so very long because it was burned into my being.

It's taken me this long to begin to remember all that he was and start to rejoice in the fact that I had this wonderful child, boy, man in my life for 24yrs, how lucky am I.

He was my everything, my only child and we were as close as two people could be... we were soul connected. Let me rephrase that we ARE soul connected.

From a tiny tot he always told me he had superpowers and over the years that evolved into his friends naming him Elliottman, little did I know he really did possess powers.

I could talk for days about Elliott, as all of us can about our beloved children but I'd like to address the issue of grief in this letter.

Strangely my grief has just turned a corner recently but it's taken a great deal of effort and it's not foolproof, I still crash and cry regularly.

The difference is that Elliott has given friends, family and myself, even strangers, signs that he's still here and I've only just begun to believe.

All of our children have those little peculiarities that are specifically theirs, numbers, songs, sayings, a myriad of things that's speaks to you of your beloved child in spirit and

how many times have you thought it a coincidence that these synchronicities keep popping up, sometimes when you need it most.

I decided to stop doubting and start believing and in doing so, it seems Elliott is able to make connections with me more often... or am I just paying attention.

At this point I'd like to give an example of one in hundreds of signs from Elliott that indicate he's still right here.

His 19yr old cousin has moved in with me and after a recent trip to Melbourne he excitedly relayed his story.

While walking through the city he heard a song that we played at the funeral and everyone that knows Elliott realizes this is specific to him, he followed the tune til he arrived at a building with an enormous 88 on front (that being the street number) and by the way Elliotts special number has always been 88. Upon reaching the buskers who were sitting on the steps of this building, he glanced at a sign they had displayed and they were called THE ELLIOTTS.. same spelling as well. The song, the number, his name, no coincidence as far as we're concerned.

Just like every other parent associated with this group, I've had many friends and even family drop away because I'm not and never will be who I was before the loss of my child.

It's hurtful of course when we're already so dreadfully broken but I'm sure we've also all experienced that kind stranger who is able to lift you up at the worst of times.

Those people have taught me to believe in angels even though I'm not religious, it has renewed my faith in humanity.

Believe me there are many who think I'm a kook, but this is MY journey and having something that provides even the smallest modicum of peace in this nightmare I can't wake up from, is a blessing.

I would love to hear any similar stories from parents who think they may have received a message from their child beyond the veil.

*Written by Kaye Watts*



# Letters from the heart

Arlene Priest wears an etched gold pendant around her neck, capturing her then 21-year-old son, Marc. At the time the engraved photo was snapped, her son was a talented musician who never picked up a saxophone he didn't love to play. He was kind, and as his mom says, "Marc was always the one, if there was a broken issue between friends, he was the mediator. He would tell people that life was too short."

For Marc Priest, life was indeed too short. Six months after his 21st birthday, he was stricken with a case of viral encephalitis and never recovered.

"Marc was a pallbearer at my mom's funeral and 30 days later, I was standing at his grave," Arlene says.

The year was 1983. It was just weeks before Marc was set to start his senior year at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

"He was complaining about aching all over," Arlene says. "There was a flu going around Billings and so we thought Marc just had the flu. I was begging him to go to the doctor. He just said to me, 'Mom, I will go to the doctor tomorrow if I am not feeling better.'" Arlene pauses and says, "These things are so vivid in my mind."

Later that night, Arlene was getting ready to turn in when she heard a loud shaking noise followed by moans. When she rushed into Marc's room, she says, "He was in the fetal position, his eyes were open. He had suffered a seizure."

After calling 9-1-1 and checking into the hospital, the prognosis wasn't good. While Arlene was talking to the physician about what would be done to help her son, Arlene says the emergency room doctor told her, "'I'm not sure you are hearing me. We are not sure he will make it through the night.' It was like knives piercing my heart."

Marc lived in the intensive care unit for 22 days before another seizure left him brain-dead.

"I knew it was going to kill me," Arlene says. "Then, when it didn't kill me, I was mad because the pain was so unbearable."

This single mother who watched her only child pass from this world felt that unbearable grief until she found herself walking into a meeting of The Compassionate Friends, a support group for parents who suffered the loss of a child.

"I don't know how I ever got there," Arlene says. "That was another God thing. Somehow, I must have heard about it." After quietly listening, Arlene says, "I thought, you know, I am not going crazy. There are others who feel this way."

Within a year, Arlene found herself leading the group. She found a new purpose. But outside of the friendships she developed there, she found a passion that would sustain her for more than 35 years. It started with a simple letter to a parent after she spotted a child's obituary notice in the paper.

What started with one letter grew to another and another and another.

"I felt their pain when I would read the obituary," Arlene says. "I would write, you do not know me and I do not know you but I know the intense pain that you are feeling." She would share a bit of Marc's story in the hope that the family knew they weren't alone in their grief. "I would tell them my heart aches for you and cries with you." Arlene would also be sure to share that there was a support group full of caring parents to help them process their grief. "It's amazing how when someone would walk into the meeting that night, just from writing to them and knowing the ages of their children, I would know who they were."

Over the years, Arlene has also been instrumental in getting memory bricks helping families to honor their children at Rose Park. She pushed for a memorial floral garden to be dedicated at Rose Park so parents had a place to go to remember their child. A bronze angel sits in the center of it all. Arlene has started a handful of Compassionate Friends chapters and secured funding to make sure the group's newsletter always reached parents in need.

"We don't charge for our newsletter because the price a parent has paid is already too great," Arlene says.

As Arlene shares the story behind her letter-writing ministry, she can't count how many notes she's dropped in the mail. "I probably send out 40 to 45 care notes a month," she says. "I have written for years and years and years now. Many still write back to tell me that the letter meant so much. Others will say that their family doesn't even mention it." Arlene says, "One of my sisters might think, 'Well, I would like to call Arlene to let her know that I am thinking about her, but she'll cry.' Well, I cry anyway." She makes sure to include her phone number on every handwritten note, just in case.

At 92, she's not sure how many more years she'll be able to write those heartfelt notes by hand.

"I am so passionate about this. If you just help one person or make it so they can get through that day, what a blessing," Arlene says. "This is my life. I do it as a way to pay tribute and honor Marc."



# Remainders: Sorting through possessions after a death

*Carefully dispersing loved ones' objects aids the grieving process.*

## URGENCY CLOUDS DISCERNMENT

After a death, the memorial service must be planned, people travel to gather together, the house or apartment may be full of family, and people feel urgency about getting back to their lives, often elsewhere. But the stuff remains.

Family members would say, “This exquisite china and crystal. Surely someone in the family wants it. What about Katie?”

Often the younger person in question lives a different lifestyle, and the family furniture, tableware, art and rugs don't find a home.

Some jewelry may be dispersed to friends and family, while much remains. A few items of clothing may be carefully saved, but most must be given away. A few books, records, CD's and scrapbooks find homes, but often people don't have room or the desire to acquire more possessions. I look back and wish I had saved a few more items from my sister, mother, father, mother-in-law, and father-in-law. But we were hurrying. We did the best we could under stress.

## CONSULT, COMMUNICATE AND RESPECT DIFFERENT WISHES

My brother and I decided, the next summer after our father had died, as well, that if anyone wanted to postpone a decision, or to keep an object, we would respect that. No exceptions. If no place remained for the object, the one who wanted to wait, or keep it, must find a place for it. We decided not to box china, flatware, linens, or fishing gear, art, and clothing to put in storage, hoping the younger members of the family might someday want them. We follow a “no-guilt-tripping” policy. If the niece says no, that means no.

## INTEGRATE INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE

I'm not a fan of “box it up and store it.” If possible, integrate the remainders of a loved one's life into your own or others' everyday life. Grandmother's rose depression glass sits in my china cabinet. My sister's jewelry takes its place among my own. I can easily turn to one of my Dad's sermon manuscripts since I placed them in several binders on my bookshelves. When I sew on a button, I use Mom's sewing kit. My husband stores his Dad's screwdrivers in his woodworking shop; every time he reaches for one he remembers objects his Dad crafted for him.

I often come across Granddad's one published novel, on Texas history, on our history bookshelf. My sister's tee shirt, silver sparkles on robin's egg blue background, remind me of the days just before she died. While too small for me, I touch it with a smile as I sort through my own shirts.

## REMAINDERS ARE REMINDERS

I learned that I could take pictures of treasures that I needed to release. This practice has helped me let go of objects. I know that as a baby boomer, soon I will decide what to do with treasures I have acquired in my lifetime. This is no time to add to my life footprint. I look at my own objects with a knowing eye, these days.

As we go to dinner one evening, my husband comments, “That lapis pendant looks great with your new shirt.” “It's Janice's,” I reply, “as are these earrings.” Janice was my younger sister. Wearing her jewelry helps me feel close to her. I could not wear her clothes either, since she was a petite size 2.

My husband gently says, “Remainders are reminders that we loved them.” We must let go of most of their objects, as we learned to let go of those we loved.

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Below are five opportunities to build resilience after loss when dispersing loved ones' items.

**Frame their handwriting** – Frame a handwritten recipe or locate your loved one's signature on a letter, car title, or passport. Doing so not only gives you the chance to sort through these items, it provides new opportunities to talk about your loved one when family and friends come to visit.

**Upcycle clothing** – Reimagine your loved one's favorite sweater, shirt, or pair of jeans. Gather a few pieces and transform them into teddy bears, throw pillows, or bean bags. Pieces of fabric can also be used to create one-of-a-kind quilts. Read my post on upcycling and how I created a quilt with my dad's neckties.

**Curate a gallery** – Gather your loved one's official documents (college ID, driver's license, military papers, business cards, etc.) and turn them into decorations around your home. To create a cohesive look, frame objects in like-colored mattes and frames. A collection that spans multiple generations often works best, no need to arrange documents in chronological order.

**Approach textiles creatively** – Show off and enjoy meaningful fabrics – table linens, towels, ties, scarves, even curtains. Frame a portion of a wedding dress or display a religious garment or uniform in a case. Wrap a love-worn tablecloth around a large canvas and mount it on a wall.

**Donate objects** – Items of all types are of potential interest to museums and historical societies. Giving objects to professional preservationists and curators helps ensure the individuals who owned them will never be forgotten. Consider what types of objects you have and find organizations that maintain vast collections of them. By donating these items, you may also alleviate any guilt that bubbles up from parting with your loved one's possessions.

Giving yourself permission to toss or transform your loved one's possessions accomplishes two distinct and complementary goals. One, it decreases the likelihood the items will become a burden; and two, it increases the chance that what's left will make you smile. Embrace this process as an unrivaled opportunity for healing and renewal.

# The Compassionate Friends Notices

## WE'RE SEARCHING FOR A NEW NAME

### *Calling all creative members*

Now is your chance to leave your mark on TCF QLD, we are searching for a new name for the current bi-monthly newsletter and need YOUR HELP.

Send your ideas through to:  
[admin@tcfqld.org.au](mailto:admin@tcfqld.org.au)

Some inspiration from our fellow TCF branches:

- New South Wales Newsletter – FOCUS
- Victoria Newsletter – Grieve Heal Grow

The name chosen will be on the next issue.

*Will your idea be the title of our next newsletter?*

## NEW INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

### CHECK IT OUT NOW, EXPLORE OUR NEW FEATURES

- Start a blog for your loved one to share with others
- Accessible grief support
- Memorial pages to cherish our loved ones
- Learn about the history of TCF
- Find out how you can make a difference
- Keep up to date with upcoming events

[www.compassionatefriendsqld.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriendsqld.org.au)

We are constantly looking at new ways to make TCF Queensland the best it can be. Any and all feedback on our new layout would be greatly appreciated.

Please email: [admin@tcfqld.org.au](mailto:admin@tcfqld.org.au) to share your thoughts.

## *Calling all cumquats!*

Vera (resident jam maker) is looking for anyone who would like to donate cumquat's for jams that TCFQ will sell. She is also on the lookout for jars.

## Art Therapy

Discover the creative and therapeutic powers of Art Therapy as you move through your grief.

Karen Lang will teach us how art can help us express what we feel unable to say in our grief and give us strategies to gently work through the heavy pain of grief, which increases our awareness and clarity.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Lang. (No art experience is necessary)

The Art Therapy Workshop is on once a month at Ashgrove or at Compassionate Friends New Farm.

**When:** Wed June 13th TCF New Farm or Friday June 15th - Ashgrove

**Time:** 9:30am – 11:30am

**Cost:** \$35 per class (TCF Members \$30) which includes all art materials and morning tea

**Where:** Compassionate Friends - 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm. Or 29 McCormack Avenue Ashgrove

**Contact:** Karen Lang Mob: 0413237604 or Kristie 32542657

**Website:** [www.alunatherapy.com](http://www.alunatherapy.com)

### OPPORTUNITIES *Community Fundraising*

We are looking for members that are interested in holding their own Community Fundraiser in the area that you live. Over the years TCFV have had members who have done a fundraiser in memory of their child, whether it is a dinner dance, a trivia night, doing a fun run or even a sausage sizzle at the local hardware store. Whatever you would like to do I am here to help you, help us. Please call or email Kristie on [admin@tcfqld.org.au](mailto:admin@tcfqld.org.au) or (07) 3254 2657

### YOU STORY *Your contribution could help others*

If any of our members, family or friends have a story, article, letter etc. They would like to share with us, please let us know. Please note that space is limited, so try to keep publications between 800 to 900 words. Alternatively you can post your story as a blog on our website, where space is not a premium.

If you or anyone you know would like to sponsor either the postage or printing of the newsletter please email to [admin@tcfqld.org.au](mailto:admin@tcfqld.org.au) or call (07) 3254 2657.

### HELP WANTED *Sub-committee's needed*

TCFQ are looking to fill roles within the following sub-committee's for 2018:

- Charity Golf Day – 3rd August 2018
  - Candle Lighting Service – 9th December 2018
  - Fundraising Events (Sausage sizzles, jam stalls) various dates throughout the year
  - Marketing – ongoing
- \* Dates are subject to change

# The Compassionate Friends Queensland Annual Seminar 2018

Saturday 30 June 2018 - 8:45am to 3:00pm

O'Shea Centre, 19 Lovedale Street, Wilston, QLD 4051

## Grief as Collective Medicine

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

#### ELHAM DAY - Grief as Collective Medicine. *Fostering community responses to grief and loss*

Elham Day is the Family Support Coordinator at Hummingbird House and a Grief Counsellor at "Karuna Hospice" and has many years of experience in death care, counselling, community, youth and arts work.

During his talk, Elham will provide insights to enable us to reframe our relationship with grief both as individuals and in community in ways which foster resilience and healing.

### WORKSHOP SESSION 1

#### Jan Elston - Wheel of Wellbeing

Jan has over 25 years in individual, team, organisational and community development and education. Jan is the WOW Support Program Project Manager for Queensland.

#### Karen Lang - Accepting Change after the Death of a Child

Karen is a counsellor, Reiki practitioner and meditation teacher. Her first book *Courage* was published in 2016.

#### Bronwen Edwards - Understanding your lived experience of suicide

Bronwen founded 'Roses in the Ocean', a lead organisation for lived experience, which exists to change the way suicide is understood, spoken about and prevented.

#### Michael Lang - Make the pain go away. A Men's Workshop

Michael is a speaker and Grief Coach. He will share how the impossible becomes possible and suggest ideas to ease the pain.

### WORKSHOP SESSION 2

#### Sherrie Meyer - Expressing Grief Creatively

Sherrie is a Social Worker who provides specialist trauma counselling for children, young people and adults.

#### David Formby - Understanding the Process of Male Grief

David's years of experience include trauma management in QR, emergency support in the Police Service and counsellor for SIDS & KIDS.

#### Tracy Lowe - Forgotten Loss and Grief in Bereaved Children and Adolescents.

Tracy's extensive experience includes developing "In School Programs" across Australia to work with students identified as suffering from grief and loss, anxiety and depression.

#### Sue Vos - Calming Mind and Body

Sue is a healing facilitator, Tapas Acupressure Technique practitioner and spiritual companion who has a special passion for transforming grief.

Seminar Information [HERE](#)



The  
Compassionate  
Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

[www.compassionatefriendsqld.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriendsqld.org.au)

Booking now available [HERE](#) or on  
[www.compassionatefriendsqld.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriendsqld.org.au)  
Book before 31 May for early bird rate

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(includes morning tea and lunch)

## Passive mourning to active remembering

If you're lucky, like me, soon after your loved one dies, a swarm of friends will embrace you in all sorts of meaningful ways. They'll pack the funeral home, attend the wake or shiva, and a few may even leave homemade meals wrapped in tin foil by your front door so you won't have to cook for a while. Rituals surrounding loss tend to kick into gear automatically and I benefitted from being the passive recipient of support when each of my parents passed away. Yet my greatest fortune ultimately caused me the most pain.

Simply put: Transitioning from passive mourning to active remembering is key to building resilience after loss. I got used to support just being there. In those first few awful days and weeks after my parents died, I didn't have to work hard to find a friend to talk with about my mom or dad. But consider the vacuum that happens later. Five years later, fifteen — those conversations often didn't occur without effort. That silence was one of the hardest and unexpected post-loss blows.

I also felt paralyzed and choked by my parents' belongings. What should I do with my father's collection of neckties and my mother's colorful assortment of scarves? A mountain of bric-a-brac moved with me from home to home, following me around like Pig-Pen's dirt cloud. At times, my sadness and isolation seemed inescapable until I figured out what I needed to do: I had to approach remembering the same way I'd pursue finding a new job or buying a car. It was up to me to take control. I needed to shift from being passive to being proactive.

So I brought my parents up in conversation. Over dinner with my children sometimes, I'd nonchalantly, but very much intentionally, recall an anecdote about Grandma or Grandpa that seemed germane to whatever we were discussing. I also began to cook a few reminiscent foods, frame unusual objects like passports and business cards to spark even more discussion, and plan a small number of outings to the neighborhoods where my parents grew up and the offices where they worked.

I ditched, donated, and gifted many of their possessions and transformed others so they could bring me joy. I got help turning my father's neckties into a quilt and my mother's scarves into the chuppah, the Jewish wedding canopy, under which I got married. Yes, these activities required some planning. But they made me stronger and happier.

For a long time, I couldn't articulate why I'd struggled so deeply years after my parents died and I couldn't find the words for what helped me heal. It turns out I failed to take ownership of keeping their memory alive. Grief experts like J. William Worden and Therese Rando have long argued that sustaining connections with loved ones is essential for moving forward. I had to crack open these opportunities. It was up to me to help my children appreciate the maternal grandparents they never got to know.

Recognizing and accepting the task of proactive remembering is critical for driving our capacity to rebound from adversity, especially the deaths of family and friends we miss most. If I had learned this lesson earlier, I would have leapfrogged years of heartache.

*Written by Allison Gilbert*

*Passed and Present: Keeping Memories of Loved Ones Alive*

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## EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

*A compassionate friend shares their story*

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me-NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions.

The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. Forget? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief.

Flowers and food were everywhere-love and concerns were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time.

People don't know what to say-nothing is NORMAL. Tragedy has brought seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents?

There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me "how are you?" Here is my answer: "I am mad Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong.

*Written by Lisa Ann Jones  
(Lifted from TCFV newsletter)*

## Am I grieving right?

We sit at the kitchen table, brushing off the chill of a winter evening. Gloria puts down her coffee mug and reaches for a picture of her children. Through tears, she tells me about her oldest son's life, and quietly laughs when describing his antics. He died three years ago, and she obviously misses him.

After reflecting on her grief for an hour, Gloria mentions that she is not angry about his death. Never has been. Then she turns to me, and whispers in a pleading voice, "Why am I not angry like I'm supposed to be? Why am I still crying three years later? What's wrong with me?"

To understand why Gloria asks these questions, we need to look at our misconceptions about grief.

Bereavement research generally goes in one of two directions. Some researchers say there is no universal roadmap for grieving. Each person's grief is uncharted territory.

Then there are other scholars who sketch a universal roadmap for grieving and label people who go "off-road" as abnormal or pathological. Popular applications of the universal roadmap often describe closure as the destination. When people travel a different route, park too long in one spot, or do not want to go in the direction others suggest, they are often defined as abnormal. Frequently, the concern is that people are not getting to the "closure destination" fast enough.

Also, the common myth that people go through stages of grief—such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—lingers in our culture, distorting our understanding. But contemporary research does not support "stages of grief." In fact, that idea was never based on bereavement research. In 1969, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced her stages of grief model after observing people dying. Soon others took the ideas out of context and applied them to grief.

Gloria wonders what is wrong with her because she was not angry. But people's experiences with grief do not go through orderly or predictable stages. Nor is there a clear ending. Our grieving lessens and changes over time, but we experience waves of grief throughout life.

Some researchers damage our understanding by defining departures from the universal road map as a medical or mental health problem. People who don't grieve the way someone else thinks they should are diagnosed with disorders like "complicated grief," "prolonged grief," "traumatic grief," "delayed grief," "exaggerated grief," or "chronic grief." Grief becomes a disease in need of a cure.

Treating grief as a disease threatens our freedom to grieve. And it gets worse.

The "normality of grief" was further eroded with the newest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The DSM5, released in 2013, frames grief as a mental disorder.

Until the DSM5, bereavement had still been viewed as an exception to the criteria used to diagnosis major depression. In other words, grief often shares many of the symptoms of major depression, but the circumstances following the loss of a loved one make those feelings and experiences "normal" or "expected." The new DSM5 eliminates the understanding that grieving is normal. It also opens up the flood gates for pharmaceutical companies, as a whole new wave of people, who used to be seen as "understandably upset" by a death, would now be diagnosed with a disorder and perhaps prescribed unnecessary drugs.

Grief comes in many colors. It can be painful and unrelenting, and sometimes sweet. It is unpredictable, mysterious, and profound. But grief is not an illness.

No wonder people question their grief: Am I OK? Is this normal? Am I grieving right?

Gloria asks what is wrong with her because she still cries for her son, three years after he died. She does not have closure. But neither does she want it.

We pay a price when labeling people with a disorder because they are grieving differently than expected. We further individualize the experience of grief by treating it as a medical problem. Rather than encouraging cultural rituals that increase social support from friends, family, and other groups, we push grieving behind closed doors.

Consequences follow when we force people to use a universal roadmap for grieving, and then judge those who do not follow it as wrong or sick. We deny the normality of grief. We deny the differences in our grieving experiences. We deny people the freedom to grieve.

I look in Gloria's eyes as tears roll down her face, and say, "There is nothing wrong with you."

*Written by Nancy Berns*



# Birthdays

*Our children – loved, missed and remembered by their families*

## JUNE

**09.06.81**

**Ian Scott Thomson**

If they grow purple flowers in heaven please pick a great big bunch put them in our darling Ian's arms and tell him they're from us. Loved always Mum, Kelly and Paul xxx

**10.06.71**

**Gregory Nikola Alcock**

Precious son of Ray and Helen, much loved brother of Darren, Brett and Tanya. To have to love, and then so tragically to lose is the greatest sorrow we carry. Always remembered.

**12.06.80**

**William Blair Gordon Williams**

You so enriched our lives, loved always, Dad (dec'd), Mum, sisters, nieces and nephews.

**12.06.96**

**Mason LaRoche**

Happy Birthday Mase. Life is not the same without you here and we miss you so much. We will always treasure our memories of you and you will never be forgotten. Love forever mum and Kirby xoxoxo

**15.06.85**

**Joanne Mary Smith**

Happy Birthday to our precious Angel in Heaven. Love Mum, Dad, Angela and Nanna.

**16.06.77**

**Rodney James Hamilton**

Precious son of Rob and Gloria. Forever in our hearts and sadly missed.

**21.06.61**

**Noel John Clarke**

Happy Birthday Noel. Always in our heart. Ride in Eternal Peace. Love Forever, Mum and Heather.

**22.06.83**

**Corrie (Coralie) Eleanor Benn**

Happy Birthday our precious blue eyed beauty. We will see you in the morning. Love from your family still here on Earth.

**24.06.66**

**Ashley Coffey**

Happy Birthday to our dear son 'Ash', husband of Yanti and father of little William. Always missed

**27.06.69**

**Pietro Guiseppa Felesina**

We love and miss you darling, we will never forget the love you gave to us all. Rest in the arms of Jesus, love Ma, Pa, John, Len and families.

## JULY

**02.07.51**

**John Phillip McCahill**

Happy Birthday to our darling Johnny. Celebrate in heaven with your dad and siblings, Andy and Tina-Maria. It only seems like "yesterday" when I gave birth to you at Queen Victoria Hospital, Melbourne. Such a beautiful baby boy with a "mop" of thick black hair. Love From All Your Family

**06.07.93**

**Anthony Hiro Nagata**

Happy Birthday. We will celebrate your "Forever Young" day. Loving you always Mum and Otorsan

**08.07.99**

**Matilda Rose Bevelander**

Happy Birthday sweetie. Today would have been your 18th. Always in my heart. Love you, Dad. xx

**10.07.90**

**Joshua Luke Finegan**

Happy birthday beautiful boy. You are always in our hearts and thoughts. Lots of love, hugs and kisses from Mum, Dad, Amy, Sooty and all your family and friends xoxoxo

**12.07.71**

**Kelvin Wayne Neihana Richards**

Dearly loved son of Cathy Richards. Always loved. Always remembered.

**17.07.70**

**Justin Douglas Summergreene**

Happy Birthday Justin. Wish we could all celebrate together. Love always and forever. Dad, Mum, Malisa and Damien, Brad and nephews Ben and Nick xxxxxxxx

**18.07.83**

**Samuel Henderson Sergienko**

My Message Happy Birthday miss your happy laughter and smile. My dearly loved beautiful boys. Love always Mum and Dad, Dan and Suza xoxoxo

**18.07.80**

**Matthew Murrie Debney**

Time stands still and we remember. Love you Matt, Mum, Dad and Megan.

*Today is full of memories happiness and tears, of birthday celebrations we've shared throughout the years. And although we'll always miss you, our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy for one so very dear. We celebrate your birthday and will hold you in our hearts forever and always with love eternal.*

*Wishing you a day of peace and warmest memories on your child's birthday.*

*From the Compassionate Friends*

# In memoriam

## Forever loved, forever young, forever remembered

### **CORRIE BENN** 22.06.83 – 14.06.00

Precious child of Jim and Sharon. We will always love you. See you in the morning little one. Love Dad, Mum, Mate and Gran.

### **EDWARD ERNEST BURDEN (EDDIE)** 03.11.78 – 02.07.07

Beloved son of Clare and Don. Our very dear son, and brother to Alison and Robert. We miss your sunny smile and bubbly personality. Always remembered and loved. Until we see you again.

### **ANNA LAVINIA DEBNEY** 29.02.76 – 01.06.79

Loved daughter of Mal and Liz. Sister of Megan and Matt (Dec'd) Remembering with love a little girl with laughing blue eyes and missing you in our lives today.

### **MARK ANTHONY FITZ HENRY** 05.02.67 – 22.06.05

Much loved son of Cheryl (nee Vennard) -FitzHenry. God saw you getting tired, a cure was not to be. He wrapped you in His loving arms and whispered 'come with me'. You suffered much in silence, your spirit did not bend. You faced your pain with courage, until the very end. Forever in my heart - Love Always - Mum

### **KIRBY LOUISE GRIMASON** 24.09.85 – 05.07.03

Loved daughter of Louise and Chris. Loving you was easy, we did it every day. Losing you was a heartache that never goes away. In our thoughts you will always stay, yesterday, tomorrow and always today. Miss you heaps Kirby. Love you always and forever. Mum, Ross, Dad, Samantha, Ashlee, Mikayla, Karen, Heath, Brendan and Jeff. Xxxx

### **JULIE ANNE KARAMI** 30.10.64 – 20.07.00 and **JOHN KARAMI** 01.04.64 – 20.07.00

There is a place in our hearts that is yours alone, a piece of our lives no one else can own. So many memories hold you near as days and years slip gently by. But your love and our memories never fade. Hammond Family.

### **DANA WILLIAM MANLEY** 23.05.89 – 02.07.10

Loved son of Christine and Brad. Dearest Dan, You've left us peaceful memories Your love is still our guide and though we cannot see you. You're always by our side. Love and cherish you always. Mum and Phil, Dad and Che and all the family.

### **STEVEN KEITH MEAGHER** 25.01.77 – 23.07.99

Dearly loved son of Keith and Linda. Brother to Colin (Dec'd) Daniel and Scott. We miss you so much, your hugs, your sense of humour and cheeky smiles, and your loving and caring ways. You have taken flight on Angel wings to find eternal bliss in Paradise. Love you always, your memory forever in our hearts.

### **MICHAEL JOHN SALKELD NORMAN** 20.02.78 – 10.06.85

Dearly loved special son of Sue and Alan and brother of David. Softly falls the day, As shadows beckon the coming dark, Softly and gently I rock your memory in the cradle of my heart. (Sandra S. Van Orman. TCF, Tacoma, Washington)

### **LEISA JANE PATERSON** 13.11.71 – 28.07.90 and **ADEN DHAL (unborn)**

Loved ones of Gary (dec'd), Rosanna and Cliff. 'Our only daughter and her baby "Safely Home" 'God has them in His keeping, we have them in our hearts Forever' Love Mum and Cliff and all the extended family xxxooo

### **KELVIN WAYNE NEIHANA RICHARDS** 12.07.71 – 06.06.97

Dearly loved son of Cathy Richards. Always loved. Always remembered.

### **CHRISTIAN PAUL SCHUBERT** 14.05.70 – 09.06.91

The sui and cide of die, My heart it still cries. Gone but not forgotten. Love Mum, Rachel and Tony.

### **BRIANNA SPITERI** 02.03.96 – 01.06.13

To my beautiful Brianna. You are forever in my heart and soul. Until we meet again, rest in peace my sweet angel. I love you. Mum xoxoxo

### **CAROLYN MAREE WILSON (CHOOKIE)** 28.12.79 – 28.06.00

Darling daughter of Vince and Judy. Sister/sister-in-law of Christine and John, Paul and Chelsea - stars in the sky "Aunty" of Paterson, Carter and Marcello - the boys love to hear about their "special" Aunty living with God. Forever in our thoughts, our lives and memories. Always remembered - never forgotten.

### **WILLIAM BLAIR GORDON WILLIAMS** 12.06.80 – 06.07.01

Beloved son of Gordon and Margaret, much loved brother and uncle. You're never too far away because you're in our hearts to stay. "From the Tree of Life each leaf must fall. The green, the gold, the great, the small. Each one in God's own time He'll call. With perfect love, He gathers all." Our family chain is broken, nothing seems the same. But as God calls us one by one, the links shall join again.

### **REVEL EATON EZZY 'Jnr'** 22.09.95 – 06.06.15

Very much loved son of Elly and Eaton, brother of Jessica, Leesa, Shaun and Maree. Tragically taken in a car accident. We will hold you in our hearts, Rev until we can hold you in Heaven. Loving and missing you always, "Live Forever". All our love, Mum, dad, Jessica, Leesa, Shaun and Maree. Xxxxxx

### **HARMONY MAYSAMS** 01.04.13 – 02.06.13

Our precious little angle star Harmony. We love and miss you so very much. Not a day goes by we don't think of you. Love forever daddy, Nanny, Family xox

### **LEIGH MATTHEW VINCENT** 18.12.81 – 29.07.16

We love you and miss you terribly. You will live in our hearts forever. Love Mum. x

# In memoriam

## Forever loved, forever young, forever remembered

**ANDREW JAMES STEPHEN  
McCAHILL**  
08.08.53 – 16.7.07

Our darling son and brother of Johnny (Dec), Patrick, Justin and Byron. Ten long years since you entered eternal life. You were such a caring and loving son/brother. We think of you everyday and words can not describe how much we miss you. Much love from all your family. xoxox

**MATTHEW ROBERT DOOLAN**  
4.9.98 – 25.7.16

To our precious son and brother. Your laughter will forever live on in our hearts. Love always Mum and Aimee. xox

**Marc-Rian Stubbs**  
09.08.1990 – 12.06.2016

Precious and much loved son and stepson of Veronica, Shayne (dec) and Mark, adored big brother of Connor and Allie, darling grandson of Caroline and loving partner of Allie. Marc, you brought so much love, laughter and joy into all our lives. From the day you were born you sparkled. Your cheeky grin, amazing wit and crazy ideas lit up our world. How much dimmer and sadder it is now that you are gone. Love you to the stars and back our darling boy xxx

BEING DEEPLY LOVED  
BY SOMEONE GIVES  
YOU STRENGTH,  
WHILE LOVING  
SOMEONE DEEPLY  
GIVES YOU COURAGE.

### *Birthday submission form*

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Message: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### *In memoriam submission form*

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Message: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Child's Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Child's Death: \_\_\_\_\_

*As so many anniversary messages are submitted it is not possible to print long messages, so please limit your message to six lines. We are happy to print poems in other sections of the Newsletter*

# Phone Contacts and Meetings

*Phone contacts are fellow bereaved parents, caring and understanding, who want to hear from you. If you are having a bad day and feel the need to talk to someone A Compassionate Friend is always there. Should you find you are unable to contact any of the people listed, please let the office know.*

**DEDICATED SUPPORT LINE: 1300 064 068**

## BRISBANE SUPPORT MEETINGS

**When:** Support meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.  
The next meeting is on:  
Tuesday 12th June  
Tuesday 10th July

**Where:** The New Farm Centre Meeting Room 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Who can attend:** Any grieving parent, grandparent or sibling who wants to meet with a friend and learn how others are coping.

**Cost:** Only the effort it takes for our bereaved parents to gather together and meet another bereaved parent who really understands and cares.

**Note:** There is plenty of street parking and complimentary tea and coffee is provided.

## CALOUNDRA SUPPORT MEETINGS

**When:** Support meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month.  
The next meeting is on:  
Saturday 16th June  
Saturday 21st July

**Where:** St Andrews Anglican Church  
Upper Gay Terrace, Kings Beach

**Time:** 9.30am

Please contact Lorraine for more information on (07) 5491 8662

## GOLD COAST/TWEED HEADS

Meetings as required.

Please contact Helen or Rodney for more information:

Helen – 0412 543 499  
Rodney – 0429 166 100

## HERVEY BAY

**When:** Support meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month.  
The next meeting is on:  
Thursday 14th June  
Thursday 12th July

Please note this meeting is for suicide survivors.

Please contact Owen for more information on 0401 311 468

## LOCKYER VALLEY/GATTON

Meetings as required.

Please contact Robyn for more information on (07) 5465 6574 or 04 17 013 309

## STANTHORPE

**When:** Support meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month.  
The next meeting is on:  
Wednesday 20th June  
Wednesday 18th July

**Where:** CWA Tea Rooms, 5 Victoria Street, Stanthorpe

**Time:** 7 pm

Please contact Sue for more information on 04 17 793 016

## ROCKHAMPTON

Meetings as required.

Please contact Rhonda for more information on 0458 274 211

## GRANDPARENT CONTACT:

Brisbane/Lockyer Valley

Robyn: (07) 5465 6574 or 0417013309

Northern Territory/Wide Bay

Marie-Clare: 0408 702 716

## SIBLING CONTACTS:

Brisbane/Beaudesert  
Trish: (07) 5541 3948

Lockyer Valley  
Mellisa: 5465 6609

MY SCARS REMIND ME THAT I DID INDEED SURVIVE MY DEEPEST WOUNDS. THAT IN ITSELF IS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT. AND THEY BRING TO MIND SOMETHING ELSE, TOO. THEY REMIND ME THAT THE DAMAGE LIFE HAS INFLICTED ON ME HAS, IN MANY PLACES, LEFT ME STRONGER AND MORE RESILIENT. WHAT HURT ME IN THE PAST HAS ACTUALLY MADE ME BETTER EQUIPPED TO FACE THE PRESENT."



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THE COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS NEW FARM  
CENTRE

## COFFEE MORNINGS

Coffee Mornings are held at the New Farm Centre, 505 Bowen Terrace on the first Monday of every month from 10am.

We invite you to come along and take the opportunity of sharing with other bereaved parents.

At this time you are also most welcome to access our library with its large range of grief related books, literature, leaflets and newsletters.

June – Monday 4th

July – Monday 2nd

## PLEASE TAKE NOTE

### *Newsletter submissions*

Closing date for submissions for the next newsletter is: July 13th.

Newsletter printing, folding and preparation for mailing is scheduled for Monday 6th August from 10am at the Centre, 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm. Volunteers are welcome!

Please note: If your child's anniversary or birthday is in August or September and you would like an Memoriam or Birthday Notice in the August/September 2018 Newsletter, the closing date is July 13th.

To have your child's birthday listed in the Birthday notices, it is necessary for you to let us know. (An In Memoriam notice is for the anniversary of the death of our children – we require you to complete the Birthday notice form and send it into the New Farm Office). Birthday messages are to be very short messages. This message will then be automatically listed every year unless you advise us of a change.