



The Compassionate Friends

Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends

P.O. Box 3696 Oak Brook, IL 60522 1-877-969-0010

National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Website: www.tcf-cle.net



Chapter Closed Facebook Group

December, 2018 and January, 2019

WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents.

MISSION STATEMENT: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Phone Contacts:

Pauline Dey

Phone: 440-526-2087

Judy Luff

Phone: 440-234-7098

Chapter Leaders:

Doreen and Brian Sismour

Phone: 440-327-8678

bsismour@oh.rr.com

Regional Chapter Coordinator:

Karen Pinsky

Phone: 513-207-8714

karenpinsky@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Bill Luff

Phone: 440-234-7098

jbl3665@sbcglobal.net

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.



December and January Monthly Meetings

December 12th at 7:00pm: There is no specific discussion subject for this meeting. You can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Joanne and Don Litvin will be the meeting facilitators.

January 9th at 7:00pm: The discussion subject will be "Coping, Moping, Hoping; How did you do with the holidays?", but you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Clayton Samels will be the meeting facilitator.

MEETING LOCATION: *Bethany Lutheran Church, 6041 Ridge Road, Parma 44129*

Remembering Our Children

Please take a moment to remember these children and those who love them on their birth dates and anniversaries. Although they were only here for a short time, the impact they made on their loved ones remains forever.



Birth Dates

December

- 2 - Tracy Ann Schuenemann
- 3 - David William Woods
- 4 - Michael Edward Moran
- 5 - Shelley Fletcher
- 7 - Christian Creed Hein
- 9 - Frederick M. Tschanz
- 9 - Dominic Vincent Vitullo
- 10 - David Thomas Erich
- 10 - Roderick ("Roddy") Joseph Stafford Whelan
- 16 - Kimberly Ann Keenan
- 20 - Jacques Christiaan Bosman
- 21 - Anthony S. Martino
- 21 - Randy Stock
- 22 - Carl David Mancini
- 22 - Justin Robert van Brakle
- 23 - Steven J. Bilecky
- 23 - Christopher Michael Vinson
- 25 - Victoria Ann (Corrigan) Horn
- 25 - Douglas A. Specht
- 28 - Robby Brandt
- 30 - Eric Justin Obloy
- 31 - Denise Ann Kohl
- 31 - Stephen John Parker

January

- 4 - Melanie Sue Ashwill
- 9 - Isabella Marie Hlynosky (Stachewicz)
- 11 - Jackie vanDaalwyk
- 15 - Ryan Mulvey
- 16 - Robert C. Cutler
- 16 - Eli James Draper
- 17 - Hannah Elise Wernke
- 20 - Joey Keeler
- 24 - Terry M. Pappas
- 26 - Steven Michael Luff
- 28 - Jessica Marie Kossin
- 29 - Kaitlyn Mary Schauer
- 31 - Christopher Todd Brogan
- 31 - Monica Lynn Weber

Remembering Our Children

Anniversaries

December

Claire Jane Cocklin (Age 4)
 Andrea Cortes (Age 26)
 Peter Anthony DiRienzo (Age 30)
 Christina Elswick (Age 49)
 Megan Lynn Frazier (Age 18)
 Charles "Sport" Haske (Age 22)
 Nathan Christopher Jurcago (Age 17)
 Johnny Robert Kazimer, Jr. (Age 24)
 Jonathan Matthew Lichtenberg (Age 20)
 Kai E. Maatz (Age 26)
 Alexander Humel McCann (Age 17)
 Katherine Lynn Nemes (Age 20)
 Matthew Pajak (Age 6)
 Dina Marie Parisi (Age 32)
 Kimberly Ann Parker (Age 34)
 Susan Kay (Pangrac) Sizler (Age 26)
 Rebecca Helen Truelsch (Age 18)
 Dominic Vincent Vitullo (Age 1 day)
 Mark Anthony Weber (Age 19)
 Dustin M. Zarobell (Age 35)

January

Monica Judith Ann Adams/Bittner (Age 33)
 Nathan Bell (Age 33)
 Gregory Charles Brown (Age 15)
 Joseph Troy Brown (Age 17)
 Sean Daniel Byers (Age 21)
 Robert C. Cutler (Age 34)
 Richard Charles Devrient, Jr. (Age 22)
 Shelley Fletcher (Age 34)
 Dawn Nicole Fordu (Age 15)
 Andrew Domonic Franklin (Age 30)
 Michael B. George (Age 20)
 Victoria Ann (Corrigan) Horn (Age 42)
 Ryan Johnson (Age 26)
 Matthew Josef-Arthur (Age 23)
 Charles Junke (Age 49)
 Matthew Kolesar (Age 21)
 Mary Kay (Moore) Lehman (Age 36)
 Matthew Glenn Lehman (Not Yet Born)
 Rick Marano (Age 33)
 Gregory Charles Christopher Musichuk (Age 24)
 Andrew Joseph Picone (Age 16 months)
 Aliyah Jean Ramsey (Age 7)
 Bradley Ryan Riggins (Age 25)
 Russell Todd Simon (Age 18)
 Amy (Cudney) Sobolewski (Age 30)
 Sean Somoles (Age 40)
 Fannie Marie Thomas-Lewis (Age 22)
 Wendy Ann Toennies (Age 51)
 Justin Robert van Brakle (Age 20)
 Michael James Wohl (Age 28)

Newsletter Dedications



Charles "Sport" Haske (Age 22)

Sport Haske
7-11-76 to 12-5-98

**Sport was a simple man,
family and friends
were very important to him.
He is loved and missed everyday.**



Steven Michael Luff (Age 19)

Steve,

**Time goes fast — Time goes
slow. But time doesn't
change our love for you.
We are so blessed to have
you as our son and brother
and will love you now and
forever.**

*Mom, Dad,
Scott and Lisa*

Newsletter Dedications



Rebecca Helen Truelsch (Age 18)

*Without you the world goes on
 Without you just too much pain to bear
 Without you must go on and keep moving
 The memories I cling to the love I hold secure in my heart
 How I wish the cure was there
 that there was no suffering in the end
 Without you there is an emptiness that can't be filled
 a piece missing from the puzzle there is a hole
 Without you*

*In memory of Rebecca H Truelsch (age 18)
 Sending our Love to you,
 Mom, Dad and sisters*



Our November meeting was the first for these bereaved parents. It is very difficult to attend a first meeting and we applaud them for having the courage to come. We hope we were of help, and that they will return and work through their grief journeys with us.

First Meeting

Christine Anderson, remembering her beloved son Dustin M. Zarobell (Age 35)

Mike Pewitt, remembering his beloved son Christopher James Pewitt (Age 23)

Gerald and Victoria Stavlas, remembering their beloved son Christopher George Stavlas (Age 30)

TCF National News

THE 22ND TCF WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

The 22nd Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held this year on Sunday, December 9, 2018. This is a very special and moving event, when bereaved families join together from around the world in memory of all children gone too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.



Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 22nd annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

What Is A Love Gift ?

A love gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but it can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of our chapter. All local TCF chapters are totally dependent on funds from our families. We DO NOT receive funds from our National Office. Everything we need to operate our local chapter is paid directly from our local resources and our local family contributions. All monetary love gifts are tax deductible.

Thank you to all who contribute and support our chapter. Some people contribute in memory of other's children ... this is a wonderful way for others to say, "I am remembering your child." Other "Gifts of Love" are evident by all the compassionate and giving volunteers we have within our organization.

Love gifts should be made payable to The Compassionate Friends and mailed to our treasurer:

George Mickol, 2914 Dellwood Drive, Parma, OH 44134

Our Chapter News



Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration

Our annual celebration will be held December 9th at the Old Town Hall, 18825 Royalton Road, Strongsville. We will have a potluck dinner beginning promptly at 6:30pm with the welcome and music/readings. At 7pm, we will each light a candle in memory of all children before sharing dinner together.

Our chapter will provide ham, rolls & butter and beverages. Each family please arrive between 6:00-6:20pm and provide a side dish, salad or dessert (including serving spoon) to serve 10-12 people. After dinner, we will extinguish our candles and have a final reading/music.

There will be a table to display your child's picture which should be no larger than 8x10. Again this year a slideshow of our children will be shown during the meal.

VERY IMPORTANT: You MUST RSVP to Pauline Dey (440-526-2087 or rpdey1@cox.net) by Monday, December 3rd. The City of Strongsville enforces a very strict maximum occupancy of 65 for this facility. We will be unable to accommodate more than 65 persons. (The last three years our attendance was 63-65.)



Directions to Old Town Hall: The building is located on the south side of Royalton Road (Rt. 82) just east of Pearl Road. It is directly across from the Town Square, in the center of Strongsville.. Parking is on both the east and west sides of the building. Please use the east building entrance. Our Candle Lighting Celebration and potluck dinner will be held on the first floor. The building is fully accessible ... there are no stairs.

*It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain.
In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the
pain lessens, but it's never gone. ~ Rose Kennedy*

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

One book you might find worthwhile is The Unspeakable Loss, by Nisha Zenoff. It's one that I picked up at the last TCF National Conference in St. Louis, where Nisha was a keynote speaker. Nisha is a counselor and psychotherapist who lost her son when he was seventeen, so she is qualified to speak not only professionally, but also as a bereaved mother. The title stems from growing up in a family where there were losses that no one was allowed to talk about, which is not a healthy thing, as you may imagine. If there is one thing we share in the world of bereavement, it's the need to share our losses by talking about them.

Besides the book, you might find a couple of YouTube clips worth watching. One is Nisha's keynote speech at the conference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vOmYlvCwDE&t=43s>

and the other is an interview of Nisha by Dr. Gloria Horsley on Surviving the Loss of a Child in the First Year:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eqN4o0fSec>

OK, back to books. I've managed to get through three or four other grief related books (fiction) and a couple non grief books by reading on my phone and tablet, using an app called Libby, which allows me (or you) to borrow books from the local library. Once you set it up and use your library card number, you can download books, either text or audible, to your favorite device. I currently have two books on my device and two more on hold from the library, which I will be able to download as soon as the people ahead of me in line get done reading them. Yeah, I could trudge through the snow to the library to get a hard copy, if one is available, or buy online, etc, but Libby is a nice option to have.

Please let me know if you have read any book that you think we might find useful or enjoyable, and I will pass it along.

Love Gifts

Love gifts are donations that are made to our chapter to support the continuation of the chapter as well as the newsletter. We would like to thank these people who donated to our Chapter in memory of their loved one(s).

~ Judy and Bill Luff ~ In loving memory of
Steven Michael Luff (Age 19)

~ Rosary and Nunzio Martino ~ In loving memory of
Anthony S. Martino (Age 21)

~ Sue Scardino ~ In loving memory of
Charles "Sport" Haske (Age 22)

~ Rita and Dave Schuenemann ~ In loving memory of
Tracy Ann Schuenemann (Age 27)

~ Connie and Dave Truelsch ~ In loving memory of
Rebecca Helen Truelsch (Age 18)

On a Night in December

As days moved on towards winter,
and trees were going bare,
we were faced with shopping malls
where carols filled the air.

And thoughts all turned to loved ones,
those present, and those not.
For us, whose lives were drained of light,
it was solace that we sought.

And so began a journey
of candles round the earth
bringing light to darkness
and honoring the worth

of children held so dear to us
but never to grow old,
whose lives filled our life tapestries,
with threads of finest gold.

Now we gather on this night
and watch the candles burn
see their pictures, say their names
one by one, in turn.

And our children, brothers, sisters,
for whom we gather here,
let us know, in the candles glow,
that they are always near.

Their light will still surround us;
their love will always flow.
As we leave may we remember,
that this is ever so.

*From Catching the Light – Coming Back to Life after the
Death of a Child
by Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
Written for TCF Marin's
2003 Candle Lighting Service*

Newsletter Dedications

A newsletter dedication is a wonderful way to remember your child, and to help defray the costs to produce the newsletter. The cost is \$30 (tax deductible). If you would like to include a dedication, please fill out the form below and either bring it to a monthly meeting or mail it with your check (made payable to The Compassionate Friends) to Bill Luff, 133 Fourth Avenue, Berea, OH 44017. If you have a picture to include or a small tribute, please e-mail it to Bill Luff at:

jbl3665@sbcglobal.net



To submit a Newsletter Dedication in loving memory of your child

Please complete this form and send with your donation (\$30). Make check payable to The Compassionate Friends.



Donor: _____
(Your Name)

Donor Address: _____
(Street) (City, State, Zip) (Phone #)

In Memory of: _____
(Child's Name)

I would like dedication to appear in newsletter for month of: _____
(1st Choice) (2nd Choice)

A Candle for My Child

Each night as darkness settles over our home, a little candle begins flickering in the east window of our stair case landing. The tiny light burns until dawn and then silently is quenched with the rising sun. This is my son's light. About a year after Todd died, the leader of our chapter suggested a candle in the window for the holidays, as I had no inclination to decorate. I placed a candle there, and I have now replaced that candle with yet another candle. This is Todd's candle.....this is Todd's light.

Todd's candle has a Victorian appearance and will burn steady or flicker. When the darkness comes forth, Todd's candle begins its nightly vigil.....a vigil that will not end until I am dead. Although this is a small gesture, it has deep meaning for me. Sometimes I awaken in the middle of the night and walk into the atrium at the foot of the steps by the light of Todd's candle. I'll grab a glass of water and watch the candle flicker. Other times in the early evening, when only a reading lamp is lit in the living room, I will look into the atrium. Todd's light shines. I feel as if he is with me somehow, in the light of this little candle. I think about him, his life, his joys, his sorrows, his immense capacity to love and to laugh. I feel a deep closeness to my son that cannot be explained to anyone but those who have lost a child. I understand that there is much peace and solace in keeping my child in my heart and life and in establishing my own private rituals of remembrance.

Leaving a candle in the window has been an American tradition since the Colonial Era. The candle symbolizes the warmth and security of the family home and its message is loyalty to a family member who is not present. So, it is fitting that Todd's candle shines each night.....reminding all that he is absent from our home, but not our hearts.

Each of us has a ritual of remembrance of our child. Some of us have consciously established this. Others have unconsciously done so. But there is a ritual that brings our child close to us, only to us. Our rituals are a very personal choice. I chose not to share my ritual for 2 ½ years. Then one day a child who lives across the street asked me about the candle. I told her that it is my son's candle. She asked if he was in Iraq. "No, I said, he's in heaven."

A momentary look of fright passed over her face, and then she smiled. "I thought you had kids. You act like a mom."

Her innocent comment about me "acting like a mom" once again reinforced the fact that we will always be parents. Those of us who have children who have died will always be parents to those children. That role has shaped who we are, and intensified it more with the death of our precious child.

This is one element of losing a child that escapes the general population. If you have not lost a child, you don't understand, you can't understand the feelings and emotions that run so deeply in our psyches and our souls.

Our Compassionate Friends understand those emotions and our need to speak of our children, to deal with our overwhelming loss. Whether for a season or the rest of our lives, we have been good friends for each other. When I see Todd's candle, I think of my child, other parents, their children, their loss, my loss, the totality of the sorrow that enters our meeting room every month, and yet, I also think of the joy. There is a peaceful joy, a sense of serenity in knowing you are not alone and isolated in your unique grief. Others are walking with you on the road of life after the death of their children.

So now, when I gaze at Todd's candle, I remember his life, the security he felt within these walls, the growing up years, the love, loyalty and emotional stability he experienced as a child which enabled him to become a man of courage, self confidence and gentleness in the face of life's worst and best. I think of the other children and the parents left behind.....the sons and daughters of my Compassionate Friends. These children are missed, they are loved and they, too, are kept forever in a parent's heart. Their parents share a common bond with me that will follow each of us to our last day. We have lost our precious, beautiful children. We know what pure and overwhelming grief really is. We walk this road together as Compassionate Friends. And we remember, each of us in our own way. Todd's candle is one way to tell him that I love him as only a mother can love....unconditionally and forever. And I will always remember. I'm will always be Todd's mom. I have found that being a parent is a lifetime journey....even when our children are not with us on life's road. As parents, we define ourselves as interwoven with the fabric of our children's lives. We always remember. There is comfort in that.

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

Eternal Flames

This is a night like no other
In the days now all too the same
When we stand with one another
And share our Eternal Flames

For in this gentle expression
Of the light from each candle's glow
Shines hope amidst our depression
And the truths we've all come to know

That death steals more than theirs only
These unfinished lives we bemoan
But though we are sad and lonely
Trust that 'We need not walk alone'

The love and loss that we all feel
Are joined, but each tries to 'win out'
Minds struggling to know what's real
And what this grief is all about

How do we make them 'alive' again?
Who here has not wondered 'to die'?
Where do we pose our question?
When the only question is 'why'?

If love truly burns eternal
Much like Mother Earth's molten core
With each turn grief grows less infernal
While love still grows all the more

That's not to say pain only subsides
For the bereaved know better still
But love which was before....abides
As their memory becomes thy will

So tell me 'dear friend' your story
And I will regale you with mine
We'll bask in that glow and glory
So that their light may always shine

*Patrick Thibault for TCF WWCL 2010
TCF Redlands, CA*

First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas
without her being here.
Yet the world is singing round me,
joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor
and brave the sights and sounds,
a few moments worth of shopping,
and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it,
find a path through holidays,
look for shortcuts, good ideas,
some directions through the maze.

Then I find at last the answer:
I'll include her symbolically.
And the giving becomes perfect;
her love's flowing down, through me.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest – After the Death of a Child*