



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, 2020 and January, 2021

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WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

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

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.

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 9th and January 13th at 7:00pm: We will meet “virtually” using the Zoom video conferencing app. Please see page 11 for more information and some help preparing for this new way to meet. The discussion topics will be “general” (December) and “How did you handle the holidays” (January). As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Meeting facilitators will be Joanne and Don Litvin (December) and Clayton Samels and Lori Rychlik (January). **Join the meetings from your home via Zoom!**

NOTE: MEETINGS WILL NOT BE HELD AT BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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
- 6 - Lisa Simpson
- 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 - Justin Robert van Brakle
- 23 - Steven J. Bilecky
- 23 - Benjamin Alan Cuthbert Corliss
- 25 - Victoria Ann (Corrigan) Horn
- 28 - Robby Brandt
- 29 - Evaristo Fernandez-Rios
- 30 - Eric Justin Obloy
- 31 - Stephen John Parker

January

- 4 - Melanie Sue Ashwill
- 9 - Isabella Marie Hlynosky (Stachewicz)
- 11 - Jackie vanDaalwyk
- 12 - Maisie McCarty
- 15 - Ryan Mulvey
- 16 - Robert C. Cutler
- 17 - Hannah Elise Wernke
- 20 - Adam Joseph Semenas
- 24 - Terry M. Pappas
- 26 - Steven Michael Luff
- 27 - Kimberly Ann Kozar
- 28 - Jessica Marie Kossin
- 31 - Christopher Todd Brogan
- 31 - Monica Lynn Weber

Remembering Our Children

Angelversaries

December

Claire Jane Cocklin (Age 4)
 Peter Anthony DiRienzo (Age 30)
 Megan Lynn Frazier (Age 18)
 Charles "Sport" Haske (Age 22)
 Nathan Christopher Jurcago (Age 17)
 Johnny Robert Kazimer, Jr. (Age 24)
 Kai E. Maatz (Age 26)
 Alexander Humel McCann (Age 17)
 Katherine Lynn Nemes (Age 20)
 Dina Marie Parisi (Age 32)
 Kimberly Ann Parker (Age 34)
 Michael Andrew Ruzicho (Age 40)
 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)
 Gregory Charles Brown (Age 15)
 Joseph Troy Brown (Age 17)
 Sean Daniel Byers (Age 21)
 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)
 Dustin Kalstrom (Age 26)
 Matthew Kolesar (Age 21)
 Rick Marano (Age 33)
 Maisie McCarty (Age 1 day)
 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)
 Justin Robert van Brakle (Age 20)
 Michael James Wohl (Age 28)

Newsletter Dedications



Michael Benjamin Kurtz (Age 17)

My son, my big brother, my friend ... in 17 short years you lived, laughed, played, grew, comforted, protected and loved. You unconditionally loved us. An unfinished life. Forever loved - Forever missed.

*Love,
Mom, Adie and Mark*



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*



'Twas the Night Before Christmas" ~ For Bereaved Parents ~

'Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days,
 That I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.
 The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
 In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.
 As others were making their holiday plans,
 My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.
 I had lost my dear child a few years before,
 And I knew what my holiday had in store.
 When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
 I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
 Away to the window I flew like a flash,
 Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash
 The sight that I saw took my breath away,
 And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.
 When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
 But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.
 With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
 I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.
 The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,
 That my child was still near me and that I was loved.
 The message they brought was my holiday gift,
 And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.
 As I knelt closer to get a better view,
 One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
 That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
 To help me get through the holiday scene.
 In the days that followed I carried the thought,
 Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -
 That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,
 Our children are with us - they're not really dead.
 Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,
 A message of hope - a message so dear.
 And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,
 "To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"

*Faye McCord
 TCF, Jackson, MS*

TCF National News



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS VIRTUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS WILL OFFER A
VIRTUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING
ON DECEMBER 13 STARTING AT 6:45 PM FOR
EASTERN, CENTRAL, MOUNTAIN AND PACIFIC TIME ZONES.

Register now to attend the candle lighting at 6:45 PM for each time zone:

[REGISTER FOR THE EASTERN STANDARD TIME CANDLE LIGHTING](#)

[REGISTER FOR THE CENTRAL STANDARD TIME CANDLE LIGHTING](#)

[REGISTER FOR THE MOUNTAIN STANDARD TIME CANDLE LIGHTING](#)

[REGISTER FOR THE PACIFIC STANDARD TIME CANDLE LIGHTING](#)

Our Chapter News



Chapter Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration

*Our annual chapter celebration **WILL NOT** be held this year due to the pandemic. Instead, we urge you to join the Virtual Worldwide Candle Lighting celebration, being offered by the TCF National organization. Please see the details on page 6, and click on the appropriate time zone to register.*

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

I hope this finds you all well. The power, which went off at 3 am, is back on, so I managed to get out of bed to turn up the heat and look out the window at the first significant snowfall of the season.

This year's Thanksgiving is just a memory, well, all except for a few leftovers still in the refrigerator. Sharyl and I cooked an eighteen-pound turkey for just two people, so, you know, that meant a lot of leftover turkey for sandwiches. I scrolled through some old photo albums on Facebook for memories of last year's Turkey Day with family in Dallas, as well as earlier Turkey Days with them up here in Parma or New York. And there are pictures of solo Turkey Days, too. Each memory is special in its own way.



As for my reading lately, I'm stuck in the middle of a collection of science fiction short stories. Hey, for \$1.99, I'm not going to complain about the price. So I am not going to recommend any grief reading this month. Instead, I'll mention some aspects of digital reading. I have nothing against good old-fashioned paper and ink books. Lord knows I've gone through my share of those. I still recall taking trunks full of books to Half Price Books and getting maybe \$20.00 for several cartons of my used books, only to spend that \$20 on one or two books to bring back home. And, of course, I have my library card for the Cuyahoga County Public Library, a system that was voted best in the US. I love browsing library shelves and bookstore shelves. But recently, the library has gone back to drive through pickup of books only, so I can't go inside there to look at stuff. I can, however, browse at leisure through the system on my phone, as well as shopping for books from Amazon. I even get daily recommendations from Book Bub on deals of the day. That's how I get those \$1.99 specials. Heck, and there is always that collection of thousands and thousands of free ebooks at Project Gutenberg, which is actually the first place I started my online reading adventures several decades ago. In fact, I used to give all my students a cd of The Best of Project Gutenberg to encourage their reading. So, while I miss the several shelves, for example, of the novels of Charles Dickens, say, I can always read a free copy of any one of those novels by taking a digital trip to Project Gutenberg.

(continued on following page)

Our Chapter News

Library Notes *(continued from preceding page)*

But, of course, to read an ebook, you need a book reading program, app, or device. I think my first program was FBReader. No, the FB wasn't for Facebook. It was for "Free Book Reader." Although I don't have it on my computer anymore, I still have it on my phone, though it is seldom used anymore. Heck, any program that displays simple text files can display a text file from Project Gutenberg, although it's a lot more pleasant to use a book reader than WordPad! And Project Gutenberg offers their books in several other formats that are more reader friendly.



I am particularly fond of Kindle as a reader. No, I don't mean the actual Kindle tablet. Rather, I mean the Kindle app, which is free and comes in versions for Windows computers, Android devices, and, I suppose, Apple devices, though I have no Apple devices, so I can't really swear to that, or at that, for that matter. When I buy an ebook from Amazon, for example, I can download it to the Kindle app on my phone or tablet, or computer. I don't read much on my phone anymore, although I have been known to go through half a novel on the phone while sitting in an airport, waiting for a flight. I have a nice old 10-inch Galaxy Tab 2 that does just fine.

As for library stuff, I started out on the computer with a program called OverDrive. You can sign into your library using your library card, or several different libraries using several different library cards, if you have them, to download books. Just like going to a library, you may have to be added to a waiting list for a certain book, etc. For Android users, you use a library app called Libby to do the same tasks. You can read a book in the Libby app, or you can download the library book to Kindle, instead.

Part of me is glad the power came back on today, letting me get up out of bed, etc., but part of me was hoping that I'd be able to stay in bed and read some more stories on my tablet. Well, hey, I guess I can always go in the living room and sit in the lounge chair and read there, while occasionally glancing up at the flickering lights over the balcony door which frame the non-flickering lights on the Christmas tree in front of the balcony door. But I'll have to wait until dark for the full effect, when the solar powered flickering lights out on the balcony rail kick in for a couple of hours. Yeah, we did more this holiday weekend than just eat turkey.

Stay safe. Stay well. Read something.

You can shed tears that he is gone, or you can smile because he has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray he'll come back or you can open your eyes and see all he has left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him or you can be full of the love you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday

or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember him and only that he's gone, or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back, or you can do what he'd want - smile, open your eyes, love, and go on.

~ Author Unknown ~

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).

~ Kathryn Kurtz ~ In loving memory of
Michael Benjamin Kurtz (Age 17)

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

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:

Cheryl Ondrejch, 14365 Old Pleasant Valley Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130

Winter Memories

The days are getting colder,
and the first snow's not too far off.
It used to be so pretty
gently falling from aloft.

But the snow won't be as pretty,
as it gathers on the ground,
'cause there'll be a snowman missing,
my son is not around.

The playing children's laughter,
used to be a special song,
but this year will be different,
without my son to sing along.

The song has lost its music,
and it'll be just another day,
as I gaze down from my window
and watch the children play.

But the snow will again be pretty,
in a far off distant time,
and we'll build snowmen together
and we'll never look behind.

For now, I'll remain with memories,
and the melting snow will fade,
but he builds snowmen to his heart's content,
because he now lives where snow is made.

*Jeremiah Sundown
TCF Nashville, TN*

A Story About John

As Christmas time nears, we who have lost a child only have our memories to carry us through. My mind has been reeling with memories of years past. But there was one that I will always remember.....

It was a cold snowy December that year in 1976. Frigid temperatures had me piling more and more wood into our wood burner in the living room. Andy wanted to go outside and build a snowman. I told him no, it was too cold. He then wanted to go over to "John's" trailer and visit. I said no. John lived on the adjoining property. An elderly man who never had any children of his own, he took a shining to my son. Every time Andy was outside playing, I could hear his giggles over at John's house as they planted a garden outside in summer, or Andy "helped" John work on some project he was doing. John didn't have much. His trailer was old and ragged looking. Andy didn't see the "old" trailer. He only saw a man who loved kids and a man who could bring a smile on a child's face daily. Andy didn't notice the tattered clothes John wore. But I did. Andy didn't notice the hands that were calloused from years of hard work, only I did. And yet, I still didn't want Andy to go over to John's house. Maybe I was afraid he'd pick up germs. Maybe I was afraid John's shabbiness would rub off onto Andy. How wrong I was. How blind, I, as an adult, was that cold snowy winter.

It was Christmas Eve Day when the knock came at the door. I was baking cookies so Andy went to the door. I heard his squeal of "JOHN" as he opened the door. John had never been to my house before and I wondered why he was there standing with his hat in his hand, head bowed in a blinding snow storm. I went to the door as the old gray eyes looked up at me and his voice said, "I've made something for Andy for Christmas." Behind him, in the snow, sat the most beautiful wood crafted toy box on wheels that I'd ever seen. Andy jumped out the door and hugged John's neck. I helped John bring the toy chest into the house. I noticed how smooth the corners were sanded. I noticed how much work was put into making the box being a wood crafter myself. I knew John had spent hours making the toy chest.

The three of us sat down as I offered John a piece of cake and a glass of milk. I saw the old gray eyes lovingly look at Andy, and I saw the love and admiration in Andy's eyes as he looked up at John. It was Andy, after John left to go back home, that went into his room and dug out a piece of wood he'd painted and told me he wanted to give it to John for Christmas. I watched as my little boy trucked through the snow to John's trailer to share the true meaning of Christmas with his friend. It was a month later on January 22 when another knock came at the door. Andy opened the door to see John standing there holding a cake he'd made with crooked letters on it saying, "Happy Birthday Andy and Andy's mom." I offered to have him come in and we'd share the cake, but he declined. He handed Andy a paper sack and hugged him before he left. I will always remember Andy reaching in the bag and pulling out the finest crafted little car I'd ever seen.

It was two months before Christmas in 1977 as I sat in a funeral home, my heart broken, as my little boy lay in the casket. Oblivious to whom was near me, only knowing I could not go on without my son, I didn't look up when I felt hands rest on my shoulder. And yet they stayed there. I remember turning my head to see John standing there, those gray eyes filled with tears as he looked at me. John lost his little friend that day. I had once been blinded by the love between a little boy and an old man. And yet, that little boy taught me to look beyond tattered clothes and old shabby trailers. He taught me to see real beauty, in an old man's eyes. For on that day, I saw love, genuine love from the heart from an old man who loved my son. John joined Andy in heaven the following winter.

God Bless you John. Take care of my little boy for me until I get there.

Love, Andy's mom Sharon Bryant

*In memory of Andy Dunbar
January 22, 1972 - October 24, 1977
I'm his mom and he's my angel forever
Reprinted by permission of author*

Zoom! Join us online for a video chapter meeting using Zoom!

Should you use a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone? They each have their benefits and their drawbacks, so pick which one you are comfortable with. In any case, you need to download the Zoom app for your device or use Zoom from within your web browser. It's probably a good idea to do a test at first with a friend or two before you actually join a meeting. Or, you can be like me, jump right into a meeting and learn the hard way.

You will receive a link to click on to join the meeting. Just click on the link and you will be put in a "waiting room" until the meeting host admits you to the actual meeting. This is a security measure to keep unwanted people from crashing the meeting. Also, the host can remove a participant from a meeting if that ever becomes necessary. You have the ability to name yourself or rename so that the other members will see that displayed. The meeting host can rename any of the participants.

You should know how to mute/unmute yourself, just in case. You should also switch off or on your video. You can leave the meeting at any time if you wish. If the meeting exceeds the allotted time limit (40 minutes) it may end automatically. To prevent that, we will probably take a break after 35 minutes and then in 5 minutes or so, the host may start up the meeting again. In that case, you can return by clicking that meeting link again.

Let's get specific: How to Zoom

1 Download Zoom for your device and install if you don't already have it and then run it. Here are some links for videos showing how to install Zoom on different devices.

Android - <https://youtu.be/1tdT35ZNGKk>

iPhone or iPad - https://youtu.be/j__a-PKrMqI

Windows - <https://youtu.be/Xp6tJOo9mmc>

Need more instructions? Search on YouTube for "zoom dottech" for some good ones.

2 Sign up for a Zoom account. Not needed to join a meeting, but you might want to sign up anyway. Their basic account is free. You can then host your own meeting with your family or friends., a good way to test it all out and keep in touch with people. Check to make sure your audio and video work, and learn how to mute/unmute your audio and turn off/on your video.

3 Click on our meeting link at meeting time to open the app and be placed in the waiting room. The meeting host will admit you to the meeting. It's that simple! (Maybe!) Try it out. If you need help, post on our chapter TCF group page and I, or someone, will try to get you going.

*Clayton Samels
TCF Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter*

Beyond Surviving: “Twenty Five Commandments”

Hundreds of books have been written about loss and grief. Few have addressed the aftermath of suicide for survivors. Here again, there are no answers; only suggestions from those who have lived through and beyond the event. I've compiled their thoughts.

1. Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with “why” it happened until you no longer need to know “why,” or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy – you are in mourning.
5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself.
6. You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will have to act on these thoughts.
8. Remember to take one day at a time.
9. Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
10. Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
11. Give yourself time to heal.
12. Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
13. Expect setbacks. Don't panic if emotions return like a tidal wave. You may only be experiencing a remnant of grief; an unfinished piece.
14. Try to put off major decisions.
15. Give yourself permission to get professional help.
16. Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
17. Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
18. Set your own limits and learn to say no.
19. Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
20. Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as The Compassionate Friends, or Survivors of Suicide groups. If not, ask a professional to help start one.
21. Call on your personal faith to help you through.
22. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, i.e., headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, etc.
23. The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
24. Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go.
25. Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and go beyond just surviving.

Holidays in Heaven

The Holiday Season is just not the same,
A smile is missing when saying one name.

For parents who've lost a daughter or son,
Nothing can bring back the delightful fun,
Of watching them talk, laugh, or just run.

The memories are all that we do have now,
We do go on.....only God knows how.

A New Year comes as midnight arrives,
Our Angels still a big part of our lives.

If only we could trade the presents we receive,
For one more day with those whom we grieve!

But nothing can bring back our beloved child,
The one that laughed, cried, and often smiled.

They are together in a much better place,
Watching us cry.....touching our face!

Although we miss them on Holidays to share,
Be assured their loving presence fills the air,
At home, in church, at New York's Times Square!

So celebrating the Holidays are now hard to do,
But always remember they are thinking of you too,

Wishing you happiness and showing their love,
Not on this Earth, but from Heaven above!

*-Dan Bryl, Lawrenceville, GA TCF
In Memory of his daughter, Jessica*

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)

Lights of Love

Can you see our candles
Burning in the night?
Lights of love we send you
Rays of purest white

Children we remember
Though missing from our sight
In honor and remembrance
We light candles in the night

All across the big blue marble
Spinning out in space
Can you see the candles burning
From this human place?

Oh, angels gone before us
Who taught us perfect love
This night the world lights candles
That you may see them from above

Tonight the globe is lit by love
Of those who know great sorrow,
But as we remember our yesterdays
Let's light one candle for tomorrow

We will not forget,
And every year in deep
December On Earth we will light candles
As.....we remember

*Written by TCF Member Jacqueline Brown For National Children's Memorial Day
Jacqueline Brown Peace Valley TCF, New Britain PA*

Suggested Holiday Letter to Family and Friends

Thank you for not expecting too much from us this holiday season.

The absence of our child when the "whole family" gathers seems to accentuate our incomplete family. It is difficult to cope with the "spirit" of the holidays on the radio, TV, in the newspapers and stores. We will need the patience and understanding of our family and friends to help us through the holidays as best we can.

Our family traditions may be too painful for us to continue this year. We may want to change the way we spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah. Please understand this and maybe some time in the future we will have these traditions again. Whatever our thoughts are for coping with the day, please take our feelings into consideration when you make your plans.

Please allow us to talk about our child, if we feel a need. Perhaps the single most helpful thing you can do for us is to include our child in the holidays. We want to hear his/her name, to have you recall fond memories of their lives, to know that you, too, are feeling their absence and remembering them with love.

As we work through our grief, we will need your patience and support, especially during these holiday times and the "special" days throughout the year.

Thank you for not expecting too much from us this holiday season.

Love, a bereaved parent/family.

*Marge Henning
TCF West Orange and Madison, WI*