



The Compassionate Friends

Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends

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National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Website: www.tcf-cle.net



Chapter Closed Facebook Group

February, 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

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.

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.

February Monthly Meeting

February 10th at 7:00pm: We will meet “virtually” using the Zoom video conferencing app. Please see page 9 for more information and some help preparing for this new way to meet. The discussion topic will be “How do you answer the question ‘How many children do you have’?”. As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Meeting facilitators will be Lori Brown and Clayton Samels. *Join the meeting from your home via Zoom!*

NOTE: THE MEETING 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.



February Birth Dates

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2 - Matthew Rogerson | 20 - LaMarr Deontay Moss |
| 3 - Christopher Anthony Bonsell | 21 - Cynthia Elizabeth Betancourt |
| 7 - Christopher Brandon Mercurio | 21 - Christopher William Harris |
| 7 - Rhonda Zusack | 21 - Matthew Kolesar |
| 8 - Kerry Kipfstuhl | 24 - Gianna Renee Knapik |
| 9 - Renee Grace Ondrejch | 25 - Jack Gorden Gray, Jr. |
| 9 - Jonathan Charles Vance | 26 - Zachary Gerard Lanum |
| 10 - Lisa Kearney | 27 - Arik Bocian |
| 10 - Taylor Makela | 27 - Tobias Garrett Brugler |
| 18 - Erin K. (Gaydos) Carlisle | 28 - Marin C. Kos |
| 19 - Claire Jane Cocklin | 28 - James Louis Morabito |
| 19 - Richard Charles Devrient, Jr. | |

February Angelversary Dates

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Kathleen Michelle Blankenship (Age 25) | Anthony S. Martino (Age 21) |
| Nicole Julian Faust-Turner (Age 32) | Jillian Deborah Martovitz (Age 28) |
| Monica Lynn Weber (Age 2 days) | Kevin John Napolz (Age 28) |
| Ian M. Hovancsek (Age 2) | Terry M. Pappas (Age 31) |
| Richard J. Kasper (Age 28) | Tiffany Lyn Clawson (Age 12) |
| Gianna Renee Knapik (Age 12 hours) | Wendy Sue Berry (Age 28) |
| Brian Kenneth Kunsch (Age 17) | Billy Thomas (Age 58) |
| Nicholas William Luca (Age 3) | Baby Boy Krajnyak (Died in Utero) |

Remembering Our Children

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).

- ~ Karen and Jim Kipfstuhl ~ In loving memory of Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)
- ~ Cheryl and Ed Ondrejch ~ In loving memory of Renee Grace Ondrejch (Age 18)
- ~ Karen Protiva ~ In loving memory of John Albert Protiva (Age 27)
- ~ Len and Sandy Vargo ~ In loving memory of Matthew Rogerson (Age 7)
- ~ Rita and Dave Schuenemann ~ In loving memory of Tracy Ann Schuenemann (Age 27)
- ~ Sharon & Douglas Wohl ~ In loving memory of Michael James Wohl (Age 28)

Seasons Of The Heart

Your special days are unchanging
Seasons of the heart I celebrate.
Your birth, forever spring,
Tender memories relate,
New and green, a dream
From which too soon I awake.

The summer of your life was bright
Laughter needed no reason,
Seemingly endless days of sharing.
Sixteen summers. Short in season.

Your death brought winter without warning,
What sense in all this can be found?
Summer dreams replaced with mourning.
Where is hope now?

But the heart knows what
The mind cannot accept
That when all is lost,
It is love that is left.
Love knows no barriers
Time or distance recognize.
Love does not diminish,
But is constant in our lives.
And like a summer breeze
Uplifts and inspires us
With healing memories.

*Peggy Walls
TCF Alexander City, AL
In Memory of my son, Eddie*

*What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?
~ George Eliot*

Newsletter Dedications



Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)

Thinking of you, Kerry, on your 46th birthday. We miss you and wish you were here with us. We love this picture of you because the Zoo was your favorite place. Keep watching over us. We love you.

*Love,
Mom and Dad*



Renee Grace Ondrejch (Age 18)

Miss you more everyday.

*Love,
Mom, Dad, Gabby, Andy and Eddie*

Newsletter Dedications



Matthew Rogerson (Age 7)

*Your Christmas stockings are already hung
up on the mantel. Everytime we see them
we are reminded that you are spending
Christmas in Heaven*

A Dozen Roses

By Alan Pedersen

If I had a dozen roses, I know just what I'd do
I'd give each one a name that reminded me of you
The first rose I'd call sunshine, because you brighten everyday
The second would be beauty, the kind that never goes away

The third rose would be priceless, like those hugs you gave to me
I'd name the fourth rose silly, oh how funny you could be
Rose five of course is patience, something you have helped me find
The sixth rose would be memories, the gift you left behind

The seventh and the eighth rose would for sure be faith and grace
Nine would be unique because no one can take your place
The tenth rose well that's easy, I'd simply name it love
Eleven would be Angel, I know you're watching from above

I'd think about that twelfth rose, and I'd really take my time
After all these roses are for you my Valentine
I'm sending them to heaven in every color that I know
So rose twelve will be forever, that's how long I'll love you so

TCF National News



Please join The Compassionate Friends for a complimentary virtual event Rising Together in Grief and Hope, featuring David Kessler, Shari O'Loughlin, and David Wood. All three of our speakers suffered tragic losses of children and siblings and have transformed their experiences into helping others. Our event is for anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one and all are welcome. Join us for an evening of community, connection, and hope. This virtual event will be held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 5:30 pm PT/8:30 pm ET. There is no charge for this event and click the link below to register. After registration, you will receive a confirmation email with the Zoom link to access the event.

REGISTER

If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever.

~ author unknown

Our Chapter News

February Monthly Meeting

February 10th at 7:00pm

Please plan to join in as we hold our monthly chapter meeting on February 10th. As we all do our part to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, we will conduct the meeting using Zoom ... an easy-to-use video conferencing tool. **THE MEETING WILL NOT BE HELD AT BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH.**

Many of us have used Zoom for group communications during these months of sheltering-in-place. Meeting via Zoom will allow us to see and listen to one another, just as if we were gathered together in our meeting room at Bethany.

Please see page 9 for helpful information and tips on using Zoom. Then, watch for an email February 10th which will include the link you will click to join the meeting.

Hope you can join us on February 10th.

Valentine Message

I send this message to my child
Who no longer walks this plane,
A message filled with love
Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat
When I ponder your early death
As I think of times we'll never share
I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love
And for those who receive love, too
For a parent the perfect love in life
Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,
With a sadness that is unspoken
As I mark another Valentine's Day
With a heart that is forever broken.

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

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

I hope this finds you all well.

The holidays have come and gone, although we still have our Christmas tree up with its lights turned on 24/7. We plan to keep it up until the end of February. I won't say it is particularly festive, but it does brighten up the place a bit.

As for my reading lately, I have gone through way too many Best of and Year's Best short stories, mystery stories, science fiction stories, etc as well as a couple Stephen King novels. Yeah, all I can say is that it all got me through the holiday season. I did, however, read one book worth mentioning here, The First Phone Call from Heaven, by Mitch Albom. When some people in a town start receiving phone calls from heaven, the world watches and wonders. Are these calls really from heaven, or is someone playing an elaborate hoax? All of Albom's books are good reads, and this one is no exception, and not just because I scored it online for under two dollars.



In my last column, I mentioned several ways to get ebooks from various places. But I did not mention a lot of books to get. One problem I noticed with my local library on the Libby app was that they had no subject area for grief books. You can, of course, just search under grief, but you are bound to miss a lot of stuff that way. So let me mention a good list of grief books sorted into categories. It's a sizeable list, over three hundred titles, too, so you are bound to find something in there worth tracking down, either for purchase online or to borrow from your library. The person who makes and updates the list is Ron Gallacher, founder of the TCF Facebook group Reading Your Way Through Grief (RYWTG), which you should be able to find with a quick search in Facebook. Ron posts a copy of the list up there. You probably have to join that group to see and grab the list, but the group is worth joining if you are a reader. I also grab a copy of his list and post it in our chapter Facebook group, so you can find a copy of it up there too. You can find our chapter group by searching on Facebook for The Compassionate Friends – Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter.

Some of you might be pining for the good old days when you could go out to a bookstore (yeah, find one now) and grab a "real" book, or go to the library to borrow one (but the Cuyahoga County Public Library has just reopened for walk-ins!), or come to a chapter meeting and grab a book from the big tub (in person meetings might resume as early as May, but I'm not holding my breath). Guess we have to adjust to the "new normal." You've heard that phrase before in our meetings, right?

Oh, well, time to start looking online to register for the covid vaccine, probably at Drug Mart or Giant Eagle. New normal. Yup.

Stay safe. Stay well. Read something.

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*

A Valentine for Mom

As we grow older, we find that the simple reflections of our children are often the best memories we have. One such memory most mothers have is a valentine.....maybe many valentines. These special valentines were made by our children just for us. They were made when mom was the most important person in their world.

Some of us have kept each little memento of our child's years....from the first little hand plaque to the handmade gifts and cards to the special gifts that our children purchased with their own money. Each one is a part of our child, a part of us and a part of our shared history.

My first valentine from my child was a handmade red construction paper heart glued to heart shaped white lace paper... On it he had written "Happy Valentine's Day to my MOM. I love you. Todd." Shyly he asked if I liked it. I told him I loved it, and that his valentine was the most beautiful valentine a mother could receive. It is a treasure I have always kept. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

In my office I have a gift that Todd bought me five years ago. All grown up now with an MBA, bright future, important corporate job, family of four children, a beautiful new home, and major responsibilities, precious little time was available for finding the perfect gift for his mom. His life was busy; his free time was limited, but a something special caught his eye and he thought about me. He decided to buy it. A few weeks later, he gave me a brightly wrapped package containing a beautiful plate picturing a Sioux Indian princess. "She's beautiful, just beautiful", I told him. "Do you really like it?" he asked. The detail, the essence of her heritage and her outlook were captured perfectly. I told him, "I love it, Todd I'll keep her in the office so I can see her every day. I think she is beautiful." And she is in my office today, another treasure I will always keep. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

Much has happened since my three year old son gave me that handmade valentine and my adult son gave me that special gift. The years have raced by; my son has been dead for over two years. And so this month I will open another special gift that my son bought me when he was still in college: my cedar chest. I'd always wanted a cedar chest for the special keepsakes marking our lives. That cedar chest contains pictures, cards, handmade gifts and other things that only a mother could hold in her hands while watching the movies play in her head. There are many movies in that cedar chest, but only I can see them. That is the beauty of memories.

Each of us has our memories of our child. Whether our child was 5 days old or 55 years old, we have special memories that are as much a part of us as our faces. Valentine's Day was always a special day for our family. We exchanged valentines and sometimes give a special gift.

This Valentine's Day I will send my son a special handwritten valentine, carried on the wind to the cosmos. The message will be simple. "Happy Valentine's Day to my SON, Todd. I love you. Your Mom."

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

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



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)

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:

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

*There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept,
things we don't want to know but have to learn,
and people we can't live without but have to let go. ~ author unknown*