



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

July & August, 2018

WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

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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.

July and August Monthly Meetings

July 11th at 7:00pm: The discussion topic will be "Vacation Memories", but as always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Judy and Bill Luff will facilitate.

August 8th at 7:00pm: The discussion topic will be "Mementoes". Please bring a favorite memento of your child to share with the group. As always you can raise any concerns you feel the group might be able to help with. Doreen and Brian Sismour will facilitate.

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.



July Birth Dates

1 - Bradley Ryan Riggins	24 - Joseph Troy Brown
5 - Matthew David Clark	24 - Stephen Josef Daschner
6 - Tom Friebel	24 - Laura Vargo Rogerson
7 - Ella Grace Kepchum	24 - Allison T. Steadley
9 - Kai E. Maatz	26 - Shelley Wochele
10 - Natalia Bercier-Graham	27 - Charles Junke
10 - Sean Somoles	27 - Alan F. Klohs
11 - Charles "Sport" Haske	28 - Owen Martin Hoeptner
11 - David J. Silvestri	28 - Eric M. Shaw
12 - John Albert Protiva	29 - Stephen Alexander (Gianfagna)
22 - Nathan Christopher Jurcago	31 - Luke Thomas Kurylak
22 - Michael A. Suglia, Jr.	

July Angelversary Dates

Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold (Age 21)	Susan Kalnitzky (Age 30)
Melanie Sue Ashwill (Age 27)	Denise Ann Kohl (Age 29)
Natalia Bercier-Graham (Age 1 day)	Michael Benjamin Kurtz (Age 17)
Antonio Deshon Briones (Age 21)	Laura Vargo Rogerson (Age 33)
Sarah Elizabeth Ciprian (Age 13)	Matthew Rogerson (Age 7)
Stephen Josef Daschner (Age 23)	Nathan A. Sorm (Age 19)
Neil Thomas Guercia (Age 22)	Donna Lynn Tischler (Age 38)
Timothy William Hautz (Age 3)	Jeremy Daniel Yurcik (Age 29)

Remembering Our Children

August Birth Dates

2 - Rick Marano	10 - Kimberly Ann Parker
4 - Rob R. Gates, Jr.	12 - Amanda Lynn Berhent
5 - Francis Scott Cwiklinski	12 - Kerrienne Loas
5 - Jason Michael Repka	13 - Douglas Charles Roth
6 - Daniel Joseph Fernandez	14 - David Michael Benning
6 - Andrea June Torres	22 - Lauren Venzel Kutchenriter
7 - Russell Ruprecht	23 - Dawn Nicole Fordu
8 - David George Benning	27 - Brad Edward Crawford
8 - Robert William Duman, Jr.	27 - Jessica Mary Van Dyke
8 - Nicole Julian Faust-Turner	30 - John Anderson Greer
9 - John Michael Mendez	31 - Dane Woods

August Angelversary Dates

Steven J. Bilecky (Age 19)	Alan F. Klohs (Age 21)
Christopher James Brennan (Age 16)	Allison Rose Kuczarski (Age)
Michael John Buchko (Age 30)	Christopher Kuzma (Age 14)
Brad Edward Crawford (Age 27)	John Michael Mendez (Age 23)
Angel "AJ" Cuevas, Jr. (Age 25)	LaMarr Deontay Moss (Age 30)
Eli James Draper (Age 1)	Arrie Clifton Pritchard, Jr. (Age 30)
Rebecca Anne Dugas (Age 11)	John Albert Protiva (Age 27)
Thomas Patrick Harsany (Age 25)	Todd Allan Rael (Age 39)
Matthew Hickernell (Age 25)	Lauren Jane Rehker (Age 7)
Anthony Lee Higgins (Age 28)	Jason Michael Repka (Age 16)
Megan Leigh Homyak (Age 27)	David J. Silvestri (Age 25)
Mark Adam Kapusta (Age 18)	Frederick M. Tschanz (Age 24)
Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)	

Newsletter Dedications



Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold (Age 21)

Lovely and Beloved



Stephen Josef Daschner (Age 23)

As you hold me close in memory,
even though we are apart,
my spirit will live on,
there within your heart ...

I am with you always.

When you lean on trusted friends
and their caring hugs enfold you,
within their loving arms,
I'll be there to hold you ...

I am with you always.

And beyond the far horizon
when we'll finally be together,
where love will be eternal
and love will last forever ...

I am with you always.

Love Mom, Dad and Eric

Newsletter Dedications



Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)

Kerry,

We think of you every day. We miss your smile, your sense of humor and your generosity. We can't believe another year has passed without you, and we celebrate your life with all of our good memories of you.

*We love you,
Kerry Kipfstuhl*



Michael A. Suglia, Jr. (Age 30)

He is not forgotten

We love him forever

TCF National News

41ST TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 27 - JULY 29



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st TCF National Conference on July 27-29, 2018. “Gateway to Hope and Healing” is the theme of this year’s event, which promises more of this last’s great National Conference experience. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. We’ll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our **TCF/USA Facebook Page** and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

REGISTER NOW

Adult Registration: \$115 Child Registration (9-17) \$55

Full-time College Student Registration \$55 Active Military Registration \$55

To help plan your time in St. Louis, view the general [conference schedule](#). We also have a list of the [Workshops](#) available.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

TCF’s discounted rate with the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel is \$140 per night plus tax. Reservations can now be made **online** or by calling the Marriott Reservation line at 800-397-1287. Please note that each attendee will only be able to reserve two rooms. If your group needs to reserve a larger block of rooms, please contact the National Office to make arrangements for your reservations.

Transportation to/from the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel to/from the St. Louis Lambert International Airport (approximately 15 miles)

GO BEST Express 877-785-4682: \$21.00 one way
Bus service: \$7.00 one way

Estimated taxi fare: \$40.00 one way
Subway service: \$3.50 one way

Our Chapter News

First Meeting



The June 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 journey with us.

Alex and Lori Rychlik, remembering their beloved son Nathan Edward Rychlik (Age 28)

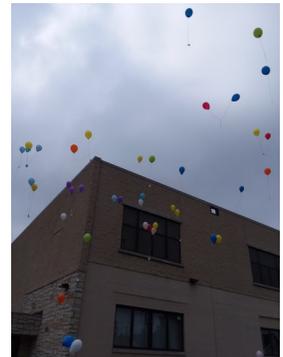
Candlelight Remembrance Service



Our chapter's annual Candlelight Remembrance and balloon release was held, Sunday, June 3rd at Bethany Lutheran Church.

After a wonderful service of readings, music and our slideshow, early afternoon rain moved away in time for our balloon release. We watched the balloons soar into the sky, carrying messages to our children.

It takes a lot to put together an event such as this and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those involved. ***Special thanks to the Mercurio family for once again providing the balloons and helium, and to Don Litvin for the wonderful slide show of our children's pictures.*** Thanks also to the members of the steering committee (Joanne and Don Litvin, Judy and Bill Luff, Bonnie and George Mickol, Clayton Samels and Doreen and Brian Sismour) for all their work to put this program together.



Photos courtesy of Joe Kaulfersch

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).

~ Joanne Arnold ~ In loving memory of Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold (Age 21)

~ Sharon Daschner ~ In loving memory of Stephen Josef Daschner (Age 23)

~ Karen and Jim Kipfstuhl ~ In loving memory of Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)

~ Chris and Michelle Mercurio ~ In loving memory of Christopher Brandon Mercurio (Age 1)

~ Loretta Mulvey ~ In loving memory of Aaron Mulvey (Age 31) and Ryan Mulvey (Age 33)

~ Mike and Kathy Suglia ~ In loving memory of Michael A. Suglia, Jr. (Age 30)

~ Len and Sandy Vargo ~ In loving memory of Laura Vargo Rogerson (Age 34) and Matthew Rogerson (Age 7)

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

DON'T STEAL MY GRIEF

Don't try to make me feel better,
By quipping your cute jokes.

Don't try to rob me of my pain,
When I need it as my cloak.

I know you probably think,
You're doing me a favor,

But what you don't understand,
Is that my sadness is my savior.

Don't try to steal my right,
To express my grief in my own way.

You see, I lost my child,
And grief is the price that I must pay.

I need to feel the hurt and pain,
As it beats inside my chest.

Don't try to steal my grief,
When it's the only feeling I have left.

*Faye McCord
TCF Jackson, MS
In Memory of my son, Lane McCord*

Butterfly Messages To Our Children

As balloons fill the northern sky, floating up and away on the wings of wind and love, I am astonished by the sense of peace which sweeps over me. I have sent my child a message written on a butterfly shaped note attached to a balloon. In my mind's eye, I know that my child will read that message and understand that his mother's love for him is eternal and unconditional. The void left in his absence is often overwhelming, and the pain frequently escalates from a quiet sadness to a screaming ache which shatters me. My child knows the pain I have felt and will always feel without him in my life. I express it every year on a little butterfly note. He knows he is loved.

This butterfly message is an important ceremonial part of my life now. Instead of an e-mail or letter, I send my child a note once a year. This ceremony is moving, the bagpipes are haunting, the readings are reflective and touching. I stand with other parents and notice that they, too, are watching the balloons until they disappear into the heavens. I am imagining my son plucking his balloon from the heavens and reading my message. Other parents are imagining this, too. Our communication to our child will be understood.

As parents who have lost children to death, we face new ceremonies and new traditions. As the years roll by, many of us will cling to those ceremonies and traditions. We are forced to replace the traditions of the past, before our child died, with new, fitting tributes that acknowledge our child's life and the meaning of that life to us. The Compassionate Friends provides us this opportunity to share our feelings and our need to honor our child in the company of others who understand us and encourage us to speak openly about our child and our sorrow. This tribute to our child has deep meaning and touches our souls with its simplicity and grace.

Our ceremony is brief by most standards, but meaningful beyond words. No speaker could reach us as this ceremony does. For a small window in time, we are reaching out to our children, honoring them, remembering them openly and communicating with them. Tears are shed. Hugs are shared. Memories form a kaleidoscope in each parent's mind as we watch our balloon join with the others on its journey to our children.

This tribute and message to our children is one of two ceremonial gatherings that we, as Compassionate Friends, share each year. Remember. Always we remember our children. Others may wish to forget, put the unpleasantness behind them, but we, the parents of children whose lives were too short, will never forget. We have established our traditions and we look to each other for hope and support as we walk this lonely road.

And so, as our balloons completely disappear into the heavens, we are immersed in peace and serenity, and we share a light meal and memories of our children with our Compassionate Friends.

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

***That was and still is the great disaster of my life -- that lovely, lovely little boy
. . . there's no tragedy in life like the death of a child.
Things never get back to the way they were before.***

~ President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Death Takes a Back Seat

There was a time, not so long ago, when the only focus I had was on the death of my child. The loss of his life and his absence from the physical plane swept over me like a tsunami. I lived his death every waking moment. The sorrow was devastating, and the waves of pain kept coming and coming, crashing over me, with no end in sight.

Each of us has experienced our grief in a unique way, and each of us has done what is necessary to cope. But at some point in my grief, I began perceiving my son's death as only one moment in his life. I believe that was when I began to find hope.

The shock had worn off; the tsunami of pain had subsided. I began remembering the events and everyday activities with joy instead of sorrow. I remembered his birth, his first steps, his first word, and his development as a toddler and then as a young child. I remembered his first day of school. I remembered the anxiety I felt as he blithely slipped out of the car and walked up that big sidewalk by himself for the first time. "I love you, Mom," he said as he grabbed his lunchbox, crayons and tablet. He looked so cute and confident that day. He knew he was going to learn to read.

I remembered his trips to the barber with my dad, the fun they had together, the first ride in Grandpa's new convertible, the obvious love they shared. I remembered the day my dad cried when Todd asked him, "Grandpa, have you ever loved someone so much that you just want to be a part of them? That's how much I love you." He was six years old, dad was the hardened WWII Marine, and dad's eyes filled with tears as the impact of this tremendous breakthrough my son had given him touched him. Dad was always a gentler, more open man after that innocent statement of emotion by his grandson.

I remembered the many Christmas celebrations, the anticipation that filled Todd's heart each year. The holidays were very special to him.

I remembered our move to Houston when Todd was just 12 years old; he got a paper route, a heavy duty Schwinn bike and he was earning money for his first car. Every Sunday I would drive him on his paper route at about 4:00 am because the papers were too heavy for the bike. Todd would make my coffee and wake me up, and off we would go. Those were special times when it was just Todd and I talking easily about his life, his dreams and the future. I thought about Todd's high school years, his graduation, the promise of the future and the tears in my dad's eyes as he watched the ceremony marking yet another milestone in his special grandson's life. I remembered the birth of Todd's son, the nights we sat talking while he fed his baby, and the discussions about the best way to raise a child. I remember the day he married, the birth of each of his daughters, the deep love and devotion he had for them.

Then I recalled the day when Todd received his MBA from Texas A&M. My dad stood proudly in the aisle watching the ceremony and listening to the Aggie fight song, tears in his eyes as he looked at his grandson, grown-up and ready for life.

I remembered my son's first house-a fixer upper. My husband and I gave him money for the down payment and he put plenty of sweat equity into it. After his daughters were born, he chose to move to a larger home, selling his first home with no small amount of sadness. For this was where his adult life started. This home had marked his first real step in responsibility and the world of the adult.

All the good times come flooding back now, the memories as vivid as the moments were in time. Yes, there is still sadness, but my heart tells me that I must celebrate the 35 years Todd had on this earth. He lived a good life, laughed, loved and worked hard. He was a lot like his grandpa in that respect.

Now when I tell a story about Todd, there is a returning joy in my heart. And now, each day when I come home from work, I remember how good it was to see him after a stressful day and to reach out and hug my child.....whether he was 3 years old or 35 years old. We have a bond, a bond I have felt everyday since his birth. The bond between mother and child does not end at death.

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

Out On My Balcony (song lyrics)

When I get up every morning
Your picture's the first thing I see
And I often wonder about you
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
And I often wonder about you
Out on my balcony.

Are you up there in heaven
Are you inside of me
Are you all around me now
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
Are you all around me now
Out on my balcony?

Sometimed I think about Jesus
Sometimes it's The Buddha I see
Sometimes I just think about you
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
Sometimes I just think about you
Out on my balcony

(INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE)

Some days I just sit and count us
You and Jesus and Buddha and me
One day we'll all get together
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
Out on my balcony
One day we'll all get together
Out on my balcony.

*Song lyrics by Clayton Samels, Robert's father
Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter*

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)