



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

July & August, 2020

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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.

July and August Monthly Meetings

July 8th and August 12th 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 topics will be “general” (July) and “What reminds you of your child” (August). As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Meeting facilitators will be announced. **Join the meeting from your home via Zoom!**

July 22nd and August 26th at 7:00pm: Chapter chat sessions, also via Zoom (see page 7)

NOTE: MEETINGS & CHATS 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.



July Birth Dates

1 - Bradley Ryan Riggins	24 - Joseph Troy Brown
6 - Tom Friebel	24 - Stephen Josef Daschner
9 - Kai E. Maatz	24 - Laura Vargo Rogerson
10 - Natalia Bercier-Graham	24 - Allison T. Steadley
10 - Sean Somoles	27 - Charles Junke
11 - Charles "Sport" Haske	27 - Alan F. Klohs
11 - David J. Silvestri	28 - Owen Martin Hoeptner
11 - Corey Michael Stevenson	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)
Brittany Nicole Finley (Age 27)	Donna Lynn Tischler (Age 38)
Jeffrey Lamont "Man-Man" Harris (Age 20)	Jeremy Daniel Yurcik (Age 29)
Timothy William Hautz (Age 3)	

Remembering Our Children

August Birth Dates

1 - Michael Andrew Ruzicho	9 - John Michael Mendez
2 - Rick Marano	10 - Kimberly Ann Parker
4 - Rob R. Gates, Jr.	11 - Dustin Kalstrom
5 - Francis Scott Cwiklinski	12 - Amanda Lynn Berhent
5 - Jason Michael Repka	12 - Kerrienne Loas
6 - Daniel Joseph Fernandez	13 - Douglas Charles Roth
6 - Andrea June Torres	22 - Lauren Venzel Kutchenriter
7 - Russell Ruprecht	23 - Dawn Nicole Fordu
8 - David George Benning	30 - John Anderson Greer
8 - Robert William Duman, Jr.	31 - Dane Woods
8 - Nicole Julian Faust-Turner	

August Angelversary Dates

Steven J. Bilecky (Age 19)	Kimberly Ann Kozar (Age 28)
Christopher James Brennan (Age 16)	Allison Rose Kuczarski (Age)
Michael John Buchko (Age 30)	Christopher Kuzma (Age 14)
Angel "AJ" Cuevas, Jr. (Age 25)	John Michael Mendez (Age 23)
Rebecca Anne Dugas (Age 11)	LaMarr Deontay Moss (Age 30)
Evaristo Fernandez-Rios (Age 29)	Rhiannon Naab (Age 28)
Thomas Patrick Harsany (Age 25)	Arrie Clifton Pritchard, Jr. (Age 30)
Matthew Hickernell (Age 25)	John Albert Protiva (Age 27)
Anthony Lee Higgins (Age 28)	Lauren Jane Rehker (Age 7)
Megan Leigh Homyak (Age 27)	Jason Michael Repka (Age 16)
Mark Adam Kapusta (Age 18)	David J. Silvestri (Age 25)
Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)	Christopher George Stavlas (Age 30)
Alan F. Klohs (Age 21)	Frederick M. Tschanz (Age 24)

Newsletter Dedications



10 seconds or
10 years...
our hearts
can't tell time.

...
www.GriefDiaries.com



**Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold (Age 21)
1988—2010**



**Stephen, its been 6 years.
We miss you more everyday,
you will always be in our hearts and on our minds.
Until we meet again. Rest in paradise.**

Love Mom, Dad and Eric

Stephen Josef Daschner (Age 23)

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)

~ Fred and Mary Tschanz ~ In loving memory of
Frederick M. Tschanz (Age 24)

~ Len and Sandy Vargo ~ In loving memory of
Laura Vargo Rogerson and in celebration of her birthday

Why Butterflies?



Since the early centuries of the Christian Church the butterfly has symbolized the resurrection and life after death. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and more free existence. Frequently, the butterfly is seen with the word, “Nika”, which means victory.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of children’s dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since children are intuitive, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us

a message.

The Compassionate Friends has adopted the butterfly as one of its symbols—a sign of hope to us that our children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom—a comforting thought to many.

Hugs From Heaven

When you feel a gentle breeze
Caress you when you sigh
It's a hug sent from Heaven
From a loved one way up high.

If a soft and tender raindrop
Lands upon your nose
They've added a small kiss
As fragile as a rose.

If a song you hear fills you
With a feeling of sweet love
It's a hug sent from Heaven
From someone special up above.

If you awaken in the morning
To a bluebird's chirping song
It's music sent from Heaven
To cheer you all day long.

If tiny little snowflakes
Land upon your face
It's a hug sent from Heaven
Trimmed with Angel lace.

So keep the joy in your heart
If you're lonely my dear friend
Hugs that are sent from Heaven
A broken heart will mend.

~ Charlotte Anselmo

TCF National News



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS ANNUAL CONFERENCE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2020 FRIDAY, JULY 31, 2020 TO SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2020

The three-day conference will include:

Keynote Sessions

- 70 plus workshop choices
- Sibling Sunday
- Candle Lighting Ceremony
- Sharing Circles
- Silent Auction
- Entertainment

Additional information:

- The conference will take place on a Zoom platform with an online registration system.
- Registration fees for the three-day event will be \$65 per person (early bird registration) and \$85 per person after July 17th, 2020.
- Information about the TCF Walk to Remember along with more conference details will be shared in the coming weeks.
- Training and orientation will be offered prior to the conference for attendees who may need some extra technology support in order to participate.

Although we would all love to be together in person, we can still connect, support, and gather as a community through a virtual event. We will continue to navigate this new environment we're in and we hope you will join us!

Our Chapter News

July and August Monthly Meetings

July 8th and August 12th @ 7:00pm

Please plan to join in as we hold our monthly chapter meetings on July 8th and August 12th. As we all do our part to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, the chapter steering committee has reviewed options for staying in touch. We have chosen to conduct the meetings using Zoom ... an easy-to-use video conferencing tool. **THE MEETINGS WILL NOT BE HELD AT BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH.**

Many of us have used Zoom for group communications during these weeks 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 during the day of each meeting which will include the link you will click to join the meeting.

Hope you can join us ... from home ... on July 8th and August 12th.

Chapter Chat Sessions

July 22nd and August 26th at 7:00pm

Please join chapter chat sessions on July 22nd and August 26th via Zoom. No planned discussion topics ... just a chance to visit with your Compassionate Friends and share whatever is on your heart or mind. Another opportunity to escape physical distancing for a short time. Watch for an email during the day of each chat session with the link you will click to join the chat. Hope to see you there.

Candlelight Remembrance Service (*uncertain*)

The service consists of lighting candles in memory of our children, with appropriate readings and music, a balloon release and refreshments. This annual event had been scheduled for June 28th, **BUT THAT DATE WAS CANCELLED.** The chapter Steering Committee will continue to monitor recommendations from public health officials for stopping the spread of Covid-19. The event may be re-scheduled later in the year, but only if it can be held safely. *Please watch for more information in upcoming newsletters.*



Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

I hope this finds you all well. I am planning on watching any fireworks displays on the 4th from my balcony. I don't know how many displays there will be this year.

I read Daring Greatly, by Brené Brown. While not dealing specifically with the topic of grief, the book offered this quote about compassion by Pema Chödrön: Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It is a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared 'humanity.'

Then I dove into Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague, by Geraldine Brooks. It is a book full of grief and life after loss, about the plague year 1666 in a small English village, which quarantines itself from the rest of the world as infections multiply. How is that for being topical? I guess social distancing goes back centuries. Those folks did not have the internet, cable tv, online shopping, or the Zoom app to help get through the plague year. It makes one count one's blessings, for sure.



After that book, it was back to tongue in cheek science fiction for me, this time, four books called the Time Amazon series, by Doug Molitor. It's Time as in time traveler, and Amazon, as in female warrior. All I have to say is if you are familiar with a lot of old movies, it will help you appreciate these books.

I have another grief book I haven't started on yet, The Meaning of Matthew: My Son's Murder in Laramie and a World Transformed by Judy Shephard. As a result of Matthew's death, along with the death of James Byrd Jr, President Barack Obama signed into law the Matthew Shephard and James Byrd Jr Hate Crimes Prevention Act, an American Act of Congress, on October 28th 2009.

"In this extraordinary volume, a courageous, eloquent, and devoted mother tells the world the deeply moving story of her son, Matthew Shepard, whose tragic death in 1998 shocked the conscience of our country. Ever since that horrible hate crime, Judy Shepard has dedicated her own life to promoting tolerance and understanding. Now, in her own beautiful words, Judy gives us all a greater understanding of Matthew and the larger meaning of his life."

–Senator Edward M. Kennedy

And, finally, I would also like to get out and see the two deer in the fenced in area in front of our building, and maybe feed the ducks and geese in the pond in the park nearby close to the big Parma sign. At least that's my plan.

**Flowers are the spirits of children whose footsteps have passed from the earth,
but reappear each year to gladden the pathway of those now living.**

~ Cowlitz Indian Legend ~

Zoom! Help and Tips

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 you 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.

A Personal Evolution Through Grief

I have been a bereaved parent now for three and half years. I have learned a few things during that time, and I have much to learn in the future. I am evolving. Evolving from what I once was.a person who had reasonable expectations of a life that included my son, his children, graduations, holidays, birthdays and special occasions. Now I have become a person who has virtually no expectations that are similar to the ones I had before my son died.

I have evolved into a more sensitive person. I know what some people are thinking before they even say the words. I feel others' joy as if it were my own. I cheer for the success of others. I feel their sorrow, their failures, their missteps. I watch children play and remember my childhood, my son's childhood and I think of the joy that is childhood. I sit for hours watching birds at our feeders, marveling at the beauty of the natural world.

I have slowed down the pace. I no longer feel the pressure to be here or there, to do this or that, to call this one or that one, to wear certain clothes, to "put on the best face" for strangers. I have liberated myself from the mundane and the materialistic. Instead, I simply feel deeply about others. I have become extremely sensitive to all that surrounds me.

I believe the loss of my child has changed me in many different ways. I see this in the attitudes of those who are in the Compassionate Friends as well. While few of us will broach no nonsense in our lives because it is meaningless compared with our experiences, we will listen intently for long periods to the weeping, hysterical cries of a newly bereaved mother. Or we will nod quietly as a parent who is far into grief has a sudden flash of sorrow that is overwhelming. We have a heightened sensitivity to others through no choice of our own. It came with the loss of our beautiful children.

I wonder about what my son would think of events that have unfolded since his death. I have come to conclusions about others that aren't, quite frankly, flattering. Yet, he had come to these conclusions before he died. While I tried to mollify his perception of the dysfunctional people with whom he was burdened, he just said, "that's how it is, mom." And he was right. That's how it is. I have learned to accept people for what they are. If I can help, I will certainly do so. If I can't help, I accept that some things can't be changed, and some people won't change. There is no magic here. It's a simple fact of life. "That's how it is, mom."

I volunteer more these days. I give of myself, my knowledge, any wisdom I may have acquired on life's path to others who are in need. I give of my time, my talents and my labors to those who don't ask as well as those who do. I am comfortable with this.

I have less appreciation for money than I once had. Perhaps that is the best thing to come out of this. What was I chasing? What was my son chasing? What was the point? Bigger, better, faster, farther, more, more, more. It's a shallow existence when one is so focused on the material things that one is defined by materialism. I have learned to let go of preconceptions, and in that letting go, I have been pleasantly surprised by many people.

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How did I get to this place? One minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month at a time. It is a slow journey from crawling through the pits of hell in deep grief to coming back to the reality of here and now. It's as close to a near death experience as I can imagine. Instead of great epiphanies, there are moments of clarity. Instead of instant gratification, there is much work to achieve tiny steps forward. But the effort is well worth making. When I came out from the pits of hell, I realized that my reality was changed; I realized that I was a different person. I discovered that the world doesn't run on the dollar. I found that all people have a capacity for goodness, but that many will never use this capacity.

But most importantly, I discovered that after leaving the pits of hell, there is a road toward hope that is traveled by each of us. Some walk more quickly, some more slowly. But we each walk that road to hope. Hope represents a life that is tolerable once again. Hope represents the acceptance of our child's death and the acknowledgement that we will keep our children alive in our hearts for all eternity as we continue into our tomorrows. Hope is reconciling those two elements: yesterday and tomorrow.

I have learned to adjust to change, because change is inevitable. I have learned to stand up for what is right because that is our duty as human beings. I have learned much about the fears of others and even more about my own fears. I have conquered my phobias as a result of my son's death. Nothing my imagination could conjure would equal that gripping pain, the ache that hangs in my heart forever because my child has died.

But most of all, I have learned that my son was right. "That's the way it is, mom." Shortly before he died, he said he wanted to give me a copy of *Who Moved My Cheese?* He never had the opportunity. But I will read it. I have a feeling I know what it will say. Perhaps Todd gave me the plot line when he died. I'd like to think that he was subconsciously preparing me.

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

The Connection

When I'm walking in the sunshine,
I'm walking in your love.
When I'm walking in the rain,
Yours tears fall from above.

Your laughter is the birds,
In song outside my window.
Your spirit passes by,
Each time I hear the wind blow.

When I smell the blooming flower,
Your fragrance lingers there.
And in the waters of reflection,
Your face is shining fair.

You come to me in many ways,
Each one different from before.
In the rainbow shines your eyes,
Your whisper I hear,
As the waves brush the shore.

You always find a way to reach me,
Just when I'm missing you most.
Making the connection,
When I'm feeling lost.

Through our bond of life
This connection will always be.
A special part of you,
And a special strength of me.

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

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)

*Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are.
Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.
Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.
One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow,
or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky,
and want more than all the world for your return. ~ Mary Jean Irion*

My New Normal

I hate this new normal, I want the old one back.
When the four of us were together and
there was nothing that I lacked.

All your birth dates were imprinted,
on my memory when you were born.
Now, with this new normal,
I have a death date, too, that I mourn.

Our family, once of four,
is what I thought we'd always be.
Never, never ever thinking,
that one day we'd only be three.

Yes, I hate this new normal,
we didn't plan for this at all.
Your future is now just past memories
and sometimes too painful to recall.

I used to feel one hundred percent,
but now the most is seventy-five.
The joys and hopes that I now have
are minus one quarter, my child died.

There are no more celebrations,
only 'occasions' that we share.
We adjust to our new normal,
because you're no longer here.

You don't walk through the door any more,
your laughter we do not hear.
The only thing I can hope for now,
are my dreams to bring you near.

Oh yes, I hate this new normal that
just came and settled in.
I hate you, I hate you, I hate you...
I want the 'old normal' back again.

~ Debbie Landsman

TEARS, TALK, TIME, AND TOMORROWS

I never thought I could go on living when you died, but...I did.
I never thought I would survive after burying you, but...I did.
I never thought I'd get through those first days, weeks, and months, but...I did.
I never thought I'd be able to endure the first anniversary of your death, but...I did.
I never thought I'd let myself love my new grandchild, but...I have.
I never thought tomorrow would be different, but...it was.
I never thought I'd stop crying for a day, but...I have.
I never thought I'd ever sing again, but...I have.
I never thought the pain would 'soften', but...it has.
I never thought I'd care if the sun shone again, but...I do.
I never thought I'd ever entertain again, but...I have.
I never thought I'd be able to control my grief, but...I can.
I never thought I could function without medication again, but...I can.
I never thought I'd smile again, but...I do.
I never thought I'd laugh out loud again, but...I do.
I never thought I'd look forward to tomorrow, but...I do.
I never thought I'd reconcile your death, but...I have.
I never thought I'd be able to create that 'new normal', but...I have.
I never thought I'd *want* to go on living after you died, but...I do --

*Always missing you, always loving you, and thinking of you daily,
with a smile on my face... and tears on my heart.*

~ *Debbie Landsman*