



# 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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Chapter Website: [www.tcf-cle.net](http://www.tcf-cle.net)



Chapter Closed Facebook Group

## July & August, 2017

### WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

#### Phone Contacts:

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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 13th at 7:00pm:** The discussion topic will be "How are you different since your child died?", but as always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Clayton Samels and Joanne Litvin will facilitate.

**August 10th at 7:00pm:** The discussion topic will be "What signs or symbols have you received from your child?", but 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        | 22 - Michael A. Suglia, Jr.        |
| 5 - Matthew David Clark         | 24 - Joseph Troy Brown             |
| 6 - Tom Friebel                 | 24 - Stephen Josef Daschner        |
| 7 - Ella Grace Kepchum          | 24 - Laura Vargo Rogerson          |
| 9 - Kai E. Maatz                | 24 - Allison T. Steadley           |
| 10 - Natalia Bercier-Graham     | 26 - Shelley Wochele               |
| 10 - Sean Somoles               | 27 - Charles Junke                 |
| 11 - Charles "Sport" Haske      | 27 - Alan F. Klohs                 |
| 11 - David J. Silvestri         | 28 - Owen Martin Hoeptner          |
| 12 - John Albert Protiva        | 28 - Eric M. Shaw                  |
| 22 - Nathan Christopher Jurcago | 29 - Stephen Alexander (Gianfagna) |

## July Anniversary Dates

|                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold (Age 21) | 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)   |
| Susan Kalnitzky (Age 30)             |                                 |

# Remembering Our Children

## August Birth Dates

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

## August Anniversary Dates

|                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Steven J. Bilecky (Age 19)         | Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)              |
| Christopher James Brennan (Age 16) | Alan F. Klohs (Age 21)                |
| Michael John Buchko (Age 30)       | John Michael Mendez (Age 23)          |
| Brad Edward Crawford (Age 27)      | LaMarr Deontay Moss (Age 30)          |
| Angel "AJ" Cuevas, Jr. (Age 25)    | Arrie Clifton Pritchard, Jr. (Age 30) |
| Eli James Draper (Age 1)           | John Albert Protiva (Age 27)          |
| Rebecca Anne Dugas (Age 11)        | 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)           |
| Christopher Kuzma (Age 14)         | Frederick M. Tschanz (Age 24)         |
| Mark Adam Kapusta (Age 18)         |                                       |

# Newsletter Dedications



**Aaron Mulvey (Age 31)  
and Ryan Mulvey (Age 33)**

**Ryan and Aaron,  
I miss you even more.**

*All my love,  
Mom*



**Allison T. Steadley (Age 20)**

**We thought of you today but that it nothing new,  
we thought about you yesterday and days before that, too.  
We think of you in silence and often speak your name, all we  
have is memories and your picture in a frame.  
Your memory is a keepsake from which we will never part,  
God has you in His arms and we have you in our heart.**

**-unknown**

*We miss you, Allison  
Love Mom, Dad, Alexa, Adam, Jaila and Levi*



## 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.

Val and Ron Brugler, remembering their Beloved son Tobias Garrett Brugler (Age 34)

## Catching Butterflies

It often hurts to come upon reminders of my son  
 Tho' often since I lost him I would search around for one  
 Which always brought on sadness and the tears that I would shed  
 Were caused by names or faces, all things that I would dread.  
 But then one day I came upon a man who'd lost his son  
 I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't even shun.  
 But rather he would treasure and I said I wondered why  
 He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies."  
 This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more  
 And learned that he took all of them and carefully would store  
 All of the reminders that I chose to push away  
 He would tuck deep down inside his heart each and every day.  
 Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard  
 Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard  
 For now instead I see these times as opportunities  
 To see my son awakened in these new fresh memories.

*Dottie Williams  
 TCF Pittsburgh PA*

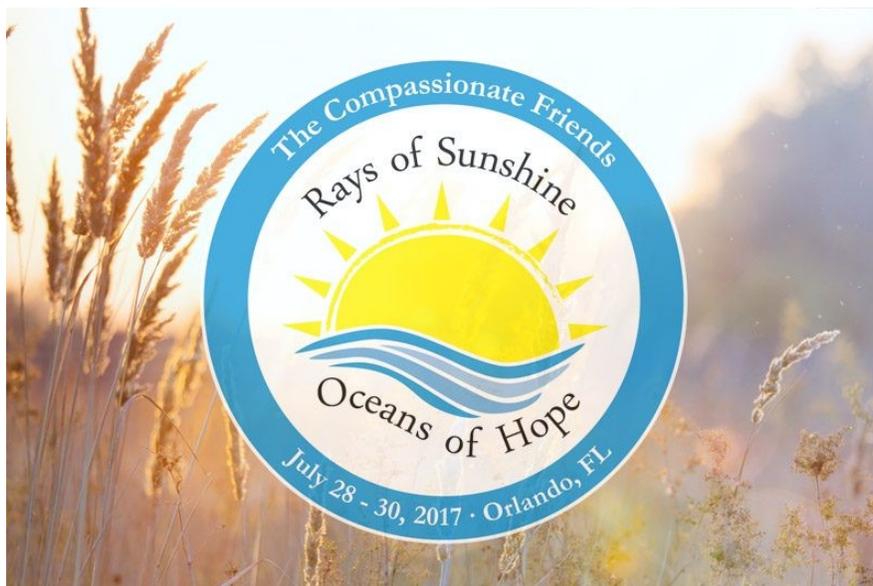
***That was and still is the great disaster of my life -- that lovely, lovely little boy  
 . . . there's no tragedy in life like the death of a child.  
 Things never get back to the way they were before.***

~ President Dwight D. Eisenhower

# TCF National News

## 40th TCF National Conference

July 28 - July 30



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Orlando, Florida, will be the site of the 40th TCF National Conference on July 28-30, 2017. “Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope” is the theme of this year’s event, which promises more of last year’s great National Conference experience. The 2017 Conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek. 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.

[« All Events](#)

[Online Registration](#)

[Print Registration Form](#)

Pre-registration will be available until July 7, 2017. Please note: while on-site conference registration will be available, the Friday lunch and Saturday dinner is only available with pre-registration.

[Workshops](#)

### Hotel Reservations

[Click here](#) to make your hotel reservations online or by calling 888.353.2013 at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek.

# Our Chapter News

## Candlelight Remembrance Service



Our TCF chapter held our annual Candlelight Remembrance and balloon release, Sunday, June 11th at Bethany Lutheran Church.

After a wonderful service of readings and music, we had a bright, sunny afternoon 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, Angela and Lloyd Riggins, Clayton Samels and Doreen and Brian Sismour) for all their work to put this program together.

## Invitation to a Very Special Event

The Lake County TCF Chapter has invited members of our chapter to a very special event on Sunday, September 17th.



The Lake County chapter has created a Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden in Willowick, which is very meaningful to chapter members and also to the community. The Lake County chapter has extended an invitation to our chapter to join them at their annual Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden Dedication celebration on September 17th. The celebration will include the dedication of new butterflies added to the garden during the past year, a live butterfly release and entertainment, with desserts and coffee afterwards. The Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden is located at Manry Park, 30100 Arnold Drive, Willowick.

This is a wonderful way to support our sister TCF chapter, and to learn about the butterfly garden. Perhaps our chapter could explore creating a similar children's memorial in our area!

Here is a link to the Facebook page for the Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden:

[Lake County Butterfly Garden](#)

## 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).

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

~ George and Bonnie Mickol ~ In loving memory of Scott Mickol (Age 16)

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

~ Bill Steadley and Family ~ In loving memory of Allison T. Steadley (Age 20)

~ 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

## Self Help

For many of us, the monthly meeting of our Compassionate Friends Group is the only real healing time we give to ourselves. Helping ourselves on a daily basis is critical to our journey in the grieving process.

Many of us find solace in books. Others find it in movies, music, time with friends, meditation or intense spiritual conviction. Each day we should take some time to center ourselves, to find a place of peace.

If you haven't already done so, start with a quiet time of reflection and search your soul for the key to your own solace. There will still be bad, even terrible, days. The effort to help ourselves begins with knowing ourselves and finding the unique activity that soothes our broken hearts for just a little while.

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

## The Paths to Peace

As bereaved parents, we look to others for answers about our grief journey. For eight years I have listened as so many parents spoke about the combination of factors which brought peace to their hearts and allowed them to move forward into a different, less painful, life. I have read books, watched movies, attended seminars and retreats. I have gone to 93 Compassionate Friends meetings. And I have discovered one key factor in finding peace and resolution on this terrible grief journey: there is no single element or singular combination of elements that answers the needs of more than one parent. Each parent must patiently seek those elements that will enhance the individual and a unique personal journey: there is no magic map to finding the path to peace.

There is one common denominator in this quest for the peace on our long journey, and that is patience. Patience with ourselves is mandatory, because the grief journey after the death of our precious child is so horrible, so painful, and so isolating that our psyches and our bodies take so very much time to begin the healing process. There are setbacks. There is progress. Each of these comes in spurts. Each is partially reversed and the process begins anew.

Friends and family do not thoroughly understand our perspective on our unique journey. We must make allowances for them. But we must ask that allowances be made for us. For we are finding ourselves while on a path that we did not choose. We are lost. We are weakened. We are heartbroken. Each of us in our own way is seeking the formula that is uniquely our own.

Some parents find a kind of peace in their religion. Some parents are angry with their God. Many parents seek private counseling. Other parents read prolifically about the grief journey, seeking some element which resonates with them. Many parents come to Compassionate Friends meetings and actively participate. Others attend meetings and say little. Some parents slip into denial and proceed on the old path of their lives. We each make choices. We are different people with different experiences, backgrounds, cultures, genetic hard wiring, education and combination of abilities.

The path to peace is found by searching, by reaching out to every resource available. We will reject much of what we find; but if we search, we will find what we need.

For many of us, finding other bereaved parents presents an opportunity to listen to the stories of their child and their journey and, within those stories, we find many threads that fit our unique journey. Many stories, many journeys, many new threads are shared in group discussion and in private discussions. We find "seasoned" grievors who provide perspective on our feelings, and listen to our story. We find newly bereaved parents who touch our hearts and remind us how we have built our path to peace brick by brick. Their pain brings reflection and new revelations about our own grief journey.

I found kindred souls at Compassionate Friends. These kindred souls have allowed me to explore the various aspects of my being and gradually create a path of peace for myself. But the journey does not suddenly end. We walk this path for the rest of our lives. And if we do the hard work and face our demons early on, we accept the unacceptable and face life on our own terms. And that is as it should be.

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

## Why I Do What I Do

Today, as I start writing my column, it is January 19, 2004. It is an anniversary of The Day. The day which changed the course of my life and the lives of my wife and daughter forever. Eight years ago the three of us were plucked out of our normal routines and dropped into a horror chamber. The words still ring clear, "We found your son's Body ....." They will forever ring in my heart.

Weeks later, still reeling from the impact, we were at the stone mason's place trying to figure out what words should be on his gravestone. It was a time to breakdown again. Are we supposed to be making that decision over the life of a twenty year old son? It was decided that the fitting words should be "You Made A Difference." The difference for the better Carl made in me is, for the most part, why I lead a Compassionate Friends chapter. He taught me about compassion and caring.

I also do what I do now because of the wonderful folks in the old Hanford TCF chapter who nurtured me, heard my pain, and gave me hope when I needed it the most. They modeled proper grief recovery for me. They modeled the life of survival after child loss by sharing their experiences and wisdom. They offered suggestions on how to handle tricky issues of grief like how to grieve, how to handle days of significance, and how to handle the ignorant words or actions of family and friends. Newly bereaved parents need role models. They need to see successful grief survival modeled to them. That is why our chapter encourages parents and siblings with many years of successful recovery to come back and show others the way. They can become the lived out examples of joy and purpose, with time, in life again.

I do what I do to provide education to the bereaved and to the general public as well. There is so much misinformation out there about grief. Grief is a natural process after child loss. Strangely, painful as it is, it is the start of the healing process. It needs to be felt. It needs its proper expression. Yes, child loss/sibling grief hurts deeper than one can know, outside of experiencing it. However our sorrow runs so deep because the love for sons and daughters runs so deep. Sorrow and love are intertwined here.

Concerns arise in me whenever new comers say, "This is too painful. I can't talk about it," or, "If I think of him or her, I will start crying." Mourning delayed is just mourning denied, and, it will not be denied! Left untreated, it wreaks havoc emotionally and physically. Unresolved mourning probably takes its toll on many marriages. The road to recovery is a journey going through child loss survival in all of its stages. Then one eventually arrives at peace and happiness.

One of the healthiest steps in recovery I have ever taken is to attend the annual Compassionate Friends National Conference. There is power and healing in numbers of folks coming together in remembrance of their loved ones. Listening, learning, and sharing with people around the nation with this common bond of loss, creates a powerful tool in healing ourselves. I strongly encourage all readers to attend The Compassionate Friends 27th National Conference in Hollywood, California, "Where Our Children Are The Stars." There will be 75 workshops. One of the guest speakers will be Richard Riordan, former mayor of Los Angeles and twice bereaved parent. The conference will be held July 30-August 1 at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel. The Professional Day program will be on Thursday, July 28. For further information, call toll-free at 877-969-0010. You may also log onto the website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). Registration forms will be sent in the mail soon. They will also be available at our February meeting. Going to the National Conference would be a great way to be good to yourself. So, be good to yourself. Aaron.

*Aaron Pueschel  
In Memory of my son, Carl*

# Where Do I Go?

Now that you're gone, where do I go  
to see your fair smile  
to hear your tingling giggle  
to smell your dank hair after a swim  
to listen to your questions  
to touch your gentle cheek  
to feel your bear hug?

Where do I go  
to share all my years of wisdom  
to find someone who'll tell me truth  
to answer the phone that won't ring  
to tell you I'm sorry  
to know that I am loved and  
to pour out my love and my tears?

I shall go  
to the pictures that hold you forever  
to the books we shared  
to the music you taught me to love  
to the woods we explored as one  
to the memories that never fail  
to the innermost reaches of my heart  
to where we are always together.

*Marcia Alig  
TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey*

## 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](mailto: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)