



# 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

## June, 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.



## June Monthly Meeting

**June 13th at 7:00pm:** The discussion theme will be "Father's Day". 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.

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN MEETING SCHEDULE  
TO 2nd WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH**

**MEETING 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.



## June Birth Dates

2 - Michael Benjamin Kurtz	16 - John Lazor
2 - Reid Alan McClellan	18 - Katherine Lynn Nemes
2 - Stephen Charles Parish, Jr.	18 - Hunter Lane Poore
2 - Robert Clayton Samels	18 - Jody Lynn Poore
8 - Arrie Clifton Pritchard, Jr.	19 - Joseph Kather
10 - Sean Daniel Byers	25 - Alexander Zachary Thomas
12 - Monica Judith Ann Adams/Bittner	29 - Rebecca Helen Truelsch
12 - Neil Thomas Guercia	30 - Angel "AJ" Cuevas, Jr.
12 - Tyler Andrew Moore	30 - Andrew C. King
13 - Christina Elswick	

## June Angelversary Dates

David George Benning (Age 46)	Brian David Moll (Age 21)
Christopher Anthony Bonsell (Age 36)	Courtney Julianne Nichols (Age 13)
Susan Elaine Chorich (Age 19)	Stephen John Parker (Age 22)
Francis Scott Cwiklinski (Age 34)	Scott Lee Pearson (Age 30)
Daniel Feuerstein (Age 23)	Gregg Benton Rael (Age 24)
Robert C. Higgins (Age 54)	Randy Stock (Age 25)
Thomas (Tommy) Joseph Kess, Jr. (Age 25)	Christopher Michael Vinson (Age 26)
Luke Thomas Kurylak (Age 23)	Mitchell Ryan Williams (Age 18)
Scott Mickol (Age 16)	David William Woods (Age 26)

***It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens, but it's never gone. ~ Rose Kennedy***

# Remembering Our Children

## Sometimes I Wonder.....

Sometimes I wonder if it would have happened to me, instead of you  
 Sometimes I wonder what it would be like if you were still here  
 Sometimes I wonder if I could just hold you for one more day  
 Sometimes I wonder if I knew you were leaving, what I would have done anything differently  
 Sometimes I wonder if this pain will ever go away  
 Sometimes I wonder if you are happy in Heaven  
 Sometimes I wonder if you miss us here on earth  
 Sometimes I wonder why people complain about the little things in life  
 Sometimes I wonder why bad things happen to good people  
 Sometimes I wonder if I could have done more  
 Sometimes I wonder if I wasn't there for you  
 Sometimes I wonder if I could only turn back time  
 Sometimes I wonder if you could be more than a memory  
 Sometimes I wonder if I could say your name without my heart breaking  
 Sometimes I wonder if anyone understands  
 Sometimes I wonder if they will find a cure  
 Sometimes I wonder why you had to die  
 Sometimes I wonder how you could touch so many people's lives  
 Sometimes I wonder how your smile could brighten any room  
 I always wonder why it had to be you

*In loving memory of Rebecca Helen Truelsch  
 by Rebecca's sister, Tabitha Truelsch  
 Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter*

## 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)
- ~ Betty Benning ~ In loving memory of David George Benning (Age 46)
- ~ Elaine and Lou Chorich ~ In loving memory of Susan Elaine Chorich (Age 19)
- ~ Sharon Daschner ~ In loving memory of Stephen Josef Daschner (Age 23)
- ~ Kathryn Kurtz ~ In loving memory of Michael Benjamin Kurtz (Age 17)
- ~ Jan and Don Moll ~ In loving memory of Brian David Moll (Age 21)
- ~ From dear friends of Viola Roble ~ In loving memory of Viola's sons Craig and Rob
- ~ Mike and Kathy Suglia ~ In loving memory of Michael A. Suglia, Jr. (Age 30)
- ~ Connie and Dave Truelsch ~ In loving memory of Rebecca Helen Truelsch (Age 18)

# *Newsletter Dedications*



**David George Benning (Age 46)**

**I miss you, my dear son.  
You are forever in my  
heart.**

***Mom***



**Michael Benjamin Kurtz (Age 17)**

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

***Love,  
Mom, Adie and Mark***

# Newsletter Dedications



**Brian David Moll (Age 21)**

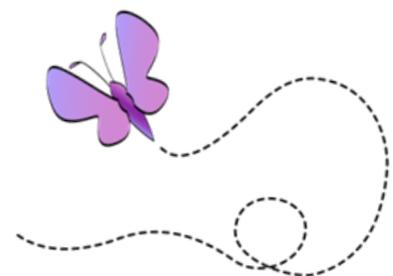
**We love and miss you.**

*Love, Mom and Dad*

Remembering with love our daughter and sister - *Mom, Dad, Hannah, Tabitha and Tamar*  
Gone yet not forgotten, Although we are apart, Your spirit lives within me, Forever in my heart



**Rebecca Helen Truelsch (Age 18)**



# 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

## Candlelight Remembrance Service

Please join us on Sunday, June 3rd from 2-4 pm for our annual Candlelight Remembrance Service and balloon release. The service consists of lighting candles in memory of our children with appropriate readings, poems, music, a balloon release (with sunshine) and refreshments. The service will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church, 6041 Ridge Road, Parma.



Please bring a framed photo of your child, no larger than 8x10 to be displayed.

The service will again include a slideshow of our children.

If you are planning on attending this special event, please call Pauline Dey at 440-526-2087 with your name and the number attending.

Refreshments will be served in the basement of the church after the balloon release. *If you would like, please bring a dessert to share.*



## **IMPORTANT CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENT: CHANGE IN MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE**

Our monthly chapter meetings will now be held the 2nd WEDNESDAY of each month. *This is a permanent change* made necessary by a schedule change for the Bethany Lutheran Church mid-week worship service.

## 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

## DEATH OF A CHILD:WHAT'S IT LIKE AT 10 YEARS?

**January 11, 2002 ... Ten years? Sometimes it seems like yesterday. Sometimes it seems like it never happened. Most of the time it is somewhere in between.**

*[EDITOR'S NOTE: Rich Edler, 58, past president of TCF's national board, author of Into the Valley and Out Again and treasured friend to many in TCF's extended family, died suddenly and unexpectedly on February 16. He had completed this article for We Need Not Walk Alone, TCF's national magazine, just over a month earlier.]*

It has been 10 years today since Mark died.

When I wrote Into the Valley and Out Again I chronicled first one day, then one week, then the first month and year. Now it is 10. Here are my thoughts:

The hurt never goes away. We never forget. We never get over it. We don't want to. We hurt so much because we loved so much. But the focus on death and the event fades and the warmth of good memories replaces it. Oh, we can still go back there in an instant. Back to the call, the moment, the good-bye. Back to the night that will forever separate our life between "before" and "after." But we now go back less and less. Time helps a lot.

I have fewer friends. Better friends, mind you, but fewer. I am out of the circle now. My Rolodex is cold. My networking, which used to be razor sharp, has atrophied. My power lunches have become tuna fish sandwiches. But the amazing thing is how much I don't care. I miss some special people so I go out of my way to stay in touch. And that is enough.

I have new and different priorities. I move through life a little slower, a little more tuned to life around me, and to life gone too soon. I brake for sunsets. I hurt for the people who share this walk with me. Since Mark died, hundreds and then thousands of children have died. I feel for them and for their families in a way I could never have understood before. I value people more than things, moments more than milestones and I no longer equate what I do with who I am.

I am not having the life I expected to have. I recall an old saying, "Man plans ... God laughs." Dennis Prager, an author and Los Angeles radio talk-show host, said that unhappiness equals image minus reality. What he meant is that you are unhappy when your image of where you should be is dramatically different from where you really are.

When a child dies, the reality of the life we are going to have is altered forever. I am no longer going to be Mark's dad. I am no longer going to join him at UCLA football games. I am no longer going to be a grandfather to the children he will never have. If that gap between image and reality is a recipe for unhappiness, well, then the reverse is also true. If you "solve" the equation of happiness, happiness equals image matched closely with reality. So I have had to change my image to match the new reality.

I like my new life better. This makes me feel guilty because I would trade my life in an instant if I could have Mark back. But I really do like the person I have become since Mark died. I don't even know that person from 10 years ago. Back then my life purpose was to run a large advertising agency. Today, it is to give back in gratitude for the joy of the life I have been given. I want to make Mark proud. I want to be a blessing to others. And I want to enjoy the journey, too. I still have a grief that goes unspoken. Who will listen at 10 years? Yes, I still miss Mark. But I miss him quietly and silently. I grieve for his loss; for the loss of the person he would have become (he would be 28 now, but instead is forever 18); and also for the loss of the life I would be having if he were here.

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I have an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I have been blessed beyond measure. I have a surviving son who has given me more joy than I could imagine any parent having ... and now a beautiful daughter-in-law, and a granddaughter. Gratitude is one of the most helpful and healing things you can do on your grief journey. And with gratitude comes thanks. So in gratitude, Kitty and I made a list this week of the people who were there for us when we needed them most. These are the people who dropped everything in their lives on a moment's phone call and rushed to our side. These are the people with whom we are joined forever, and who, no matter how far they drift, or what unimportant spats we might have, will always have a special place in our heart. You make your own list. Then find those people wherever they are, and say thank you.

I choose joy over sadness. If there is one overriding thought in these years, including 10 TCF conferences in a row, it is simply this: Grief is inevitable; misery is optional. It does no good to sit in a hole. It does no good for the loss of one life to lead to the loss of two.

What does do good is doing good. To decide to lead the second part of your life differently and better than you would have before ... in your child's name. When we do that ... when we do one small act of kindness we never would have done before ... when we reach out to other bereaved parents because we can and because we have been there ... then the world is changed in some small way for the better, and then the actions we take become a living tribute to our child's life. And then that child is never entirely gone.

And that, my fellow compassionate friends, is how it looks at 10 years for me.

*Rich Edler  
TCF South Bay, CA  
In Memory of my son Mark Edler  
Spring 2002, We Need Not Walk Alone  
Reprinted with permission*

## 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)



**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)

## Father's Day

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father's Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday.

Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son's life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan's arrival, but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die.

Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child's death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex's memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might.

So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother's needs on Mother's Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husband's this Father's Day as well. It is frequently said that we males don't often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and 'warm fuzzies' when we hurt also. Please remember us on June 18, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonalds, Hallmark, and AT&T.

Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.

*Doug Hughes  
TCF Cincinnati, OH  
In Memory of my son, Alex*

## Mystery

I bought toys for my baby after she died  
And I opened the cedar chest and put them inside  
And nobody ever knew but me  
The meaning of the mystery  
Of brand new toys hidden here and there  
And not one baby anywhere.

*Andy Cipriano  
TCF Tallahassee, FL*

## Pictures on a Mantle

As I wake each morning, the first thing that I see  
 Your picture on our mantle smiling down at me.  
 I whisper good morning, I Love You Forever,  
 Make a wish that can never be.

Here's your picture as an infant, sitting on my knee  
 Now you're a toddler, how daring you could be  
 First trip on the bus, your first day of school  
 All the new friends you met.  
 Your first dog, first trip to the beach  
 How much better could it get?

There's your soccer team, your baseball team  
 Oh the pride you made me feel  
 A bases clearing triple to end the game  
 Could this be for real?

Out of grade school, on to high school  
 Your innocence almost gone  
 Your first car, your first prom  
 A young man you've become

A bumpy road in high school  
 Trouble we couldn't see  
 Lots of jobs, two years of college  
 An Associate's Degree.  
 At last, you were close to being  
 The person you wanted to be.

When you left that fateful night  
 You said, "Dad, I'll see you then."  
 How could I have ever known  
 That I would never see you again?

I know you're out there somewhere  
 In a place we cannot see  
 Your picture on God's mantle now  
 Smiling down at me.

*Tom Murphy  
 Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH  
 In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy*