



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

June, 2019

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WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

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.

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

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 12th 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. Doreen and Brian Sismour and Marge Clemens will facilitate.

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	14 - Andrew P. Hudgins
2 - Reid Alan McClellan	16 - John Lazor
2 - Stephen Charles Parish, Jr.	18 - Katherine Lynn Nemes
2 - Robert Clayton Samels	19 - Joseph Kather
8 - Arrie Clifton Pritchard, Jr.	25 - Alexander Zachary Thomas
10 - Sean Daniel Byers	29 - Rebecca Helen Truelsch
12 - Monica Judith Ann Adams/Bittner	30 - Angel "AJ" Cuevas, Jr.
12 - Tyler Andrew Moore	30 - Andrew C. King

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)	Ryan Kenneth Perkins (Age 45)
Robert C. Higgins (Age 54)	Randy Stock (Age 25)
Thomas (Tommy) Joseph Kess, Jr. (Age 25)	Mitchell Ryan Williams (Age 18)
Luke Thomas Kurylak (Age 23)	David William Woods (Age 26)
Scott Mickol (Age 16)	

Remembering Our Children



First Meeting

Our February meeting was the first for this bereaved mother. It is very difficult to attend a first meeting and we applaud her for having the courage to come. We hope we were of help, and that she will return and work through her grief journey with us.

Michelle Shaffer, remembering her beloved son Corey Michael Stevenson (Age 27)

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).

~ Loretta M. Brown ~ In loving memory of Gregory Charles Brown (Age 15)

~ Elaine and Lou Chorich ~ In loving memory of Susan Elaine Chorich (Age 19)

~ Marge Clemens ~ In loving memory of Kimberly Ann Kozar (Age 28)

~ Kathryn Kurtz ~ In loving memory of Michael Benjamin Kurtz (Age 17)

~ Russ and Ruthann Simon ~ In loving memory of Russell Todd Simon (Age 18)

*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*

Newsletter Dedications



Kimberly Ann Kozar (Age 28)

In memory of my brave daughter, Kim Kozar. I miss your smile, I miss your laughter - I miss you.



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



Russell Todd Simon (Age 18)

We feel a warmth around us
 like your presence is so near,
 And we close our eyes to visualize
 your face when you were here,
 We remember the times we spent together
 and they are locked inside our hearts,
 For as long as we have those memories
 we will never be apart.
 Even though we speak no more
 our voice is always there,
 Because each night before we sleep
 we have you in our prayers.

Love, Mom and Dad

Sometimes...

“Sometimes, I still don’t believe it,”
 My husband said to me.
 We had gone to bed, said our goodnights
 And were resting comfortably.
 My reply was short and to the point.
 I simply said, “I know,”
 Though it’s been eight years since you have died
 Chip, we miss you so.
 The memories of our life with you
 Are treasures that we share.
 For nineteen years we loved you well
 While you were in our care.
 So once again we said goodnight.
 But before this we did pray.
 This was a very poignant night.
 This night was Father’s Day.

*Nancy McKeaneey
 TCF North Penn Chapter, PA
 In Memory of my son, Chip*

TCF National News

42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 19 - JULY 21, 2019

42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE



**RINGS OUT IN
PHILADELPHIA**

JULY 19-21, 2019

The Compassionate Friends National Conference is a weekend spent surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. With inspirational keynote speakers, abundant workshops for everyone's wants and needs, and a remembrance candle lighting program culminating with the annual Walk to Remember, this time of healing and hope is the gift we give ourselves. Join us as together we remember and share the everlasting love we have for our precious children, siblings and grandchildren.

The 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019 at the Philadelphia 201 Hotel. "Hope Rings in Philadelphia" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great National Conference experience. 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.

Choose to attend from nearly one hundred different workshops and sharing sessions, given by professionals and also individuals just like you.

- Take advantage of "Healing Haven" to receive free personal services such as a massage.
- Craft items to commemorate the love for your family member in the "Crafty Corner".
- Step away for a quiet moment of pause in the "Reflection Room".

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Pre-registration Rates

Adult – \$125.00

Senior (65+) – \$115.00

Active Military – \$75.00

Full-time College Students

(with ID) – \$60.00

Child – \$60.00

[REGISTER NOW](#)

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Philadelphia 201 Hotel

201 N. 17th St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Or call 215.448.2963 ext. 6415 to reserve a room and use group code TH1326. Room rate is \$145 for guest room with Queen/King or 2 Doubles

Our Chapter News

Candlelight Remembrance Service

Please join us on Sunday, June 23rd 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. ***Many of the readings and poems will be new this year.*** 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 have not provided a photo in the past and want your child included, please e-mail a photo to lit@roadrunner.com with your child's name, ***no later than Monday, June 17th.*** You can also mail a photo to Don Litvin, 11521 White Tail Run, Columbia Station, OH 44028-9334.

If you are planning on attending this special event, please sign up at the June meeting or phone 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.***



My 3 Gifts For Lexi

I gift to you a bucket, to hold a bucket full of tears,
I've shed for you while grieving
These past long, long three years.

I gift to you a special place, in the corner of my mind.
For you to stay forever,
and pop out from time to time.

And, I gift to you that little piece, of my aching heart,
That you took along with you
When we had to part.

For I have plenty more tears, and my mind has lots of space.
And, my heart is scarring over.
It forms a mask to hide my face.

These little things I gift to you, please accept them with my love.
And I know that you are forever near.
Whether spirit, or angel above.

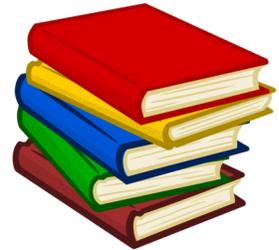
*Jim Wells
TCF, Jefferson City, MO
In Memory of my daughter, Lexi*

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

The chapter library has been updated as much as I could do in May and back in service. You'll notice the list has updated section keys to help you find a particular book as well as display cards to let you quickly find the section of the display you are looking for instead of just trying to figure out how the heck I had set things up. I hope it makes your searches a little easier.

I bought a hard bound used copy of Riding with the Blue Moth, by Bill Hancock, off of Ebay for under four dollars with free shipping. I was drawn to this book for two reasons. First, I found out about it from my friend Ron Gallacher, the guy who has that grief book list of almost 300 books now, and who is the big moderator on the TCF closed Facebook group Reading Your Way Through Grief. I am one of the other moderators for that group. Ron likes books about people who do remarkable things like walk across the United States or bike across the United States. I think it's a big deal to walk over to Walmart and back, but that's just me. The big reason I'm reading the book is that, like my son Robert, Bill Hancock's son died in a small plane crash along with a number of other college students, so Bill and I have that much in common. His loss dates from 2001, mine from 2006, so he's a bit further down the road than I am. When I finish the book, I'll donate it to our library. Anyway, here's the blurb from the Amazon site:



Bill Hancock led a charmed life. He married his high-school sweetheart. He had two successful sons and a beautiful grand-daughter. He ran the NCAA men's basketball tournament. During his ascent through college athletics, he moved among the top sports figures in the world.

On January 27, 2001, everything changed: a small Oklahoma State University airplane crashed in a snow-storm. Ten people died that evening; one of the passengers was Bill's son, Will Hancock.

Bill and his wife, Nicki, struggled with how to survive the loss. Yet, they knew that they had to go on living for one another, for their marriage, as well as for their son, Nate, for Will's wife, Karen, and for their young grand-daughter, Andie.

Bill, who had run 15 marathons, chose to bicycle across the United States in an effort to confront his grief, head-on. He and Nicki started the journey in Huntington Beach, CA and concluded at Tybee Island, GA. Ultimately, the 2,747-mile journey from the Pacific to Atlantic coasts, became something much more important than a cycling trip to help cope with loss. It became a journey in discovery as well as one of recovery.

A book that I did finish this month is When Bad Things Happen to Good People, by Harold Kushner, which Don Litvin, a co-facilitator at our last chapter meeting, recommended. It is rightfully a classic, and one of the three copies in our library has been around for a long time, a paperback the pages of which are all turning brown with age. The book was written by a Jewish rabbi, so, for Christians, the God in there is the God of the Old Testament, one that might rightfully be asked what did I do to be punished by You like this? Or any number of other similar questions. In explaining the Book of Job, Kushner notes two things. First, Job's three comforters do two things right: they show up, and they listen to Job for days without speaking. After that, they seem to do everything wrong, especially when they open their mouths to give explanations and advice. Instead of giving Job any comfort, consolation, and compassion, they offer merely defense of God, Who, really, ought to be big enough to defend Himself without their help, right? So if at a chapter meeting, you find me giving advice to others, it will probably be not to give people advice. Two striking ideas for me in the book are: pain (physical or mental) is the price we pay to live, and we have the power to give objects, events, and experiences meaning. So the question for us is really not why bad things happen to good people but how are we to make these things meaningful to us in our lives in the future.

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:

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



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)

*Sorrow is like a precious treasure,
shown only to friends ~ African Proverb*

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*

Father's Love

Father weighed us once a month
And totaled up the pounds
Then he weighed the dog and cat
(As silly as that sounds)

He then included their weight, too,
And with pride and joy he'd say,
"Hmm. Yes. I do believe
Here's what we have today"

There's thirty-five and forty-eight
And Jim weighs eighty-nine,
Spot and Puss weigh twenty-four
And all these pounds are mine!"

Father loved us not by age
Nor virtues that he found
He gathered all his children in
And loved us by the pound.

*Dee L. McCollum
TCF Atlanta, GA
1st Prize Light Verse Award
North Carolina Poetry Society*

Men Do Cry

I heard quite often “men don’t cry”
Though no one ever told me why
So when I fell and skinned a knee
No one came to comfort me.

And when some bully boy at school
Would pull a prank so mean or cruel
I’d quickly learn to turn and quip
“It doesn’t hurt” and bite my lip.

So as I grew to reasoned years
I learned to stifle any tears.
Though “Be a big boy” it began
Quite soon I learned to “Be a man.”

And I could play that stoic role
While storm and tempest wracked my soul.
No pain nor setback could there be
Could wrest one single tear from me.

Then one long night I stood nearby
And helplessly watched my son die
And quickly found to my surprise
That all that tearless talk was lies.

And still I cry and have no shame
I cannot play that “big boy” game.
And openly without remorse
I let my sorrow take its course.

So those of you who can’t abide
A man you’ve seen who’s often cried
Reach out to him with all your heart
As one whose life’s been torn apart.

For men do cry when they can see
Their loss of immortality.
And tears will come in endless streams
When mindless fate destroys their dreams.

*Ken Falk
TCF NW Connecticut Chapter*

A Father Returns To Work

After Kathy died, I, of course, went back to work. Some of my co-workers made the stop at my desk to express their sympathy. I know I turned them off, as my pain and my denial were so great. I could not talk about what had happened and how I felt. I thanked them. Although nobody ever talked to me about it, that was okay as my pain was such, I thought, I could not bear to talk. I threw myself into my work and on occasion was confused because I could not make the kind of decisions I had been making for years. I never made the connection that this inability to concentrate was part of my grief and was normal.

Lunch was the worst time. My habit was to eat with my associates, but often in the middle of the meal I would just have to get up and walk away. Although nobody ever said anything to me about this odd behavior, I do thank them at least for their tolerance. Slowly I readjusted (I thought) and in time (a long time) I was able to perform well again. But I never really grieved until I found THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS and it was here that people helped me to talk. It was almost twelve years before I found TCF as there was no such organization in 1967. My friends, let TCF help you...don't wait twelve years to talk!

*Bill Ermatinger
TCF Baltimore, MD
In Memory of my daughter Kathy Ermatinger*