



The Compassionate Friends

*Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies*

Fellow Compassionate Friends,

During June we will hold our monthly chapter meeting on the 10th, and a chapter chat session on the 24th. To do our part to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, the chapter steering committee has reviewed options for staying in touch. As a result, both the June 10th meeting and June 24th chat session will be conducted using Zoom ... an easy-to-use video conferencing tool. ***THE MEETING AND CHAT SESSION 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 8 of the June newsletter for helpful information and tips on using Zoom. Then, watch for emails during the day on June 10th and 24th which will include the links you will click to join the meeting and chat session.

Your June newsletter appears on the following pages. Several additional pages are included. Those additional pages contain a few more stories and poems that hopefully will provide additional support during this period of physical distancing.

As a reminder, several phone numbers appear on the first page of each chapter newsletter for members who feel the need to talk. Additionally, many other support resources can be found through:

- The National TCF website (www.compassionatefriends.org)
- The National TCF Facebook page
- Our chapter website (www.tcf-cle.net)
- Our chapter Facebook page

***Remember ... We're all in this together!
Stay safe and stay healthy!***

Doreen and Brian Sismour, Chapter Leaders





The Compassionate Friends

Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends

P.O. Box 3696 Oak Brook, IL 60522 1-877-969-0010

National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Website: www.tcf-cle.net



Chapter Closed Facebook Group

June, 2020

Phone Contacts:

Pauline Dey

Phone: 440-526-2087

Judy Luff

Phone: 440-234-7098

Chapter Leaders:

Doreen and Brian Sismour

Phone: 440-327-8678

bsismour@oh.rr.com

Chapter Treasurer

Cheryl Ondrejch

Phone: 440-799-1980

echondo@aol.com

Chapter Newsletter Editor:

Bill Luff

Phone: 440-234-7098

jbl3665@sbcglobal.net

Regional Chapter Coordinator:

Karen Pinsky

Phone: 513-207-8714

karenpinsky@gmail.com

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 10th at 7:00pm: We will meet “virtually” using the Zoom video conferencing app. Please see page 8 for more information and some help preparing for this new way to meet. The discussion topic will be “Father’s Day”. As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Meeting facilitators will be Doreen and Brian Sismour. *Join the meeting from your home via Zoom!*

June 24th at 7:00pm: Chapter chat session, also via Zoom (see page 7 for more information)

NOTE: THE MEETING & CHAT 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.



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)	Scott Mickol (Age 16)
Cynthia Elizabeth Betancourt (Age 47)	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)

Remembering Our Children

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).

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

~ Bonnie Mickol ~ In loving memory of
Scott Mickol (Age 16) and George Mickol (Age 80)

On Pain and Healing...

In pain management used for patients with chronic pain, it is taught not to tighten around the pain but to relax and allow the pain to be present. The idea is that when pain is resisted, it intensifies. When we breath deeply and acknowledge the presence of pain, it has room to move and can dissipate more readily. Pain is there to tell us something, to warn us of possible danger.

This is as true for emotional, spiritual and mental pain as it is for physical pain. When pain speaks, we need to listen. All it takes is paying attention to our pain so that when it comes we remember to breathe and get soft. We don't want to fight with our pain. We want to learn from it.

Time does not heal. But healing does take time. Give yourself the gift of time. To become whole means that as we open to the pain, we open to the loss. We break open and, as a consequence, we get bigger and include more of life. We include what would have been "lost" to us if our hearts and minds had closed against the pain, we include what would have been lost if we had not taken the time to heal. As singer/songwriter Carly Simon tells us: "There's more room in a broken heart."

*From the chapter, "Time Does Not Heal All Wounds,"
of the book, "Good Grief," by Deborah Morris Coryell*

**A friend is one who knows you as you are . . .
Understands where you've been . . .
Accepts who you've become
And still gently invites you to grow. ~ author unknown**

Newsletter Dedications



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*



Scott Mickol (Age 16)

**We will never forget you.
You will always be in our hearts.**

*Love,
Mom, Tracy and Jeff*

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*

Wish You Were Here

You’d be nineteen if you were here
But why you’re gone still isn’t clear.
Your things are still all in your room
As if you’d be returning soon.
Spongebob waits there by the door.
Your shoes are still there on the floor.

Your friends are all young women now.
They’re working jobs or college bound.
Sometimes we see them and they say
We miss her so, wish she had stayed.

Your boyfriend’s in the Army too
And by the way, he still loves you.
You thought his love was not so true
And that some other girl he’d choose.
But near two years have passed on by
Still to your grave he goes to cry.

Your niece and nephews miss you too,
And talk of the things you used to do.
Your Mother’s going to be alright
And doesn’t cry so much at night.
She puts the flowers on your grave,
And scrapbook pictures tries to save.

And me, I’m still the same old Dad,
The same old routine like I had.
I work real hard to make a way
To pay some bills and pass the day.

I’m not as funny as before
My world’s not happy anymore.
I don’t let on the pain I feel
But deep inside the hurt is real.

Time passes by year after year,
Life goes on with seldom a tear.
One wish I have, a wish so clear
My wish most of all, I wish you were here.

~Dad

*By Steve Tutt
TCF, Tyler, TX*

TCF National News

An Important Update From The Compassionate Friends About Our 2020 National Conference

Dear Compassionate Friends,

A few weeks ago, we wrote to you to share how The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is responding to the Coronavirus pandemic and the challenges it has presented for our national conference this summer in Atlanta, GA. Since that time, we have been watching national developments and considering the many issues surrounding our ability to hold the conference in July.

We want to share with you that we have made the very difficult decision to cancel the national conference currently scheduled in Atlanta, GA, for July 24 to July 26, 2020. This decision has not been made lightly, and we recognize how important the annual conference is to so many of our members in providing community, connection, support, education, and care. Our Board of Directors, staff, Conference Co-chairs, and committee volunteers are as disappointed as many of you may be that we cannot proceed safely and responsibly with our plans for meeting in Atlanta this July.

We know that these are challenging and trying times we are all sharing right now. Some are fighting illness or experiencing the death of a loved one due to COVID-19, while others may have job, financial, or other losses. Many of us are experiencing the sudden loss of control and abrupt change of what we knew, triggering the deep pain of loss we are already experiencing from the death of our child, sibling, or grandchild. We also know that having the support of our TCF community is more important than ever as we experience our individual and collective grief.

Because of this, we are actively and diligently exploring options for alternative ways that we can continue to care for our community and meet some of the needs that come through a national conference. Many details are involved with this, and we will work through them one-by-one to find alternatives including possible later dates for an in-person conference, and ways to connect virtually through this extraordinary time. We truly are in new territory since this is the first time a conference has needed to be canceled due to significant events outside of our control.

We have already seen many volunteers throughout TCF step forward with new ways of serving our members' needs during this time, and these examples show the heart of The Compassionate Friends. Please know we share this spirit and are committed to continued care for our community and leading the way with innovative ways to engage during this time.

As your new CEO, the Board of Directors and I were particularly excited for this first opportunity to meet in person when we were together in Atlanta this summer. While I'm disappointed this won't be able to happen in July, I remain very hopeful and optimistic that we'll all share meaningful time together before long.

We'll be working with the hotel to cancel existing July reservations. Those of you who already made your reservations should receive a notification of these cancellations soon. Additionally, those of you who are workshop presenters or keynote speakers will receive a separate correspondence in the coming days regarding this.

Please reach out with any questions you may have, and we'll continue to be in touch with you as we become clearer on additional options.

Stay safe, healthy, and well.

Shari O'Loughlin

Connor's Mom & Patti's Sister
Chief Executive Officer
The Compassionate Friends
tcfconferences@compassionatefriends.org

Debbie Dullabaun

Dale's Mom
President, Board of Directors
The Compassionate Friends
tcfconferences@compassionatefriends.org

Our Chapter News

June Monthly Meeting

June 10th at 7:00pm

Please plan to join in as we hold our monthly chapter meeting on June 10th. As we all do our part to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, the chapter steering committee has reviewed options for staying in touch. As a result, we will conduct the meeting using Zoom ... an easy-to-use video conferencing tool. **THE MEETING 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 8 for helpful information and tips on using Zoom. Then, watch for an email during the day on June 10th which will include the link you will click to join the meeting.

Hope you can join us ... from home ... on June 10th.

Chapter Chat Session

June 24th at 7:00pm

Please join a chapter chat session on June 24th via Zoom. No planned discussion topic ... 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 on June 24th 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 HAS BEEN 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 rescheduled later in the year, but only if it can be held safely. *Please watch for more information in upcoming newsletters.*



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.

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

Another stay-at-home month has come and gone. Also, not sure when the next physical chapter meeting will take place, or how that would work. But at least the weather is getting warmer, so I had the chance to fire up the grill over the holiday weekend and cook some delicious chicken. And I have participated in several more Zoom meetings and am trying to learn how to use the Facebook Messenger Rooms feature, which has just recently been rolled out. On the downside, my desktop computer gave it up for good, but even so, I had a fairly recent backup, so I didn't lose much data. And, of course, I had some time for more reading on my tablet.



I continue to read science fiction short stories. I've borrowed an ebook from the local library called The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy Stories of the Year, Volume 8, which has almost thirty short stories, so I am trying to do one a day. As with any such large collection, there are stories I didn't much care for, a few anyway, but most grab my attention, for a while at least. But with the improving weather, it's just hard wanting to be out and about. Well, at least there is still my balcony.

I have also planned my next book to read and downloaded it from the local library, Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague, by Geraldine Brooks. Here is what Goodreads has to say about the historical fiction, "When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer. Through Anna's eyes we follow the story of the fateful year of 1666, as she and her fellow villagers confront the spread of disease and superstition. As death reaches into every household and villagers turn from prayers to murderous witch-hunting, Anna must find the strength to confront the disintegration of her community and the lure of illicit love. As she struggles to survive and grow, a year of catastrophe becomes instead *annus mirabilis*, a "year of wonders." Inspired by the true story of Eyam, a village in the rugged hill country of England, *Year of Wonders* is a richly detailed evocation of a singular moment in history." My friend Ron, from Reading Your Way Through Grief, a TCF Facebook group, says it might be a good read "if you have been suffering increased anxiety during the Covid-19 pandemic." Well, ok, I'm pretty sure that covers just about everyone in the world.

Well, I guess I am thankful that during the pandemic, I have access to reading material on my tablet so I don't have to actually lick the pages to turn them. Now, if they would only make those produce bags in the grocery store so that they could be opened without licking my fingers before dropping in a tomato or an onion.

In closing, let me just repeat some words from that old song by Vera Miles, "We'll meet again ... Don't know where. Don't know when. But I know we'll meet again some day."

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)

*The passage of time alone does not cause our grief to end,
but its softening touch helps us to survive ~*

Wayne Loder

Butterfly Messages To Our Children

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Empty Places

I drove the old way yesterday.
It'd been a while, you see.
And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait
to summon up the tears,
to say remember yesterday,
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.
These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.

*by Genesse Gentry ~ TCF, Marin Cnty CA
In memory of Lori Gentry*

Love's Lasting Touch

Don't weep for me when I'm gone,
Because I'll always be there.
My spirit will exist in all the earth,
In the water, trees, and air.
You'll hear me say, "I love you",
In the whisper of a breeze.
You'll know that I'm beside you,
With the rustling of the leaves.
You'll feel my arms caress you,
In the warmth of each sunrise.
The moon will be my goodnight kiss,
The stars my watchful eyes.
Your life will be my legacy,
Your memories my epitaph.
These ties will bind us together,
Till we meet on heaven's path.
I'll not ever desert you,
We'll never be far apart.
I'll live within you always,
Nestled deep inside your heart.

*Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
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In Loving Memory of My Angels...
Michelle, Jerry & Danny*

He Is Gone

You can shed tears that he is gone
Or you can smile because he has lived

You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her
Or you can be full of the love that you shared

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday

You can remember him and only that he is gone
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
Or you can do what he would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

*written 1981
David Harkins 1959 -
Silloth, Cumbria, UK*