



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

March, 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.

March Monthly Meeting

March 14th at 7:00pm: The discussion theme will be "Tell us about your child." You might like to bring a photo to share. As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Clayton Samels 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.



March Birth Dates

1 - Aliyah Jean Ramsey	15 - Nathan A. Sorm
9 - Monique Nicole Jones	17 - David Bilick
11 - Larissa Ann Johnson	19 - Derek Reed Smith
11 - Marilyn Mickol	21 - Kathleen Michelle Blankenship
13 - Brian Kenneth Kunsch	21 - Russell Todd Simon
14 - Tommy Blahnik	25 - Mary Beth Hendricks
14 - Susan Kalnitzky	26 - Gregory Charles Brown
14 - Jonathan Matthew Lichtenberg	30 - Traci Lynn Rettig
15 - Nick Rothenbuhler	31 - Wendy Ann Toennies

March Angelversary Dates

David Michael Benning (Age 42)	Marilyn Mickol (Age 1 day)
Amanda Lynn Berhent (Age 16)	David Mitchell (Age 29)
Christopher Todd Brogan (Age 33)	Aaron Mulvey (Age 31)
Marc Daniel Buterbaugh (Age 19)	Stephen Charles Parish, Jr. (Age 23)
Daniel Joseph Fernandez (Age 22)	Robert D. Runyon (Age 37)
Rob R. Gates, Jr. (Age 24)	Eric M. Shaw (Age 24)
Mary Beth Hendricks (Age 48)	Andrea June Torres (Age 32)
Stephen Kanz (Age 21)	Jonathan Charles Vance (Age 1 month and 3 days)
Joseph Kather (Age 1)	Roderick ("Roddy") Joseph Stafford Whelan (Age 20)
David Matthew Knox (Age 36)	Shelley Wochele (Age 45)
James S. Mentzer, Jr. (Age 33)	Dominic Zunis (Age 18)

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).

~ Karen and Jim Kipfstuhl ~ In loving memory of Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)

~ Bill and Chris Rettig ~ In loving memory of Traci Lynn Rettig (Age 17)

~ Clayton Samels ~ In loving memory of Robert Clayton Samels (Age 24)

~ Len and Sandy Vargo ~ In loving memory of Laura Vargo Rogerson (Age 34) and Matthew Rogerson (Age 7)

In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled a dreadful distance. You have come, seeking solace, understanding, hope, threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.

In this place you can relax and breathe . . . the coats of others' expectations taken off. Walk into these few hours as into an oasis where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed.

In this place all names can be spoken; in this place each one's story may be told. We will not be discouraged by your sorrow; in this place ALL feelings, we enfold.

Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting; we do not count how many tears are shed. Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage, for the long and winding road that is ahead.

And those we love are pleased we are together. They smile down on us, and bless this day, glad for every tiny step we're taking and send their light to guide us on our way.

Traveling with us as we journey onward, sending strength for what the miles may bring, they are a part of everything we do that matters - in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Catching the Light –
Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child*

Written for TCF Meeting or Conference First Timers

An important way to cope with grief is having an outlet, be it interpersonal, be it artistic, that will allow you to not have to contain your grief, but will give you an opportunity to express it, to externalize it to some degree.

~ R. Benjamin Cirlin, Grief counselor

Newsletter Dedications



Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)

To Kerry. We think of you every day, but especially on your 43rd birthday. We miss your smile, your sense of humor and your generosity. We can't believe another year has passed without you, and we celebrate your heavenly birthday with all of our good memories of you.

Happy birthday,

Kerry Kipfstuhl.

We love you.



Traci Lynn Rettig (Age 17)

Bless All

The Children

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing.” Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouchies” can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so...we are stuck with this pain, this grief and what do we do with it? Surely we can’t live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable...some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don’t have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress through grief against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.

Don’t push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments...but don’t expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don’t get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn’t lose our child...HE [SHE] DIED. We don’t lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn’t love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I’m very glad I loved. Don’t let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

Darcie D. Sims

SNOW

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again—even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

*Denise Falzon
TCF Lake Area, MI*

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

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.

Candlelight Remembrance Service (save the date)

Our annual Candlelight Remembrance Service will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church on Sunday, June 3rd. The service consists of lighting candles in memory of our children, with appropriate readings and music, a balloon release and refreshments. Please plan to attend this very special event in remembrance of our children. *More information will appear in the April and May newsletters.*



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

Catching Butterflies

It often hurt 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*

The Beautiful Name of Parent

People often ask why there is not a word for someone who has lost a child. For me the answer is quite simple; I am and always will be a parent. The death of our child does not take that precious title away from any of us. Nothing and no one can ever change the fact that we are parents. We gave life to, nurtured and raised our children, for however long or short their lives were. "Parent" is a living word. It is an eternal word.

Our children would want us to remember that we are their parents now and forever. They would want the name of "parent" that was bestowed on us at their birth to live on in our hearts. We are still actively parenting our children. We continue to bring life to our children by loving them now and forever. There is not and should never be a word to signify the endless love of a parent.

*Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX*

WHY ME? - The Unanswerable Question

Most of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievors found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

*Polly Moore
TCF Nashville, TN*

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)