



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

March, 2020

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WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

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 11th at 7:00pm: The discussion theme will be "How men and women grieve differently." As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Doreen and Brian Sismour will facilitate.

MEETING LOCATION: *Bethany Lutheran Church, 6041 Ridge Road, Parma 44129*

***** DUE TO CHURCH LENTEN ACTIVITIES, PARKING WILL BE AT A PREMIUM *****

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 |
| 2 - May-Lyn J. Martinez | 21 - Kathleen Michelle Blankenship |
| 8 - Christopher George Stavlas | 21 - Russell Todd Simon |
| 9 - Monique Nicole Jones | 23 - Nathaniel Joseph VanNostran |
| 11 - Marilyn Mickol | 26 - Gregory Charles Brown |
| 13 - Brian Kenneth Kunsch | 29 - Christopher James Pewitt |
| 14 - Susan Kalnitzky | 30 - Frank A. Ragone |
| 15 - Nick Rothenbuhler | 30 - Traci Lynn Rettig |

March Angelversary Dates

- | | |
|---|--|
| Amanda Lynn Berhent (Age 16) | Aaron Mulvey (Age 31) |
| Christopher Todd Brogan (Age 33) | Stephen Charles Parish, Jr. (Age 23) |
| Marc Daniel Buterbaugh (Age 19) | Charles "Corky" Pecoraro (Age 48) |
| Benjamin Alan Cuthbert Corliss (Age 29) | Robert D. Runyon (Age 37) |
| Daniel Joseph Fernandez (Age 22) | Eric M. Shaw (Age 24) |
| Rob R. Gates, Jr. (Age 24) | Alexander Zachary Thomas (Age 24) |
| Stephen Kanz (Age 21) | Andrea June Torres (Age 32) |
| Joseph Kather (Age 1) | Jonathan Charles Vance (Age 1 month and 3 days) |
| David Matthew Knox (Age 36) | Shane Michael Ward (Age 22) |
| Marilyn Mickol (Age 1 day) | Roderick ("Roddy") Joseph Stafford Whelan (Age 20) |
| David Mitchell (Age 29) | Dominic Zunis (Age 18) |

Remembering Our Children



Our February 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 journeys with us.

First Meeting

Ellen Cuthbert, remembering her beloved son Benjamin Alan Cuthbert Corliss (Age 29)

Evaristo Fernandez, remembering his beloved son Evaristo Fernandez-Rios (Age 29)

Rosemary Ruzicho, remembering her beloved son Michael Andrew Ruzicho (Age 40)

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).

~ Joyce and Todd Gates ~ In loving memory of Rob R. Gates, Jr. (Age 24)

~ Patricia Harris ~ In loving memory of May-Lyn J. Martinez (Age 40)

~ Donna Penavic ~ In loving memory of Ivan Marko Penavic (Age 18)

~ Len and Sandy Vargo ~ In loving memory of Matthew Rogerson, and in celebration of his birthday

~Linda Yonkof ~ In loving memory of Stephen Kanz (Age 21)

*A thousand words can't bring you back
I know because I tried
And neither can a million tears
I know because I cried.*

~ Sarah Ratliff

I Said I Could Not Do It, *But I Did!*

Exactly 8:05 a.m., Friday, July 9, 1971, was the last time I looked at my eight year-old daughter with her eyes open. I walked beside her as they rolled her down the hall to the elevator that would take her down to the operating room for her simple, routine tonsillectomy.

At exactly 1:30 that afternoon, I was told she was dead. I said then I could not live a day without her. I just could not do it.

BUT I DID

During the drive home, I said I would never be able to walk in that house without her.

BUT I DID

As I walked in that empty house, someone quickly ran and shut her door—the door to her room where she kept all the things she loved. The room where she played and slept. I said I could never go in there again. I said I could not do it.

BUT I DID

When they said, “Come, let’s go to the funeral, the Rosary, the Mass,” I said I could not do it.

BUT I DID

For months that followed, I just knew my life would never be the same, and it wasn’t. All the things I said I could not do did get done. All the life I said I could not live did get lived. Differently, but I did live. Now comes today—16 years later. I have to admit, I had to look it up to be sure. Sixteen years! Palmer Ann would have been 24 years old. I had to stop and think about that, too.

I stood before her portrait today and stared a long, long time, and yes, I remembered the pain with total recall of July 9, 1971. I reached out, touching what’s left of my memory of her and I offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to God—a prayer of gratitude, for giving me such a beautiful eight years with a lovely daughter, and most of all, the opportunity to be able to stand there and realize that I had said I could not do it, but I did.

YES I DID

And each month when I come to a Compassionate Friends meeting with you, the new member, I share the pain that I know you are feeling—that hopelessness of the future. I smile to myself, because inside I know a secret—you will be okay. You will touch again, love again, laugh again, and live again. After all, I said I could not do it, but I did and...

YOU WILL, TOO!

*Betz Crump
TCF Ft. Lauderdale, FL*

TO MY MISCARRIED BABY

Out of our love you came,
 Planned, wanted, welcomed.
 Your announcement created excitement, joy.

Friends and family inquired,
 Do you want a girl or boy?
 Will you take Lamaze?
 What colors for the nursery?
 Then suddenly you're gone — and silence.
 No one talks about a baby that won't be.

Were you real or a dream?
 I feel alone and empty.
 Where can I put my love that was for you?
 Now what does it mean?

*Betty Ruder
 TCF North Shore Chapter, IL*

THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have traveled a while
 Along this path called grief
 Need to stop and remember that mile,
 That first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers
 Who told us of ways to deal.
 It wasn't the one who talked and talked
 That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friends who quietly sat
 And held our hands in theirs.
 The ones who let us talk and talk
 And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember
 That more than the words we speak,
 It's the gift of someone who listens
 That most of us desperately seek.

*Nancy Myerholtz
 TCF Waterville/Toledo, OH*

TCF National News



43rd TCF National Conference
July 24-26, 2020 • Atlanta, GA

43RD TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

JULY 24 - JULY 26

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 43rd TCF National Conference will be held in Atlanta, GA on July 24-26, 2020. "Sharing Sweet Memories of Love" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great National Conference experience. This year's conference will be held at the [Atlanta Marriott Marquis](#), 265 Peachtree Center Avenue in downtown Atlanta. 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 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 will be available in March.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Our hotel block is now officially open for the 2020 TCF National Conference in Atlanta. Reservations can be made [on](#)

Our Chapter News

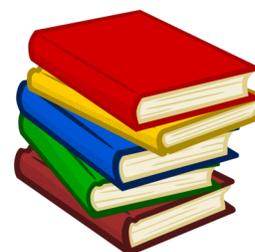
Candlelight Remembrance Service (save the date)

Our annual Candlelight Remembrance Service will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church on Sunday, June 28th. 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 May and June newsletters.*



Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

The weather here keeps changing like a roller coaster ride. This afternoon, it's cold. In a few days, it will be thirty degrees warmer, only to get cold again. It's got me longing for the days when I can have a nice cup of tea out on my balcony. But I might as well take a cue from the weather and change this month's column a bit. So instead of giving you a book or two that you might want to read, I'm going to talk about how you might help by donating a book to our library.



Not that we don't have enough books there as it is. We have a pretty good size tub full of books that I set out before our monthly meetings. But new books come out all the time. I recently posted a list by Ron Gallacher of almost 700 grief books from the TCF Facebook group Reading Your Way Through Grief. But regardless of where you pick up a grief book, from your local bookstore, an online outlet like Amazon, unless it's from a library that you have to return the book to or an ebook that just sits on your phone or tablet, you end up with a book on your shelf, and after you have read it once or twice (or maybe more), chances are, it's going to eventually just sit there. Why not pass the book along so that someone else can also derive some benefit from it?

We would love to have it for our library, and I'm sure there is at least one person in the chapter that would take it home to read it. I would ask that you do a couple things before you bring the book in. First, on the inside front cover, write a sentence or two along the lines of "This book is being donated to the TCF Library by . . ." and then put your name. And then, most importantly, add something like "In memory of my" son/daughter/grandchild, and then, their NAME. So the next person to check the book out of our library will know who to thank for being able to read the book, and will remember your child's name, too.

Of course, I realize that there are those books that are so special that you really want to keep them forever on your shelf. In that case, you might do what one lady in our chapter did, that is, buy TWO copies and donate one, and keep one for yourself.

Here is hoping that the weather is a lot warmer by the time I write next month's column. Oh, and I hope I don't have to stay locked in my apartment because of the corona virus, regardless of the weather. But if I do have to stay inside, I'll just put on some soothing music by erik Satie and open a good book.

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

His Room

Sun splinters through
 The stained-glass unicorn Still on the sill
 Splattering black walls with color
 Few things are as forlorn as a vacant room
 Furniture gone, awaiting definition
 Bare, yet there on the carpet
 Imprints of chair and waterbed
 And there is the hole he
 Accidentally shot through the wall
 And there and there and there
 Nail holes that held pictures and posters
 And eight-point antlers
 And there... God, how can a place
 So empty, be so full?

*Richard Dew
 From Rachel’s Cry—A Journey Through Grief*

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:

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



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.



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)