



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, 2017

WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

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Happy St. Patrick's Day

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 9th 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. Judy and Bill Luff and Clayton Samels 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.



March Birth Dates

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

March Anniversary 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

First Meeting



The 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.

David Oldenburgh, remembering his beloved son
Brian D. Oldenburgh (Age 18)

Jane Pritchard, remembering her beloved sons
Arrie Clifton Pritchard (Age 30) and
Jacob Benjamin Pritchard (Age 20)

Susan Walzer, remembering her beloved daughter
Sarah Alice Walzer (Age 21)

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).

~ Kathy Blankenship ~ In loving memory of
Kathleen Michelle Blankenship (Age 25)

~ David Oldenburgh ~ In loving memory of
Brian D. Oldenburgh (Age 18)

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

~ Fred and Mary Tschanz ~ In loving memory of
Frederick M. Tschanz (Age 24)

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

Newsletter Dedications



Kathleen Michelle Blankenship (Age 25)

Kathleen Michelle Blankenship

Happy Birthday to my angel in Heaven. Not a day or night goes by that you're not on my mind. I miss your smile, your laugh, your kindness, the sound of your voice.

The hole in my heart will always be there.

I fill my time with the 25 years of so many wonderful memories. For those, I'm grateful, and those keep me moving forward.

**Love you and miss you,
Mom and Dad
XOXO**

Hidden Emotion

Hidden deep inside my breast is a longing that has been suppressed. The feeling is always there--longing---longing to see you, to hug you, to know who you are at this time in your existence. It stays hidden for a period of time and then---when I least expect it--- rises to the surface and must be tended to.

At times I feel as if I cannot breathe, as if I will suffocate trying to suppress the pain. At other times a tear comes from nowhere and trickles down my cheek. Occasionally, something inside of me explodes causing me to weep uncontrollably.

I can only guess what causes these unbidden emotions. Is it the song that's playing on the radio? Can it be the changing of the seasons? Do the budding trees beginning new life cause me to let down my guard? The longing never goes away.

I feel like a tight rope walker never knowing if I will make a misstep, causing me to fall into the stream of emotional pain that forces me to cry out, as I long to see you again.

With the passing of years, I have learned that if I can hang on for just a little longer, these emotions---strong as they are---will pass and I can live again with the longing hidden deep inside my breast.

*Shirley Muller
TCF Lafayette, IN*

I Will Cry With You

I will listen closely ~ hold your hand or just sit with you ~ as long as it brings comfort - I will be near ~ I will be silent ~ I WILL CRY WITH YOU ~ I will silently pray for you ~ I will quietly listen as you share your unspoken thoughts ~ I will not fill the space with questions, words of wisdom, well intentioned resolutions, or small conversations ~ there are no words for missing ~ the heart kisses the thoughts and dare to remember happier moments ~ in time, tender memories will guide us through difficult seasons - occasions ~ in time, tender memories will be flowers a bloom in spring, a summer sun set at dusk, the crisp leaves of fall, the first snow of winter ~ But for now, I WILL CRY WITH YOU ~ I will not tell you how to feel, how to be ~ I will not tell you stories of others who have lost ~ I will honor your moment ~ I will honor your loss ~ Please share your tears with me ~ I will not hush them away, turn away, emotionally walk away ~ I will be near ~ I will hear you heart ~ I will hear your unspoken words ~ I will not offer answers, but I will offer love ~ I will help you ~ I will hope for tender moments, But for now---I WILL CRY WITH YOU

*Pamela Hagens
TCF Nashville Chapter, TN
Copyright 8/5/2015*

The Child That's Not There

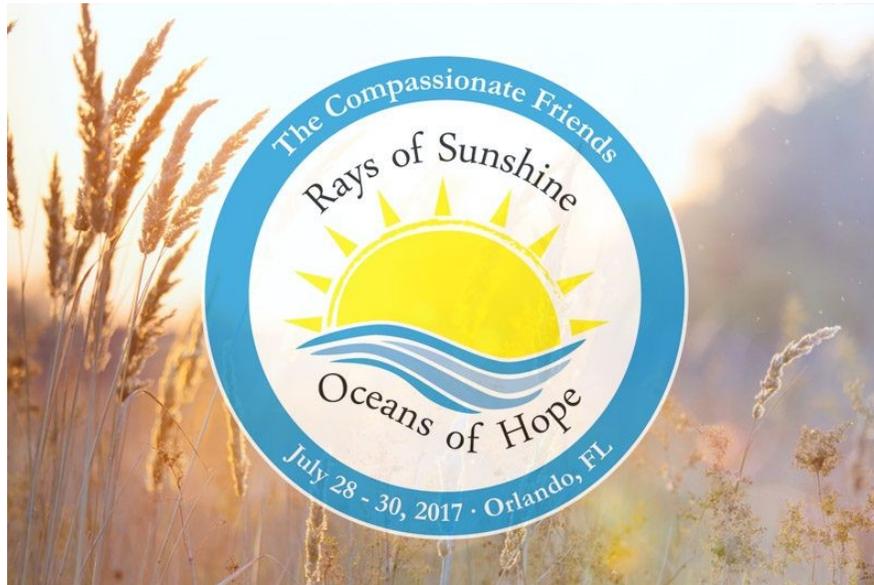
The child that's not there
Takes up every piece of me
The child that's not there
Consumes my every thought
The child that's not there
Makes me feel like I failed
The child that's not there
Took away a main reason for being

But
The children that are there
Still somehow bring me joy
The children that are there
Still need my love
The children that are there
Don't need any more grief
The children that are there
Force me to go on.

*Tricia Palmer
In memory of my son, Gabriel Boyer
TCF, Tidewater, VA*

***He that conceals his grief finds no remedy for it
~ Turkish Proverb***

TCF National News



The 40th TCF National Conference

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Orlando, Florida, will be the site of the 40th TCF National Conference on July 28-30, 2017. “Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope” is the theme of next year’s event, which promises more of this year’s great National Conference experience. The 2017 Conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek.

More information will appear in the April newsletter

TCF National Office Seeks Your Stories and Articles

For many years, The Compassionate Friends National Office has provided on its Leadership site stories and poems by TCF members that can be published in Chapter newsletters around the country.

Currently, the Newsletter Editor Database has over 500 stories and 200 poems. The National Office would like to include your personal grief related stories and poems. Please submit your articles and poems to sara@compassionatefriends.org. Please include your name and chapter affiliation.

The Drop

A water drop
moves with the sea,
a part of all
eternity –

It moves beneath
the sun and stars,
its life submerged
so deep and far –

But there exists
within this one,
a tiny hope
for things to come –

To drift ashore
a dream to live,
create a world
so much to give –

To have a sea
all of its own,

where only hope
and love are known –

This drop of sea
pulls to the shore,
forever free
its life to soar –

The river forms
joined with the sea,
to flow for all
eternity –

*Submitted by Carol Furman
TCF Tidewater Chapter, VA
In Memory of her daughter Candy Elaine Furman*

(Written by Candy Elaine Furman at age 27, as a gift to her mother for her support as she studied and passed her CNA exam. Candy later went on to become an RN. Seven weeks after Candy's death at the age of 44, her father also passed away. Candy and her Daddy's ashes were deposited in the ocean together.)

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

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

The Robin’s Song

It’s spring once again. Our part of the world is turning back towards the sun; trees are leafing out; wildflowers are blooming. Robins are again singing to one another. And, I believe, also singing to those who are grieving.

Before my daughter Lori died in the summer of 1991, I was under the misperception that only the English robin had a glorious song. That smaller, red-breasted scalawag of a bird delights all who hear it, and I had felt that we in the United States had been short-changed when they’d misnamed its larger, boring, American cousin the same sweet name. All I’d ever heard our robins do was cheep!

Then one spring day in the year after Lori died, during one of the darkest times of my grief, my ears and heart flew open with surprise at a song I heard outside my window. I distinctly heard, in the midst of my pain, a bird singing loudly and clearly, “Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio! . . . Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!” I went outside to see what marvelous bird might have been sent to sing to me. I could barely see the bird at the top of the neighbor’s poplar tree, so, while hoping this exotic, magical bird wouldn’t fly away while I was gone, I went to find our binoculars.

Rushing back, I could hear the bird from each room in the house. After adjusting the binoculars, I was truly amazed to see one of our “boring” American robins come clearly into view! As he continued singing clear as day, “Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!” I marveled at this special message and wondered if my robin was the only one who sang these words. So I looked it up in my *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds* and found that my robin was not an anomaly, but that robins are considered the true harbinger of spring, singing “Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily.”

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I stood there that day filled with wonder. I wasn't hearing things; there it was in the bird book: "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily." I thought to myself, "Cheerily . . . No, that isn't what I hear." We had lived in England for a year and our family, especially Lori, who loved to put on an English accent, often said "Cheerio!" to one another when we meant, "Goodbye" or "See you later!" There was no doubt in my mind as I stood there listening. It WAS cheerio. Lori could have found no more perfect way to try to cheer me up AND say "hello"!

Nine springs have passed since then, and although I will always deeply miss Lori's physical presence in my life, those darkest of times are thankfully now mostly in the past. It is spring once again and as I hear the robin singing so hopefully in the highest branches, it takes me back to that first spring song, and I smile, remembering. And I think of all those who are now in the darkest depths of their own grief and pray they too will hear this lovely song.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
TCF Marin & San Francisco, CA
From, *Catching the Light – Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child*
She is also the author of *Stars in the Deepest Night – After the Death of a Child*
In Memory of my daughter, Lori Gentry*

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.



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)