



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

May, 2017

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.

May Monthly Meeting

May 11th at 7:00pm: The discussion theme will be "Mother's Day and 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 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.



May Birth Dates

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3 - Gregg Benton Rael | 19 - Fannie Marie Thomas-Lewis |
| 6 - Ian M. Hovancsek | 21 - Nicholas William Luca |
| 7 - Jay (John) Defevere | 22 - David Mitchell |
| 7 - Robert D. Runyon | 24 - Michael John Buchko |
| 9 - Alexander Humel McCann | 26 - Amy Angel Marilyn Lee |
| 10 - Jeremy Daniel Yurcik | 28 - Justin Robert Swanger |
| 11 - Daniel Feuerstein | 30 - Wendy Sue Berry |
| 11 - Richard J. Kasper | 30 - Brian Tyler Jenkins |
| 14 - Johnny Robert Kazimer, Jr. | 31 - Marc Daniel Buterbaugh |
| 18 - Ryan Johnson | 31 - Andrew Domic Franklin |
| 18 - Ivan Marko Penavic | |

May Anniversary Dates

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Erin K. (Gaydos) Carlisle (Age 25) | Brian Joseph Kochmit (Age 26) |
| Heather Lynn Hist (Carr) (Age 1) | Tyler Andrew Moore (Age 20) |
| Robert William Duman, Jr. (Age 18) | Jody Lynn Poore (Age 4) |
| Abigail Nicole Fenstermaker (Age 6) | Traci Lynn Rettig (Age 17) |
| Ann Marie Gero (Age 25) | Isabella Marie Hlynosky (Stachewicz) (Age 1) |
| Stephen Alexander (Gianfagna) (Age 18) | Allison T. Steadley (Age 20) |
| Carl Raymond Grants (Age 30) | Michael A. Suglia, Jr. (Age 30) |
| Scott Winfield Hawke (Age 31) | Hannah Elise Wernke (Age 8) |
| James A. Jarosz (Age 24) | |

Remembering Our Children



The April 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.

First Meeting

Dionne Moss-Walton, remembering her beloved son LaMarr Deontay Moss (Age 30)

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).

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

The Song

I could write the words to the world's song.
 How the death of a child is so unfair and wrong.
 I would tell how lost and empty I feel.
 How every day without him still seems so unreal.
 The words would go on and on and may bring a tear.
 And all I would know that I wish he was here.

*Angela Riggins
 Bradley's Mother
 TCF Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland, OH*

Newsletter Dedications



Traci Lynn Rettig (Age 17)

Bless All

The Children

Hands

Little handprints
in a frame,
Flashback of memories
days long gone,
yet still so fresh in my mind
as if only yesterday.

Tiny hand of my baby girl,
Fingers curled around my own,
Only a reflex to some,
But not in my mind,
For me only the purest
of loving connections.

Outstretched toddler hand
reaching out for mine.
trusting mother's protective grasp,
maneuvering the busy streets,
we skipped together,
hand-in-hand.

Slender-fingered teenage beauty,
polished nails, smooth scented hands.
Seeking independence,
Hands pushing me away,
Sensing somehow her reluctance,
Not really ready, not quite yet...

Hands of her adult years,
I thought would have held mine
as I navigated through the ageing years.
Hands to comfort and hold, but never to be,
I am left only with my memories,
and tiny handprints,
in a frame...

*Cathy Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN
In Memory of my daughter, Nina*

The Long View

A few weeks after my son Arthur died I met a nurse. She conducted an assessment for me for a procedure that I had scheduled months ahead of time. She ran down her list of routine questions. One of them was “Are you in pain now?”

Jess, my stepdaughter, was with me because she was my ride home after the procedure. We just looked at each other.

I hesitated and answered honestly, “Well, emotional pain,” and then explained it. The nurse stopped and looked at both of us. She said soothing things that I don’t remember. Then she said, “Someday, you will smile again, just not now.”

She was right. That’s the long view of it. At the time Jess and I had no idea that would happen again. Our fresh grief was way too huge and painful to imagine smiling again.

To the tender newer members of TCF I wish you a someday when you will smile again. You will feel a spark of joy. This will come again.

The Compassionate Friends support group anchored me from one month to the next. I met people who were further down the road than me who had experienced child loss. They smiled, even laughed and they were authentic. They were my role models.

Now as a TCF chapter co-leader, when I see a newer member spontaneously reach out to someone who is at their first or second TCF meeting, I breathe a sigh of relief for both of them. One is helping the other and both will feel that healing on their grief journeys. This is how we work and it works very well.

*Monica Colberg
TCF Minneapolis, MN
In Memory of my son Art*

Their Song of Love

Remembering on this Mother’s Day
the melody your child etched
in your heart.
The sweet song of love
that only your child could place there.
As this special day brings
their song to you,
may the warmth of their eternal love
fill your heart once again,
For their song is never ending.

*Patty Erdman
TCF Longview, WA*

***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***

TCF National News

40th TCF National Conference

July 28 - July 30



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 this year’s event, which promises more of last year’s great National Conference experience. The 2017 Conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek. 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.

[« All Events](#)

[Online Registration](#)

[Print Registration Form](#)

Pre-registration will be available until July 7, 2017. Please note: while on-site conference registration will be available, the Friday lunch and Saturday dinner is only available with pre-registration.

[Workshops](#)

Hotel Reservations

[Click here](#) to make your hotel reservations online or by calling 888.353.2013 at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek.

Our Chapter News

Candlelight Remembrance Service

Please join us on Sunday, June 11th from 3-5 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. 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.

We will again be performing 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 Wednesday, May 31st. You can also mail a photo to Don Litvin, 16447 Southway Drive, Brook Park, OH 44142.

If you are planning on attending this special event, please sign up at the May 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.



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

Boston Pedicab

The GoTo Boston van driver picked up my friend Carol Hawk and me and other travelers at Logan Airport. “Looks like you are all going to the Sheraton,” he said. I turned to the passengers by me—Compassionate Friends? Heads nodded. The club nobody wants to join had filled the whole van with attendees for the 36th National TCF Conference.

On the way to the hotel an impromptu sharing session took place. We asked their names. How long ago? How old were they? The driver heard none of those quiet conversations over the noise of traffic.

Carol was seated in front with the driver and she asked what he would recommend we do during our visit. His answer “Take a pedicab ride.” Boston is a walk-friendly town. Most city travel occurs by mass transit or walking or by pedicab, a bicycle powered mode of transportation with a passenger cart attached to rear of the bike.

“My son is a pedicab driver,” said the van driver. “He can tell you all about the history of the town as he heads to your destination. He’s friendly, he knows Boston. He’s lived here all his life. Pedicab drivers are college kids. The fee is negotiable free will. And he’s handsome!” The driver gave us his son’s name and recommended that we ask for him.

The father’s plug for his son’s summer job was sweet. He spoke in easy present tense about his son.

It was ironic. Every one of his passengers would have given anything to have a present tense conversation with the children we had traveled to Boston to honor.

Carol and I hailed a pedicab the next day. I asked but our driver did not know our van driver. Two thousand or more pedicabs are licensed in Boston. What are the chances?

A week later I was still in Boston on my last day of vacation. Carol returned home at the close of the conference. My friend Scott and I were walking through yet another Boston neighborhood trying to see it all. I was tired. A pedicab driver spotted us holding our maps. He called across the crowded street to us.

I waved him off and he nodded but Scott asked him to come over. The young man laughed as he maneuvered a totally illegal U-turn on the one-way street. He pulled curbside and we shared our map. He pointed out that we had about half a map to get back to the hotel. Bummer, I thought. Long walk.

“You can take the T (Boston’s light rail subway),” he said. “The transit station is 12 blocks away. I’ll take you there.” We hopped on.

The pedicab merged into traffic as the young man spoke about growing up in Boston. He talked of his parents. He briefed us on Boston history as we passed beautifully restored buildings. He was a delight, bright and friendly. He reminded me of my son. And he was handsome.

“Does your father drive a van for GoToBoston?” The young man’s astonishment as he turned toward us confirmed my hunch. “How did you know that? Do you know my Dad?” Did he give you my name?”

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“Yes he did.” We all laughed at the degrees of closeness in Boston Town! I asked him twice to call his dad and he said he would that night. He had a story to tell! It was easy to see the son loved his dad as much as the father loved him.

Good, I thought. That will make one more connect for father and son, one more easy present moment conversation between the two of them. As a member of the club no one wants to join, I recognize the extraordinary value of one more conversation between parent and child.

The van driver offered his passengers a gift of time with his son. I sensed that I would meet the son. Then I second-guessed it. I waved the young man away. But powers greater than myself were at work.

In my new grief hearing a parent talk about his living child was painful. As a seasoned griever I listen as a proud father talks about his child. The father’s joy for his son motivated me to connect with the young man and once more feel that abundant energy of youthful warmth and friendliness in present moment. I felt calm and invigorated after the young man’s visit with us.

During TCF conference Mitch Carmody and Alan Pederson talked about signs from our loved ones. I now include pedicabs right up there with butterflies and dragon flies as a method of delivery for messages from our children.

*Monica Colberg
TCF Minneapolis, MN
In Memory of my son Art*

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)