



# 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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Chapter Website: [www.tcf-cle.net](http://www.tcf-cle.net)



Chapter Closed Facebook Group

## May, 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.

### May Monthly Meeting

**May 9th at 7:00pm:** The discussion theme will be "Mother's Day" As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Joanne and Don Litvin 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.



## May Birth Dates

- |                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3 - Gregg Benton Rael           | 18 - Ivan Marko Penavic        |
| 6 - Ian M. Hovancsek            | 19 - Fannie Marie Thomas-Lewis |
| 7 - Jay (John) Defevere         | 19 - Mitchell Ryan Williams    |
| 7 - Robert D. Runyon            | 21 - Nicholas William Luca     |
| 8 - Stefanie Kmiotek            | 22 - David Mitchell            |
| 9 - Alexander Humel McCann      | 24 - Michael John Buchko       |
| 10 - Jeremy Daniel Yurcik       | 26 - Amy Angel Marilyn Lee     |
| 11 - Daniel Feuerstein          | 28 - Justin Robert Swanger     |
| 11 - Richard J. Kasper          | 30 - Wendy Sue Berry           |
| 13 - Christa Melody Hodges      | 30 - Brian Tyler Jenkins       |
| 14 - Johnny Robert Kazimer, Jr. | 31 - Marc Daniel Buterbaugh    |
| 18 - Ryan Johnson               | 31 - Andrew Domonic Franklin   |

## A Mother's Lament

If I had known  
The pain I'd bear  
The sadness and the great despair  
Would I have chosen the path I did  
To have this child  
Who so briefly lived?

Yes, I am certain  
That I would  
For all the laughter  
All the good.

He taught us all  
So much you see  
Through his kindness,  
Love and generosity.

Though he's gone  
From us physically  
He lives on in our hearts  
Eternally.

*Sandy Roush  
TCF Lakes Area, MI  
In Memory of Whit*

# Remembering Our Children

## *May Angelversary Dates*

Tobias Garrett Brugler (Age 34)	Kadeem Von Hogan (Age 23)
Erin K. (Gaydos) Carlisle (Age 25)	James A. Jarosz (Age 24)
Anthony James Dawson (Age 22)	Stefanie Kmiotek (Age 18)
Robert William Duman, Jr. (Age 18)	Brian Joseph Kochmit (Age 26)
Abigail Nicole Fenstermaker (Age 6)	Tyler Andrew Moore (Age 20)
Stephen Alexander (Gianfagna) (Age 18)	Jody Lynn Poore (Age 4)
Carl Raymond Grants (Age 30)	Traci Lynn Rettig (Age 17)
Scott Winfield Hawke (Age 31)	Allison T. Steadley (Age 20)
Heather Lynn Hist (Carr) (Age 1)	Michael A. Suglia, Jr. (Age 30)
Isabella Marie Hlynosky (Stachewicz) (Age 1)	Hannah Elise Wernke (Age 8)
Christa Melody Hodges (Age 26)	



Our April 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**

Sue Hunyadi, remembering her beloved daughter Christa Melody Hodges (Age 26)

Damion Thomas, remembering his beloved son Alexander Zachary Thomas (Age 24)

***Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,  
Love leaves a memory no one can steal. ~ found on a headstone in Ireland***

## ***From the Desk of a Former TCF Executive Director***

### **Amanda**

Amanda. She was a little thing with a big smile and a big heart. I met her on the first day of school when she accompanied Stephanie home from the bus stop. It was raining and Amanda walked Stef home so she could keep her dry under the umbrella she carried in her hand.

We had moved into the house a few weeks before school started so it was the first opportunity that Stephanie had to meet Amanda who lived up the street. Amanda was a year older than Stephanie, who was seven, but it sure didn't matter. They soon became playmates and often included Stephanie's little brother Stephen in their games and fun.

From September through March their play continued until that terrible day when the unthinkable happened. A speeding racing design motorcycle broadsided my car where my two children were seated as I attempted to turn left onto my street. It was Amanda's dad, hearing the crash, who ran down the street to help me—at the very spot Amanda and Stephanie waited for the bus.

Stephanie and Stephen died as a result of the accident. Amanda lost her playmates and the world lost two beautiful children who didn't have a chance to pave their own path in the world. Stephen wasn't even old enough to wait at the bus stop with his best friends to experience school for the first time.

But Amanda didn't forget Stephanie and Stephen, and she didn't forget me. I'd walk down to the mailbox and often find that she had left me a handmade sympathy/thinking of you card. Sometimes she'd pick flowers and would leave them in the mailbox, too. I watched over her every morning as she waited for the bus—alone.

Then one day Amanda appeared at the door carrying a deck of Uno cards. "I'm lonely, and I'm pretty sure you are too," she said, as she led me by the hand to the kitchen table. My eyes started to moisten as I sat down at the table to play. Amanda got up, hugged me tight, and whispered quietly "I miss them too." After a lingering hug she sat down and said, "Let's play!" We played several games before she finally got up and announced she had to head for home.

The cards and flowers continued to find their way into the mailbox to let me know she was thinking of me. She also continued to appear at the door with her Uno cards eager to play a game or two, or three, or four!

Amanda was a comfort. When other people stopped visiting Amanda continued, Uno cards in hand. She also continued with her beautiful handmade cards and the flowers that she had so obviously picked from her mother's garden. Throughout the summer months she made her way to my house to sit and chat as we played Uno.

One day she announced, "I think I'm feeling better." I knew what she meant; it had nothing to do with being sick or under the weather. She had been missing her buddies and in our strange Uno-playing way, we were comforting each other and helping each other to grieve.

Amanda didn't come back anymore that summer but there were still the occasional cards and flowers found in the mailbox.

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As the first day of school rolled around the following year, I watched Amanda through the window as she walked down the street early and patiently waited for the bus to come. When she boarded that big yellow school bus she turned slightly, our eyes met, and she flashed me a big smile and waved. She knew I'd be watching over her, just as she had been watching over me, trying to fill a void, and provide comfort and love.

*Pat Loder  
Executive Director  
In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen*

*Former TCF Executive Director Patricia Loder has been involved with The Compassionate Friends since 1991 when her children, 8-year-old Stephanie and 5-year-old Stephen, died in an auto-motorcycle accident. Her brother, Rick, died from cancer only three weeks earlier. After co-founding a TCF chapter in 1993 and serving as Michigan regional coordinator, she became involved as co-editor of TCF's national publications, which have been combined into the award winning national magazine We Need Not Walk Alone. Pat was hired as development director of The Compassionate Friends in 1998 and two years later asked to fill the vacant executive director position. She lives in Milford, MI with her husband Wayne and two subsequent children, Christopher, 18, and Katie, 17.*

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## **My Perennial Love**

Every summer my son gives me flowers. He planted them 17 years ago ... the summer before he died. I remember the day he planted them. Not the exact date, but standing there talking to him as he poked holes in the ground and carefully placed each one. I remember thanking him and thinking how very sweet of him to do that for me.

Terry died the following February. After months of crying and grieving, summer came and with it his flowers bloomed! Of course it made me miss him even more, but how I loved seeing them and knowing that he had put them there the year before. I know nothing about flowers so I was astounded when my mother told me that what he had planted was an annual and not a perennial and that they should not have come back.

A few weeks ago, our neighbor who moved in last summer, commented on my impatiens. She said she was surprised to see them come back from last year. I told her that they have been coming back every year now for 16 years. Just saying it aloud made me realize how extraordinary that really is!

There is something else I have come to realize. My love for my son did not end when he died. My love for him is indefinite; it is enduring. It is perennial.

*Maureen Harman  
TCF Tidewater Chapter, VA  
In Memory of my son Terry*

# 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

## Candlelight Remembrance Service

Please join us on Sunday, June 3rd from 2-4 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.

The service will again include 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](mailto:lit@roadrunner.com) with your child's name, **no later than Wednesday, May 23rd**. You can also mail a photo to Don Litvin, 11521 White Tail Run, Columbia Station, OH 44028-9334.

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

## Mother's Day

As I write this, I am very much aware that Mother's day is coming soon. That will be an undoubtedly difficult day in countless homes. For all the thousands of mothers who will be glowing with a radiant kind of pride and happiness that day, there will also be those of you whose hearts are aching for that phone call that will never come, that special visit, that one Mother's day card which will not arrive. For us, the reading and re-reading of that one last card - "Mom, you are the greatest and I love you" - will have to last a lifetime. How does a mother face a lifetime of silence on "her" day? Ask those of us who have "been there" already, and we will tell you of lonely Mother's Day visits to spring-green cemeteries where the sweet clear notes of a single spring bird perched nearby float over our heads and seem surely to have been intended as divine comfort for a heart full to breaking. You will hear of yellow roses being sent to a small church - "in memory of..." and a cherished story of a kind and sensitive friend who sent a single rose that first Mother's Day "in remembrance".

Always we struggle with the eternal questions - how does life in fairness extract from us the life of a beloved child in exchange for a clear bird call in a spring-green cemetery, a slender vase of yellow rosebuds or even the kindness and sensitivity of a friend who remembered our loneliness and pain on that day? Where is the fairness and justice in such barter?

The answer comes back again and again - life does not always bargain fairly. We are surrounded from birth to death by those things which we cannot keep, but which enrich, ennoble and endow our lives with a fore taste of Heaven because we have been privileged to behold, to experience, to wrap our arms around the joyous and beautiful.

Can we bottle the fragrance of an April morning or the splendor of a winter's sunset and take it home with us to place it on our fireplace mantle? Can we grasp and hold the blithesome charm of childhood's laughter? Can we capture within cupped hands the beauty and richness of a rainbow? Can we pluck the glitter of a million stars on a summer night or place in an alabaster box the glow and tenderness of love?

No, we cannot. But to those who have been given the splendor, the blithesome charm, the glory, the glitter, the tenderness and the love of a child who has departed, someday the pain will speak to you of enrichment, the compassion for others, of deeper sensitivity to the world around you, of a deeper joy for having known a deeper pain. Your child will not have left you completely, as you thought. But rather, you will find him in that first clear, sweet bird call, in those yellow rosebuds, in giving and receiving and in the tissue wrapped memories that you have forever in your heart.

*Mary Wildman  
TCF Moro, IL*

## Memories

The certain special memories  
That follow me each day,  
Cast your shadow in my life  
In a certain way.

Sometimes the blowing wind  
Or the lyrics of a song  
Make me stop and think of you  
Sometimes all day long

Memories are good to have  
To share and keep in my heart,  
Just knowing that you're still inside  
Makes sure we'll never part.

*Collette Covington  
TCF Lake Charles, LA*



## 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*

# 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.

## 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](mailto: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)