



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, 2019

WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

Phone Contacts:

Pauline Dey

Phone: 440-526-2087

Judy Luff

Phone: 440-234-7098

Chapter Leaders:

Doreen and Brian Sismour

Phone: 440-327-8678

bsismour@oh.rr.com

Regional Chapter Coordinator:

Karen Pinsky

Phone: 513-207-8714

karenpinsky@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Bill Luff

Phone: 440-234-7098

jbl3665@sbcglobal.net

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 8th 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.

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 | 19 - Mitchell Ryan Williams |
| 7 - Jay (John) Defever | 21 - Nicholas William Luca |
| 7 - Robert D. Runyon | 22 - David Mitchell |
| 8 - Stefanie Kmiotek | 23 - Charles "Corky" Pecoraro |
| 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 Domic Franklin |
| 18 - Ivan Marko Penavic | |



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

Sandy Finley, remembering her beloved daughter Brittany Nicole Finley (Age 27)

Randall Kalstrom, remembering his beloved son Dustin Kalstrom (Age 26)

Catherine Pecoraro, remembering her beloved son Charles "Corky" Pecoraro (Age 48)

Jessica and Mike Ruccio, remembering their beloved son Shane Michael Ward (Age 22)

Remembering Our Children

May Angelversary Dates

Tobias Garrett Brugler (Age 34)	James A. Jarosz (Age 24)
Erin K. (Gaydos) Carlisle (Age 25)	Stefanie Kmiotek (Age 18)
Heather Lynn Hist (Carr) (Age 1)	Brian Joseph Kochmit (Age 26)
Anthony James Dawson (Age 22)	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)
Stephen Alexander (Gianfagna) (Age 18)	Isabella Marie Hlynosky (Stachewicz) (Age 1)
Carl Raymond Grants (Age 30)	Allison T. Steadley (Age 20)
Scott Winfield Hawke (Age 31)	Michael A. Suglia, Jr. (Age 30)
Christa Melody Hodges (Age 26)	Hannah Elise Wernke (Age 8)
Kadeem Von Hogan (Age 23)	Michael Yandek (Age 14)

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).

~ Kathryn Kurtz ~ In loving memory of
Michael Benjamin Kurtz (Age 17)

~ Mike and Joyce McCann/Humel ~ In loving memory of
Alexander Humel McCann (Age 17)

~ Russ and Ruthann Simon ~ In loving memory of
Russell Todd Simon (Age 18)

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

Newsletter Dedications



Alexander Humel McCann (Age 17)

Dear Alex,

When we visited your grave the other day and considered the coming of another Spring without you, we missed you as much as we did that first Spring. Every day in every way. On your birthday it will be 4,889 days since your revered last spoken words, "I love you, man."

We are comforted believing that you are perfect in God's loving embrace. We will always love you and treasure the 17½ years we had with you in this life.

Mom, Dad, Nick

Letting Go

Tiny hands would hold on tight
No matter what you'd do
You took my hand so many times
As through the years you grew

You reached for Mommy late at night
When scary dreams awoke
Seeking comfort and advice
In every word I spoke

Decisions made in later years
Would bring you home again
A broken heart, A love renewed
A quarrel with a friend

Wanting you to make your way
Decisions all your own
You'd need your hand held less and less
I'd know you'd finally grown

Through the years I thought I knew
And though I'd hate it so
I hoped each time I held you tight
It would help me to let go

Now all I have are memories
Of every hug and touch
You've gone to be with God, my son
And I miss you oh so much

Fate's reversed what I must do
And that's the saddest part
For now I have to let you go
To keep you in my heart

*Donna Gerrior
TCF Pasco County, FL
In Memory of Rob*

Waiting for the Wake-Up Call

I'm waiting for the wakeup call that surely must come someday in this journey through grief. When will it get better?!! I'm waiting for the day when the memories are softer, the step a little lighter and when the sounds in my heart aren't always those of sadness, I'm waiting for the music to return, for the light to shine, for the magic to come back. I'm waiting for the pain to stop, the hurt to leave and for everything to go back to its original place. I want the picture to look the same as before, and I'm waiting until it does.

But, while I'm waiting, I'm learning a lot, I know I have to make lists now in order to capture my chores and things I have to do. I gave up trying to remember and now just carry a notepad with me (with a pencil attached!) I have set the clocks 10 minutes fast so I have a better chance of being on time, and I have stocked the car with maps of every place I need to be.

I make menus and create shopping lists. I plan ahead, write down everything and then don't worry when I lose the list, get lost, or simply change my mind, I think most people thought I was always confused, so now I don't worry so much about not remembering. I'm liking advantage of being bereaved and am learning to work with the lack of concentration, the forgetfulness, the confusion. If it isn't written down, it doesn't exist and I've been much happier ever since!

If the weather and the seasons can't get it together, why should I try to coordinate an outfit? I'll just wear what's comfortable for the moment and worry less about what others think. Maybe they are as confused as I am. Maybe they're struggling too. Maybe we should all just stop, look and listen...trying to remember to hold hands when crossing the street and practice hugging instead of hitting.

Maybe spring reflects nature's inability to make up its mind or maybe that hesitation to change is more of Mother Nature's mourning the passing of her winter season. Maybe it's hot one day and cold the next to keep us on our toes, to keep the blood flowing, the legs moving. Maybe shoveling snow one day and planting seeds the next is what we are supposed to be doing...maybe spring is the season of change and we should let go of the whys? and work on the hows? Maybe pushing the plow is better than trying to pull it.

Maybe just relaxing into the craziness and letting the tides ebb and flow across the beach will work better than trying to direct the winds that change rides on. Perhaps letting the sun warm my winter-weary bones is a more productive activity than rearranging the closet, and maybe the good memories will come back if I let them.

Maybe spring is the reason for getting up...to simply see what is possible today. Maybe today is the day and if I'm in bed, I'll miss the beginning, and I'll still be lost.

Maybe I'm already in the middle of change and maybe I will always be confused, lost and slightly off balance, but maybe that's okay, and I'll just have to figure out how? instead of why? And when that happens, I know I won't be lost anymore! It really doesn't matter if it's Tuesday or Friday (unless one of those days is garbage day, and then it does matter!) Maybe I can let go of the time frames and calendar pages that dictate my life and my emotions and let life simply flow.

Perhaps you and I have already answered the wake up call. Don't let a poor yesterday or an uncertain tomorrow use up today. I think this is it, and now is the time for being all I can be. Half of me is still in winter and dyeing eggs. All of me is still perhaps a bit off balance, but I am alive and that's a start! This wasn't the life I expected to live, but it is the one I've got.

If I'm lost, I'd explore wherever it is I am. If I'm late, I'll just apologize and enjoy the time I have left. If I'm out of place, out of style or out of sync, I'll just keep dancing to the tune I hear and let the rest of the world figure out their own melody...

Darcie Sims
Bereavement Magazine Mar/Apr 1995

TCF National News

42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 19 - JULY 21, 2019

42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE



**RINGS OUT IN
PHILADELPHIA**

JULY 19-21, 2019

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 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019 at the Philadelphia 201 Hotel. "Hope Rings in Philadelphia" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great National Conference experience. 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 one 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 Rates

Adult – \$125.00

Senior (65+) – \$115.00

Active Military – \$75.00

Full-time College Students

(with ID) – \$60.00

Child – \$60.00

[REGISTER NOW](#)

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Philadelphia 201 Hotel

201 N. 17th St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

[MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

Or call 215.448.2963 ext. 6415 to reserve a room and use group code TH1326. Room rate is \$145 for guest room with Queen/King or 2

Our Chapter News

Candlelight Remembrance Service (save the date)

Please join us on Sunday, June 23rd 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. ***Many of the readings and poems will be new this year.*** 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 with your child's name, ***no later than Monday, June 17th.*** 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 or June 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.***



The Gifts You've Given Me

I left the need to know Why behind years ago.
Instead,
I practice finding peace with the inner turmoil,
accepting the unacceptable, living my truth.
You have given me the gift of uncertainty
and thus, taught me to live in the Now.

The fingers of your loss have quietly shaped me,
molding away the sharp edges,
my judgment of others,
my innocence.
You have given me the gift of Humility.

You were a child, my child.
Now you parent.
Invisibly, quietly, from behind the veil,
you show me the meaning of Life.
You have given me the gift of Awareness.

I am not the same.
In losing you,
I found my strength, my sorrow,
my compassion, my
Self.
You have given me the gift of Suffering.

These tears carry knowledge
that through suffering came
Understanding,
and through understanding came
Forgiveness,
and through forgiveness came
Love.

You fluttered in my womb like a butterfly,
and now you flutter in my soul,
eternally a part of me.
Eternally giving.

Sara Therese
TCF Tucson, AZ
In Memory of Shawn

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

For this month's book, I'd like to comment on an audio book I borrowed from the Cuyahoga County Library on my Libby app. It's Bold Spirit by Linda Lawrence Hunt. It's the telling of the story of Helga and her daughter's journey by foot from Spokane to New York in the 1890's in an attempt to win a ten-thousand-dollar prize to pay off the mortgage on her house and land and keep her family from being dispossessed. It is a tale of feminine determination and the struggle between two value systems, the Victorian view of womanhood versus the new, more progressive view. The audio book is a bit over six hours long. Since I had two potluck dinners to prepare for within a week, listening to a book gave me the opportunity to listen and cook at the same time.



How is all this grief related? Well, Helga loses several children in the course of the book, and part of the family's reaction to her pedestrian journey across America is related to the anger they felt over her leaving the family home to make that journey fairly soon after one child dies and later two more die while she is on the journey, so much so that one of the children actually later destroys Helga's detailed notes of the journey. Again, there was a clash of ideas about how grief, especially a mother's grief, should be expressed and handled.

The final chapter deals with the telling of family stories, or more specifically why some family stories are never told, and is worthwhile reading by itself. There were lots of other interesting bits, like when the pair visited the President elect McKinley and his wife Ida in their Canton, Ohio home. Having climbed the steps of the McKinley monument and having gone through the McKinley museum, those bits provided a local connection for me.

But, as I said about that final chapter, there is the connection between this book's analysis of family stories that never get told and a book that I brought back from a TCF national conference called The Un-speakable Loss by Nisha Zenoff, which deals with her own family stories about grief that never got told for various reasons. Let's just call them taboo topics. And to connect this all to our chapter meetings and our sharing sessions, which are supposed to be safe places to share our experiences rather than to give advice, you might hear stories or share stories that have rarely if ever seen the light of day.

I just got back from a family gathering of my own where some of us sat around and shared some family stories that I had either never heard before or had heard only scattered bits and pieces, like puzzle pieces. I'm sure for a while now, I will be trying to capture some of those stories by writing in my journal, trying to get a larger picture of things, not that I ever expect anyone to ever read any of my journals. But it is worthwhile just to write them down, regardless of whether they ever get read or burned.

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:

Bonnie Mickol, 2914 Dellwood Drive, Parma, OH 44134

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)

Bereavement is a darkness impenetrable to the imagination of the unbereaved. ~
Iris Mudoch

The Room

I began to think about my son's room and how parents often struggle with what to do with a child's room and belongings after a child dies. This decision may be more compounded if your child still lived at home, but living at home or not, most of us confront the decisions of how to handle our child's possessions. There are different thoughts on how to handle the physical items left behind; do we give them away, store them in a box, share them with friends or family or just leave them be. Whatever the choice...the answer lays in what brings you peace.

It has been 857 days since my son's death. While we've not kept his room exactly as it was, mostly it is unchanged. My sister made a quilt from some of his clothes and that now adorns his bed, we added a bed side table and removed a cabinet. A painting of his beloved river given to us by the mother of his friend hangs on the wall. But, his clothes are in the chest of drawers, his things still about the room, the proverbial "junk" drawer still sits un-pilfered by our hands. I know there is a chocolate Santa Clause in there and photos from a middle school field trip, a crazy pen from his grandma, notes from his girlfriend and an old phone. I'm not ready for any of that, not at 857 days.

I decided it was ok to leave it be, to allow his room to be there as before. Why should I change it, I see no need. Some days it's a comfort to go in there, some days I avoid like the plague with the fear of unrelenting tears. Some days I pull open the shade and let the light shine through, some days I leave it dark and cool. Simple acts bring startling memories of him and in my grieving the way they hit me changes from day to day. Today, the blinds are open and I can smile at his handsome face. Tomorrow, well, tomorrow will be what tomorrow will be.

The Room

I walk by your room many times a day; it's the place of all my lost dreams. The bed still sits as it was that fateful day. The dresser with a photo of you and her, the one you loved. Cologne bottles sitting there, three dollars placed under a rock, guitar picks, capo, one yellow 20 gauge shot gun shell and a sea shell. The guitars are on the wall, hanging as before...only longing to be held and strummed by you.

The shelf is there with all your things...ticket stubs from your last concert, your bible, photos of you racing your motorcycle, the books we read when you were small, Blueberries for Sal and Dr. Seuss. The harmonica, pocket-knives, the collectable die cast cars, a howling wolf atop a box that I set there not long before your accident and of which you heartily approved and a carved and brightly painted little wooden fish.

The things of a boy's life are sitting here; a boy growing into a man, yet not quite there. You were still attached to mom and dad yet yearning to be free. All was taken on that fateful day, all your freedom, all your dreams, it just went away.

I wonder sometimes what to do with this room I pass by every day. This place of your existence for so long, the place you held your deepest secrets and shared with friends your thoughts and dreams. The place where you and I would sit and talk, mother to son...if only for the allotted minute or two. The scratches on the floor, the once newly painted walls that boast the little fish you caught with grandpa when you were seven and the trophies you won when racing.

I wonder some days what to do with this room; this room that holds my memories of when you were here. I've no cause to move it or change it; there are no more children here. This room I'll keep for you, as a vessel of your being here and for all my hopes and dreams.

*Marian W. Lambeth
TCF Tallahassee, FL
In Memory of my son, Wyatt Lambeth*

Where Did My Sunshine Go

“In My Daughter’s Eyes” is our song
Our song, for you and me
For it tells how much of a love we have
And is there for all to see

It speaks of how I see you
And how I hope that you see me
And a love that only we two shared
A love for all of eternity

We danced to this song together
At your wedding you and I
And as happy as I should have been
I couldn’t help but cry

I was sad that you were all grown up
And that you would move away
But I never thought I would have lost you
On a dark September day

My sunshine was taken in September
It seems so long ago
A day I will always remember
A day that hurt me so

We did so much together
You were my true best friend
You listened, loved and comforted me
Until the very end

I am so lost without you Jessie
People truly have no clue
Each day that I am without you
My heart is a deeper blue

Someday my heart will stop beating
And you will be standing beside me with a
smile
And you will reach out your beautiful arms
And hold me for a while

Then, with your gentle hands
You will lead me to the light
Where Jesus will smile upon us
And we will never leave each other’s sight

Laurie Card

In Memory of my beloved daughter Jessie

Resilience

In her book, Resilience, Elizabeth Edwards contemplated her life and her impending death. She lost her oldest son, Wade when he was 16. She once said she was not so afraid of death since Wade’s death. I understand her words. I’m not so afraid of death either, some days I long for death, so I can see my Wyatt. Death is my passage to being with Wyatt again, I long to see him; to sit and talk with him; to watch him grow; to be his mom; to see his future. If death takes me to him then I am not afraid of death.

Resilience comes in how I am dealing with Wyatt's death. Resilience is knowing that I can get up each morning even though when I look in his room I know I will not see him. Resilience is smiling at other's happiness even when my heart is broken. Resilience is sharing company with friends when I wish to cover my head and hide in darkness. Resilience is taking the time to speak and be cordial when really I want to scream and show my anguish. Resilience is knowing my heart will never heal and still choosing to live.

One of the things Elizabeth Edwards said was we have to be resilient, we must make the best out of our situation, make the best of what this world gives us.

That is resilience. I will be resilient.

*Marian W. Lambeth
TCF Tallahassee, FL*

In Memory of my son, Wyatt Lambeth