



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

November, 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.



November Monthly Meeting

November 14th at 7:00pm: The discussion theme will be "Preparing for the holidays". 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.



November Birth Dates

3 - James Christopher Hartman	19 - Tiffany Lyn Clawson
5 - Dina Marie Parisi	19 - Bruce Albert Schmidt
8 - Thomas Patrick Harsany	19 - Amy (Cudney) Sobolewski
11 - Michael James Wohl	20 - Dorothy Thomas
12 - Anthony James Dawson	20 - Jason Tompkins
12 - Scott Winfield Hawke	26 - Christopher E. Andes
14 - Todd David Buchko	29 - Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold
15 - Brian David Moll	30 - Kadeem Von Hogan
17 - Gabrielle Nicole Walczak	30 - Mary Kay (Moore) Lehman
18 - Antonio Deshon Briones	

November Angelversary Dates

Christopher E. Andes (Age 25)	Andrew C. King (Age 21)
Arik Bocian (Age 5)	Lauren Venzel Kutchenriter (Age 27)
Todd David Buchko (Age 1 day)	Donald A. Litvin, Jr. (Age 13)
Benjamin David (Age 31 days)	Kerrienne Loas (Age 20)
David Thomas Erich (Age 29)	Steven Michael Luff (Age 19)
Tom Friebel (Age 17)	Tracy Ann Schuenemann (Age 27)
James Christopher Hartman (Age 31)	Justin Robert Swanger (Age 22)
Brian Tyler Jenkins (Age 12)	Ashley Nicole Szewczyk (Age 39)
Sean R. Kaminski (Age 26)	

Remembering Our Children



Our October 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

Cheryl Holmes, remembering her beloved son Ryan Kenneth Perkins (Age 45)

Al Naab, remembering his beloved daughter Rhiannon Naab (Age 28)

Carol Thomas, remembering her beloved children Billy Thomas (Age 58) and Dorothy Thomas (Age 59)

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).

~ Val and Ron Brugler ~ In loving memory of Tobias Garrett Brugler (Age 34)

~ Diane and Ollie Higgins ~ In loving memory of Anthony Lee Higgins (Age 28) and Robert C. Higgins (Age 54)

~ Sharon Daschner ~ In loving memory of Stephen Josef Daschner (Age 23)

~ Karen Protiva ~ In loving memory of John Albert Protiva (Age 27)

~ Alex and Lori Rychlik ~ In loving memory of Nathan Edward Rychlik (Age 28)

~ Sharon and Douglas Wohl ~ In loving memory of Michael James Wohl (Age 28)

We quickly find there are no words to describe the experience of losing a child. For those who have not lost a child, no explanation will do. For those who have, no explanation is necessary. ~ Mary Lingle

Newsletter Dedications



Stephen Josef Daschner (Age 23)

**Forever in our hearts.
Gone but not forgotten.
We miss you, we love you Stephen.**

Love Mom, Dad and Eric



John Albert Protiva (Age 27)

**To the world you might be one person,
but to one person you might be the world.**

Love, Mom

Newsletter Dedications



Nathan Edward Rychlik (Age 28)

Nathan, we can't believe it's been over a year you've been gone. Most days we still can't even believe you're really gone. We so much miss your smile, your laugh, your great sense of humor, but mostly we just miss you.

We love you so very much son,

Mom and Dad.



Michael James Wohl (Age 28)

To Michael,

Yesterday is gone - so are the plans, hopes and dreams that went with it.

Today is a test - to survive without bitterness, self-pity or despair.

Tomorrow is open, not empty, hopeful not hopeless.

I trust that the beautiful, loving memories that were made yesterday will comfort me until tomorrow opens up to eternity and we will walk together again.

Love,

Mom, Dad and the Puppy

TCF National News

THE 22ND TCF WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

The 22nd Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held this year on Sunday, December 9, 2018. This is a very special and moving event, when bereaved families join together from around the world in memory of all children gone too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.



Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 22nd annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

THANKSGIVING

You may ask, “What do I have to be thankful for now that my child is dead?” After the death of a child, where is the joy in a day off from work? What pleasure can we derive from sitting around a table when someone is missing, and an uttered prayer of thanksgiving echoes hollow in our hearts?

Maybe we have been concentrating on the loss which has brought the overwhelming sorrow of death, and have forgotten the complete joy of life. When I remember laughing brown eyes, a mischievous grin, a scraped knee that Mommy could fix, a new word learned, even the memory of the realization that I had a baby boy, I have a great deal to be thankful for. I had 1 1/2 years of a dream come true, and I’m truly thankful I had my child.

Sure, the agony of grief, the anguish of losing my precious child to death, the torture of wanting to see that child grow and mature and the pain of never knowing, rips me up.

There is no Thanksgiving in entertaining these thoughts, so this month I am going to concentrate on the Living of my child, the Life that brought me so much joy. In this I am thankful that Evan was born, thankful that he lived, thankful that even for those short 30 months—I lived them too. Even so, as he lived once, I live now and want a productive life.

I am thankful I have come that far in my grief work to know I want to live and remember the good times without sorrow. And, I am thankful for my husband, who stood by me during the rough times. The husband who is the father of the child of our love. In him I have found my child, in our marriage I have found love, and that love taught us how to love that child. I am also thankful for you, my real friends—Compassionate Friends.

*Edie Kaplan
TCF Ft. Lauderdale, FL
In memory of my son, Evan*

Our Chapter News



Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration

Our annual celebration will be held December 9th at the Old Town Hall, 18825 Royalton Road, Strongsville. We will have a potluck dinner beginning promptly at 6:30pm with the welcome and music/readings. At 7pm, we will each light a candle in memory of all children before sharing dinner together.

Our chapter will provide ham, rolls & butter and beverages. Each family please arrive between 6:00-6:20pm and provide a side dish, salad or dessert (including serving spoon) to serve 10-12 people. After dinner, we will extinguish our candles and have a final reading/music.

There will be a table to display your child's picture which should be no larger than 8x10. Again this year a slideshow of our children will be shown during the meal. If your child's picture *has not* been included in a previous slideshow, please bring a picture to the November meeting or email one to Don Litvin at lit@roadrunner.com *no later than Friday, November 30th.*

VERY IMPORTANT: You MUST RSVP to Pauline Dey (440-526-2087 or rpdey1@cox.net) by Monday, December 3rd. The City of Strongsville enforces a very strict maximum occupancy of 65 for this facility. We will be unable to accommodate more than 65 persons. (The last three years our attendance was 63-65.)



Directions to Old Town Hall: The building is located on the south side of Royalton Road (Rt. 82) just east of Pearl Road. It is directly across from the Town Square, in the center of Strongsville.. Parking is on both the east and west sides of the building. Please use the east building entrance. Our Candle Lighting Celebration and potluck dinner will be held on the first floor. The building is fully accessible ... there are no stairs.

This Thanksgiving

This Thanksgiving and always,
 Through the grief,
 Through the tears,
 Through the loneliness,
 Through the fears,
 WE ARE THANKFUL
 WE HAD OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

*Khaki Chambers
 TCF, Pensacola, FL*

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

One book that I felt helpful very early on in my grief journey is Healing After Loss - Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief, by Martha Whitmore Hickman, a Perennial book, of Harper Collins. It was a gift during the first six months after Robert died and still sits on my coffee table

My attention span and tolerance for text was rather limited back then, but the book had a short page for each day of the year, and a short quotation for that day with a paragraph or two of elaboration, and then some brief questions for thoughtful meditation.

Some days, it was all I could do just to get through the quotation. But that time for reading in the book each day became an island of relative peace or calm that I would look forward to. And the thought that I would make it through an entire year with the little book was comforting. I still occasionally look through the book. The meditation section for October 1 reads, "I will set forth on this journey in hope and trust. What more have I to lose? And how much to gain!"

The page for October 14 is all about books and worth quoting at length:

To read the works of others who have gone through grief is another way of keeping the process going, and of finding another understanding friend. When a writer describes for me how I am feeling, she or he becomes my friend; I am not alone. Somehow that person has achieved some peace with the pain, enough to write it down. Maybe I, too, will find my way through this. —MARTHA WHITMORE HICKMAN

“In the crisis of losing a loved one, as in most other crises in life, we can be helped most by those who have been through the same thing. In addition to friends who may have had experiences like ours, and to community support groups for grievers, don’t overlook libraries and bookstores! There are books tailored to particular types of loss—of a parent, a spouse, a child. Some tell personal stories; some are more from the point of view of a counselor, offering clinical analysis and help. Some are from a particular religious or philosophical point of view. In a bookstore or library we can browse until we find something that speaks to us. Variety isn’t what matters here. It’s like good friends—one or two may be all we need.

The discovery of the right book can bring hope and wisdom, be a companion in the dark watches of the night.”

First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful
fills my heart with dread.
They’ll all be feigning gladness,
not a word about her said.

These heavy shrouds of blackness
enveloping my soul,
pervasive, throat-catching,
writhe in me, and coil.

I must, I must acknowledge,
just express her name,
so all sitting at the table,
know I’m thankful that she came.

Though she’s gone from us forever
and we mourn to see her face,
not one minute of her living,
would her death ever replace.

So I stop the cheerful gathering,
though my voice quivers, quakes,
make a toast to all her living.
That small tribute’s all it takes.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest – After the Death of a Child*

A New Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving morning 1991, I was standing at the sink, peeling potatoes. The turkey was in the oven, the pies were cooling on the sideboard. Just another normal holiday morning. At 10:30 the phone rang. I was closest, so I answered it.

That call from the San Diego medical examiner changed my life forever.

Within seconds our whole household was in chaos and shock our beautiful daughter Nancy had been killed in a car accident earlier that morning.

How could this be? I had just talked with her less than 24 hours before. She had wished us a "happy Turkey Day" and closed her call with "I love you, Mom." That was to be the last time I would hear her voice.

How did I get from that day of wrenching pain to this day nine years later? The simple answer is: a minute, an hour, a day at a time....putting one foot in front of the other, reaching out for people who had been where I was.

The first Thanksgiving after Nancy's death was the most difficult. I couldn't bring myself to cook or even look at a turkey. The decorated paper plates and napkins in the store were sickening to me. My solution to the turkey was to serve prime rib instead. That strategy got me through the next two Thanksgivings.

One of my watershed moments came on the fourth Thanksgiving after Nancy's accident. My surviving children wanted the traditional turkey-and-trimmings dinner. They missed the old ways. The truth is, they had moved forward and they wanted me to take that step also.

Reluctantly, I obliged, but with a heavy heart. With red roses nearby and her candle lit, we gathered together and counted our blessings.

Today with love and support of family and friends, I will once again prepare the Thanksgiving dinner. It will always be "different." I can't change what was. I can, however, choose to embrace the life I have now. There is so much more to be grateful for. Not a day goes by that I don't count my blessings. Among the greatest of these is the love of family and friends, and peace in my heart.

I truly believe that those blessings can be yours, too. Time, tears, love of family, good friends, and reinvestment can lead you there.

*Mary Conway
TCF, Nashville, TN
In Memory of my daughter, Nancy*

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

Thanksgiving Prayer

I'm thankful this Thanksgiving
That my grief is not so new.
Last year it was so painful
To think of losing you.

Death can't claim my love for you
Tho we are far apart,
Sweet memories will always be
Engraved upon my heart.

Time can never bring you back.
But it can help me be
Thankful for the years of joy
You brought our family.

To all the parents with grief so new
I share your loss and sorrow.
I pray you find with faith and time
The blessings of each tomorrow.

*Charlotte Irick
TCF, Idaho Falls, ID*

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)

Thanksgiving

November: Cool days, chilly nights, autumn leaves changing colors, football games, apple cider and pumpkin pie. Ah. November! . . . Is it November already? Oh, no! Make it go away! Just let me sleep; wake me up in January. November is here, the start of the holiday season.

This is the time of year most bereaved parents dread. This is the time of year when thoughts turn to spending time with family and friends and celebrating. Holiday decorations start popping up everywhere you turn and holiday music begins to play at the malls and on the radio. People are busy cleaning their home, and are all abuzz with getting ready for. . . Oh, no! Thanksgiving!

Everyone is asking what are you doing for Thanksgiving?" For the bereaved parent, especially the newly bereaved, this question can become daunting and almost horrifying. What am I doing for Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving - giving thanks. But I don't feel very thankful.

How can I be thankful, when my child lives no more?

How can I be thankful, when he/she will never again walk through my front door?

How can I be thankful, when my eyes are filled with tears?

How can I be thankful, when he/she won't be here throughout the years?

How can I be thankful, when my heart will never mend?

How can I be thankful, when I've lost my dearest friend?

How can I be thankful, when his/her hugs and kisses have now ceased?

How can I be thankful, and sit down to a feast?

How can I be thankful, when my heart is filled with sorrow?

How can I be thankful, when I can hardly make it to tomorrow?

What do you answer? What will you do this year? For some, the choice is to keep the same tradition they have in the past. Others choose to remain home and ignore the holiday completely.

There are parents who go on vacation or go out to Thanksgiving dinner at a restaurant. Newly bereaved parents may question "what am I supposed to do?" There is no standard right or wrong answer. Whatever feels the most comforting is the right answer for you. Family members or friends might disagree with your decision and say you are wrong. This often happens if you decide to break tradition, want to be alone, or decide not to celebrate at all. People can become very insistent, and tell you that Thanksgiving is about being with others. I have found that my choice has varied over the years from choosing to be alone and not acknowledge the holiday at all; to going to friends' and family members' homes; to just having dinner at home and when asked, I say, "I know that you may not like my answer, but still. I need to do what is best for me."

However you decide to spend this Thanksgiving, please remember that for however short or long your precious, awesome, amazing, wonderful child was with you here on earth, you are blessed to be their parent. You have been given a most spectacular gift—a one of a kind, unique, extraordinary child to carry in your heart, thoughts, and soul for all eternity. And this is a reason to be forever thankful.

From my home and heart to yours may you have a blessed Thanksgiving and may it be filled with peace.

*Bev Rosen Katowitz
TCF, Charlotte, NC*