



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, 2019

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WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

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 13th 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	22 - Dustin M. Zarobell
14 - Todd David Buchko	26 - Christopher E. Andes
15 - Brian David Moll	29 - Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold
18 - Antonio Deshon Briones	30 - Kadeem Von Hogan

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



First Meeting

Our October meeting was the first for this bereaved mother and brother. 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.

Patricia Harris, remembering her beloved son Christopher William Harris (Age 32)

Mario Ragone, remembering his beloved brother Frank A. Ragone (Age 41)

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).

~ Don and Joanne Litvin ~ In loving memory of Donald A. Litvin, Jr. (Age 13)

~ Loretta Mulvey ~ In loving memory of Aaron Mulvey (Age 31) and Ryan Mulvey (Age 33)

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

~ Rita and Dave Schuenemann ~ In loving memory of Tracy Ann Schuenemann (Age 27)

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

*Life's unfairness is not irrevocable;
we can help balance the scales for others, if not always for ourselves.*

~ Hubert H. Humphrey

Newsletter Dedications



Donald A. Litvin, Jr. (Age 13)

Love and miss you today and everyday,

Mom and Dad



**Aaron Mulvey (Age 31)
and Ryan Mulvey (Age 33)**

Though not long enough, I am grateful to have had you. “Gratitude” is one of the nicest feelings a heart can have. It’s a feeling that comes along for a very special reason, and it’s a lovely thought that never goes away once it enters your heart. It joins together with special memories.

*With all my love,
Mom*

Newsletter Dedications



John Albert Protiva (Age 27)

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

Love, Mom



Michael James Wohl (Age 28)

To our son Michael on his 37th Birthday

**The sun kept shining all through the day.
It didn't have a clue you had gone away.**

**Small mementos I still find
Showing your loving and caring mind.**

**Memories of yesterday peacefully dance through my head.
Oh no dear Michael — are you really dead?**

**As the approaching winter chills my heart
Warm memories of you will never let us be apart.**

*You live forever in us, our precious son.
With all our love,
Mom and Dad*

TCF National News



THE 23RD TCF WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 pm 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 23rd 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. TCF's WCL 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.

The Compassionate Friends and allied organizations are joined by local bereavement groups, churches, funeral homes, hospitals, hospices, children's gardens, schools, cemeteries, and community centers. Services have ranged in size from just a few people to nearly a thousand.

Every year you are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website. The Remembrance Book will be open to post a message Sunday, December 1st, through Monday, December 9th. Photos can be posted on our Worldwide Candle Lighting Facebook page.

Our Chapter News



Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration

Our annual celebration will be held December 8th 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 Thursday, November 28th.*

VERY IMPORTANT: You MUST RSVP to Pauline Dey (440-526-2087 or rpdey1@cox.net) by Monday, December 2nd. 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 four 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.

*A friend is one who knows you as you are . . .
Understands where you've been . . .
Accepts who you've become
And still gently invites you to grow.*

~ author unknown

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

I'm recovering from my recent move across the street, so my reading time has been rather limited lately. But my listening time has been open enough, and since I did a presentation on music and grief at our last chapter meeting, I thought I might add to that by listing some of the cd's I have filed under grief. You know, there are lots of things in libraries besides books, so I figure I can get away with this departure from my usual book suggestions.

Besides those songs and music that were particularly meaningful to my son Robert and me, my pile of grief music consists mainly of cd's that I picked up at TCF national conferences as well as cd's of music for relaxation and meditation. The first group deals specifically with grief, while the second group is really self-care (sort of like good nutrition and exercise). So here is a partial list of the cd's in my grief basket:



First Group

Liv On - Amy Sky, Olivia Newton John, and Beth Nielsen-Chapman

Sand and Water - Beth Nielsen-Chapman

March - Chris Donohoe

Forever Love - Jeralyn Glass

Looking Up - Michael Nunley

A Little Farther Down the Road - Alan Pedersen

Second Group

Solace - Peter Davison

A number of cd's from Windham Hill, including the Winter Solstice series, and Sanctuary: 20 Years of Windham Hill

50 Essential Piano Pieces by Erik Satie - Roland Pontinen

Assorted cd's of nature sounds, birds, waterfalls, Tibetan temple bells, that sort of thing

I should note that the Erik Satie music and Windham Hill stuff has long been my music to chill and just relax since the 1980's. In fact, some of the Windham Hill stuff was on cassette tapes that I used to play on my old Sony Walkman while I graded papers at 2 in the morning. I have a bunch of stuff in mp3 format stored on my phone, so I can play that stuff anywhere. I like to play it through my little Bose bluetooth speaker, but I can just listen to it on my phone - or without earphones. I have really trained myself to relax to that stuff.

The process of moving is a personal grief trigger, reminding me of closing down Robert's apartment in Indiana and carting what we could manage back to Ohio back in 2006. But I used the Erik Satie music the last eight weeks to relax a bit during the packing, move, and unpacking. You probably have your favorite music to relax and unwind. Set aside some time for yourself to just sit and listen.

GRIEF IS LIKE A RIVER

My grief is like a river –
 I have to let it flow,
 But I myself determine
 Just where the banks will go.
 Some days the current takes me
 In waves of guilt and pain,
 But there are always quiet pools
 Where I can rest again.
 I crash on rocks of anger –
 My faith seems faint indeed –
 But there are other swimmers
 Who know that what I need
 Are loving hands to hold me
 When the waters are too swift,
 And someone kind to listen
 When I just seem to drift.
 Grief's river is like a process
 Of relinquishing the past.
 By swimming in Hope's channel,
 I'll reach the shore at last.

*Cynthia G. Kelley
 TCF Cincinnati, OH*

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:

jb13665@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.

Tissues, Tears & Treasures

A circle of chairs and boxes of tissues,
A roomful of tears and emotional issues.
Frightening at first, I did not want to enter
Into this strange group, and be in the center.

What I soon learned, as we sat side by side,
We were bound by the love of our children who died.
Each shattered heart,
desperately seeking a moment of peace,
from the pain and weeping.

So many things different, and yet all the same,
Hearts lost in a fog of loss and pain.
Those who have journeyed, much further than me,
Reached out in comfort, listened quietly.
Each shattered heart spoke, and the tissues were passed,
We never avoid speaking of the past.

This circle of friends, have found a bond,
And here I'm still known
As "Tony's Mom."
Slowly, I've found
I can reach out to others
Who are newly bereaved, fathers and mothers.
Strength I have found in this
Circle of chairs,
To grieve and to heal
And to show that we care.

*Diane Barta
TCF Portland, OR
In Memory of my son, Tony*

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:

Cheryl Ondrejch, 14365 Old Pleasant Valley Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130