



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

October, 2017

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

jb13665@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.

October Monthly Meeting

October 12th at 7:00pm: The discussion theme will be a general discussion, with no specific topic. As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Judy and Bill Luff 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.



October Birth Dates

2 - Heather Lynn Hist (Carr)	21 - Matthew Josef-Arthur
5 - Brian D. Oldenburgh	23 - Sarah Elizabeth Ciprian
7 - Thomas (Tommy) Joseph Kess, Jr.	27 - Rebecca Anne Dugas
8 - Brandon Gregory Smith	27 - Courtney Julianne Nichols
13 - Michael B. George	28 - Christopher John Erdovegi
17 - Peter Anthony DiRienzo	30 - Susan Kay (Pangrac) Sizler
20 - Benjamin David	31 - Scott Mickol
20 - Dina Michelle Dlugoz	

October Angelversary Dates

David Bilick (Age 21)	Carl David Mancini (Age 48)
Jacques Christiaan Bosman (Age 28)	Ryan Mulvey (Age 33)
Robby Brandt (Age 19)	Jacob Benjamin Pritchard (Age 20)
Christopher John Erdovegi (Age 19)	Douglas Charles Roth (Age 2)
Jack Gorden Gray, Jr. (Age 30)	Russell Ruprecht (Age 46)
Owen Martin Hoeptner (Age 19)	Bruce Albert Schmidt (Age 19)
Brittany Holtzman (Age 22)	Brandon Gregory Smith (Age 29)
Lisa Kearney (Age 22)	Douglas A. Specht (Age 23)
Zachary Gerard Lanum (Age 7 months)	Shane Michael Wiech (Age 15)

Remembering Our Children



First Meeting

The August 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.

Patricia and Michael Harsany, remembering their beloved son Thomas Patrick Harsany (Age 25)

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).

~ Fran and John Erdovegi ~ In loving memory of Christopher John Erdovegi (Age 19)

~ Joan Mass ~ In loving memory of Russell Ruprecht (Age 46)

~ Donna Penavic ~ In loving memory of Ivan Marko Penavic (Age 18)

An important way to cope with grief is having an outlet, be it interpersonal, be it artistic, that will allow you to not have to contain your grief, but will give you an opportunity to express it, to externalize it to some degree.

~ R. Benyamin Cirlin, Grief counselor

Newsletter Dedications



Christopher John Erdovegi (Age 19)

Forever in Our Hearts

*Love Always,
Mom and Dad*



Russell Ruprecht (Age 46)

**Not a day passes, I don't think of you.
Thank God for the memories and that I
can still remember them. Even though
you are gone from here your love lingers
on. We miss you more today, if possible,
than yesterday.**

Love Forever, Mom and Renee

Another Death Anniversary

It has been three years since my son died. On the anniversary of his death, I went through the morning saying very little. In the afternoon I left work and went for a drive. I drove past the park we used to love for those special talks and special events. I drove past the high school he attended. I drove around the neighborhood thinking of him peddling his heavy-duty bike as he delivered his papers seven days a week. I remembered the good times and some of the “teaching moments”. I drove past the first house that he bought and remembered how proud he was of his purchase and all the work he did making that house a home for his child and wife.

As I drove, I felt the deep burning in my eyes of tears so long repressed. Has it really been three years since he left us? I remembered the day he died, the days that followed his death and months of withdrawal after his memorial service. I remembered all the firsts....the first Christmas, the first Easter, the first Mother’s Day, the first birthday, the first Thanksgiving and the first anniversary of his death. I remembered the agony, the heartache, the gut churning shock of losing my child to death. How did I survive this? I wondered why I am still here.

How can any mother whose only child has died begin to get a grip on sanity? Have I gotten a grip on sanity? How could I accept losing my son’s daughters to the long-term, seething hatred of my husband and me by my former daughter-in-law? How did I endure the protracted pain of the wrongful death suit she filed against my husband and me in the accidental death of my child? What did I say in all those depositions? Who were those lawyers? Were they thinking of my child or just the money they would receive? How can I help my child’s son as he

moves forward into adulthood? How do I take the endless days of longing for my child’s voice, his hug, his special “I love you, mom”? How can I stand hearing other parents talk about taking flowers to their children’s grave or putting candles next to their child’s urn, when I don’t even know what my former daughter-in-law did with my son’s cremated remains?

The answer is not simple, yet it is not complex, either. The answer is in honoring my child in a way that exemplifies his life – gently, persistently and without reservation. The twisting road to this discovery has been made much smoother with the help of my Compassionate Friends group. I listen. They talk. They listen. I talk. The dialogue has grown to be part of who I am now. The conversations help me to chart my way on this stormy sea that is now my life.

Without these gentle, understanding parents, I probably would have lost my mind. But they are there for me, month after month. They are there daily if I need them. They help me, and I help them. Each of us does our best in the hope of giving and gaining peace and solace.

I finished the anniversary day by purchasing a small wind chime. I took it to the little bench and marker that are surrounded by a small garden which our Compassionate Friends group maintains in memory of our beautiful children. When I hung it on the branch of a bush, I listened as the chimes sang their beautiful song.....a song for my child. Briefly I thought that someone might take it. But then I thought, I don’t care. This is for today. This is my way of reaching out to my son today.....on the third anniversary of his death. If it’s gone next week, I will be sorry, but it won’t matter. I have honored my son on this sad day. The gentle song of these chimes will float upwards and reach him today. That is what matters. It is in this little garden that I visit my son today. This is where a little bit of peace touches my soul. Once again, I thank my Compassionate Friends for providing an answer.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX*

TCF National News



THE 21ST TCF WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

The 21st Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held this year on Sunday, December 10, 2017. 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 21st 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.

Introducing TCF's New Executive Director



The Compassionate Friends/USA, the foremost parental grief organization in the world, providing grief support services to more than one million bereaved parents, grandparents, siblings, grief professionals, social service networks, religious organizations, hospitals, first responders and academic institutions, has appointed Debbie Rambis their new Executive Director, succeeding Alan Pedersen.

A Project Manager and Communications Director for the Internal Revenue Service since 1985, Ms. Rambis joined The Compassionate Friends in 2011 after the drowning death of her son Tony Rambis.

After chartering a new chapter in Savannah, Georgia, Ms. Rambis soon became a Chapter Leader, a Regional Coordinator, a Development Director, a Chapter Leadership trainer, and a member of the National Board of Directors in 2016. (Ms. Rambis will take the reins at TCF on September 25, 2017)

Our Chapter News



Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration

Our annual celebration will be held December 10th 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 October or November meeting or email one to Don Litvin at lit@roadrunner.com **no later than December 1st.**

Please RSVP to Pauline Dey (440-526-2087 or rpdey1@cox.net) by Monday, December 4th.

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.



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

A Very Special Celebration



The Lake County TCF chapter has created a beautiful Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden in Willowick, which is very meaningful to chapter members and also to the community.

Several members of our chapter attended the 10th Annual Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden Dedication celebration on September 17th. The celebration included the dedication of new butterflies added to the garden during the past year and entertainment, with desserts and coffee afterwards. It was a beautiful celebration, and we thank the Lake County chapter for inviting our chapter to attend.

The Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden is located at Manry Park, 30100 Arnold Drive, Willowick.

Here is a link to the Facebook page for the Children's Memorial Butterfly Garden:

[Lake County Butterfly Garden](#)

Catching Butterflies

It often hurt to come upon reminders of my son
Tho' often since I lost him I would search around for one
Which always brought on sadness and the tears that I would shed
Were caused by names or faces, all things that I would dread.

But then one day I came upon a man who'd lost his son
I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't even shun.
But rather he would treasure and I said I wondered why
He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies."

This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more
And learned that he took all of them and carefully would store
All of the reminders that I chose to push away
He would tuck deep down inside his heart each and every day.

Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard
Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard
For now instead I see these times as opportunities
To see my son awakened in these new fresh memories.

*Dottie Williams
TCF Pittsburgh PA*

Dancing in the Flame

Though I am tired and weary,
My eyes continue to weep,
And my heart denies me the comfort,
That I find only in my sleep.

So I sit alone in the darkness,
Before the firelight,
And stare into the flames,
On this dark and moonless night.

As the flames leap and dance,
I am surrounded by an eerie sight,
That evokes haunting memories,
Brought to life by the fire's light.

My thoughts take me back,
To a time when you were here,
To times when laughter filled my heart,
Times lost forever, I fear.

In the flames, I see your face,
Your sweet and loving smile.
And I know that we will meet again,
But I must wait a while.

These quiet moments of reverie,
Bring comfort to my aching heart,
And tell me that you and I,
Are never far a part.

Now my heart begins to lighten,
As sleep arrives to claim,
The pain I felt just moments ago,
Before I saw you dancing in the flame.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
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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)