

Thank You!

The September newsletter included an urgent request for love gifts to help fund our chapter activities. The chapter bank account was at a critically low balance. In response, love gifts have been received from the following Compassionate Friends.

~ Elaine and Lou Chorich ~ In loving memory of Susan Elaine Chorich (Age 19)

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

~ Mary and Terry Hickernell ~ In loving memory of Matthew Hickernell (Age 25)

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

~ Karen and Jim Kipfstuhl ~ In loving memory of Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)

~ Diane and Fred Klohs ~ In loving memory of Alan F. Klohs (Age 21)

~ Judy and Bill Luff ~ In loving memory of Steven Michael Luff (Age 19)

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

~ George and Bonnie Mickol ~ In loving memory of Scott Mickol (Age 16)

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

~ John and Cindy Napolz ~ In loving memory of Kevin John Napolz (Age 28)

~ Ron Obloy ~ In loving memory of Eric Justin Obloy (Age 26)

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

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

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

~ Sue Scardino ~ In loving memory of Charles "Sport" Haske (Age 22)

~ Jerry and Angela Suhar ~ In loving memory of Frank Michael Suhar (Age 38)

~ Fred and Mary Tschanz ~ In loving memory of Frederick M. Tschanz (Age 24)

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

A heartfelt thank you to each of these Compassionate Friends for their donation in memory of their loved one(s).

If you would like to add to the response, please make your love gift payable to The Compassionate Friends and mail it to our treasurer:

**George Mickol
2914 Dellwood Drive
Parma, OH 44134**



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, 2018

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.



October Monthly Meeting

October 10th at 7:00pm: The discussion theme will be "What songs remind you of your child?". As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Clayton Samels 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) | 20 - Dina Michelle Dlugoz |
| 5 - Brian D. Oldenburgh | 21 - Matthew Josef-Arthur |
| 7 - Thomas (Tommy) Joseph Kess, Jr. | 23 - Sarah Elizabeth Ciprian |
| 7 - Lisa Monty | 27 - Rebecca Anne Dugas |
| 8 - Sean R. Kaminski | 27 - Courtney Julianne Nichols |
| 8 - Brandon Gregory Smith | 28 - Christopher John Erdovegi |
| 13 - Michael B. George | 30 - Susan Kay (Pangrac) Sizler |
| 17 - Peter Anthony DiRienzo | 31 - Scott Mickol |
| 20 - Benjamin David | |

October Angelversary Dates

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

Remembering Our Children



Our September meeting was the first for these bereaved mothers. 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

Darthena Culpepper, remembering her beloved son Jeffrey Harris, Jr. (Age 20)

Sue Fletcher, remembering her beloved daughter Shelley Fletcher (Age 34)

Megan Webster, remembering her beloved son Andrew Joseph Picone (Age 16 months)

All I Need to Know

I'm beginning to know your children
From the things I've heard you tell,
From the pictures that you've brought here
I think I know them well
Our hurt and sorrow are immense
I'm not sure where to start.
Compassion after all is
Your pain in my heart.
My thanks to you for listening
To words wrung from my soul.
We are The Compassionate Friends
That's all I need to know.

*Jack Brown
TCF Louisville*

*There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept,
things we don't want to know but have to learn,
and people we can't live without but have to let go. ~ author unknown*

Newsletter Dedications



Christopher John Erdovegi (Age 19)

Forever in Our Hearts

*Love Always,
Mom and Dad*



Russell Ruprecht (Age 46)

**Too many years gone by.
Remembered — never forgotten.
We love and miss you always.**

Mom, Renee' and Family

Newsletter Dedications



Scott Mickol (Age 16)

You are forever in our hearts

*Love,
Mom and Dad
Tracy and Jeff*



**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*

The Tree in Our Backyard

My daughter Lesa was a free spirited child who always had something to say, who enjoyed school and loved life. One day, as part of a school project, she planted a tree in our back yard and announced that she had named the tree Angella. Lesa watered the tree daily, fertilized it, talked to it, and finally placed stakes in the ground to give it more support to help the tree grow straight. Lesa watched over this tree she named Angella with determination and a certain amount of pride that she was able to nurture a spindly, leafless tree into a blossoming life-giving part of nature.

One day our daughter Leslie was mowing the lawn and accidentally hit the tree. Lesa witnessed this event from an upstairs window and immediately flew down the steps to confront her sister. A confrontation followed between the two girls, with Lesa demanding an apology. Leslie told me later that she did, in fact, go over to Lesa's tree, pat it on the trunk and apologize. Laughing, she told me it was not only the first time she had spoken to a tree but also the first time she had apologized to one.

Angella the tree continued to flourish and grow, watched over and nurtured by my daughter. Lesa, however, became ill with cancer. As her cancer worsened, she was unable to watch over Angella. Before our last trip to the hospital, Lesa visited the tree and discovered bumps on the leaves. We delayed our trip to spray the tree to reassure Lesa that her tree would be safe while she was in the hospital.

Lesa died on a hot summer day in August, two days before her eighth birthday. We moved away from that house, hoping to find some peace in a new environment and we transplanted Lesa's tree Angella to the back yard of our new home. We watched it closely, wondering if the tree would survive the transplant. Our special friends who knew the story of Lesa's tree shared its progress with us.

Several years later we sold our home, but this time Lesa's tree was too big to transplant. I wrote the story of Lesa's tree and how she named it Angella and how Lesa had died of cancer and I left it on the kitchen counter for the new owners, hoping they would take care of the tree.

Several months passed while I considered contacting the owners, and then one day I met the daughter of the family that now lives in our old home. She stopped to tell me that the story of Lesa's tree had been passed on to them and that they would guard Lesa's legacy for us. She described how her family had been touched by this story and they were planning to pass on the story should they move in the future.

So, the legacy of a child's love of nature and determination to take care of a special tree goes on. My daughter did not survive her cancer but the story of Angella the tree has touched the lives of every family that has lived in our house.

*Pat Langford
TCF North Platte, NE
In Memory of my daughter, Lesa*

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

Hi fellow readers, I'm Clayton, your friendly chapter librarian, the guy that lugs that big tub of books out for display before each meeting. I've posted a full-page description of how our library works as well as the contents of the library on our closed Facebook group page. If you don't see what you want to read in our library, use an app like Libby to borrow online from the county library or just order from Amazon or your favorite bookstore.

This Month's Book Recommendations – (I hope to do this each month. Help me out, readers!)

Standing on One Foot – A Journey from Deep Grief to Re-Engaging Life, by Neal Raisman," is a memoir that takes the reader fully into the loss of a child and how it devastates a parent before he or she might find balance in life again. It brings the reader along with me as I experience my son's death, the agony of that tragedy, the rage I felt and then how I worked my way back into living a full life again. As it does so, it explores questions of physiology, psychology and spirituality that arise during the bereavement and healing process." I attended a conference workshop by Neal a couple years ago and got his book primarily because, like me, he lost a son, and like me, he was in academia. I found the book so engaging that I had it read completely on my trip back home

What is your personal recommended read? Let me know so we can share with the chapter. And consider donating the book to our library after you've read it.

Save the Date

Our chapter's annual Worldwide Candle Lighting celebration will be held **Sunday, December 9th** at the Old Town Hall in Strongsville. 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.

Our chapter's celebration will include a potluck dinner, music and readings, and a slideshow remembering our children.

Please plan to join us for this very special evening. More information will appear in the November and December newsletters.

January, 1994

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I wrote this letter for my co-workers and posted it in the office where everyone would see it because I found that although everybody had been extremely kind and generous during Laurie's last brief illness, some of them didn't seem to know how to deal with me or what to say after she died. The idea for the letter and some of its contents are from a book on grief work by Bob Deits. (Editor's note: the book referred to is *Life After Loss: A Personal Guide Dealing With Death, Divorce, Job Change and Relocation*. It is in our chapter library.)

Marcia Davis, TCF
Contra Costa County, California

Dear friends and co-workers:

I want to thank all of you for your kindness and support during the last few months. I have experienced a loss that is devastating to me. It will take time, perhaps years, for me to work through the grief I am having because of the loss of my daughter, Laurie. Although Laurie was our oldest child, she was the child of my third pregnancy, so she was very much wanted by the time I gave birth to her. She was also the child who was most like me, both in appearance and personality. Perhaps because of this, I actually feel I have lost a part of myself. I would gladly have given my life in exchange for hers, had I had that option.

I will cry more than usual for some time. My tears are not a sign of weakness or a lack of hope or faith. They are symbols of the depth of my loss and, I am told, a sign that I am recovering. I find that I become angry without there seeming to be a reason for it. My emotions are all heightened by the stress of grief. Please be forgiving if I seem irrational or unfriendly at times.

I need your understanding and your friendship more than anything else. If you don't know what to say, just touch me or give me a hug to let me know you care. Do not be afraid to mention Laurie's name – she is gone from this life but she will never be gone from my memory or my heart. And please don't hesitate to call me – it is reassuring to hear from supportive friends.

If you, by chance, have had an experience of loss that seems anything like mine, please share it with me. You will not make me feel worse. And if I get emotional or tear up – you are not making me cry – I am crying inside all the time anyway!

This loss is the worst thing that could happen to me. But, I will get through it somehow and I will live again. I will not always feel as I do now – I will laugh again.

Thank you all for caring about me. Your concern is a gift I will always treasure.

Sincerely,
Marcia

*Marcia Davis
In memory of Laurie
TCF, Contra Costa County, CA*

Grief: Our Act of Love

“I had a child who died.” How simple these words are, yet how painful they are to say. The death of a child is the harshest blow life has to offer; it destroys our trust in the world at the most basic level. Grief is our total response to the death of a child; our body, mind, emotions and spirit all react to the loss. While many of us wish to stop the intense grief work we are doing, we find it impossible for many reasons.

First, grief is an act of love, not a lack of strength or faith. The more we loved our child, the greater will be our grief. The more integrated our lives were with the life of our child, the more we will miss his or her very presence. The intensity of our grief is often representative of our love.

Second, grief is a necessary process that we must go through in order to maintain our wholeness and sanity. If we do not grieve, we will not heal. One of the earliest and hardest lessons we bereaved parents learn is that men and women grieve differently; women, in general, grieve more openly than do men, and women, on the whole, are more comfortable verbally expressing their feelings of loss. While segments of our culture indicate it is more “manly” not to cry, we know this is not true.

Grief work also helps us to complete unfinished business with our child and close the past relationship that we had. We will never “get over” the loss of our child, nor would we ever really want to. We are who we are partly because of our relationship to that child. Our lives will always be influenced by our son or daughter, but most of us will eventually learn to live a meaningful life, despite our tragedy. Our child will always be with us in spirit and in love, and we often feel a need to hold on to tangible items, such as toys or clothes, to maintain that feeling of closeness. But, intense grief work allows us to let go of the relationship we had and create a new relationship with our child. Our remembrances, love and feelings of oneness with our child can never be destroyed. I cannot see nor touch my Philip, but I vividly remember him. I have completed earthly mothering, but I still have an intense mother-child relationship with my son.

Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect that grief to ever totally go away, because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

*Elaine Grier
TCF Atlanta, GA
In Memory of my son, Philip*

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 Stranger . . . My Friend

I don't remember who, but someone called me to the phone that day.

A lady said she didn't know me, but just wanted to say:

That she had lost a child, too. She would pray for my deep pain.
My days that had been sunny were now filled with crashing rain.

Her voice was kind and soothing as she spoke to me with care.

I grasped each word intensely that the stranger was willing to share.

Her child died in a way similar to mine, a passenger in a car.
She knew rage, shocking sorrow and recognized my new, deadening scar.

She said we have a mutual friend in the funeral director there.

For he had buried her child too and now mine – I could not bear.

I cried and cried as she talked to me that sad, heartbreaking day.

But she quickly instilled in my mind right then and there – that crying was okay.

She briefly spoke of brighter days to come somewhere along the way.

She assured me, too, that God was there, if only I could pray.

I don't remember all she said, my mind was so far away.

But I thank God for sending her, a stranger – my friend – that day.

She called me again a few days later to see if I was alive.

Still in shock, I remembered her, the lady who had survived.

Such grief, such devastating sadness: I was totally in despair.

But my new friend called again, keeping me in her care.

We came to meet, this lady and I, in life's ungracious bend.

I love her now, this total stranger:

She is my Compassionate Friend

*Diana Grider
TCF, Kokomo, IN*

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)