



The Compassionate Friends

Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends

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National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Website: www.tcf-cle.net



Chapter Closed Facebook Group

October, 2019

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WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

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

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.

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

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 9th 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 and Lori Rychlik 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)	23 - Sarah Elizabeth Ciprian
7 - Thomas (Tommy) Joseph Kess, Jr.	25 - Rhiannon Naab
8 - Sean R. Kaminski	27 - Rebecca Anne Dugas
8 - Brandon Gregory Smith	27 - Brittany Nicole Finley
13 - Michael B. George	27 - Courtney Julianne Nichols
17 - Peter Anthony DiRienzo	27 - Billy Thomas
20 - Benjamin David	28 - Christopher John Erdovegi
21 - Matthew Josef-Arthur	31 - Scott Mickol

October Angelversary Dates

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 Hoepfner (Age 19)	Adam Joseph Semenas (Age 35)
Brittany Holtzman (Age 22)	Brandon Gregory Smith (Age 29)
Lisa Kearney (Age 22)	Corey Michael Stevenson (Age 27)
Zachary Gerard Lanum (Age 7 months)	Nathaniel Joseph VanNostran (Age 22)
Ryan Mulvey (Age 33)	Shane Michael Wiech (Age 15)
Christopher James Pewitt (Age 23)	

Remembering Our Children



First Meeting

Our September meeting was the first for this bereaved mother. It is very difficult to attend a first meeting and we applaud her for having the courage to come. We hope we were of help, and that she will return and work through her grief journey with us.

Elaine Schuster, remembering her beloved daughter Lisa Simpson (Age 46)

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)
- ~ Karen and Jim Kipfstuhl ~ In loving memory of Kerry Kipfstuhl (Age 40)
- ~ Joan Mass ~ In loving memory of Russell Ruprecht (Age 46)
- ~ Lynn and Greg Smith ~ In loving memory of Brandon Gregory Smith (Age 29)

All who have been touched by beauty are touched by sorrow at its passing

~ Louise Cordana

Newsletter Dedications



Christopher John Erdovegi (Age 19)

Forever in Our Hearts

*Love Always,
Mom and Dad*



Russell Ruprecht (Age 46)

***Congratulations Son!!!
You just became a grandfather:***

***Chase Russell Ruprecht
Born June 9, 2019
Proud parents: Eric & Britney***

**Watch over him, today, tomorrow and
always. We miss you each and every
day. You are always here in our
hearts.**

Love, Mom and Family

Newsletter Dedications



Brandon Gregory Smith (Age 29)

Thank you Brandon for all the gifts you have given us in life and in death. Your love was a special blessing to us. We miss you each and every day.

*Love, Ryder, Mom, Dad, Lauren,
Mike, Tyler, Jenn and Grandma.*

I'm Beginning

I'm beginning to know your children
From the things I 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*

TCF National News



TCF NATIONAL MAGAZINE WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE AVAILABLE FREE ONLINE

The Compassionate Friends national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*®, is available for free online. The magazine remains available in print free with any patron donation or when ordered by paid subscription through TCF's online store.

We Need Not Walk Alone provides comfort and support to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents through stories, poems, advice columns, and much more. It has been referred to as “a support group in print” and is published three times a year. Sign-up for a free online subscription through our website, compassionatefriends.org. It can be read online or downloaded to your computer for personal use.

Advertise in the Upcoming Issue of We Need Not Walk Alone

To help support free online subscriptions of *We Need Not Walk Alone*, The Compassionate Friends is now accepting paid advertising from organizations, products, and services that are in line with TCF's Mission Statement and Principles. All advertising is in full color and will reach all those receiving our print edition, as well as online and in the website archives. For more information, including rates, please e-mail theresa@compassionatefriends.org.

TCF “ONLINE SUPPORT COMMUNITY” OFFERS OPPORTUNITY FOR GRIEF SHARING

The Compassionate Friends national website offers “virtual chapters” through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click “Online Support” listed under the Find Support menu.

Our Chapter News

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

This month, I would like to mention two books that I read years and years ago after my son Robert died. I was teaching a course called Basic Writing at the University of Akron, and both books related to my grief as well as to my professional life.

The first book was given to me by my friend Kathryn Popio, a fellow teacher. The semester after Robert died, Kathy and I shared an office in the Polsky Building. I think our superiors thought it would be a good idea to put us together. Either that, or they didn't know of anyone else that would be comfortable sharing an office with me. Anyway, she gave me a copy of her book Heart's Rest: God's gift to a Grieving Parent. Kathryn lost her son, Macaulay in 1988, and so was well along in her grief journey when I lost Robert in 2006. The slim, 70-page book tells her experiences. Kathryn was also the religion editor for a local Wadsworth newspaper and would often sincerely say things that I took to be trite platitudes. I should have listened with an open heart, but at the time, that was rather difficult. I must say, she hit me with an expression that I will never forget. She said that people will "wallow in their grief" for as long as they need to. Wow! True enough. Anyway, I haven't forgotten Kathryn or her book, which I am donating to our chapter library.



The other book is The Lively Shadow: Living with the Death of a Child, by Donald M. Murray. He lost his daughter and twenty-five years later wrote a book about his experiences of living without her. At that time, Murray was, along with Donald Graves, one of the two bright lights in the literature concerning beginning writers, so I was familiar with his name before I got this book. He was also a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist for the Boston Globe. Believe me, his book is a good read. I loaned the book to Mary King, who was head of the Writing Lab at that time, and I still have the thank you card she wrote when she returned the book to me. It says, in part, Murray is a wonderful writer. She is certainly right about that. I am putting this one in our library also.

It was interesting for me to revisit these two books, which I read early on in my own grief journey, and to muse upon all that has happened and how I have changed over the past thirteen years.

Best wishes for you, and good reading.

*Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are.
Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.
Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.
One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow,
or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky,
and want more than all the world for your return.*

~ Mary Jean Irion

Healing and Hope

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, which control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, “It’s different with me! You don’t understand!” This is the “normal” response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face.

Fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way who have learned that, out of this morass of loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope. Though small and fleeting at first, this hope becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child’s death. And this healing will occur even though there is still no understanding of “Why?”

It is by working through our guilt (both real and imagined), facing our anger including anger at God and even at the dead child, crying our way through our despair (with carefully chosen professional help if necessary), that the loneliness will lessen, and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought gone forever. Each one must use one’s spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process.

Full recovery—in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear never to return—return not occur, although the term “recovery” is used. I prefer the term “healing,” a process whereby our lives come to a new “normal.” Healing implies (a) our accepting the unacceptable (the death of our child), and (b) our slowly learning to resume productive relationships with others. This is done all while we continue to love and miss the dead child.

Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may slow the process by failing to do our grief work, but we cannot stop it!! One of the greatest hindrances to our healing is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time! Perhaps the greatest obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive—ourselves, the dead child, others involved with the child’s death, even God if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others.

We enhance the healing process when we do our grief work, when we have gratitude for the time we had with our child, when we recall the happy times we experienced with our child (or during pregnancy, if that’s all we had), and when we pick up the shattered pieces of our existence (as our child would want us to do), slowly resuming productive living.

No matter where you are in your journey toward healing, bolster the hope that arises within you. Your healing is probably the best memorial you may erect to your dead child!

*Robert Gloor
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL*

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

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)

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. ~ Maya Angelou

Differences in Grief — Women and Men

THEIR SON DIED, suddenly in his early years. There was shock, anger and disbelief and a terrible quiet that both parents knew would be with them for the rest of their lives. In the weeks and months that followed, the mother wrote long letters to everyone who visited or sent condolences. But whenever someone came to the house to offer sympathy, the father would retreat to another room.

Perhaps neither parent's behavior is startling; we are part of a society in which poets extol "the silent manliness of grief" and woman is expected to provide shoulders for one another to cry on. Some ways of showing sorrow are more common to women and others are more frequent to men, but several recent studies suggest that all ways have both value and problems. By learning about them, we may all be able to cope better when we lose someone we care about.

Most researchers say that men and women share equal feelings of pain and grief, but, over all, women use their social-support systems to help them through mourning, and men do not. In a two-year study it was found that not only did women have more friends than men, but also women used those friends as supports. The pain of loss is often eased, "by talking to other people, by opening yourself to others, telling them about your loss. Now, women seem to be better able to do this than men." Women who have a close friend to talk to, adapt to their loss better than those who do not have a confidant according to a study by researchers.

The tendency of men to keep their grief to themselves has made it difficult to gauge their reactions to loss, primarily because many men are reluctant to participate in studies. Two psychologists sent an attitude questionnaire to the men who declined to take part in their study, and from the results it appears that the men who did not take part were more depressed than those who agreed to participate. In another study, psychologists found that widowers were more likely to feel lonely and depressed than widows were, that men needed more help around the house and that they were less willing to talk about the feelings associated with their loss. The study found that women continued to talk about their loss, and men preferred to avoid the subject. The fear of losing control in front of other people, of seeming less "manly," may lie behind the men's silence. This means that the men who would most need help might be the least likely to go out and search for it.

This pattern of men withdrawing and women reaching out seems to hold true for various kinds of losses. Women whose children died unexpectedly felt they had an advantage over their husbands because they had "friends who rallied around them," according to the psychologists while their husbands had fewer people to turn to. A lot of women would report that the men would have to put on a show at their place of work, and then would come home and stare at the walls.

At times, when a husband and wife may need one another's emotional support most these different coping styles can create problems. When dealing with pregnancy loss, conflicts arising from different reactions can lead to marital distress. It's seen over and over again after a pregnancy loss, there are a high percentage of marriages that break up.

The difference between the coping styles of women and men might stem from the way people are socialized. Women are brought up to see themselves connected to or "in relationship" with others, while men are taught to be independent and autonomous. As a result, the effects of loss tend to be more pervasive for women.

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A male speaks of learning to break away from the past, and this is reflected in the behavior of many men who prefer to "get on with their life" and quickly involve themselves in work or other activities. But in mourning a loss, you don't break your ties with the past you change your ties, a style with which women appear to be more comfortable. This idea that women are better able to "connect" with others and that men are more independent, indicates there might be a few things about coping that the sexes could teach one another. In a study of the widowed, it was found that men tended to be more decisive and task-oriented in reordering their lives, but they lacked a sense of how to live as a social person without their wives. What they had to learn was to be more connected to other people. The women, by contrast, had to learn to be on their own and more centered on themselves.

In the end, it would seem what matters most is not who suffers more but how we can learn to help one another to suffer less.

Author unknown

Your Compassionate Friend

I can tell from that look, friend that you need to talk,
So come, take my hand and let's go for a walk.
See, I'm not like the others, I won't shy away,
Because I want to hear what you've got to say.

Your child has died and you need to be heard,
But they don't want to hear a single word.
They tell you your child's "with God" so be strong.
They say all the "right" things that somehow sound wrong.

They're just hurting for you and trying to say,
They'd give anything to help take your pain away.
But they're struggling with feelings they can't understand
So forgive them for not offering a helping hand.

I'll walk in your shoes for more than a mile.
I'll wait while you cry and be glad if you smile.
I won't criticize you or judge you or scorn,
I'll just stay and listen 'til your night turns to morn.

Yes, the journey is hard and unbearably long,
And I know that you think that you're not quite that strong.
So just take my hand, 'cause I've got time to spare,
And I know how it hurts friend, for I have been there.

See, I owe a debt you can help me repay
For not long ago, I was helped the same way.
As I stumbled and fell, thru a world so unreal,
So believe when I say that I know how you feel.

I don't look for praise or financial gain
And I'm sure not the kind who gets joy out of pain.
I'm just a strong shoulder who'll be here till the end -
I'll be your Compassionate Friend

*Steve Channing
TCF Winnipeg*

In Memory of my daughter, Kimberly Susanne Channing

He that conceals his grief finds no remedy for it

~ Turkish Proverb