



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, 2020

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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.



October Monthly Meeting

October 14th at 7:00pm: We will meet “virtually” using the Zoom video conferencing app. Please see page 9 for more information and some help preparing for this new way to meet. The discussion topic will be “Sharing Family Stories”. As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Meeting facilitator will be Clayton Samels. ***Join the meeting from your home via Zoom!***

NOTE: THE MEETING WILL NOT BE HELD AT BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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)	Frank A. Ragone (Age 41)
Christopher John Erdovegi (Age 19)	Douglas Charles Roth (Age 2)
Jack Gorden Gray, Jr. (Age 30)	Russell Ruprecht (Age 46)
Christopher William Harris (Age 32)	Bruce Albert Schmidt (Age 19)
Owen Martin Hoeptner (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

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)

It Will Be Another Birthday Without You

The sun will shine
roses bloom, geese fly
throughout the sky

stocks will trade,
the weatherman predict
politicians debate

it'll seem like another day
just a day, same 24 hours
not a special holiday

But to this mother
who will stand at the grave
lifting balloons into the sky

serving angelfood cupcakes
with rainbow icing
coated with tears

fluctuating between emotions:
the grief over death
the celebration over birth

For this mother
it will be yet
another birthday without you.

In Memory of Daniel

*Alice J. Wisler
TCF, Wake County NC*

*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*

Newsletter Dedications



Christopher John Erdovegi (Age 19)

Forever in Our Hearts

*Love Always,
Mom and Dad*

Butterfly Wings, Bricks and Lead

When I saw her load of grief, it looked to me to be merely a light load of butterfly wings, as compared to my full load of heavy bricks. Then I saw another man, and he seemed to be carrying a small load of lead. But as I watched her step on the scales bearing her load of butterfly wings, the scales read "one ton." When he stepped on the scales with his load of lead, the scales also read "one ton." I knew my grief-load of bricks would weigh more, but those scales read for me, "one ton." Our loads of butterfly wings, lead and bricks weighed exactly the same to the one carrying that particular load of grief.

We bereaved parents often feel resentment when a non-bereaved person speaks about our child's death. HOW can THAT PERSON know or even dream of how I feel or what I am going through? These feelings may be justified. But when we begin to feel resentment toward another bereaved parent "That child's death was easy compared to my child's death," "I have suffered more than she/he ever did" —we should remember that each of our grief-loads weights two thousand pounds to the one under it. Compared to Rose Kennedy, who had one child in a mental institution, and lost one daughter and three sons in violent deaths, my grief-load begins to look as if it were made of gossamer soap bubbles, but when I again step on that scale, it still reads, "one ton."

Our grief-loads may appear to weigh less because we who are under them have grown stronger through time and grief process maturation. The load actually weighs no less; it is we who have grown stronger and can carry it more easily. Sometimes we can even completely ignore the weight that is still there. Always be careful in judging another's grief-load. Remember the lead, butterfly wings and those bricks, and how they all weigh the same to the one under that load of grief.

*Tom Crouthamel
TCF, Sarasota, FL*

GRATITUDE...THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

I am convinced that the real key to happiness is gratitude. I did not come upon this insight. I learned it from Dennis Prager, a wonderful and gifted man who is both author and talk show host for KNBC radio in Los Angeles. I give him all the credit. But I have thought a lot about this idea after my son, Mark, died five years ago tomorrow.

At first I was offended by people who smiled or even laughed during The Compassionate Friends meetings. These were the people who seemed to have somehow re-entered the land of the living. How dare they greet each other with hugs. How dare they laugh. How dare they appear normal when their children have died. But over the last seven years I have learned three valuable lessons:

- Life goes on and we must too. Gradually the pain eases and the warm memories replace the sadness. Gradually we return to life. One day we find that is 11:00 in the morning and we have not thought about our child yet. At first we feel guilt. But then we also realize we are going forward. We will never forget. But we decide that the loss of our child will not be the all-consuming factor in our life. We choose to enjoy friends again. We choose to go out to dinner again. We choose to laugh again. I am convinced that this is what our children would want for us. The pain does not bring our child back. It only makes us miserable without end.
- Become grateful for what we have, not focused on what we have lost. I see people in our chapter meetings who have gone through "every parent's nightmare" and want no part of life again. But, I ask that these compassionate friends also think about the ways they have been blessed, as well as hurt. In my experience, most people have more to be thankful for than they realize: health, other children, a loving family, a career they enjoy, financial security, life in a free country, a faith that works for them, a true best friend, a spouse who they love. Nobody has it all. But compared to most of the world, we have a lot.
- The life we now lead will be better than it would have been. That does not make our child's death a good thing. It just means that our child's life mattered, and it has changed us forever. It means that in some small way the world will be better because our child lived, and we are the ones who can make it so. We have a new sense of priorities. We don't "sweat the small stuff." We know what matters because we know what is irreplaceable. And we know how deeply other people hurt because we, too, have been there. We "know how they feel."

And when our life is different and better because our child lived, then that child is never forgotten. Each of us would do anything in the world to go back in time, but we can't. It is up to us now to go forward, and we can.

*Richard Edler
TCF South Bay/LA, CA
In Memory of my son Mark Edler
As published in We Need Not Walk Alone, 1999 Anniversary Issue*

TCF National News



SIGN UP FOR COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS E-NEWSLETTER

The Compassionate Friends National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters.

The e-newsletter includes information on such things as TCF National Conferences, the Walk to Remember, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, regional conferences, and other events of importance.

All you have to do to receive The Compassionate Friends e-newsletter is sign up for it online by visiting The Compassionate Friends national website at www.compassionatefriends.org and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

TCF NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON FACEBOOK

Please visit and help promote The Compassionate Friends National Organization's Facebook page by becoming a fan. You can get there by clicking on the Facebook icon from TCF's national website home page at www.compassionatefriends.org. Or, you can find it by going to: www.facebook.com/TCFUSA.

We want this to be both an informative and supportive place for those of us who are mourning the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild. All are welcome to leave messages and talk about their child and their grief. As in our meetings, we especially appreciate shared insights about anything that has brought you comfort, hope, or some measure of peace.

In addition to the social support aspect, The Compassionate Friends/USA Facebook page has posts about upcoming events such as conferences, the Walk to Remember, and the Worldwide Candle Lighting. Please visit often and contribute to the conversation.

TCF is also now on Twitter. Search for TCFofUSA. These social media initiatives are important to TCF because they will help increase public awareness about our organization and better enable us to fulfill our mission to help bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents.

For more information, please call TCF's National Office at 877-969-0010 or e-mail sara@compassionatefriends.org.

Our Chapter News



Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration December 13, 2020 (*save the date*)

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.

Our chapter is reviewing options for observing this annual event virtually, via Zoom. More information will appear in the November newsletter.

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

I hope this finds you all well. Autumn is here, the days are getting shorter, and the nights, colder. But I still have some hotdogs in the fridge and buns in the pantry that I should use up soon.

I did manage to finish When things Fall Apart. Heck, as members of TCF, I guess we have all experienced things falling apart to the max. Not only that, but 2020 seems like it is coming apart at the seams, too. Let me just say that the book will probably pull the rug of all those cliches out from under your feet. I guess if you can live twenty-four hours a day when everything has fallen apart, you probably can get through any day when a least a few things seem to remain together.

I read Dear Edward: A Novel by Ann Napolitano, which I purchased at a modest price in a Kindle edition from Amazon. It's about the sole survivor of a commercial airline disaster. Although the book is a work of fiction, nevertheless, there were a number of reasons I was drawn to the story. First, it concerns a plane crash and its aftermath, so I was familiar with a lot because of my son Robert's death in a small plane crash, to some extent, with descriptions of NTSB investigations and media attention to tragedies. Next, because it is a work of fiction, the author is free to present the workings of the minds of the characters, not just their actions. In real life, of course, we have access to our own thoughts, but have to rely on guesses as to what others might actually be thinking at any given moment.



I also read The Meaning of Matthew by Judy Shepard. Judy tells the story of her son Matt, who was murdered in a case that made national headlines. If you read this book, notice the number of times that Judy struggles to speak without crying in an effort to control the meaning of Judy. I'm sure that most of us in TCF consider ourselves to be the keepers of our children's memories and legacies.

Next, I read Hanna's Gift by Maria Housden. Maria tells the story of her young daughter's battle with cancer. You can read about how Hanna transformed child cancer care and how she became known as "the girl in the red shoes." I would have called it the book about the girl who got pizza when she wanted pizza.

Finally, I read Confessions of a Griever by Crystal Webster. Crystal is a thirty-something woman who had a number of miscarriages and experienced the death of a day-old child. If you read this book, be prepared to some sharp attitude, biting humor, and not quite so soft language. She calls things as she sees them, and if you can let yourself laugh a little, you might find that chuckles can be as healing at times as tears. If nothing else, the book is a change of pace.

(continued on following page)



Library Notes – by Clayton Samels *(continued from preceding page)*

And, ok, I did get out some more and see the deer in the fenced in area in front of our building, so I don't spend all my time reading. I found that the young deer have lost their spots. Also, they often come right up to the edge of the fence to stare at me, so I hope they enjoy the view as much as I do. But I still didn't get to feed the ducks and geese in the pond in the park nearby close to the big Parma sign. Maybe I'll get over there with some stale bread to give them Trick or Treat. Stay safe; stay well.



You Know You're Making Progress When —

You can remember your child with a smile--
 You realize the painful comments others make are made in ignorance---
 You can reach out to help someone else--
 You stop dreading holidays--
 You can sit through a church service without crying--
 You can concentrate on something besides your child--
 You can find something to thank God for--
 You can be alone in your house without it bothering you--
 You can talk about what happened to your child without falling apart--
 You no longer feel you have to go to the cemetery every day or every week--
 You can tolerate the sound of a baby crying--
 You don't have to turn off the radio when his or her favorite music comes on--
 You can find something to laugh about--
 You can drive by the hospital or that intersection without screaming--
 You no longer feel exhausted all the time--
 You can appreciate a sunset, the smell of newly-mowed grass, the pattern on a butterfly's wings—

~Judy Osgood
 TCF, Carmel/Indianapolis, IN

Zoom! Join us online for a video chapter meeting using Zoom!

Should you use a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone? They each have their benefits and their drawbacks, so pick which one you are comfortable with. In any case, you need to download the Zoom app for your device or use Zoom from within your web browser. It's probably a good idea to do a test at first with a friend or two before you actually join a meeting. Or, you can be like me, jump right into a meeting and learn the hard way.

You will receive a link to click on to join the meeting. Just click on the link and you will be put in a "waiting room" until the meeting host admits you to the actual meeting. This is a security measure to keep unwanted people from crashing the meeting. Also, the host can remove a participant from a meeting if that ever becomes necessary. You have the ability to name yourself or rename so that the other members will see that displayed. The meeting host can rename any of the participants.

You should know how to mute/unmute yourself, just in case. You should also switch off or on your video. You can leave the meeting at any time if you wish. If the meeting exceeds the allotted time limit (40 minutes) it may end automatically. To prevent that, we will probably take a break after 35 minutes and then in 5 minutes or so, the host may start up the meeting again. In that case, you can return by clicking that meeting link again.

Let's get specific: How to Zoom

1 Download Zoom for your device and install if you don't already have it and then run it. Here are some links for videos showing how to install Zoom on different devices.

Android - <https://youtu.be/1tdT35ZNGKk>

iPhone or iPad - https://youtu.be/j__a-PKrMqI

Windows - <https://youtu.be/Xp6tJOo9mmc>

Need more instructions? Search on YouTube for "zoom dottech" for some good ones.

2 Sign up for a Zoom account. Not needed to join a meeting, but you might want to sign up anyway. Their basic account is free. You can then host your own meeting with your family or friends., a good way to test it all out and keep in touch with people. Check to make sure your audio and video work, and learn how to mute/unmute your audio and turn off/on your video.

3 Click on our meeting link at meeting time to open the app and be placed in the waiting room. The meeting host will admit you to the meeting. It's that simple! (Maybe!) Try it out. If you need help, post on our chapter TCF group page and I, or someone, will try to get you going.

*Clayton Samels
TCF Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter*

Empty Places

I drove the old way yesterday.
It'd been a while, you see.
And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait
to summon up the tears,
to say remember yesterday,
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.
These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.

In memory of Lori Gentry

*Genesse Gentry
TCF, Marin Cnty CA*

My Time To Leave

I'm sorry it was my time to leave
But please, don't cry or grieve
You see, God gave me his hand to go home.
Now I don't have to roam alone.

It's more beautiful here than I've ever seen,
Even in my most vivid dream,
I will miss seeing you everyday
But remember, I am only a breath away.

I was welcomed with such loving arms,
So far away from all of life's harms
So it is here I will stay,
Until we see each other again one day.

The joy we will have on that day
Is really not too far away
So think of me every once and a while,
But only with a happy heart, and a smile

Because in your heart I will forever be
Every time you think of me.

*Nittie Hickman
TCF San Diego, CA*

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)

*A thousand words can't bring you back
I know because I tried
And neither can a million tears
I know because I cried. ~ Sarah Ratliff*

What Is Grief

It's soaking your pillow with tears at night,
your thoughts flying 'round in your head.
You feel like you'll never sleep again,
Wondering why you went to bed.

It's softly crying in the shower,
And hoping no one will hear.
When sobs wrack your chest, taking your breath,
You'll surely be heard, you fear.

You blow your nose and wipe your eyes,
Come out looking innocent.
The silly games we all play,
You wish you knew what they meant.

It's having swollen eyelids,
Your nose peels all the time.
You go through boxes of Kleenex.
Then people say you look fine!

It's guilt and depression and anger,
Emotions are magnified.
Good days and bad days are measured
By the amount of tears that you cried.

It's hanging in limbo from lawsuits,
Your grieving has been put on hold.
You feel like you'll never start healing
Before you're a hundred years old.

It's when someone says; "It's God's will,"
And you're sorry you nodded and cried.
You feel like you've betrayed your child,
Your precious child that died.

It's feeling abandoned by God,
Wondering if He really does care.
Then on a good day, believing,
Convinced, all the time, he was there.

It's crying to God in your sorrow,
Imploring him for some reprieves.
He comes to you in his own time,
Conveying that with you he grieves.

It's having compassion for others,
Supporting them when their child dies.
It brings back the painful memories,
But, "Lord, help them," is what your heart cries.

Feelings

Her clothing is folded in tidy array
 How it was left is how it will stay.
 Her desolate dresser silently weeps
 In the still of the night, when everyone sleeps.

The closet continues to guard and protect
 Items hanging on hangers, forlorn with neglect
 The bed she adored, where she bounced high with glee
 Cries invisible tears when no one can see.

The bathtub she splashed in will not again see
 Someone who will love it as fiercely as she.
 It sits idle now, no longer a "star"
 And asks (in its way) if I know where you are.

The house that she lived in, the yard where she played
 Are missing the landscape of love that she laid.
 Her numerous playthings, her once favorite toy
 Languish mournfully now without any joy.

This dwelling called "home" has relinquished its heart,
 That gift from the one who was forced to depart.
 Now it withers from grief—is spirit extinct
 and we watch through our tears as the walls seem to shrink.

Our angel was gone in the blink of an eye
 She took the light with her that day in July.
 Yet now there are times when my heart feels her near
 Then I know she's not left me ... her love is still here.

(For Tracey, Always)

*Sally Migliaccio
 TCF, West Islip, NY*

***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***