



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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Chapter Closed Facebook Group

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September, 2021

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.

September Monthly Meeting

September 8th 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 “How do you handle your child’s possessions?”. As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Meeting facilitators will be Judy and Bill Luff. *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.



September Birth Dates

2 - Megan Lynn Frazier	17 - Anthony Lee Higgins
5 - Susan Elaine Chorich	21 - Andrew Joseph Picone
6 - Aaron Mulvey	23 - Baby Boy Buchko
7 - Robert C. Higgins	23 - Brian Joseph Kochmit
7 - Nathan Edward Rychlik	23 - Shane Michael Wiech
8 - Frank Michael Suhar	25 - Abigail Nicole Fenstermaker
10 - Thomas D. Hayn	25 - Timothy William Hautz
10 - Shane Michael Ward	26 - David Matthew Knox
12 - Donald A. Litvin, Jr.	27 - Alyssa Louise Miller
13 - Matthew John Desmarteau	29 - Christopher James Brennan
14 - Elizabeth Dalton	30 - James A. Jarosz

September Anniversary Dates

Baby Boy Buchko (Age 1 day)	Alyssa Louise Miller (Age 2)
Brenda Cole (Age 31)	Eric Justin Obloy (Age 26)
Matthew John Desmarteau (Still Born)	Renee Grace Ondrejch (Age 18)
Zachary Thomas Gott (Age 12)	Nick Rothenbuhler (Age 20)
Adam Timothy Grodzik (Age 17)	Nathan Edward Rychlik (Age 28)
Christian Creed Hein (Age 3)	Raven Santos (Age 2 months)
Micala Christie Hicks-Siler (Age 41)	Alex B. Sismour (Age 14)
Marin C. Kos (Age 36)	Frank Michael Suhar (Age 38)
Jessica Marie Kossin (Age 21)	Dorothy Thomas (Age 59)
Reid Alan McClellan (Age 1)	Dane Woods (Age 15)

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).

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

~ Doreen and Brian Sismour ~ In loving memory of
Alex B. Sismour (Age 14)

Rosebush Full of Blooms

On a rosebush full of blooms, there is occasionally one rose more fragile than the rest. Nobody knows why. The rose receives the same amounts of rain and sun as its neighboring blooms: it receives the same amounts of food and water from the earth, of clipping and tending and gentle encouragement from the gardener. Its time on earth is neither more nor less significant than that of the other blooms alongside. It has all the necessary components to become what it is intended to be: a beautiful flower, fully open, spreading its petals and fragrance and color for the world to see.

But for some reason, once in a while, a single rose doesn't reach maturity. It's not the gardener's fault, nor the fault of the rose. So it is that sometimes, despite the best growing conditions, the best efforts of the gardener, the best possibilities for a glorious blooming season, a particularly fragile rose will share its growth for awhile, then fade and die. And the gardener and the rosebush and the earth and all around grieve.

We are never ready for a loss, not for the loss of a promising rosebud, whose life appears ready to unfold with brilliant color and fulfillment, in the midst of our grieving, we can remember the glimpses of color and fragrance and growth that was shared. We can love the fragile rose and the fragile soul for the valiant battles won and the blooming that was done. And as our own petals unfold, we can remember the softness and beauty of those who touched us along the way.

*Ernestine Clark
TCF, Oklahoma City, OK*

***Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,
Love leaves a memory no one can steal. ~ found on a headstone in Ireland***

Newsletter Dedications



Nathan Edward Rychlik (Age 28)

Nate,

Can't believe it'll be four years this month that we've seen your smiling face and heard your voice. We love you so very much and, though we feel your presence, we miss you more with each passing year. ❤️

*Love,
Dad, Mom and Alex*



Alex B. Sismour (Age 14)

Hard to believe 10 years have gone by since we last saw your precious face and heard your beautiful voice. Forever in our minds and in our hearts.

*Love,
Mom, Dad and Andrew*

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

Share the Pain

Guest Writer - Bill Chadwick

I was watching the news tonight when they announced that the 27 year old son of Bill Cosby had been murdered today. I felt that now familiar sickening in my gut again...as one more young person beat us adults to the grave. Such a senseless waste...and such pain.

They read a statement from Mr. and Mrs. Cosby which said in part "..., this is a tragedy that is very difficult to share with anyone." The death of a loved one is such a personal thing...a direct wound to the heart. His statement is so full of truth. In fact, it may be impossible to share the loss completely with anyone...but I think we have to try.

When my 21-year-old son Michael was killed three years ago by a drunk driver, the pain was so intense...so incredibly powerful...that I just didn't think I would survive. It is a miracle that I ever did. I remember feeling so alone...so completely alone. People were hovering around me day and night...yet I felt so far away from them. My pain was a very personal pain...one I knew they could never comprehend. I was right I think...they didn't or couldn't understand. It was that realization which caused me to seek out someone...anyone...who did understand. Was it a coincidence that I had recently signed on to the Internet?

I found a place on the Internet called "alt.support.grief." It's one of the Usenet Newsgroups. When I arrived, there were only a few "posts" there, but enough that I could sense the mood of the group. I was totally new to the Net...and had never posted to a Newsgroup before. It took a lot of courage...but I mustered enough to type: "My name is Bill...and my 21 year old son Michael was killed in a car crash on October 23, 1993. My life has been forever changed."

I have been typing that same message now for over three years...and it is still true today. Michael's life...and his death...forever changed me. But...that day...when I shared my pain for the first time on ASG...my life changed even more. I felt some relief almost immediately...even before people had responded. As the responses to my message (back then, only a couple!) began to get posted...my heart warmed. I had no way of knowing then just how important these precious people would be to me. In the end...they literally saved my life.

Something powerful happens when we write about our grief and share it. Even before it is shared...just the writing of it seems to help. I think it helps to move us out of our denial. Somehow, seeing my own words in print helped me to center on the reality of Michael's death. But if writing it is helpful...sharing it is miraculous!! As I always say on ASG..."A miracle happens when we share our pain here. I don't know why it works...but it does!"

I remember hearing some years ago about an experiment conducted at an eastern university. It seems they lined up 50 barefooted students and had them come one at a time and place one bare foot into a bucket of ice. They timed each student to see how long he could keep his foot in the bucket before the pain overwhelmed him. After each student was clocked, they lined them up again...this time with a partner to stand next to them...holding their hand. On average, each student was able to keep their foot in the bucket twice as long as when they were alone!

The obvious conclusion that the scientist drew from this experiment was that somehow the students could endure more pain when they were not alone. I think perhaps the scientist may have missed the most important factor in the formula. You see...the student holding the participant's hand...had his foot in the bucket only minutes before. He knew what it felt like!!

Talking to a therapist...writing in a journal...sharing with a relative...all of these are positive ways to express our feelings of grief. But...there is something very special...very powerful...about sharing with someone who has been down the path you are walking. Find them at a Hospice grief group...at "The Compassionate Friends"...or right here on the Internet...just find them. And once you have found them...don't let them go until you have told them EVERYTHING! It will be a big favor you are doing for yourself...and an even greater favor you will be doing for them!

Love & Peace, Bill

This article originally appeared on the Website of TLC Group < <http://fohnix.metronet.com/~tlc/> >, which specializes in publications for transition, loss and change. *TLC Group grants anyone the right to use this information without compensation so long as the copy is not used for profit or as training materials in a profit making activity such as workshops, lectures, and seminars, and so long as this paragraph is retained in its entirety.*

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

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels



I hope this finds you all well.

I can't believe fall is on its way. I have only made it to one music festival, but I think I might be able to get to one more before the season is over. Even if I don't, I've had a pleasant vacation to some quiet spots, so if you run into me, you might ask me about them.

Instead of more of the cheap sci-fi stuff I usually gorge myself on, I switched over to mysteries/thrillers for a bit, with a few books by David Baldacci, a couple of books by James Patterson, and a couple more by James Patterson and Bill Clinton (yeah, that Bill Clinton). Then I even read one by Stephen King. No, it wasn't a spooky horror thing, but one called Billy Summers. That one is about a freelance hit man, ex-military sniper, who dreams about becoming a writer. Ok, so it's a little weird, but not really spooky. And now, I'm back to sci-fi with a fifty-year-old book by Pohl Anderson called Tau Zero. Yeah, fifty years old! So I guess it could be called a classic.

As for grief reading, I found a gem, called The Pull of the Stars: A Novel, by Emma Donoghue. It's the fictional account of an influenza/maternity ward in Dublin during the pandemic of 1918 as told by the head nurse in the ward, which is really only a room with three beds. I have to tell you that I found the reading extremely intense, so much so that when I was finished, I couldn't start another book for a week. I'm a guy, ok, so maternity ward stuff is unusual reading for me, but, hey, I was in the delivery room when my son Robert was born, so some of that stuff brings back some personal memories. But like I said, the story is intense, and I imagine it will affect mothers much more strongly than it affected me. And if you happen to be a mother who lost her child before, during, or a bit after birth, then prepare yourself before you dive into this book. I have a sister who has nurse training. When she worked in the hospital and had to take a baby down to the morgue, it caused her to quit the hospital and take up working in a pediatrician's office, where she said the worst thing she would have to deal with were kids with stuffy noses or a bean stuck in their ear. More severe than that, they were sent off to the hospital, so she didn't have to deal with any of that. I'll tell you, the one thing the book makes clear is the heroism and dedication it takes to be any type of medical professional. And, of course, it's pandemic reading, too.

So there you have it for another month. Oh, a bit off topic, I guess, but I had some five-dollar sushi today. I call it sissy sushi. For some reason, it came without the usual packet of soy sauce, but that's ok, I guess, because I have a whole bottle of soy sauce anyway. I enjoy my sissy sushi sessions, remembering that it was thanks to my son Robert that I tried sushi in the first place. So the sushi sessions are a small way that I remember him. I guess it's not so far off topic after all.

Stay safe. Stay well. Read something.

September Monthly Meeting

September 8th at 7:00pm

Please plan to join in as we hold our monthly chapter meeting on September 8th. As we all do our part to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, we will conduct the meeting using Zoom ... an easy-to-use video conferencing tool. More information on page 9.

THE MEETING WILL NOT BE HELD AT BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH.

A Survivor's Alphabet: Empathy

"Where were you when I needed you?" Ever find yourself saying words like that? Ever look for comfort at a point of greatest need and wonder why it doesn't come or help? Family and friends try their best to let us know they care. It never seems enough for just what we need at the critical moment.

What's going on? Family and friends, in expressing their sincere words of comfort and love, are relieving their own anxiety. In their attempts they often bypass our more critical need. It's like two trains passing each other in the night. They meet but quickly go their separate ways.

What we have received is sympathy which, by itself, gives temporary comfort and relief but has little long lasting effect. It may or may not touch the point of hurting with enough impact to relieve. What is better is a sensitivity to hurt where it is and a response to that hurt that mirrors the crisis itself. What is needed is not sympathy but **empathy**.

Empathy is made up of the following:

Listening. What do you hear when you hear? Isn't it amazing how often we hear but we do not listen. You and I hear the concert while the violinist listens for pitch and tone. We tell a mechanic the engine runs "rough" while he listens and notes that something is wrong with the valves. Developing the skill of listening enables us to be more sensitive to actual need where it occurs. A cry for help may be more, or less, than what we think we hear. Someone is hurting and needs relief, now. Being with that person we listen and are given clues of what to say and do that will bring the greatest relief. It's not for us to set the agenda; the other person in their hurt and pain does.

Understanding. By careful listening it's amazing what we can learn that we only surmised before. We learn that our agenda can be put "on hold" while the hurting person is considered as top priority. We learn that words do not always have the weight we give to them; a touch will do far more. Maybe just being there without thinking that we have to do something helps. Whatever it is, we are there for the other person and they know it; they are given just what they need at that given moment.

Value. This tacit understanding gives strength for building trust. A bond is created whose value will be noted long after the crisis is over. Friendships are developed that are long lasting. New understanding between family members creates a climate of love. Personal self esteem is given a boost which has a value of its own. We understand others and they understand us and a network is established of support and caring.

Empathy is "LUV" actively supporting and sustaining to develop strength for times of crisis. It goes beyond in creating long lasting relationships that give personal vitality to each of us.

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Jesse Baker is a retired minister of The United Methodist Church. He and his wife Fay live in Port Orange, FL. They became bereaved parents when their daughter Vera was murdered in November, 1984.

Reprinted from the Heart of Florida Chapter newsletter, May 1999.

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*

I Am Wearing A Pair of Shoes

I am wearing a pair of shoes. They are ugly shoes, uncomfortable shoes. I hate my shoes. Each day I wear them, and each day I wish I had another pair. Some days my shoes hurt so bad that I do not think I can take another step. Yet, I continue to wear them. I get funny looks wearing these shoes, they are looks of sympathy. I can tell in others eyes that they are glad they are my shoes and not theirs. They never talk about my shoes. To learn how awful my shoes are might make them uncomfortable. To truly understand these shoes you must walk in them. But, once you put them on, you can never take them off. I now realize that I am not the only one who wears these shoes. There are many pairs in this world. Some women are like me and ache daily as they try and walk in them. Some have learned how to walk in them so they don't hurt quite as much. Some have worn the shoes so long that days will go by before they think about how much they hurt. No woman deserves to wear these shoes. Yet, because of these shoes I am a stronger woman. These shoes have given me the strength to face anything. They have made me who I am. I will forever walk in the shoes of a woman who has lost a child.

~Author Unknown

Angels Among Us

Our Angels are among us
We see them everyday
In all the forms that God created...
They are with us along life's way.

We see them in the sunrise,
That brightens and warms our soul.
We feel them in the summer breeze
That chases away our cold.

They are there among the flowers...
Their sweet scent a memory of love.
They soar with the eagles,
As they fly so high above.

The night will find them in the stars,
Lighting our path below.
And even in our dreams,
Their presence we'll still know.

As the snow melts with the sun,
And spring flowers peek through their beds,
They come on the wings of butterflies,
And flutter about our heads.

They are telling us they are with us,
And will be forever more...
Until it's time for us to meet again,
As we pass through heaven's door.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

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A Flicker In The Distance

In this time of grief,
When the darkness is so great,
And your heart is aching so,
You feel that it may break.

Remember that in this darkness
There is a candle's light
A flicker in the distance
Small but intensely bright.

That tiny little glow
That seems so far away
Will grow brighter and brighter
With each passing day.

Time does not heal, as they say,
But it tends to numb
The ache we feel inside our heart
When that darkness comes.

In time your heart will feel lighter
And the memories won't bring such pain
The tears won't flow as often
And you will find laughter again.

So keep you eye on that distant glow
To see how far you came...
Because at the end of the darkness
That flicker becomes a flame.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

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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:

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)

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