

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



April, 2019
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The Compassionate Friends is an international self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents and siblings.

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Meeting Information

When: First Thursday of
each month. 7-9 p.m.
Where: St. Timothy's Church
16700 Newburgh Road, Livonia,
East side of Newburgh, 1/4 mile S. of
Six Mile

Coming Events:

NEXT MEETING- April 4 - First time tables, sibling table, Infant loss table, topic table: Do you feel like you have evolved into a different person since your child died?

April 13 - 10 a.m. - Home of Kathy Rambo - see page 8

April 16 - 6:30 pm TCF Dinner-at Brann's Steakhouse (39715 6 Mile, Northville, MI) sign up at meeting or call Kathy 734-306-3930 or katjrambo@gmail.com

Speaking of Hurricanes

...It was a documentary on television. A story about people who live by the ocean, where they build sturdy, good-looking homes which offer the most spectacular views. One could tell how their owners cherish them — these well-tended houses with shiny clean windows like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea.

But then, alas, there was a hurricane. In a matter of minutes, many of these treasured, handsome homes were struck, broken, swept away by wind and water, covered by an avalanche of careless sand.

The report continued. With an edge of surprise in his voice, the announcer observed that most of the devastated homes by that dangerous sea would be rebuilt precisely where they had faced the elements before.

And the reporter asked, weren't the people afraid of another hurricane? The answer was yes, of course, they were afraid, but there was no better way in the world to live, and so they would stay, they would risk it all again.

The story touched me strangely. I understand those people in their hurricane houses. Is it because my life, too, has felt like a hurricane house at times? My children died — taken by one drowning and by one suicide — leaving me half-broken and swept aside by a storm of tragedy, overwhelmed by loss, the

symbol of irreversible destruction.

Yet if someone asked me about it today, I would say yes, of course I was a hopeless ruin then. But I gradually discovered that the memory of my children and my place in life were not ready for oblivion. I learned to accept the lonelier space inside. I rebuilt my inner house, and now a changed "me" lives there, in rooms filled with welcome feelings about two marvelous children.

Not a very smooth allegory, is it? Hurricane House must seem meaningless and impossible for the newly bereaved. But I think that a "seasoned" griever might know what I mean. Perhaps others will understand next year...or the year after that. There is no hurry.

For the legacy of times remembered, for a different view of life and its meanings, for the people we love and who survived with us — how many of us have decided to stay on the dangerous beach and to restore our hurricane house with its shiny clean windows like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea?

- Sascha Wagner

July 19-21 - 42nd Annual National TCF Conference, Philadelphia. For info, go to : www.compassionatefriends.org



Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

This month, we remember the children who are so deeply and sadly missed. Please take a few moments to place them and their parents in your thoughts.

Let Us Remember Them Always

<i>Child</i>	<i>Parent, Grandparent, Sibling</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Age</i>
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Names withheld for the sake of privacy except for members



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

After Some Time - It is Still Okay to Cry

It seems to be acceptable to go for counseling or therapy during the early months of grief. But what happens after a certain amount of time has passed and you feel yourself being ambushed by the first raw feelings of grief? Most people think you should just buck up and look around you and count the blessings you have left. These are worthy and meritorious attitudes, but sometimes they are simply unattainable, at least for a little while. We have lost MUCH when we lost our child. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves that it is okay to relapse, that there is nothing wrong with us when we feel alone and sad, that there is no shame in backtracking to the dark recesses of grief, for it is in those times when we give way to the hurt and pain that we acknowledge how MUCH our child continues to matter to us. We sometimes have to allow ourselves space to be sad and permission to cry over the simple sadness of no longer having our child with us. They MATTERED to us. They still do. WE CONTINUE to remember them, to love them, and to miss them. IT IS STILL OKAY TO CRY.

May each of you weep tears of release for the child that you so deeply continue to love and miss.

With the deepest respect and compassion for my fellow grievers.

*Faye McCord, TCF/ Jackson, MS
In memory of Lane McCord (1/26-9/13)*

Shards of Grief Linger after Murder

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was that Anne, our only daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process, were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived.

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne's life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived.

There was the awful anger against the legal system for being so callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne's death were already deep and unhealing, but listening to and reading about the insinuations and innuendoes by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt. But we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence.

I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is, when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb, that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain all that faith. All the fears are real; but so far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has been found, tried and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders and we could restart living our lives. Somehow we survived.

How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne's life and character. Each individual is endowed with certain instruments, and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone. Anne's instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we still can hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us. Anne's instrument of hope for a fu-

ture in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the back-bone of her dream. The songs of hope in work, in life and the good-ness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us. Anne's instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night. We will not believe Anne's dreams have ended, but we believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever.

The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.

*Bill Boggs
TCF, Atlanta, GA*

Falling Apart

I seem to be falling apart.
My attention span can be measured in seconds;
My patience in minutes.
I cry at the drop of a hat.
I forget things constantly.
The morning toast burns daily.
I forget to sign the checks.
Half of everything in the house is misplaced.
Feelings of anxiety and restlessness are my constant companions.
Rainy days seem extra dreary.
Sunny days seem an outrage.
Other people's pain and frustration seem insignificant.
Laughing, happy people seem out of place in my world.
It has become routine to feel half crazy. I am normal I am told.
I am a newly grieving person.
Eloise Cole

Evolution

Rich Edler once said, "The only good that can come from the death of your child is the person you will become." As bereaved parents, we undergo a metamorphosis. The person we were before our child's death is gone forever. We are evolving into somebody different. For most parents further along in their grief journey, they say that they have become better people as a result of their experience. Don't get me wrong, every one of them also say they would trade their "better" self for who they used to be if they could have their child back. However, the fact remains, we can't go back to who we were. The loss of a child is so traumatic and life altering that we can't help but be changed by the experience. There are several ways in which we do change. Many bereaved parents have similar experiences.

Some of them are:

·Our patience level is different-what used to seem like huge problems are now just petty annoyances. When somebody complains to me about how awful their day is going, I think "if you only had a clue to what a real tragedy in life is-try walking in my shoes for awhile!"

·We have a new appreciation of life-unfortunately we have learned the hardest way possible just exactly how fragile life is. We no longer take those we love for granted.

·Others' expectations for us-people who knew us before our child's death often put our grieving on a timeline. After a set amount of time (6 months to a few years depending on how compassionate the person), the "unbereaved" begin looking for the "old" you to emerge. They can be disappointed when you don't live up to their

expectations. They don't understand that the person you used to be is gone forever.

·Priorities change-I used to define myself by what I did for a living. My work and my income no longer have the same meaning. Employers often have a difficult time understanding this. After the loss of a child, I no longer have the desire nor the drive to "climb the corporate ladder" that I once had.

·We are more compassionate-because we have felt the worst pain possible, we are more caring towards others.

The road we travel as we survive after the death of our child teaches us many things about who we are and who we are becoming. As we help others, we also help ourselves. This new awareness of life and death does make us reevaluate who we once were.

*Lorna & Matt Pierce
Lovingly Lifted From
TCF South Suburban (Evergreen Park, Ill
November 2003 Newsletter*

Beginnings

A New baby is on the way

Not just any baby --

it is your little brother or sister -- A part of you.

I am so afraid

And excited

And angry

And sad.

Afraid of being hurt again.

Excited that I will have another child to give my love to.

Angry that you are gone.

And sad, every moment wishing you were here with us.

All of these emotions

Sometimes make me feel crazy, But I know I am not.

I am just a grieving mother.

To Louis from Mummy

In the Bedroom

In the bedroom, it feels cold and still.

It once was warm and full of life.

In the bedroom, even after all these years, your scent lingers.

In the bedroom, there is still an indentation on the pillow where you slept.

A stuffed Snoopy, left at your grave, Rests gently there now.

In the bedroom, your shoes are perfectly aligned. How you loved shoes. Your clothes hang in the closet...cute skirts, warm sweaters. I wonder where you are and if you are warm enough.

In the bedroom, I try to go through some of your things—impossible. I walk out and close the door.

In the bedroom, a fine layer of dust cover your favorite treasures—books, cds, photo, mementos. I clean carefully to not disturb the way you left them.

In the bedroom, mail that continues to come addressed to you is stacked. You won't be reading it but the alternative of throwing it away is just painful right now. Besides, you would laugh at the "come fly with us" captions.

In the bedroom, I find interesting things—a calendar that says "Live life to the fullest"; a paper written for a psychology class entitled "Talking to the Dead"; and a yoga class card with the expiration date 12/8//01, the day you expired. How ironic! You took such good care of yourself and died anyway.

In the bedroom, your memory calls me. Most days I walk past the closed door, pausing sometimes, wishing I could hear sounds of you again.

In the bedroom, the day will come to pack away your things and let life back in. Whether weeks, months or years, we will know when the time is right.

I laugh, I cry, I remember..in the bedroom.

*(continuation of
April Birthdays)*

SIBS

My Best Friend

The fishing season's coming,
but no more fishing for me
Because my best friend's not here, to
share his hooks with me.
We went fishing nearly every day.
Never hooked a thing.
But, oh, what fun we had,
Talking about the one that got away.
The garage holds all the fishing gear,
but I've no desire to fish.
It's not the same without him here.
Oh! If I could have one wish.
My wish would be
To bring my brother back to me,
So we could fish along the shore. We'd
have fun together,
And laugh once more.

All that's left are memories,
For me to think about.
I won't say goodbye;
I'll see you again.
But I will miss you forever,
MY BEST FRIEND.
*Ryan Auch for his brother Ronny
BP/USA Augusta, GA*

You Are Here

Now You Are Gone
You're here.
Now you're gone.
It went that fast.
Where'd it begin? Where'd it end?
Like a flash of lightning in the sky.
So bright and full of life.
Now gone and full of emptiness.
How'd it start? Why didn't it stop?

No one knows, but everyone cares.
Your spirit is flowing in the air.
You're not here, but you'll never be
gone. You will always rise with the
morning dawn. You hold my heart.
It will never be torn apart.
*By Catherine Ludlow, in memory of her
sister, Cynthia who died by suicide in June
1993.*

My Brother is Really Gone

The sky turns dark and gloomy,
My brother has gone away.
I know I'll never see him again,
Not another day.

Why, I ask a thousand times,
Must this all happen to me?
My family is left in sorrow
Weeping like a willow tree.

I can vaguely remember
How he was before,
Yet still I sit and wait
Wait for him to walk through my door.

Can this be some mistake?
He's not really gone.
Who am I trying to fool?
But still I must go on.

Another day begins!
I realize that I am wrong.
My brother is really dead -
He is really gone.

*Teglene Burwell
TCF Van Nuys, CA*

Need to Talk to Someone Between Meetings?

TELEPHONE FRIENDS:

The people listed below have volunteered to take your calls:

Linda Houghtby - Long term illness - (734) 591-3062

Catherine Walker - Loss of Only Child - (248) 921-2938

Charli Johnston - Suicide - 734-812-2006

Joe Hofmann - Drug related death - 734-331-9919

Bob Vitolins - A father's grief - (313) 882-8632

Dana and Brandy Bumstead - Loss of an infant -(313) 447-8144

Kathy Rambo - Sudden Death - (734) 306-3930

Remember that our chapter has a Facebook page. It is a closed page, so you just need to search for The Compassionate Friends of Livonia, Michigan and ask to join.

TCF CHAT ROOM

www.compassionatefriends.org

The chat rooms are moderated and are open at different times. There is one open most evenings from 10-11 p.m. They are all moderated which means that all the chat rooms have a trained facilitator in them.

National Mailing Address: PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522; Phone: (630) 990-0010; Toll Free: (877)969-1101; Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

OTHER TCF CHAPTERS IN OUR AREA:

Ann Arbor: Mike Fedel: MikeFedela2@gmail.com; 734-998-0360 ; 3rd Sunday, 2:30 to 4:30 pm - First Presbyterian Church (Vance Room)1432 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

St. Clair Shores: 2nd Wed. Kathy Joerin ; 586-293-6176, KJMac21@aol.com

Detroit: Kellie West Outer Drive Methodist Church, 12065 West Outer Drive, Detroit ; 2nd Wed., 6:30 - 8:30; 734-660-9557.

Troy: St. Paul's Methodist Church, 620 Romeo, Rochester, MI 3rd Thursday 7-9; Tina@586-634-0239

Pinckney TCF Chapter: The Christian House of Prayer, 9949 McGregor Road, Pinckney, MI; 2nd Monday of the month, 6 - 8 pm; Jimmy Batchelor - 734-277-9705

Tecumseh TCF Chapter: First Presbyterian Church, 211 W. Chicago, Tecumseh, 4th Sunday of the month, 2-4 pm, Rose Hatchett, 517-270-3308.



Livonia Chapter Page

Your Wings of Love Are Now Eternal

My son, Jason, was just 17 when he died September 21, 1991, in a motorcycle accident. Not only did we lose a son, but a dream that we shared as a family for fourteen years. Even though it has been a long five years, his presence is still felt by those whose lives he touched, especially mine.

At an early age, Jason expressed a desire to "win a gold medal at the Olympics." He spent years of hard work and sacrifice toward making that dream a reality. Not only did he possess a God-given talent in the sport of gymnastics, but he had a burning desire and the motivation to make his dream come true. Jason had an infectious smile and such charisma that it was easy for anyone who met him to get caught up in his dream.

I marveled at his determination and hard work and yet at the same time he had the ability to enjoy life to the

fullest. To this day, when I am exercising and want to cut it short or cheat just a little, I feel his presence and go the extra mile. I will step out of my "comfort zone" at times to experience something new because of the zest for life quality that he had. I recently went white water rafting, although it is not in my nature to be adventurous. I kept thinking how much he would have loved the experience and took him with me in my heart.

Jason met a lady named Jessica at a Puerto Rican meet he competed in. After his death, she called to say she had only known him for three days, but he had extended himself to her and encouraged her in her gymnastics. She was so taken by their brief encounter that she spend 10 days with us the following summer, hoping to get to know the friend she only had known for three days.

A foundation has been established in Jason's honor with scholarships awarded at the yearly Whitfield

Invitational held at the University of Michigan. Two of the 1996 Olympics members are recipients of Jason's scholarships. Many gymnasts will still tell me that Jason is their role model because of the impression he made on them. He would tell them that they can accomplish anything if they just believe in themselves, think big and make it happen.

I have learned from my son that it is not the length of a life that is an important as the impact we made on others while alive. In spite of injuries and setbacks he had at times, he had an incredible ability to "adjust, adapt and overcome." He would visualize himself healing and improving his routines to perfection. I visualize myself healing and going on with my life. I will always be grateful for the pride he has left me with as a parent and hope that I can make him as proud of me as a bereaved parent.

*Cathy Whitfield
TCF, Livonia*

Coming Dates to Remember

May 2 - Annual Balloon Lift
Regular meeting time, but chapter provides balloons for you to release.

Family and friends are welcome. If you would like, you can bring a small plate of a favorite food to share.

September 14

Third Annual Family Picnic at Rotary Park in Livonia. From 1 to 4 pm. Family and friends welcome. More info to follow.

Sibling Sharing Table

We encourage siblings to attend our meetings and meet Amy Golen who will be leading this table. Contact Amy at 313-283-8136 or email at aegolen@gmail.com.

Infant Loss Sharing Table

Our chapter is now offering a sharing table for Infant Loss/Stillborn & Miscarriage. Please contact Michelle Ciemnicki with questions at 734-276-3149 or email at michellejurcak@gmail.com.

New Members

We welcome new members. We are so sorry for the circumstance that has brought you here. Although we have no easy answers, we can offer you understanding through our common experiences. We also know how much courage it took for you to attend.

*Amy Golen whose beloved brother; **Andrew**, Born 7/17; Died 11/5, 29 years*

A Love Gift is a gift of money to Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but may also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, simply a gift from someone who wants to make a donation to help in the work of the Livonia Compassionate Friends. Love Gift form on back page.

- ♥ JoAnne Tappan "In memory of her sons; Kevin & Keith"
- ♥ Marci Merath "My dearest Kayla, 3 years ago the angels carried you off to heaven. We miss you every day! Mom, Dad & Amy - LOVE LIVES FOREVER"
- ♥ Cindy & Matt Stevens "Always in our hearts, Love you Justin"
- ♥ Sylvia & Vincent Fregonara "Michael V. Fregonara, 4 years missed. "I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night" Reaching across time and space, love, always and only Love, save a spot for us... Mom, Dad & Bradbury"
- ♥ Michele & Ray Schmidt "In memory of Erika Anstett. In loving memory of our niece on her 37th birthday. Love, Aunt Michele & Uncle Ray"

TCF Livonia Chapter
Brenda Brummel
10531 Calumet Trail
Gaylord, MI 49735

March 2019

If any of you would be willing to get the newsletter via the internet,
please email me. Thanks, Brenda Brummel

LOVE GIFTS

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Love Gift Donation of \$ _____ in Memory of _____

Message: _____

Direct my gift to: _____ Outreach (Printing, postage, phone , web
_____ General Fund (90% local; 10% national)

Mail to: Rhonda Temple, 25164 Hanover St., Dearborn Heights, MI 48125

April Craft Day

Our Craft Day will be on April 13, 2019 at the home of Kathy Rambo from 10 am. until 1 pm. We are asking for some help for the TCF National Conference in Philadelphia this year in July. We are making tiles with the conference logo on them to sell in the Butterfly Boutique. We would so appreciate your help and if there is enough time you may make a couple tiles for yourself. Any questions, please contact Kathy (734-306-3690) or Gail (734-748-2514). There will be a sign up sheet at the April meeting.