

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



August 2020
Volume 32, Number 8

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:

August 6th - Zoom meeting at 7:00 pm

August 15th - Craft Meeting- see pg. 8

August 18th - 6:30 pm - Chapter
Dinner: TCF Dinner-at Richard's
Family Restaurant, 39305 Plymouth
Rd., Livonia 48150.
Call Kathy 734-306-3930 or
katjrambo@gmail.com

July 31-August 2 - Virtual National
Conference - see page 7

A Note from our Chapter Leadership Our next meeting will be on August 6th! We would like to meet at a park that has restroom facilities, in one of the parks on Hinds Drive, if weather permits. We will post on our The Compassionate Friends of Livonia Michigan facebook page any updates. Please join the facebook page if you have not already done so.

We will have a virtual meeting via Zoom if we cannot meet in the park. Our meeting place, St. Timothy's Pres. Church, is still limiting our group from using the church.

Please contact one of our leaders (numbers below), call the Chapter #734-778-0800, or email Gail if you are interested in meeting at a park for our meeting August 6, 2020. We would all need to bring a lawn chair and your own drink and it would be a way to get together and social distance.

Please contact Gail (angel4gail2016@gmail.com) if you are interested in being included in our Zoom meetings. She will keep your email addresses to use on any of the future Zoom meetings.

If you need additional support, these members have offered their phone numbers in addition to our TCF Livonia Chapter number (734-778-0800):

Joyce Gradinscak – 734-560-6883

Catherine Walker – 248-921-2938

Mary Hartnett – 313-550-5410

Cindy Stevens – 734-837-3722

Judy Cappelli – 734-674-1073

Kathy Rambo – 734-306-3930

Gail Lafferty – 734-748-2514

Please take good care of yourselves.....we want you all to be safe.
Remember: We are all in this together.

Rooms and Things

How many people have suggested to you in subtle and not so subtle ways that you'd be better off if you'd only go ahead and get rid of your child's things and redo the room? You see, they think that the holding on to these things is morbid. These people, who have never suffered the loss of one of their chil-

dren, really do not understand that you have to do your grief work, and whether you do this sad task now or later really doesn't affect the length or depth of your pain.

Some parents need to make the changes and decisions about personal belongings as soon as possible after the death. Having the chore ahead of them is more

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 available only to members



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

*Softly ... may peace
replace heartache
and cherished memories
remain with you always on
your child's birthday*

painful than the doing. These parents are advised, however, to go slowly when disposing of belongings. It may seem to you, also, that not seeing or having anything around to remind you of your dead child will somehow make your pain less. Later, though, when your grief has softened, you may find you need that special something, but by then it's too late.

On the other hand, you may try to keep everything, and it may take many months and several acts of sorting through the belongings at intervals before you're able to decide on just the special things you want to keep as mementos. As time goes by, you will be able to let go of the less important things without it ripping you to pieces. Not everything will forever have the same value for you. You may change in how you feel and find that it comforts instead of hurts to see your subsequent child wearing some of the baby's clothes, or that catching a glimpse of an old familiar shirt on one of your teenagers brings a warm angling

Whether you've made changes or haven't been able to make changes, it's okay. There is no rule about when you do it, so don't let well-meaning friends or relatives make you feel guilty because your needs don't meet their timetables. What we would like to suggest to you is, though there is no rules about when you do it, that you have as a goal eventually making the changes, otherwise the room and things become a shrine, and if you have surviving children or a spouse that may find it very difficult to live in this atmosphere forevermore. If they could be honest with you, many would tell you they don't want their dead sibling closed up in his or her room, as though their dying was something for which they're being punished. Instead, bring the record player and records into the den, or use the backpack and tent or whatever, because it comforts them to feel that their sibling has once again become a part of the family and not relegated to "the room".

I don't think I know of anyone who hasn't kept some belongings of their dead child, so that must be normal. What we learn after the death is that life is tenuous at best, and rather than hanging on to unchanged rooms, try to value the important people who are left in this life, be they family or friends, and savor them along with the memories of your dead child. For when all is said and done, those memories are truly the important part of what you have left of your child. That's a truth that doesn't need changing.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

On Pain and Healing

In pain management used for patients with chronic pain, it is taught not to tighten around the pain but to relax and allow the pain to be present. The idea is that when pain is resisted, it intensifies.

When we breath deeply and acknowledge the presence of pain, it has room to move and can dissi- pate more readily. Pain is there to tell us something, to warn us of possible danger.

This is as true for emotional, spiritual and mental pain as it is for physical pain. When pain speaks, we need to listen. All it takes is paying attention to our pain so that when it comes we remember to breathe and get soft. We don't want to fight with our pain. We want to learn from it.

Time does not heal. But healing does take time. Give yourself the gift of time. To become whole means that as we open to the pain, we open to the loss. We break open and, as a consequence, we get bigger and include more of life. We include what would have been "lost" to us if our hearts and minds had closed against the pain, we include what would have been lost if we had not taken the time to heal. As singer/songwriter Carly Simon tells us: "There's more room in a broken heart."

*From the chapter, "Time Does Not Heal All Wounds," of the book, "Good Grief,"
By: Deborah Morris Coryell*

The Tide Recedes

The tide recedes but leaves behind bright seashells on the sand....
The sun goes down but gentle warmth still lingers on the land....
The music stops and yet, echoes on a sweet refrain....
For every joy that passes, something beautiful remains....
Dear sweet Kristina, even though for now, we are apart...
The beauty of you, lives on, in all of our hearts.

Lisa Comstock, Jeffersontown, KY

Good Old

Summertime?????

The good old summertime has arrived. The time when we usually plan vacations, family reunions, picnics, etc. There are many activities going on, such as ball games, golf, swimming, though for some of us a float trip on an Ozark stream is more enticing. Vacation Bible Schools and ice cream socials are held at churches. We usually adopt a more casual lifestyle, cook outdoors, and free ourselves of rigid schedules. Whatever our interests may be, this is the time for family togetherness. When our family is still intact it can be a wonderful time. If not, it can be a very painful time.

If this is the first summer following the death of your child, you may not have much inclination or energy for the usual activities, although many parents find that doing something physically demanding helps release the tension and anger associated with grief. Some have found a measure of healing and peace working in their yard or garden, or planting a flower garden in memory of their child. Others may feel obligated to attend family activities, and then they find that it does help to get involved.

If you don't feel able to get out and get involved in your usual activities, don't be concerned, just do what you feel like you can do now. Most of us think going away on a vacation or short trip somewhere will help us get

away from the painful reminders of our child's death, and though it may be less painful than it was at home, we soon learn that we take our memories and emotions with us wherever we go. However, a vacation can be an incentive for doing something relaxing and enjoyable, though most of us feel guilty if we enjoy ourselves very soon after our child has died.

When we made vacation plans for the summer following our son's death in February, I was a little apprehensive. We were going to visit our daughter, who had recently moved to Michigan, and invited our daughter-in-law (our son's widow) and her daughters, ages three and five, to accompany us on the vacation. From there, all our group traveled upstate to stay a few days at a lake resort. Our little granddaughters kept the trip upbeat and lively, and we were able to enjoy ourselves for the first time that summer. It was helpful for all of us, even though there were several intense emotional moments. Now we realize that everyone in our family was still grieving, each in their own way, and it would have been helpful to have allowed each one some private time to rest every day.

As newly bereaved parents, we are like pioneers, charting our way through an unknown area to our new destination. We've been told that it is peaceful there, but we can't feel that peace until we arrive. Those who have already made the trip report that life is different, yet good, in that new place. But we find that difficult to believe, because we are still traveling that long, rugged trail, and the end is not yet in sight. "Don't be afraid," we are told, "we made it, and you will make it too. Just take your time, and you will find your way." Those who have made the journey encourage us to believe that we'll make it through the wilderness of grief and find peace.

As one who has found peace at the end of the journey, I'm thankful to those who encouraged me during those dark days when I could not see the way. Their loving support, and my

faith, gave me hope that life could be good and meaningful again, and now it truly is.

If you are still struggling along, unable to see a future without pain and confusion, please reach out to those of us who have been there. We are here to take your hand and help you find the way to healing. Be kind to yourself and others, and take time to relax and remember. Your child would want you to try to find some ways to enjoy life once again, without feeling guilty. This summer you may find the road to renewed hope and recovery.

Lenora Sanders

The Butterflies are Here!

Many of us at TCF hold the butterfly with utmost regard, for it is a symbol of our child's life and death. We think of our children being born into a free and more beautiful existence after the drudgery of a caterpillar's life here on earth.

But what about us? Does the butterfly hold an even deeper meaning for bereaved parents? It seems in fact we have also died. We are never the same after the death of our child. But can we be transformed into a beautiful creature, or are we doomed to be trapped in the web of a cocoon forever? I believe it is simply a matter of choice. We can stay in the silken threads which we have spun for ourselves. It's quite safe there. Perhaps if we isolate ourselves with a really tough cocoon, no one can ever reach in far enough to hurt us again.

But if we take a chance on emerging into a new person, the light of our children's love will have a chance to shine through our newly formed wings. It won't be easy. The grief cocoon holds anger, fear, guilt and despair. But we must work through it. In fact, there's no going around it. All butterflies must work their way through an ugly cocoon.

The butterflies are here. Won't you join them?

Lovingly lifted from Bluegrass Newsletter



Summer Butterflies

It is the first day of August, a typically warm and sunny, summer day in the suburbs of Cincinnati. It is also a little past the eighth anniversary of my son's death from a skateboard fall. These days, when few people (other than my TCF friends) remember my child's 13 years of life, I am frequently reminded of him by magnificent colorful butterflies, soaring everywhere ... in Alaska where our family recently visited, butterflies along the river where we relaxed on weekends, butterflies around our home where he once frolicked. They are everywhere but never have I seen a butterfly in the pharmacy where my prescriptions are filled! Except today.

As bereaved parents, we often seek comfort in something that reassures us that our children are okay and are at peace where they are. My comfort comes from butterflies. The TCF butterfly symbolizes the emergence of our children from life here on earth to a beautiful new freedom; to soar and swoop like the butterfly, to flit its magnificent wings at will, to lend grace and purity to its surroundings for everyone to admire and receive comfort. I frequently mention to the newly bereaved that there may be a message of love for them in the butterflies they see around them. I encourage them to look at the ones that fly nearby.

Today, standing alone in that pharmacy, I was stunned and overcome with joy as I watched that beautiful creature flit and soar, glide, and swoop over my shoulder. I embraced the message as my very own. My son is okay and happy where he is ... and I am comforted and at peace where I am. "Thanks Kevin; I love you too."

SIBS

On the Anniversary of Three Years Without You To My Brother

Thank you for the laughter from wonderful moments we shared and for the comfort given in times of pain and sadness.

Thank you for the happiness with which you've filled my heart and for the smiles you've brought forth from your inner soul.

Thank you for the beautiful memories of sharing life with you and for the pleasure and joy I receive from thinking about you now.

Thank you for being a beautiful and caring Brother to me. You will be

loved and remembered always and forever beyond measure. You were more than a Brother, you were my friend who gave yourself again and again. You opened your heart, you supported me in whatever I did, your big bear hugs will be waiting for me when we are together again. Thank you for touching my life.

Anonymous

BirthDay Wish

Today is my birthday.

The card is signed,
"Love, Mom, Dad, Poco, (and Chris)"
Mom is my mom,
Dad is my dad,
Poco is my poodle,
Chris is my brother.
He's dead.

Seven months and four days

Since he was killed.
Today is my birthday,
and All I want is him.

My present would be Six-feet, seven inches tall
With a tow-head top,
Wide at the shoulders and Narrow at the hips.
Big hand, one hammer thumb,
Blue eyes.
A big heart –
And I'd like him wrapped in life!

He's in a box,
But there's no bow.

*By Shannon Ausman—Asotin,
Washington Bereavement Magazine
September 1992*

Time

It's only been ten years since your death. Yet, time somehow feels surreal. It only felt like yesterday that the world changed and became emptier from your absence. Has it been so long since I last heard you laugh or spent time with you?

Seeing you every day was something I took for granted. And I now have endless time to live with that regret. So many years that I have cried for you and wished it all were different. That time could be turned back to happier days. Where the dark clouds could have lifted and allowed you to see the blue skies that lay ahead. Time would have seen you grow into a man. Instead of being far too young to die. We could have shared a lifetime of beautiful memories. If only we'd had more time.

*Jacqueline Cairns
TCF, Qld – in loving memory of my
brother, Colin Cairns*



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

South Rockwood TCF Chapter: Southwood United Methodist Church, 6311 S. Huron River Drive. South Rockwood, MI 48179; 3rd Tues. of month meeting - 7 pm; Sheri Schooley, Leader; Contact Karen 734-672-7469

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

PLEASE REMEMBER

Sibings are welcome to attend the Livonia Compassionate Friend meetings. We ask that you be at least 16 years old.

Livonia Chapter Page

Annual Picnic

Due to the Covid 19 virus, it has been determined that we will have to cancel the Annual Picnic. Although we know this a a favorite and valued event for the chapter, it is felt that for this year, we will have to cancel.

TCF Virtual Conference



TCF's Virtual Conference will provide an important opportunity for our community to connect in a way that is feasible right now. It also offers the opportunity for many people to attend who may not have been able to do so in the past for a variety of reasons.

The three-day conference will include:

Keynote Sessions	70 plus workshop choices
Sibling Sunday	Candle Lighting Ceremony
Sharing Circles	Silent Auction
Entertainment	

Additional information:

The conference will take place on a Zoom platform with an online registration system. Registration is now open and the fee for the three-day event is \$85 per person.

Go to the National website: www.compassionatefriends.org to register and for more Information about the TCF Walk to Remember. Training and orientation will be offered prior to the conference for attendees who may need some extra technology support in order to participate. We look forward to connecting virtually with your TCF family through an enriching and inspiring virtual event.

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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.

Pam Cartwright, whose beloved son, **Randall**, Born 6/28; Died 5/7; 39 years
Judy Hamilton, whose beloved son, **Kristoper**, Born 11/20; Died 2/23; 27 years
David Harrison, whose beloved son, **Jonathon Rains**, Born 9/12; Died 12/25; 40 years
Stephanie Porter, whose beloved daughter, **Emmy Nesi**, Born 4/29; Died 8/30; 13 years
Ken Ventura, whose beloved son, **Krysten**, Born 4/10; Died 6/14; 31 years

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

August 2020

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



August Craft Day

Our craft day will be on Saturday, August 15, 2020 at the home of Kathy Rambo, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. We will be painting and decorating rocks to celebrate our children. There will be a \$3.00 cost for supplies. Any questions you can e-mail Kathy at Katjrambo@gmail.com or call/text Kathy at (734) 306-3930 or Gail at (734) 748-2514.