

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



August 2021
Volume 33, Number 8

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

Chapter Leader

Joyce Gradinscak
Mary Hartnett
Cindy Stevens
(734-778-0800)

Newsletter Editor

Brenda Brummel
10531 Calumet Trail
Gaylord, MI 49735
231-585-7058
bbwriter59@aol.com

Treasurer

Rhonda Temple
25164 Hanover St.
Dearborn Heights, MI 48125

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 5 - Monthly Chapter Meeting -
see info about meeting on page 7

August 21 -Craft Day
See page 8.

August 17 : 6:00 pm TCF Dinner-at
Richard's Family Restaurant, 39305
Plymouth Rd., Livonia 48150. For more
information, call Kathy 734-306-3930
or katjrambo@gmail.com

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."

Laughter

Can you think of anyone that deserves happiness more than a bereaved parent? I can't! Yet, after your child dies, you find yourself feeling guilty when you laugh or are diverted for a moment from your pain. It's as though there's an unwritten rule that says a parent's depth of grief and love will be measured in direct proportion to the lack of joy and the inability to take pleasure in any part of life again. Laughter is as important to your recovery as tears. It is as vital as the bee to blossom. It provides a balance that you need in your life right now. Many people have survived by finding something funny and thus relieving and releasing some of the stress involved when coping with life's tragedies. If you are able to find something you can laugh about, do it! It doesn't mean you don't love, care, or miss, nor

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>
--------------	-------------------------------------	-------------	------------

Birthdays and Anniversaries have been removed from the Internet version of our newsletter for security purposes.

❖ August ❖


Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

that you have forgotten. It just means you know not to judge your depth of feeling by whether or not you can smile. Grief changes as we go along and it is okay to let go of some of the symptoms of early grief when you are able. To do so in no way insults the memory of your child. Some are afraid to let go of anything for fear they will forget. It is important for you to know that option is not available to you. You will always remember your child. The fact that he or she lived and died is a part of who and what you have been, are, and will be. Most try to be good to themselves by eating the right foods and exercising, with the hope that the end result will be trim bodies and unlined faces. Those things are well and good, but it turns out that the kindest thing you can do for yourself is to develop some lines on your face—laugh lines—for as someone once said, “He who laughs, lasts,” and he also survives in a better way.

The Gap...

The gap between those of us who have lost children and those who have not is profoundly difficult to bridge. No one, whose children are well and intact, can be expected to understand what parents who have lost children have absorbed and what they bear. Our children come to us through every blade of grass, every crack in the sidewalk, every bowl of breakfast cereal. We seek contact with their atoms, their hairbrush, their toothbrush, their clothing. We reach for what was integrally woven into the fabric of our lives, now torn and shredded.

A black hole has been blown through our souls and, indeed, it often does not allow the light to escape. It is a difficult place. For us to enter there is to be cut deeply, and torn anew, each time we go there, by the jagged edges of our loss. Yet we return, again and again, for that is where our children now reside. This will

be so for years to come and it will change us profoundly. At some point in the distant future, the edges of that hole will have tempered and softened but the empty space will remain - a life sentence.

Our friends will change through this. There is no avoiding it. We grieve for our children, in part, through talking about them and our feelings for having lost them. Some go there with us; others cannot and through their denial add a further measure, however unwittingly, to an already heavy burden.

Assuming that we may be feeling “better” six months later is simply “do not get it”. The excruciating and isolating reality that bereaved parents feel is hermetically sealed from the nature of any other human experience. Thus it is a trap - those whose compassion and insight we most need are those for whom we harbor the experience that would allow them that sensitivity and capacity. And yet, somehow there are those, each in their own fashion, who have found a way to reach us and stay, to our comfort. They have understood, again each in their own way, that our children remain our children through our memory of them.

Their memory is sustained through speaking about them and our feelings about their death. Deny this and you deny their life. Deny their life and you no longer have a place in ours. We recognize that we have moved to an emotional place where it is often very difficult to reach us. Our attempts to be normal are painful and the day-to-day carries a silent, screaming anguish that accompanies us, sometimes from moment to moment. Were we to give it its own voice we fear we would become truly unreachable, and so we remain “strong”

for a host of reasons even as the strength saps our energy and drains our will. Were we to act out our true feelings, we would be impossible to be with. We resent having to act normal, yet we dare not do otherwise. People who understand this dynamic are our gold standard. Working our way through this over the years will change us, as does every experience - and extreme experience changes one extremely. We know we will have recovered when, as we have read, it is no longer so painful to be normal. We do not know who we will be at that point or who will still be with us.

We have read that the gap is so difficult that, often, bereaved parents must attempt to reach out to friends and relatives or risk losing them. This is our attempt. For those untarnished by such events, who wish to know in some way what they, thankfully, do not know, read this. It may provide a window that is helpful for people on both sides of the gap.

Carrying On

The road is long and rocky. I stumble every day.

At times I wonder how to go on, but then, I make my way.

The dust I carry on my clothes is a reminder I'll always keep, So that I know how far I've come and remember — the price was steep. Once you walked along with me, but now I walk alone.

The road you took diverged from mine, onto a path much lesser known. You didn't want to carry on. The hardships were too much.

And so you laid down in the grass, and welcomed God's soft touch. Through all the pain of missing you, and trudging through long days,

I never thought I'd find a way to see through such a haze.

But there it was, before my eyes, the comfort I longed to find,

A concept I had never known, cap-

tured in my mind.
Beauty surrounds me every day, and
you are in it too.
The birds, the sunset, the falling rain,
are my new vision of you.
So now I feel you next to me — Or
your spirit, shall I say,
If only in my open mind, but it brings
you back each day.

A Room Just Down the Hall

There's a room just down the hall,
Where there's never a sound at all,
But once these walls knew laughter,
And music from the radio.

There's posters on the wall,
In the room just down the hall,
And love is all that lives here,
In the place that you called home.

On the bed where you dreamed your
dreams,
You were what you wanted to be —
A fireman and a cowboy,
Shootin' straight and riding tall;
And I remember what you wanted to
be
When you grew up — just like me!
And the world was just like heaven
In the room just down the hall.

Now sometimes late at night
By the flickering candlelight,
I find simple comfort
Just lying on your bed.
I finally fall to sleep,
With your picture next to me,
And again my tears find freedom
On the pillow where you laid your
head.

Lying there in the night
I know it'll be all right;
I always feel you close,
I often hear you call,
From the place you now call "home,"
In the room you call your own.
Heaven again lies waiting,
In the room just down the hall.

*Jeremiah Sundown,
TCF Nashville, TN*

Let Life Be Renewed

As I write, I await the airport van and
the beginning of a year of living over-
sees. It is the realization of a lifelong
dream, and I know how fortunate I am.

The feeling of being fortunate is as
much about the fact that I want the
dream again as it is about having it
happen, however. For many years after
Philip's death, now seven and a half
years ago, life became something to be
endured. The energy for dreams, much
less working to achieve them, was
zero. Unfortunately, you know this
road well also.

I write about this renewal of life
because it means so much to me, and
because I did not expect it.

It is startling (and gratifying) to find
my old enthusiasm for life ratcheted
up several notches, and the energy for
work surfacing again. In other words,
I am living with some of myself
that had been submerged all these
years since Philip died. It is good to
have that back, however tempered. I
never thought it would return. When I
mentioned my experience to another
bereaved parent, she said, "I must
admit that I have experienced similar
feelings of renewed energy for life. In
the process of the daily activities of
our lives and the continuous interac-
tion with people, we are moving on,
and so, to hear your renewed interest
in life is understood, and I rejoice."

It isn't that the renewed investment
in life is as it was before our children
died. It is tempered, more thought-
ful, restrained in some ways. I can't
believe anyone could face the hor-
rible trauma we all have and not see
life through different eyes. But what's
important is that the aching pain of the
first few years can indeed give way
to a desire to live and a true interest
in life. I had given up on having my
former enthusiasm and vitality back,
but it returned on its own. I am as sur-
prised as anyone else. If you are feel-
ing renewed and more alive, perhaps
you'll share your feelings with another
bereaved parent. It is the holding out
of hope that enables many of us to

keep going through the darkest days of
those early years.

itty Reeve,

TCF Reprinted -- WNNWA Summer 2002

In the Twilight Zone

Do you remember the Rod Sterling
TV dramas, "The Twilight Zone"? I
was reminded of one recently when I
passed another milestone in my grief
journey.

The last TV show Ruthie and I
watched together was a Twilight
Zone about a mother who kept go-
ing into her daughter's room and we
could only see her go in and then
hear her talking to her daughter. It
was revealed, late in the show, that
her daughter was, in fact, dead. She
missed her so and would go into the
room, shut the door, and visit with her.
I remember that Ruthie thought that
was spooky and said it sounded like
something I would do! Neither of us
could know that, not too long after,
Ruthie would die and I would find out
that I was in my own Twilight Zone!

From time to time in the last 11 years,
I have gone into her room to clean,
put things away, etc., but I had never
packed up her things or really changed
the room much. Everyone said we
would know when the time was right.
As we faced the 11th year since her
death, we realized we had reached that
time. Time to take the next step. So,
in December I went through drawers,
closet, etc. Some things went to our
Family Refuge Center for children
to use and some to our Head Start
program. Some went into boxes to go
under the bed and be there to look at
whenever we want to. Memories went
with each thing and both Jack and I
kept saying — "Remember when...."
"So, does this mean I'm out of the
Twilight Zone? I doubt it — I just visit
it less often! Do I talk to her and feel
she is there with me — absolutely!
Does this mean I "slipped over the
edge"? I think not. I am a mother still
on that journey through grief.

Author unknown

SIBS

Everything Is A First

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday.

Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us.

It's never more than a sentence away from me...NEVER!

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality.

FORGET? How is this possible?

The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere.

Love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say. Nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be?

Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents?

There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me "How are you?"

Here is my answer: "I am mad Dave died at the age of 17.

I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of

other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day.

I will be strong."

Lisa Ann Avoca, PA

Memories of Your Face

I woke this morning
Finding everything in a haze
Wiping tears from my eyes
I saw your smiling face.
I reached out and touched you
Yet all I could feel was pain
You felt nothing
From your life within a frame.
I spoke. Receiving no reply,
I told you that I loved you
I asked you why?
I'll never have another
No one to take your place
All I have, little brother, are memories
and the picture of your face.

Lisa Walmsley,
TCF, Sarasota, FL

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

Marlene 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: 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808 Wixom, MI 48393

Phone: 877-969-0010; 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 Thursday7-9; 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, Marsha & Jeff DiCenzo 517-918-5608 & 517-358-1883



Someday

Someday, it won't hurt so bad and I'll be able to smile again.

Someday, the tears won't flow quite as freely whenever I think of what might have been.

Someday, the answers to "why" and "what if" won't be quite as important.

Someday, I'll be able to use what your death has taught me to help others with their grief.

Someday, I'll be healed enough to celebrate your life as much as I now dwell on your death.

And someday, maybe tomorrow, I'll learn to accept the things I cannot change...But, for today...I think I'll just be sad.

Steve Channing

PLEASE REMEMBER

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

Livonia Chapter Page

August Meeting

Meeting August 5th at 7:00 pm at St. Timothy's Church, 16700 Newburgh Road, Livonia. Please bring your own drink.
The church does not require masks so it is your decision to wear one.

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.

- ♥ Rob & Joyce Grandinscak "In memory of Adam. Happy Birthday Babe! Missing you, Love Mom Dad"
 - ♥ Dora Hinojosa
 - ♥ Tim & Jan Anstett "In loving memory of Erika Kelly. We love & miss you always. Forever in our hearts"
 - ♥ Ashish Garg "In memory of Vedaant. Love you & miss you all the time"
-

Let Us Celebrate Their Births - continued

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.

Janet Bellant , whose beloved son, **Jimmy Lukasiewicz**, Born 7/21; Died 9/27; 43 years

Louis Mansfield , whose beloved son, **Donald L Ordway**, Born 9/9; Died 6/2; 51 years

Marlene Ordway, whose beloved brother, **Donald L Ordway**, Born 9/9; Died 6/2; 51 years

No Man

I did something today that no man
should have to do.
I weeded around your grave.
The sun was starting to set.
I could hear the crickets in the trees.
I could feel the coolness of the autumn
on the evening breeze.
The same coolness I can feel creeping
into my heart.
As I bent to kiss your stone good-bye.
It was warm.
Once again, you have told me your
love still lives.
Just in a different place.

Daryl Hutson,

BP/USA Montgomery County, IN

A Circle of Chairs

A circle of chairs and boxes of tissues,
A roomful of tears and emotional is-
sues.
Frightening at first, I did not want to
enter
Into this strange group, and be in the
center.

What I soon learned, as we sat side by
side,

We were bound by the love of our
children who died.

Each shattered heart,
Desperately seeking a moment of
peace,

From the pain and the weeping.
So many things different, and yet all
the same,

Hearts lost in a fog of loss and pain.
Those who have journeyed, much
further than me,
Reached out in comfort, listened
quietly.
Each shattered heart spoke, and the
tissues were passed,
We never avoid speaking of the past.
This circle of friends have found a
bond,
And here I'm still known as "Tony's
Mom."
Slowly, I've found I can reach out to
others
Who are newly bereaved, fathers and
mothers.
Strength I have found in this circle of
chairs,
To grieve and to heal
And to show that we care.

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

August 2021

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



Our Craft day will be on Saturday, August 21, 2021 from 10 am to 1 pm at the home of Kathy Rambo.

We will be making angel pins. All supplies are provided and cost is \$3.00. Please let us know if you are attending by calling Kathy at 734-306-3930 or email: katjrambo@gmail.com.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the August TCF Chapter meeting and examples of our cute angels.

Hope you can attend.