

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



July 2021
Volume 33, Number 7

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:

July 1 - Monthly Chapter Meeting - see
info about meeting on page 7.

No Craft Day in July

July 20 : 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

July 2021- Virtual International TCF
Conference. See page 8.

Fireworks Are Like the Love in our Hearts

July brings Central Oregonians lingering blue skies, lazy afternoons and the Fourth of July celebration, complete with the grand fireworks finale bolting from the top of Pilot Butte. This was one of my son's favorite holidays. When he was six I asked him why fireworks were so special to him. He said, "The lights explode in the dark and make the whole sky light up!" That was obvious. I said "Hum?" he gave me one of his "Oh Mom" looks, then went on to say "The fireworks are like the love in our hearts, we should always try to spread our love out to others." I know then and I still am aware today that profound wisdom comes from the lips of our children. From that summer on, in my mind, fireworks have been a triumphant testament of love's enduring power and wonder. I miss my son, Joshua, terribly. I comfort myself knowing that his wisdom and kindness were precious gifts in my life.

Wherever you are on the Fourth of July, I hope that the splendor of sparkling fireworks might comfort as you acknowledge that the love you hold dear for your child is the light that is able to shine through you. We all have known grief well, yet as compassionate friends we need not walk alone in the darkness. We can lighten the path for

others.

Grief can cripple and destroy us, but as we gather to share each other's burden, we are able to gain strength. Love for our children is our common flame, sharing and caring keep the flames afire. I look forward to our next meeting and the opportunity to hug and listen to my comrades.

Jane Oja
TCP/Central Oregon Chapter

And the Rockets Red Glare

I watched the spectacular bursts of colors. It was always such a treat. The star bursts, the swirls, the straight ones, making their noisy banging trajectories into the night time sky.

Throughout these exciting displays, tears ran down my face. Inconceivable that I am here to enjoy this and you, my beautiful Cheryl, are not.

Then new thoughts rolled through my mind. Perhaps you are viewing the fireworks and many more from a higher vantage point, where the colors and designs shine more vividly. Perhaps you are seeing and understanding things that I can neither see nor understand. Perhaps your world is filled with rainbows and flowers and butterflies. Perhaps you are surrounded by love, music, beauty and unbounded joy. Perhaps my love. I can only hope ...

Carol Silverman

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

Child Parent, Grandparent, Sibling Date Age

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



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

Catching Butterflies

It often hurts to come upon reminders
of my son
Tho' often since I lost him I would
search around for one
Which always brought on sadness and
the tears that I'd shed
were caused by names or faces, all
things that I'd dread.
But then one day I came upon a man
who'd lost his son
I found that things I ran from, he
wouldn't even shun.
But rather he would treasure and I said
I wondered why
He told me that he called them "Catch-
ing Butterflies."
This view of his intrigued me; I
wanted to hear more
And learned that he took all of them
and carefully would store
All of the reminders that I chose to
push away
He would tuck deep down inside his
heart each and every day.
Now a name or likeness when catch-
ing me off guard
Does not upset me as it did and I don't
find it hard
For now instead I see these times as
opportunities
To see my son awakened in these new
fresh memories.

Dottie Williams
TCF/Pittsburgh, PA



On Butterfly Wings

From earth's caterpillars to heaven's
butterflies -
They soar with the angels from the
earth to the sky.
Their wings seem so fragile, translu-
cent and light -
But they transfuse our world giving us
strength in our night.
In silence they appear like messengers
of love,
Bringing hope and comfort from
heaven above.
These beautiful butterflies so graceful
in flight,
Transport us from darkness to color

and light.
So when choosing a symbol to help
grieving parents cope,
What more than a butterfly could best
symbolize hope.
Our hearts stand in awe and hope from
within us springs.
As our hearts take flight - On Butterfly
Wings.

Faye McCord
TCF/Jackson, MS
In loving memory of my son, Lane McCord

Summertime

It sounds so easy. A soft, warm
word-- time to run barefoot, time to
leave windows open all night. Sum-
mertime. Somehow it seems, doesn't
it, that it's especially meant for chil-
dren. Children on beaches, children
on swings, children in large pools,
children in tiny tubs.

We who do not have all of our chil-
dren with us may feel the summer-
time in two ways. One is to remem-
ber shared events and adventures
-- there were so many. Long rides in
a hot car, a nap in the back seat. The
famous question, "Are we there yet?"
Everything from a heat rash to ice
cream cones and sand castles.

For us, another way to feel summer-
time is the special emptiness brought
about by children who are no longer
on this earth. They used to trot along
on hikes in the hills; they used to
gather wood for an evening fire. Now
summer brings us again the melan-
choly awareness of their absence.
Have you ever walked on some
unfamiliar path, surprised about not
having been there with the children?
Even when there's nothing to remem-
ber, we are reminded of the children's
absence.

We have been diminished by death.
Some of us may still have living chil-
dren. Other parents have no children
left. They have lost an only child,
perhaps. Or all of their children died.
And here we are, grateful for the
warmth of summer mornings, aware
of the ripe beauty of nature, trying to
deal with our children's absence with
all the grace of which we are capable.

Often we do not want to burden others
with our grief. Or we may be con-
vinced that others don't wish to share
our distress. We have learned, after all,
that the world around us is not always
able to understand how we feel.

Besides, we were taught to be brave.
Many of us will do everything we can
to appear "normal" after our loss.
But we were also taught to be honest.
And when you feel the hurt, when you
seem almost to be lost in the shadows
of this golden summertime, don't hide
your sorrow. The grief of your spirit
can perhaps be kept a secret on the
outside. Yet, your deepest feelings,
unexpressed, can burn into your exis-
tence with harmful force.

You can be both brave and honest.
You know that it's brave to share grief,
be it old grief or new grief. And re-
vealing that sorrow is also honest. Of
course, nothing can wipe away much
of your pain, but sharing grief is help-
ful. You will know that after you have
expressed the painful sorrow you once
kept hidden, and you find yourself,
finally, smiling at the memories and
the blessings of past summertimes.

Sascha

Vacations Are a Challenge

I'll bet that you never dreamed that
there would be a time when you would
not welcome vacation from work ...
and the daily hassles of routine living.
If you are a newly bereaved parent,
you are probably not looking forward
to the slow pace of summer, cook-
outs, softball, and all the hoopla of
summer, which probably includes a
vacation or getaway.

Surrounded by summer fun, a be-
reaved parent need only to look
around, and there are painful memo-
ries everywhere. When we are faced
with all the living, loving, happy fami-
lies with their children, the anger boils
within, and we feel cheated. So this
year we don't feel like going back to
'the beach cottage we visited for years
or the favorite mountain retreat where
we laid around for a week or two and
relaxed, or the family-oriented amuse-
ment park where the kids had to ride

every ride and see every attraction despite the temperature.

Those of us who have lost adult children also don't look forward to time away. Yes, we fear our memories, too much time to think--too many young people with their families and friends. We don't want to feel the emotions and pain this conjures up.

Yes, vacations can be a challenge to those of us who are newly bereaved and those of us who have been at it a long time. It takes effort to make plans and even feel good about going away ... and it won't ever be the same again without your loved one. While there are many suggestions to follow, ultimately all of us have to determine what is best for us.

For Brenda Holland and her family for the first few years, she consciously changed some of her routines in order to deal with her fears. She could not visit the same places she and her family visited when their son, Todd, was with them. So they tried new experiences, with new people, and in new places. That isn't to say that there were not some down times; however, the faster based vacations worked better because "I could not allow myself too much time to think."

For the first few summers, Brenda had to "dig in the yard, repaint lawn furniture, rearrange the garage, and took on a multitude of busy projects that were put off for lack of time. That was a better vacation for me, then forcing myself to go somewhere and be miserable."

If you can find some enjoyment and relaxation, relish it ... you deserve it, and it does not mean you don't care. It simply means you are healing.

After nine years it has gotten much easier. Now, I walk down the beach and enjoy the solitude, or laugh when I see a toddler, or listen to the joy of kids laughing. It warms my heart. Yes, I miss Todd, but I know he enjoyed every minute of this season. I know that's what he would want for me ... and thank God I can do it once more!

Brenda Holland, TCF/Concord, NC & Barbara April, TCF/Pittsburgh, PA

Waiting for Answers

Years ago I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul. But when I walked out into the spring air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever.

Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory? During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared were true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed. My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede.

If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise? As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. "Just do what feels right to you," she said, "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too. Sometimes the best advice is none at all."

*Mary Clark
TCF/Sugar Land TX*

"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart, I'll stay there forever."
Winnie the Pooh

The Hawk

The air is warm beneath my wings
As I glide in the air for things, I see
A wooden cross, a family brings
Placed carefully here, oh the memories.

I hear them talk, they named this place
The tears they fall and sunset brings
The heavy heart I feel the pain
Of a child now resting here.

The deer in sunset visit the site,
The sun it rises and shines real bright
I can't read the markings on the cross
But know the pain of a young life lost.

I land in a tree over their heads
As they talk of the life this young one led

His love for hiking and my native lands
And all their dreams for him they had.

On this mountain, the stories linger
In the blowing wind his warmth is felt
For this young man gone before his time
Now lives with me on this countryside.

*Lydia Burns
TCF Atlanta*

If Only One More Time

To hear your voice loud and clear.
To see your image as if you're here,
To feel your warmth like you are near,
If only one more time...

To hear you call, "Mom, I'm home"
To keep me company when I'm alone,
To watch you run and grab the phone,
If only one more time...

To watch you sit quietly and read
To buy you things you say you need,
To see you do a thoughtful deed
If only one more time...

To find a note written by you.
To walk upstairs and trip over your shoe.
To comfort you when you're feeling blue,
If only one more time...

To feel your arms in a soft embrace
To see the smile upon your face.
To understand when you needed space
If only one more time.. .

Vicki Riche

SIBS

The following letter, signed "Sibling," appeared in the Louisville, KY newsletter. It is a poignant expression of love and pain that is typical of siblings' reactions. It is hoped that, for those of you with teenagers, it will offer clues leading to freer communications and sharing of feelings.

Dear Parents of "Compassionate Friends":

I am writing to let you know how I feel and maybe how some of the other siblings feel. There have been times when my parents start really getting extra down about my brother. I usually leave the room. I feel that no matter how hard I try, I will say or do something that will hurt them more, or that they won't understand what I'm really trying to say. They already feel enough pain. I really love

them and I understand enough about how they hurt, but I'm just not good at saying what I feel. It seems like it never sounds right. I also hold my emotions back from them. I always hear it is best to let it out, and I do, but not in front of my parents. I'm afraid they might try to hold their emotions back in front of me, so I won't get upset. I've had rough times for the past couple of years, and I'm still having hard times, so I'm always afraid they will hold back if they see me getting upset. I know that would just hurt them more when they try to hold it back. I love to talk about the good times my brother and I had, but I'd just rather be alone when I cry for him. Just once in a while my sister and I can talk about him, but that's the only person I can really talk to. I hope and pray with all my heart that my parents will under-

stand, but I just can't talk to them. I miss my brother a lot, more than I think they really realize. I love and care for them too much to go and upset them even more. Maybe I'm wrong, but please parents, understand how I feel. May we always be close.
Love,
Sibling

An Empty Chair

The first wedding was two years after Alan, my twin-brother, passed away. My second oldest brother was getting married. I was waiting for the question, "When was I going to get married?" I was never asked so I couldn't use my prepared response, "When Alan could be my best man."

I thought if I did get married I would have an empty chair next to me. If Alan couldn't be my best man, I didn't want anyone. My brother's name would appear in the program (that he would have designed) as honorary best man.

This year I turned thirty-six, it was my sixth birthday without Alan. At the restaurant we had made a mistake, the reservation had been made for one too many. I had ended up sitting next to an empty chair.

Although I thought, I was doing better, no longer crying at family events. I now realize that I will not have an empty chair at my wedding, if I can ever bring myself to get married without Alan being there. The loss I feel will always be there but it's much worse seeing an empty chair.

Daniel Yoffee



PLEASE REMEMBER

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

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



Livonia Chapter Page

July Meeting

Meeting July 1 at 7:00 pm at St. Timothy's Church, 16700 Newburgh Road, Livonia. Please bring your own drink and maybe an outside chair in case it is nice out and maybe we can sit outside. 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.

- ♥ Tom & Connie McCann "In memory of our son, Tom Jr on his Angel Day 7/15 & Joe Coffey on his Angel Day 7/26"
 - ♥ Tom & Connie McCann "In memory of our son's Ryan "Ryfro"; Tom Jr, Bryan "Bryfro" Soupis considered a son to our family, Mark "Sparky" Abbott, Joe Coffey & Jim "Jimmy" Vick"
 - ♥ Sandra Weisl "In memory of Scott. Can't believe it is 9 years since you have been gone. Miss & Love you forever. Love, Mom"
 - ♥ Glenn & Dorothy Laswell & Tammy "In memory of Christine Kramis. WE miss you every day. We love you very much"
-

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.

Wilma Baxter, whose beloved daughter, **Lauren**, Born 2/15; Died 5/3; 37 years

Dora Hinojosa, whose beloved son, **Ruben Guzman III**, Born 1/8; Died 7/29; 45 years

Khadijah Nevels, whose beloved daughter, **Cherish**, Born 8/18; Died 3/2; 11 years

Todd and Dianne Lambert, whose beloved son, **Eric**; Born 1/21; Died 4/10; 26 years

Gregory and Patricia Haywood, whose beloved son, **Tyler**; Born 1/11; Died 4/4; 26 years

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares."

Henri Nouwen

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

July 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



TCF's 44th National Conference will be presented virtually July 16-18, 2021. Although we would love to be together in person, we can still connect, support, and gather as a community through our virtual event. Registration is \$90, and includes keynote speakers and over 100 workshops that cover many different aspects of grief. To get more information or to register, go to: <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/event/44th-tcf-national-conference/>