

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



July 2018
Volume 30, Number 7

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

Chapter Leader

Sally Cassidy
Joyce Gradinscak
Catherine Walker
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:

NEXT MEETING - July 5 -- First time tables, sibling table, topic table: Are there times when you like the Mom in Another Day, simply enact a play around other people? Are there those with whom you can be real?

NO CRAFT DAY

July 17 - 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

July 27-29 - National TCF Conference
St. Louis, MO - for information
www.compassionatefriends.org

The Myth of Closure

"When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?" grievors often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievors hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one's room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual.

Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes—"surely then, we will have closure," we think.

We pray...

The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us. Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain—turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course. Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings

or for people we love.

Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn't exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us—the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let's not ever think that we'll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

Ashley Davis Prend, ACSW

Save the Dates!
See page 7 for details.

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

(Names withheld except for members.)



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

Its' Okay to Grieve It's Okay to Grieve.

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned.

It's Okay to Cry.

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to level off and continue our cruise along the stream of life.

It's Okay to Heal.

We do not need to prove we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel guilty, for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death.

It's Okay to Laugh.

Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh.

*Patricia Lufty Nevitt
TCF, Austin TX*

Another Day

Another day, another play
This role assigned to me
I walk, I talk, I live my life
But they don't really see.
I'm pretty good at hiding things
My emotions are at bay
No one seems to worry much
About what I do or say.
But if they only knew the pain
Of each and every breath
The endless days, the sleepless nights
The constant restlessness.
Maybe in my shoes just walk a mile
They would start to understand
The sheer determination
That each new day demands.
I make sure to put my game face on
And go about the day
Hoping nothings tips the balance
Of my very fragile state.

So if you catch me with a look
That seems so far away
Yesterday calls me back to it
Where sweeter memories lay.
Pretend with me, don't let me down
Just play this game with me
It's easier for me to lie
If you don't really see.
So for now, please try and understand
My efforts to conceal
I walk, I talk, I live my life
But some wounds will never heal.
*From the Poems and Prose of Deborah Streb
In loving memory of son, Adam Marano
TCF, Rochester NY*

Driving

You know how it is when you are driving: suddenly you realize you've driven several miles, but you don't remember getting there. With grief the miles are years. Driving is habit. The destination changes; you are to turn left, but you still turn right. When the child in the store calls, "Mom!" I turn the way I always did.

We detour to avoid obstacles. I drive blocks out of my way to bypass his playground. If you are old enough, you will see a car like one you owned when you were young, and you will travel back through time. Yesterday, I saw my child in the passenger seat of a small car approaching a red light. I changed lanes to get a better look. His head was the same, his blue eyes familiar. He was close, but his mother drove him away.

I should have driven forward, but I couldn't. Wiping my eyes, I could see in my rear-view mirror the driver behind me honking his horn, screaming, "What's the matter with you?" The question I was asking myself.

*Shelly Wagner,
The Andrew Poems, 1994.*

Miscarriage - The Unrecognized Tragedy

Though it's been almost three years since I experienced a miscarriage, it still evokes painful memories. My husband and I had two healthy daughters at the time and were eagerly anticipating the arrival of our third child. The

little one was to complete our family.

But at 18 weeks gestation, things went awry, and we lost our wee son. I remember experiencing an overwhelming feeling of emptiness as I left the hospital without our baby. Denial, then shock, sadness and anger caused anguish over the "whys?" and "what ifs?" It wasn't long before I found out how miscarriage may be trivialized as an insignificant occurrence.

My physician, who had not been present when I delivered the baby, confronted me a few hours later. "It was a boy," I sobbed. "Oh," she remarked in an offhanded way, "I didn't see it." I vividly remember my anger toward her nonchalant manner and the way she referred to him as an "it." Don't you know that was our baby, our little son?, I thought. Please don't minimize our loss.

"You have other children at home, don't you?" she continued. Yes, I was screaming inside, but don't you realize that each child is unique and special in his or her own right? Having two at home doesn't in any way lessen the sorrow I feel for this baby. "Go home and enjoy your summer," she added later. "You can start trying again in another three months." Enjoy my summer?! This miscarriage had literally knocked me off my feet. There I was, an adult mother of two, reduced to tears whenever I saw a pregnant woman or new baby. (They seemed to be everywhere I went!) There was no denying the intense emotions I felt. My husband and daughters, as well, were trying to deal with the loss in their individual ways. Even though I tried, it was not an enjoyable summer. Life didn't automatically revert back to normal.

Yet my heartache was misunderstood not only by my physician, but by others as well. I was given the impression that it was inappropriate and even abnormal to be mourning. There was a conflict between the way I actually felt and the way society expected me to feel. I began to think I must be losing it.

Fortunately, I had a deep need to find out all I could about miscarriage. I read avidly, attended support group meetings and talked to other women who had been through a similar experience. I was relieved to find out that my reactions were healthy and normal. Until then, I didn't know that I was going through the grieving process.

The tears, along with the questioning, the heart-to-heart talks with my family and friends, and the memorial service to say goodbye to our baby all helped me to heal.

A loss is a loss. Just because it's named "miscarriage" doesn't mean that it's insignificant. Nothing has ever affected me so deeply Though the deep sorrow I felt has since subsided, I realize that I'll never completely "get over" him. There are still times that I long to hold our son, to watch him grow, to love him I know I'll never forget.

Sara Winslow, Bereavement Magazine

Summertime

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

We who do not have all of our children with us may feel the summertime in two ways. One is to remember 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 summertime 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 melancholy 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 remember, we are reminded of the children's absence.

We have been diminished by death. Some of us may still have living children. 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 convinced 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 existence 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 revealing that sorrow is also honest. Of course, nothing can wipe away much of your pain, but sharing grief is helpful. 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 Wagner

The following letter was written by a Dad after the death of his son due to an overdose. The letter was suggested as a means of therapy. Thank you, Roger, for sharing.

Good bye to Emotional Pain

Dear Kelly, my son, you made your Mother and Father very happy just by being born. I have been reviewing our

relationship and have discovered some things I want to tell you.

I apologize for cutting your phone service, for losing faith in you, doubting you, demeaning you, pushing you verbally. I was only trying to wake you up! I forgive you for your addiction, behavior and attitude. I just didn't understand. I acknowledge all your shortcomings and I refuse to let them hurt me anymore.

I want you to know I'll always love you. I'll never forget you were my son and never forget the good and enduring memories. I want you to know I appreciate your being born and having you as a son. I am glad I had the time I had to be your Dad. Thanks for playing baseball and batting left like me. I will always be proud of you.

I have to go now and I have to let go of the pain. I love you. I miss your laugh. It's been five years.

Good bye,

Your Dad

Roger Shanks

TCF, Livonia, MI

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

Raffle Basket

Our TCF group would like to donate a basket from Michigan for the raffle

at the National Conference in July at St. Louis, MO. If you would like to donate an item/items we would appreciate your help. Remember items will need to be shipped so we need no big glass items (like wine etc.) and we will need all items by the July meeting. Thanks for any donations you can help with.



Alan Pedersen to Perform at September Meeting

Alan Pedersen is an award-winning speaker, songwriter and recording artist. His inspirational message of hope

and his music have resonated deeply with those facing a loss or adversity in their lives and have made him one of the most popular and in-demand presenters in the world on finding hope after loss. Since the death of his 18-year-old daughter Ashley in 2001, Alan's tour is called, "Angels Across the USA". His tour will be visiting over 300 cities in 2018. He travels the country in his special van that commemorates loved ones and speaks to groups through faith-based organizations, hospices, local Chapters of The Compassionate Friends, and many other types of organizations who minister to bereaved families. He offers CDs of his music as well as butterflies that can be placed on the van.

Alan also successfully served four years as the Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends.

Buttons Available

If you would like a button made with your child's picture, contact Laura Myers (lmyers@twmi.rr.com).

The following names were accidentally left off the printed version of the June Newsletter. We are so sorry for this omission

Child Name	Parent's Name	Angel Date	Age
(Names withheld except for members)			

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 sons; Ryan 'Ryfro', Tom Jr., Bryan 'Bryfro' Soupis considered son to our family & Mark 'Sparky' Abbott, Joe Coffey, Jim 'Jimmy' Vick"
- ♥ Josie Knorp "Just accept life on life's terms"
- ♥ Marilyn Berman "To my son Stuart, you light the heavens with a radiance that will never die. You'll always be '38'"
- ♥ Cindy Stevens "Love you always Justin"
- ♥ Tom & Janice Manzella "In memory of Justin"
- ♥ Sonny & Brenda Fields "In memory of Jordan John Fields. Always in our hearts, Love Mom & Dad"
- ♥ Susan Steinberg "In memory of Shannon. We love you and miss you every day, Mom, Dad, Todd, Chris, Ajax"
- ♥ Sandra Weisl "In memory of Scott Weisl. Can't believe it's been 6 years. Miss you so much. Love, Mom"
- ♥ Lee & Rhonda Temple "In memory of Alyssa 'PeeWee', every day you are missed and every moment you are loved. We love you with all of our heart and soul. Mom, Dad, Justin and Brandon"

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.

Josie Knorp whose beloved son; **Derek Gravelle**, Born 9/30; Died 1/15, 36 years

Forever on My Mind

When I attended my first meeting of the Bergen-Passaic Compassionate Friends, it was the day after my fifth birthday without my twin brother Alan. Up to then I was working nights and unable to attend meetings. Nine months later, May 1998 at a chapter meeting someone in the circle spoke of the tenth anniversary of his or her child's death. They said they no longer think of their child everyday and it didn't bother them. This was shocking to me, not to mention upsetting. I couldn't imagine living a day without thoughts of him - both happy and sad. I went home very upset.

Even after five years I always thought of him each and everyday. To this day I will lick the bowl of frosting and think of the times we fought over the bowl. After a snowstorm I write his initials in the snow. When I hear something funny I think of him. But I also think of all that he has missed. He would have gotten to know his six, soon to be seven nieces and nephews. We would have been able to enjoy many vacations together.

This June will be the ninth anniversary of his death. With the passing of time I have adjusted to not talking to him everyday (we both had 800#'s at work). I do think of what he would say when I have a problem to work out. I think the part of the old me is returning. I have started to exercise again. This is something I used to love to

do before Alan got sick. I have taken steps to advance my career, something I was planning at the time of his death. I also think I took on some of his traits like becoming a better writer and not emptying the laundry basket after each wash.

There are now many more good days than bad. But almost nine years after Alan's death, I am probably the only adult male to cry at a children's movie. In "Rugrats in Paris" Chucky's father remarries sometime after his mothers death. Tommy is thrilled that he will have two mommies, one on earth and one in heaven. I am forced to remember that I can't have another Alan.

I have given myself a job that I love: The job of keeping Alan's memory alive. I do this by putting this newsletter together, collecting license plates, with his name, for each new state that I visit, donating to his scholarship fund and in many other ways.

When "Phantom of the Opera" opened on Broadway I had no desire to see it That was until it opened in Philadelphia, after Alan's death. Alan was a publicist in Philly and the show was playing at the only theatre where I had not seen something Alan had publicized. One of the songs has a line "There will never be a day in which I won't think of you." I think this will be true for a long time to come.

- Daniel Yoffee
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Memories

The certain special memories
That follow me each day,
Cast your shadow in my life
In a certain way.
Sometimes the blowing wind
Or the lyrics of a song,
Make me stop and think of you
Sometimes all day long.
Memories are good to have
To share and keep in my heart,
Just knowing that you're still inside
Makes sure we'll never part.

Collette Covington
TCF, Lake Charles LA

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 Thursday7-9; 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.



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

July 2018

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)



The Compassionate Friends of Livonia
Would like to welcome you to the
'2nd Annual'
Family and Friends Picnic of Hope & Healing
Sunday, September 16th
12p - 5p
@ Rotary Park - in Livonia
(off 6 mile between Merriman and Farmington)
\$10 per family
please bring your favorite dish to pass
(meat is being donated)
Any questions please contact Rhonda Temple @ 313 477 9889
(alcohol not permitted)