

# The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

## Livonia, Michigan Chapter



**June 2020**  
**Volume 32, Number 6**

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

### Chapter Leader

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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:

See note on page 1



***A Note from our Chapter Leadership*** ..... Since our “Stay Home, Stay Safe” is continuing this month because of the COVID-19 virus, and we want our Chapter to continue to be safe and all of you to take care of yourselves. .... our JUNE CHAPTER MEETING IS CANCELLED. All activities including craft day and TCF dinner are canceled for the month. We are sorry about the cancellations and we will keep you posted when our activities will resume. We urge you to check our Livonia Facebook page (The Compassionate Friends of Livonia Michigan) for any updates. If you are not a member of this Facebook page, just search for the name and ask to join ... you will have to answer 3 questions and our moderator will approve you. This is a way to keep in contact with our members and you can post your thoughts or ask questions on this page. 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

We will be having a ZOOM MEETING ON JUNE 4, 2020 AT 7 P.M. as a virtual June meeting. If you are interested, please contact Gail via email at [angel4gail2016@gmail.com](mailto:angel4gail2016@gmail.com) for more information. She will need your email address to invite you to the zoom meeting.

Please take good care of yourselves.....we want you all to be safe.

Remember: We are all in this together.

We need not walk alone; We are the Compassionate Friends.

### A Bear Hug for Father's Day

As Father's Day approaches, we are reminded of the significant contributions and unique love of fathers and stepfathers. Their defined role, after the death of their children, is to sup-

port their wives and surviving children. But their pain is deep.

Men, by their nature and in response to our society's expectations, do not usually grieve as openly as women. They do not talk as candidly about their loss. They generally do not reach out to

# **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 to protect privacy. Names available to members.*



## **Let Us Celebrate Their Births**

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

others for comfort. They are, after all, the rock, the solid center of the family. Their wife's pain supersedes their pain because women are fragile. Or so we are told.

Yet, as I look into the eyes of so many bereaved fathers, I see a deep, gripping pain. The tears left unshed, the words that are never spoken, the anger, guilt and agony....all remain in the eyes of the bereaved father.

What can a father do? Talk with other bereaved fathers. Read books written by bereaved fathers. Talk with spouses, private counselors and close friends who are not as structured in their "male" societal roles. Try to attend three meetings of Compassionate Friends. You don't have to talk. But you might decide to express a single thought or idea, logically presented, to the small group. You might find peace in this place, and then again, you might not. But, as my own dad often said, "Step up to the plate and see what happens." He was a pretty wise man.....a child of the depression, a football player, Greatest Generation WW II Marine, a fighter, a provider, a protector.....a man's man. He endured much in his 78 years, and I only saw him cry a few times.

But when his friend lost a child, my tough dad was the first one to reach out with a bear hug that wouldn't let go until the tears began to flow. They both cried. They both knew that the agony of losing a child was far worse than the horrors of war. Together, they cried.

Happy Father's Day....May your bear hugs be many and your memories become sweeter with each passing year. May your child live forever in your heart so that peace embraces you always.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

*In memory of my son, Todd Mennen And my father, James M. Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX*

## In The Silence

In the silence you hear me,  
In the silence I am here.

In the silence you can feel me,  
In the silence it is clear....  
That my spirit hasn't left you,

I am just a thought away,  
You can see me in the shadows,  
Anytime you look my way.  
Look for me in the sunshine,  
And in the stars at night.

In the wind, trees and flowers,  
Everything that is in sight.  
Talk to me, say my name,  
Know that I'm still here,  
In my death I have a new life,  
And one day it will be clear.  
So talk to me and look for me  
In everything you do,

For I haven't gone so far away,  
I'm really right next to you.

Joy Curnutt

*Reprinted from TCF Bridgewater, NJ May  
2006 Newsletter*

## Letter to A Friend

Grief is hard on friendships, but it doesn't have to be. Sometimes, all it takes is a little honesty between friends. If we gently and lovingly explain what we need from the relationship during our time of grief, and what we are willing to do in return, we can turn even a lukewarm friendship into something special. Share the following letter with a friend over lunch.

You'll both be glad you did.

*"Dear Friend,*

*Please be patient with me; I need to grieve in my own way and in my own time. Please don't take away my grief or try to fix my pain. The best thing you can do is listen to me and let me cry on your shoulder. Don't be afraid to cry with me. Your tears will tell me how much you care.*

*Please forgive me if I seem insensitive to your problems. I feel depleted and drained, like an empty vessel, with nothing left to give. Please let me express my feelings and talk about my memories. Feel free to share your own stories of my loved one with me. I need*

*to hear them.*

*Please understand why I must turn a deaf ear to criticism or tired clichés. I can't handle another person telling me that time heals all wounds. Please don't try to find the 'right' words to say to me; there's nothing you can say to take away the hurt. What I need are hugs, not words.*

*Please don't push me to do things I'm not ready to do, or feel hurt if I seem withdrawn. This is a necessary part of my recovery. Please don't stop calling me. You might think you're respecting my privacy, but to me it feels like abandonment.*

*Please don't expect me to be the same as I was before. I've been through a traumatic experience and I'm a different person. Please accept me for who I am today.*

*In return for your loving support I promise that, after I've worked through my grief, I will be a more loving, caring, sensitive and compassionate friend - because I have learned from the best.*

Love,  
"(your name)"

## Fathers...the hidden grievers

Fathers are often referred to as the hidden grievers. When a child dies, thoughts generally go to the mothers—the agony they most certainly are suffering, their loneliness, emptiness, now that someone who was once a part of them is gone. Women tend to grieve outwardly, talking to their friends, crying, seeking out supportive groups and friends to be with and with whom to share their burden of sorrow.

Men, on the other hand, have a much more inward grieving style. Men are usually more factual than emotional. They accept more readily that nothing they say or do will reverse the situation; their child is irrecoverably gone from this earth. They may weep at times, but that is not their primary mode of mourning. A man may throw

himself into his job with fervor, perhaps to help alleviate the feeling that as the “family protector,” he has failed to keep each member safe. He may begin or continue a project, or start a new activity, in memory of his loved one, to whom he dedicates his efforts.

Men are more concrete in their thinking, but that does not mean they grieve less. What it often does mean is that they get less emotional support; people see them return to work, keep busy at home, and assume “they’re over it.” Little do others realize that men agonize through their grief and mourning fully as much as women, and appreciate just as much the caring word, the hug, a recalled memory, a shared moment of silence.

Perhaps the best gift you could ever give a grieving father on Father’s Day is the recognition of his loss, and affirming him as a father in mourning. A book especially for men in grief; a card recognizing that he is missing one of those who made him a father, yet he is still a father; a gift in memory of his child; or simply a hug, an arm around the shoulder, or a compassionate word will assure him that although he does not grieve outwardly much, those who truly care about him have not forgotten.

*Lovingly Lifted from TCF South Suburban Chapter Evergreen Park, IL Newsletter, Volume XI Number 5*

## What Might Have Been

There is a place I go to stand and think every Sunday for the past seven years.



I feel sadness as I walk from the car to my spot. It still has the power to bring me to tears.

I stand in the place where one day I will be.

Same prayers, same questions, over and over again.

I have one lingering thought every time I’m here.

I’ve never stopped wondering what might have been.

I think about things I would have done differently.

Other things could remain the same.

It saddens me to think that all we have left

Are memories, pictures and a stone that bears his name.

I close my eyes and think about the future.

Memories of the past echo through my mind.

I hope he can somehow feel the love From all of us who were left behind.

There’s not a day that goes by that I don’t wonder

What a wonderful life this would be.

No more why’s, no what if’s, no more self pity.

Once again a family of four instead of three.

Somehow we’ve been able to live with what is.

To know the time will come when we’ll meet again.

The dreams buried beneath that stone make me wonder

We’ll never know what might have been.

When I’m ready to leave this spot and go back home

I always touch his name carved in that stone.

I know that I will never forget how we cried,

When we stop to remember...the day the music died.

*Tom Murphy Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy*

## On Gratitude

My feet were cold from the icy pavement as I waited for the morning bus. The bitter winter was receding and I was working hard on gratitude. I bent my head deeper into my scarf and saw a penny in the street.

I had just returned from a regional meeting of The Compassionate Friends in Green Bay, Wisconsin. A presenter held up his ‘Pennies from Heaven’ and declared that signs from our loved ones are everywhere. I

wonder...

I picked up that penny and found my reading glasses.

I work on gratitude with some skepticism. Was this a treasure or just a muddy little coin? The date imprinted in the copper became clear—1983—the year my son was born.

Surprise and tears triggered by that date immediately washed across my face. I no longer felt cold. I meandered through memories of a day in July some 20+ years ago when I delivered that child.

“Collect yourself,” I said to myself under my breath. I might scare my mass transit bus mates. In the cold air I turned my face away from the others and watched my breath puff into icy clouds.

The bus appeared and I boarded with everyone else. I was a penny richer that day and grateful beyond measure for the treasure trove of memories that lay in my hand.

*Monica Colberg  
TCF Minneapolis, MN*

## Older Grief

Older grief is gentler. It’s about sudden tears swept in by a strand of music. It’s about haunting echoes of first pain at Anniversaries. It’s about feeling his presence for an instant one day while I’m dusting his room. It’s about early pictures that invite me to fold him in my arms again. It’s about memories blown in on wisps of wood smoke and sea scents.

Older grief is about aching in gentler ways, rarer longing, less engulfing fire. Older grief is about searing pain wrought into tenderness.

*Linda Zelenka  
TCF, Jacksonville, FL*

## Grief is Not. . .

*Grief is not a mountain to be climbed,  
with the strong reaching the summit  
long before the weak.*

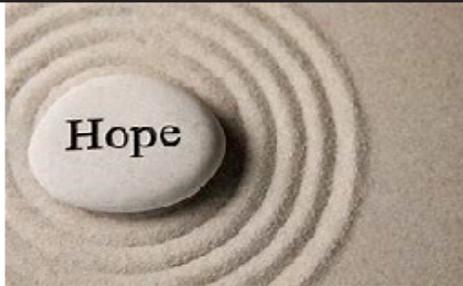
*Grief is not an athletic event,  
with stop watches timing our progress.  
Grief is a walk through loss and pain  
with no competition and no time trails.*

*~Author Unknown*

# Livonia Chapter Page

**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.

♥ Sandra Weisl "In memory of my son Scott Weisl. Happy 50th birthday. Miss you so much. Love you forever, Mom"



The Compassionate Friends of Livonia

would like to welcome you to the

'4th Annual'

Family and Friends Picnic of Hope & Healing

Sunday, August 30th

1p - 4p

@ Nankin Mills - Hines Park - Westland

(corner of Ann Arbor Trail & Hines Drive)

\$10 per family

please bring your favorite dish to pass

Any questions please contact Cindy Stevens @ 734-837-3722

(alcohol not permitted)

## 2020 TCF National Conference Cancelled

This year's National TCF Conference scheduled for July 24-26, 2020 in Atlanta, GA has been cancelled due to the Corona Virus. Since this has happened, we will not need donations for the Michigan Basket that we usually donate to the auction. We will be able to participate in the conference scheduled for Detroit in July 9-11, 2021 and will ask for donations then.

Thank you!



## Shari O'Loughlin

Meet Shari O'Loughlin the new Executive Director of the Compassionate Friends. Shari was the Chief Operating Officer of a technology company when her fourteen year old son was killed in an airplane accident. In coping with her loss, Shari turned to the Children's Grief Center of New Mexico and eventually took on a leadership position there. She wrote a book about her experience titled "Life from the Ashes; Finding Signs of Hope After the Loss of Your Child." She also started a life coaching business to help people cope with all kinds of loss. She has been affiliated with TCF since the death of her son 7 1/2 years ago and serves in memory of her son, Connor and her sister, Patty.

## There's An Elephant in the Room

There's an elephant in the room.

It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get around it.

Yet we squeeze by with, "How are you?" and "I'm fine," and a thousand other forms of trivial chatter. We talk about the weather. We talk about work.

We talk about everything else, except the elephant in the room.

There's an elephant in the room.

We all know it's there. We are thinking about the elephant as we talk together. It is constantly on our minds.

For, you see, it is a very large

elephant.

It has hurt us all.

But we don't talk about the elephant in the room.

Oh, please say his (her) name.

Oh, please say his (her) name again.

Oh, please, let's talk about the elephant in the room.

For if we talk about his (her) death, perhaps we can talk about his (her) life. Can I say his (her) name to you and not have you look away?

For if I cannot, then you are leaving me....

alone....

in a room....

with an elephant

Terry Kettering

Courage

My brother died three years ago when he was seventeen years old. It was an accident when he fell while hiking in the mountains. I was fifteen and my brother was my hero. I would do anything to make him proud. When I lost him, I could have just given up. I have the courage to love people even though I know that I could lose them. I had many opportunities to just forget everyone else and lose myself. My brother was my best friend and when he died I could have too.

I decided that he would not have wanted me to throw my life away. I try my hardest to work hard in school and live up to what his expectations would have been. I am not living just for him.

I am living for myself. A lot of people like to escape their problems by drinking or doing drugs. Alcohol and drugs only make problems worse because escaping a problem is not solving the problem. Self-respect means knowing who you are and treating yourself with dignity. I want people to look at me and to respect me. Staying in school and working to my potential is essential for respect. People cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. As Shakespeare said, "This above all else, to thine own self be true."

I do not make choices based on what the popular decision is. I base my thoughts and ideas on what I believe is right and important. I know that my brother would have been proud of me, because I made it through the most difficult time in my life, without him. I kept living when I lost the most impor-

tant person in the world to me.

Courage is to keep fighting even though it looks like you are going to lose. When he died, I felt the world crash down on me. Everything I ever hoped for just seemed empty. Even now sometimes it will just hit me that my brother is gone. I have to keep on living and facing the world because that is what life is all about. Sometimes things happen that seem impossible to face. If I do not face my problems, who will?

Life is not supposed to be easy but it is not devastating either. There are so many wonderful things that happen and I have to have the courage to realize it. Life is not just a long line of problems. It is also a long line of answers. I need courage and self-respect to find these answers. I have to trust myself and my future that everything will work out. It always does. The answers to life's problems can only be found through hard work and belief in yourself. My belief in myself comes from a big brother who always had faith in me.

*Patricia Kelley  
TCF Richmond, VA I  
n Memory of my brother, Sean*

Not the Same

He was a very nice man, like so many others, and yet he was so different. His quick smile and gentle ways were like those of others and yet, he was so uncommon.

He was kind and loving with unshakable faith like others, and yet he was so unique.

He was a dutiful soldier who gave his life like many others, and yet he was so special.

The same as others? No  
Not to those who knew and loved him.  
He was himself, an individual, and he was my brother!

*Pam Miller Farrell  
TCF Evansville, IL*

**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](http://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](http://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, Rose Hatchett, 517-270-3308.



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

June 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

