

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



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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:

NEXT MEETING- November 7 -First time tables, sibling table, Infant loss table, topic table: "Can you still find gratitude in the midst of your grief?"

November 19: 6:30 pm TCF Dinner- at Richard's Family Restaurant, 39305 Plymouth Rd., Livonia 48150. sign up at meeting or call Kathy 734-306-3930 or katjrambo@gmail.com

November 23 - Craft Day - see page 8

December 8 - Annual Compassionate Friend Candle Lighting - Kellogg Park see page 7.

Thanksgiving Article

A very difficult area of functioning is coming to grips with the knowledge that there is absolutely no way of getting around holidays despite your best efforts to avoid them. And they are horrendous times for many years. Their pain cannot be minimized. But they still must be faced.

One family, trying to avoid Thanksgiving— which was the dead child's birthday as well— decided that family gatherings were no longer for them. They would travel or simply ignore the festivities.

One day the mother came upon her ten-year-old daughter crying and asked what was wrong. "She was sobbing," reported the mother. "All the children in school had told of their plans and made table decorations for the holiday and Lynn felt completely removed from her classmates. She cried that she was not only deprived of her brother who was dead, but she couldn't even have Thanksgiving dinner and a turkey!"

"I listened to her and held her in my arms and cried. What she was saying made sense. After all, we still had three living children. They also mattered. That night I talked to my husband and we decided that, no matter how bleak and empty it would be, we would have a traditional Thanksgiving dinner." The mother said the family sat around the table, very quietly at first. The father

said grace and thanked the Lord for a bountiful meal. When he was through, their ten-year-old said she had something to add, "I want to thank Mommy and Daddy for making this very special dinner for our family. And most of all I want to thank you God for having let us have my brother, Eric, for six years." The mother, who will never forget what her daughter said, told me there was not a dry eye at the table for a few minutes. But gradually, as the meal progressed, they made an effort to discuss why the holiday was celebrated. From there, the parents told of amusing experiences at Thanksgiving dinners in their younger years.

The mother said she planned to tell the stories to lighten the atmosphere just as carefully as she planned the menu. By the time the meal was over, the parents discovered what had been built up in their minds as unsurvivable had become just another turning point.

There will be many such turning points as you work your way forward. You have already survived what you were certain you could not live through—the death of your child. Turning points, plateaus, are merely steps in coping and nothing more. As you go through each holiday, each season, each happy-sad occasion, you will gain strength from having passed beyond yet another painful event.

From The Bereaved Parent, Harriet Schiff

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 for privacy protection



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

Names withheld for privacy protection

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

Detour of the Month – Thanksgiving

Well, here it is--detour time again! And just when you were about headed back to the main road after Halloween. Some out there think of the four months of October, November, December and January as the holiday season, but we know better, don't we? We know they're really the detour season, and I don't have to tell you why, do I?

About this time last year I had a really good laugh when I received a letter from a member of the Atlanta Chapter where she told me, among other things, that she and her husband and their two young boys were heading for Florida over Thanksgiving. "We are not," she said "going to sit around a turkey and pretend to be thankful." Now, that "ain't" observing that day in a traditional way. Do whatever it is that you need to do this year, if Thanksgiving is a problem. Explain to those who really care about you that this year will, by necessity, be different. Hope they will understand, but if they don't, let it be their problem, for your needs are paramount right now.

I'm happy to report that I look forward to our traditional day now. (Let me tell you, there was a time I didn't!) I hope you will soon reach that place, if you haven't already. I just want to assure you that nowhere is it carved in stone that you must sit around a turkey pretending.

Mary Cleckley, TCF Atlanta, GA

Who was That Person? An Eight Year Retrospective...

Who was that person?

He looks like me. He talks like me. But I don't think I know him anymore.

Who was that person? He had so many friends. He was popular at cocktail parties and told good jokes. Today, he seeks out one person he can really talk to and that is enough. His contact list is a lot smaller, but so much more important.

Who was that person? He had such different priorities. He skated over life

like an ice skater on a frozen pond. He never thought about how cold the water was. Now he reaches out to people who hurt because he knows how they feel. He has felt the ice water.

Who was that person? He had an orderly chronological sense of time. Now the world is divided forever into simply "before" and "after."

Who was that person? He used to rush through dinner or cut the family vacation short to get back to the office. Now he thinks back to the family times as the most wonderful times of his life. He knows what is irreplaceable.

Who was that person? He used to worry about so many troubles, most of which never happened. Now he spends most of his time in the present. He appreciates today's sunset, simple things, and good friends. He knows how precious each moment is.

Who was that person? He used to think about what he wanted to get out of life. Now he thinks about how grateful he is for the gifts he has had.

Who was that person? He used to measure his goals in terms of where he was going. Now he focuses on what his life will have been about. He asks less and less why his child died and more often: "Why did he live?"

Who was that person? He had never heard of The Compassionate Friends. Now they are his best friends. And he knows that by helping someone else through TCF, he also helps himself.

Who was that person?
I don't think I know him anymore.

Richard Edler

Giving Thanks

I can not hold your hands today,

I can not see your smile.

I can not hear your voices now,

My children, who are gone.

But I recall your faces still,

The songs, the talks, the sighs.

And story times, and winterwalks,

And sharing secret things.

I know you helped my mind to live

Beyond your time with me.

You gave me clearer eyes to see –

You gave me finer ears to hear –

What living means, what dying

means,

My children, who are gone.

So here is is Thanksgiving Day,

And you are not with me.

And while I weep a mother's tears,

I thank you for the gift you were,

And all the gifts you gave to me,

My children, who are gone.

Sascha

Dwelling on Our Loss

To an outsider, the idea of meeting with a group of people for the purpose of discussing death, our personal experiences with the death of our children, the "grief process," etc., may seem grim if not altogether morbid. All of us who are involved in The Compassionate Friends have run into someone who has asked, "Why do you do this?" or "Why don't you just try to let it go?"

The idea of "dwelling on the loss" is always stated with negative connotations, yet dwelling on the death of a child is not something we can avoid. Indeed, "dwelling" is part of the healing process. It's how we come to grips with the questions "Why, what if...?" that uncontrollably pop up in our minds, and it is how we learn to accept the unacceptable.

Certainly, there is a wealth of information in books dealing with death and dying. Our faith, our pastors, priests, and rabbis have much to contribute to our healing. Psychologists, psychiatrists and therapy may be necessary. The Compassionate Friends encourages grieving parents to utilize any or all of the above tools, but we also realize the value of learning to verbalize, openly, publicly, the grief and the loss we feel . . . not in the privacy of our doctor or minister's office, where we are very sheltered, but openly among people who know full well how hard it is to say, "My child is dead."

We do not put any pressure on people attending our meeting to say anything, but the beautiful part of this group is that it enables you to see people who are "down the long road" a way further and to realize that you will be there in time. Are we dwelling on our loss? Absolutely. But we are learning to dwell 4

on it constructively, to dwell on it without guilt and without the isolation we have all felt. We learn how to reach out (in time) to others with a compassion that brings healing to others as well as to ourselves.

Philip Barker, TCF, California

One Week Young

Seven long and lonely days
have passed

Since you were born

It is the anniversary of the day

You lay on my lap breathless.

And in your quiet beauty

I shall always remember

How perfect you were.

And those few treasured moments

Of joy and pride

In knowing

That you would always be my son

No matter what...

Bonnie Rabic, TCF, Jasper, GA

Gifts from Amy

I recently had to take part in the one-year anniversary of my precious daughter Amy's death, a day that we as parents never want to take part in. I was distressed as it really sank in that this was real and very final. Last year at this time I had been in such a state of shock that now, looking back, I began to realize the daze I was in for several months.

This year I was in no such daze—the pain was all too real. What could I do with this day? How could I make it through? In my pain I remembered one of the first things I had said when Amy died. I had expressed thankfulness for all the things she had taught me by being in my life. As I thought of this now, I began to write down all the many things. Soon I found I was taking my list a step further and listing all the things I had learned since Amy's death. I began to see my list as a list of gifts from Amy.

Before Amy's death I had thought of myself as a religious person, going to church, believing in God, even knowing several Bible verses by heart. I was wrong. I have only now begun to see the difference in religious and spiritual. Only now, after Amy's death,

have I embarked on my very own spiritual path. What greater gift could my child have left me!

I took my list and put it in a box, wrapped it up and tied it with a bow. I put the box in my closet. This time next year I will open the box and celebrate all the wonderful gifts my daughter has given to me. And I'm sure I will add more as the years go by.

Suzanne Owens, TCF, West Columbia, SC

Your Permission Please?

To family and friends, loved ones alike, even casual acquaintances and strangers -- may I please have your permission to grieve for my child in any way I choose?

May I eat too much, eat too little, oversleep or have insomnia?

May I be allowed to be lost, sad and angry at myself and at the world during those heart-wrenching moments when something triggers my grief? It usually comes in waves, but it shall recede, until the next wave hits.

May I have compassion and understanding when I do not want to attend family functions or if I do attend, that I may sit quietly reflecting upon the beloved one who is not able to be with us during those joyous occasions?

May I ask that you do not judge me because it has been over three years since my child died, but in your mind I can't get over it? I will never "get over" the loss of my only child, my son, my sunshine. All my hopes and dreams for my precious son are forever gone, forever broken – never to be realized.

May I please be the "new" me as I weave my way through this path of anguish and despair but yes, also those brief moments of happiness and laughter, which can turn to tears in the blink of an eye? Hopefully, I live each day to the best of my ability while honoring my son's memory. That I will remember the good times more than the bad, for me the worst being the day my son died, but all in my timing -- not yours.

At the end of the day, I truly do not need your permission to grieve for my

loss, the death of my child; however, may I humbly ask for your grace and acceptance in the way that I do grieve?

Kathy Kilgore Beeler, TCF Nashville, TN

Ghost Story

"Daddy, Daddy, come go with me, please."

To others it's only the wind in the trees, But in the soft haze of dusk when the mind runs free,

The ghost in the woods is calling to me. He's spoken often since we've been apart,

In a voice heard not with my ears but my heart.

Down familiar, overgrown pathways he leads

Me to the creek where wood ducks nest in the weeds.

"Over here. Over here." By the ghost I'm drawn,

Into the thicket where he once found a fawn,

White spots on brown in a thick bed of leaves,

Had he not shown me I would have believed

It was bare. "Look up, Daddy, look. It's still there."

The frayed end of the rope swings high in the air

Dangles, unused since he left. Just beyond,

Past the spring and the meadows lies the pond.

"Come. Come." Running ahead, he leads me there

To the sunken log in the corner where He caught his first fish. I stand, now alone,

While darkness deepens, then slowly head home,

Hearing his voice fade into the haunting call

Of the owl. I stroll through the dark and with hope recall

How a few past times before my walk was done,

I experienced something beyond belief, As, wholly engulfed by memories and love, for a brief

Magic moment, I and the ghost became one.

Richard A. Dew, M.D., TCF, Knoxville, TN 5

To My Sister

You touched us all, you loved us all,
 Forever giving, forever caring,
 Forever forgiving.
 Never wanting in return.
 Blessed are those who shared your life
 Rich are those who carry your
 memories.
 Please rest now; your chores we will
 finish.
 'Til we meet again . . .
Cindy Keltz

My Brother

As kids, we lived together
 We fought, we laughed, we cried.
 We did not always show the love,

that we both had inside.
 We shared our dreams and plans,
 and some secrets too.
 All the memories we share,
 Is what bonds me now to you.
 We grew to find we have a love
 that is very strong today.
 It's a love shared by our family,
 that will never fade away.
 You are my brother not by choice,
 but by the nature of our birth
 I could not have chosen a better one
 you were the best on earth.

My First Five Years as an Only Child

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I have aged 30 years in the past five. In a strange

way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I have accomplished the many things of a typical young adult learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career.

Every one of my accomplishments has been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone, and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I have learned to accept that he is not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changing to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I am angry about all the things that we have missed and all the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be.

Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I have been forced to grow up too fast. I have been forced into a new outlook on life. I have felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. Maybe I am a better person because of what I have been through. Five years ago I never thought I would survive, but I am still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I have made it this far.

*Kristin Steiner
 TCF Staten Island, NY
 In Memory of my brother, George*



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

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.

Livonia Chapter Page



Thanks to all who came to our "Painting with Monica" fundraiser on October 5th. We had such a fun time and all became artists with the help of Monica and her daughter, Patti. We want to thank Monica, Roman and Patti for their donation to our chapter, in memory of their son & brother, Andy.



Flint Chapter Leader Training Program
Our Michigan Regional Coordinators, Gail and Kathy, are giving a training on Nov. 2nd in Flint, MI starting at 8 am. Anyone interested in attending can please contact them at 734-748-2514 or 734-306-3930 for further information.



Our annual Candle Lighting will take place in Kellogg-Park in Plymouth at 7:00 pm on December 8th. Remember that this is an event that is open to all of your family and friends. To have your child's name read and an ornament made for them, there will be a sign up sheet at the monthly meetings or you may call the TCF number 734-778-0800 to register.

November Birthdays continued

Names withheld for privacy protection

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

- ♥ Deborah Roe "In memory of my son Robert Leighton. Happy Birthday (10/21). Love & Miss you"
- ♥ Glenn & Carol Mead "In loving memory of our son Bobby. Happy 36th Birthday. You're not here but still celebrating 'you'. Miss you every day Bobby. Love, Glenn, Carol, Katie, DJ, Addison & Heidi"
- ♥ Elizabeth Golen "In memory of Andrew Golen. Our dear Andrew, nothing has changed, we miss you every day. Love, Mom, Dad, Amy, Jeff, Blair & Rose"
- ♥ Rich & Mary Bodnar "In memory of Mike Gagnon. You are missed and loved more & more as each year passes. Love, Mom, Rich & Curtis"
- ♥ Lee & Rhonda Temple "In memory of our sweet girl Alyssa. Happy, Happy Birthday to our angel in heaven. May you be dancing with the angels on your special day. You are forever missed and always loved. Love, Mom, Dad, Justin & 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.

Brenda Smith whose beloved son, **Billy Kirchoff**, Born 9/24; Died 4/14; 29 years

Erica Tomalah whose beloved son, **Justin Lee Couch, Jr.**, Born 1/13; Died 4/26; 3 months

Marcia Turner whose beloved son, **Jordan**, Born 2/13; Died 11/16; 28 years

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

November 2019

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

November Craft

Our craft day will be at St. Timothy's Pres. Church on November 23th starting at 10 am.

We will be completing the ornaments for our TCF Memory trees our chapter sponsors in Kellogg Park, Plymouth, MI.

If you would like to write your child's name on the ornament, let us know when you get to the gathering making the ornaments.

After the ornaments are completed those who want to travel to Kellogg Park and decorate the trees are welcome. Please bring scissors if you can and bring warm clothes to go to the park to decorate.

If you have any questions, please contact Rhonda at 313-477-9889.