

# The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

## Livonia, Michigan Chapter



**November 2021**  
**Volume 33, Number 11**

**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:**

**November 4** - Monthly Chapter  
Meeting -- see article this page

**November 16 : 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.

**November 27- Craft Day**  
**See page 7.**

**December 12 - Annual Candle**  
**Lighting at Kellogg Park.**

**Save the Date! November 4**  
We welcome back Alan Pedersen,  
Angels Across America Tour,  
to our chapter meeting.

Alan's performance is open to anyone who has experienced the death of a child, grandchild and sibling. 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, in demand presenters in the world on finding hope after loss. Since the death of his 18-year-old daughter Ashley in 2001, Alan has traveled to more than 1,500 cities speaking and playing his original music.

Alan also successfully served four years as the Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends, the largest grief organization in the world.

The Angel Van will not be coming with Alan this year since Covid is still an issue and The Angels Across the USA Tour is on hold for now. His last visit here was during 2019 where he performed in over 100 U.S. cities. The Tour works with organizations large and small who are reaching out to those in grief and offers to present Alan's program regardless of their ability to pay a fee or all of the expenses of travel.

*If you would like to bring a light snack to share, please do. During this meeting we will not have sharing time. If you have any questions about the event, please contact the chapter leaders, Joyce Gradinscak, Mary Hartnett or Cindy Stevens at 734-778-0800.*

### **SAVE THE DATES**

The TCF National Candle Lighting will be held on Sunday, December 12th @ 7 PM at Kellogg Park in Plymouth. We will light candles in Honor and Memory of our Children, Grandchildren and Siblings gone too soon.

TCF Memory Trees will be available Saturday, November 20th for you to place your homemade ornament on the tree. There is a copy of a Butterfly Ornament on page 7 in the Newsletter if needed.



# 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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*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*

## Some Suggestions for Thanksgiving

Throughout our lives, expectations of things to come are based upon the past experiences. If, in the past you had set a glorious table and were the perfect host or hostess, it is very possible that friends and family will expect more of the same this year. They may not be aware that you are not looking towards the holidays with a fun and games' attitude. They probably do not know that in anticipation you may feel anxiety and fear. They are probably thinking that this year will be different and some sadness will accompany it, but I don't think they are aware of your anguish, especially if it's been "awhile".

I would like to suggest to you that in fairness to yourself, you need to be honest about your feelings and, just as important, you need to communicate these feelings to those around you. I really don't think that it is necessary for you to believe that because you set a tradition, and always make the turkey, and always had the family over, you need to feel obligated to do it again this year. Perhaps you would like to tell everyone that:

- Someone else will have to make the dinner this year.
- You want to make dinner in your home, but need lots of help because you don't have the energy to do it alone.
- You want to go to the parties, but you are afraid that you may break down and cry, and you want them to know in advance that this is really okay.
- You want to tell them that it's okay to talk about your child, and by not talking, it makes it very uncomfortable.

The list goes on, but the point is that if you pretend everything is "just fine" it's a lie, and that's not fair to you or the people who love you

*Diane Zankoff,  
TCF Simi Valley, CA*

## Quiet Courage

I have seen much courage in my life. Many types of bravery have inspired me. I am astonished by the courage of the elderly widow who buries her husband, quietly sells most of her personal belongings, furnishings and home and moves into a tiny apartment so that she can survive until death takes her, too. I am distressed by the youthful courage demonstrated every day by soldiers who were high school kids heading for homecoming last year but who now serve in dangerous, hostile places fighting an enemy who is invisible in the crowd. The law enforcement memorial in Washington, D.C., speaks of the many brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty to keep anarchy at bay.

The EMS and fire fighting people who hold strong to tradition and put themselves in harm's way each day to save others amaze me with their dedication and devotion to duty.

The single mother who works two jobs, raises her children, cares for them in times of illness, keeps a home, cooks, cleans and still finds time to bake cookies for the PTA fundraiser is a heroine who is doomed to remain faceless and unknown. Yet the courage to start each new day in the hope of making a better life for her children drives her forward.

There are all types of courage in this life. All are impressive, all are worthy of praise and all set standards for us to emulate. But the deepest, most compelling courage I have seen in my life is that of the parent who has lost a child to death. Each has experienced total helplessness and real physical pain in their loss. Raw in their grief, they join our Compassionate Friends group.

I am struck by how weakened in spirit these parents are, how tenuous their hold on sanity must surely be. Yet these parents quietly enter our meeting room and face the unknown with tears in their eyes and tremendous weight in their hearts.

Their world is upside down, their children have died and the pain and loss seem insurmountable. They have been snatched out of their former reality and slammed into the depths of hell by a cosmic force more intense than a tsunami. These moms and dads who have lost their beautiful child listen quietly as others talk of children who have lived for years in their parents' hearts. Each parent tells a story, each voice breaks, each heart breaks as a lost child's name echoes in the quiet room. The courage to acknowledge and face this new reality and look for hope in the midst of this infinite despair is a pure wonderment.

What pain is in this room? What deep, agonizing loss is systemic within this group? What will I say? How can I relate when I cannot even remember what day it is? How can I go on for one more day? These are the agonizing feelings of the newly bereaved parent. The Compassionate Friends meeting is the place they have chosen to begin their journey into what they perceive as a hideous, horrible, dark and unknown future. Yet their courage to face this, the greatest loss any human could possibly endure, is extraordinary.

The power of the mind to begin to see reason, to begin to seek hope, to climb this mountain of trauma and travail cannot be overstated. This power is pure courage, raw courage, desperate courage, but courage in its purest form. Each meeting brings the dread of facing the reality of their child's death. Yet the parents who have lost so much return to talk, to listen, to understand, to move into the light of hope. Gradually an understanding develops. Slowly each parent learns we must continue to live and honor our child. They light candles, visit cemeteries, fund scholarships, write poetry, raise funds to help others.....all in memory of their precious children. They reach out to other parents who are newly bereaved, listening, talking and listening again with their hearts. Occasionally they smile. Then one day they laugh. The journey is long, the grief work is

difficult, the pain is forever, yet they keep on moving forward into the light.

There are no medals, no press releases, no television appearances, no accolades, no parades. The deepest, soul-permeating, life changing and amazing courage is found here. As I look at my Compassionate Friends I am awe-struck by the rare and quiet courage that fills this room.  
*Annette Mennen Baldwin,  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX*

## Thanksgiving Joy

Thanksgiving was always an easy holiday. Unlike Christmas, there was no pressure of giving just the right gift. Thanksgiving Day was a day of family gatherings and good food; Late that afternoon, we would return home full from overeating and satisfied that our family relationships were intact. It is also a day that we are reminded of all that we have to be thankful for. We are supposed to be thankful for our health, our families, our comfortable life, etc.

The death of a child changes our perceptions. When the family gathers around the Thanksgiving dinner table, I now see a missing plate that no one else sees (of course, when I say no one, I exclude Bren and Kim. I am sure they see, hear and wish what I do, although probably at different times).

When the nieces and nephews are laughing or crying, I hear a voice that no one else hears. When a family member recounts a story about something his or her child did last week, I wish I had a story to tell.

We still have much to be thankful for, and we should remember that. But now, Thanksgiving Day has an additional observance for us who are bereaved. It is a day of forgiveness also. We must forgive others who cannot acknowledge the missing child, for whatever reasons. If family and friends cannot understand us, then we must try to understand them, especially on holidays. If we can exhibit tolerance, forgiveness, and understanding on a day on which we offer thanks,

we can climb another step on the ladder to recovery. Hope you have a forgiving Thanksgiving.

*Jim Hobbs, BP/USA,  
Denton, TX*

## A Suicide Survivors Beatitudes

**Blessed** are those who recognize our grief is compounded: that we grieve the death of a beloved person, but foremost, we grieve the cause of the death—suicide.

**Blessed** are those who give us permission to mourn the loss of one dearly loved, free of judgment, censure and shame.

**Blessed** are spiritual guides who relieve our concerns for the repose of our loved one's soul with the truth that God is All-Knowing, All-Loving and All-Forgiving.

**Blessed** are those who don't offer the meaningless cliché, "Time heals", because, for along while, the passing of time holds no meaning or value for us.

**Blessed** are those who don't say, "I know just how you feel," but instead say, "I am here for you. I will not tire of your tears or your words of sorrow and regret."

**Blessed** are those who have the patience and love to listen to our repetitive obsession with "why?" without offering useless answers or explanations.

**Blessed** are those who reaffirm the worth of our deceased beloved by sharing memories of his/her goodness and times of fun, laughter and happiness.

**Blessed** are the mental health care providers who explain to us that, very probably, our loved one died of a terminal illness called depression.

**Blessed** are those who challenge our sense of omnipotence with the reminder that no one has enough power or control over another to cause them to end their life.

**Blessed** are the first responders to our loved one's suicide who try to relieve our sense of guilt and responsibility by assuring us, "This death is not your fault."

**Blessed** are those who lend acceptance to the value of the relationship we shared with the one who died by allowing us to speak of them and "what might have been."

**Blessed** are those that allow and encourage us to use our loved one's death in a manner that gives our loss and grief meaning and purpose.

**Blessed** are those who do not expect us to find "closure," "grief resolution," "recovery," or to "be healed," understanding that these terms define "grief work in progress" that will take the rest of our life.

**Blessed** are community care givers who direct us to suicide bereavement support groups where our anguish is understood, our loss validated and where we are encouraged by the example of others who have traveled this road before us.

**Blessed** are long-term survivors after suicide who role model. Not only can we survive, but, in time, we can thrive, we can regain peace of mind, restored confidence, renewed productivity and revived zest for living.

*LaRita Archibald,  
Reprinted from The Survivors Group  
(friends and families of suicides)*

## Giving Thanks

I cannot hold your hands today -  
I cannot see your smile -  
I cannot 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 winter walks, 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.  
So here it is Thanksgiving Day,  
And you are not with me.  
And while I weep a moment's tear,  
I thank you for the gifts you were And  
all the gifts you gave to me  
My children.

*Sascha*

# SIBS

## The Room Across The Hall

The room across the hall is dark and empty now.

All of the things that once filled it have been removed somehow. The clothes that were once in the closet have all been given away. The occupant won't be needing them, for he died in the month of May.

The room across the hall was filled with a young man's things; Guns, and knives, and video games and rocks from many springs. All of these have been locked away inside a small square chest. Just like the room's occupant, they have been laid to rest.

The room across the hall aroused feeling such as pain.

The fact that it is Empty can make tears fall like rain.

I cry because the occupant was very much like me.

The occupant was my brother, whom now I cannot see.

The room across the hall belonged to a normal boy.

He could bring you heartache and lots of sorrow, but he could also bring you joy.

He was not another Socrates, for he wasn't quite that clever.

But the memories he left me will be with me forever.

Melissa B.,  
TCF/Atlanta, GA

## I Miss

I miss you,  
I miss the loud music coming from your room,  
I miss the warmth of knowing You're just a call away,  
I miss the way we fought and played,  
I miss seeing your big bright smile,  
I miss getting kicked out of your room,  
I miss seeing you here and there,  
I miss cooking you breakfast lunch and dinner,  
I miss hearing you come in at night,  
I miss making you wear your seat belt,  
I miss holding your hand to pray,  
I miss your smell,  
I miss you with all my might,  
I miss the way we would fight,  
I miss my brother,  
I miss my friend,  
I miss you, I love you and that's  
THE END!

Salena A. Hayes

## 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](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:** 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808 Wixom, MI 48393

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



## PLEASE REMEMBER

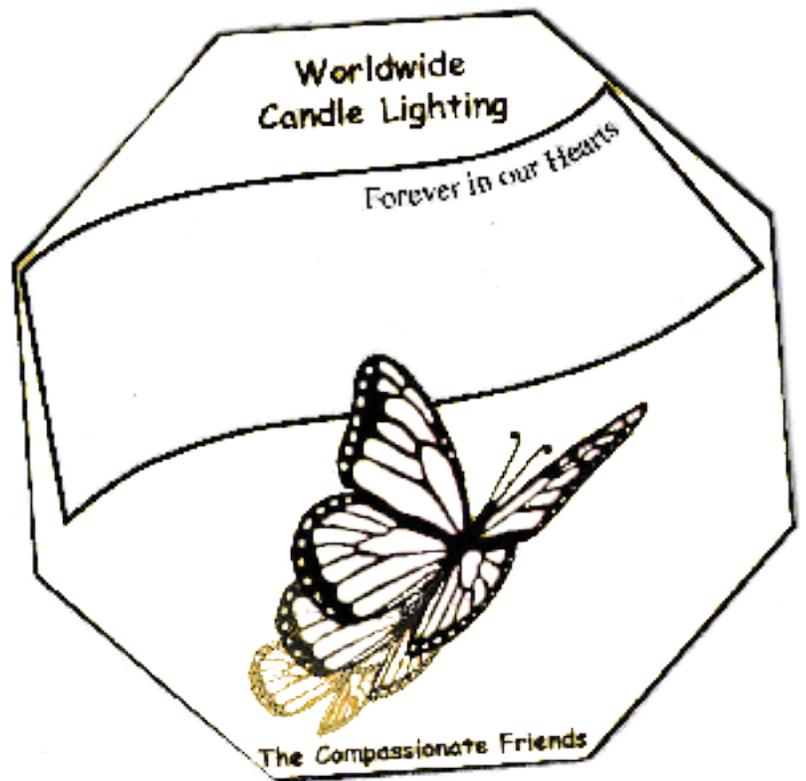
Siblings are welcome to attend the Livonia Compassionate Friend meetings. We ask that you be at least 16 years old.

# Livonia Chapter Page

## **Directions for making your own ornament:**

You can use the ornament template provided as is, cut it out and decorate with your child's name, a picture, stickers and/or the year 2021. Please do not use any birth or death dates. You can also cut it out, trace it onto different paper like scrapbook paper or cardstock, and then decorate as you like.

The next step is to laminate or use clear contact paper so that the ornament can be sealed and sustain our Michigan weather. Laminate and/or contact paper can be purchased at local stores and the office stores will laminate for you. You need to leave approximately ½" edge around the ornament so water cannot reach the ornament. Make a small hole at top on the laminate and put wire or string in the hole and attach it to the Memory tree.



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## 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.*

Elizabeth Clos, whose beloved son, **William**, Born 9/19; Died 3/3; 43years

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**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.

♥ Donna Storie "In Memory of my son, Donald"

♥ Dora Hinojosa "In Memory of my son Ruben, I miss you dearly. You are always in my heart. Love you forever. Love, Mom"

♥ Denise & Chris Falcon "In Memory of our son Brian.!"

♥ Elizabeth Golen "In Memory of Andrew. Five years feels like an eternity. We love and miss you Andrew. Love, Mom, Dad, Amy & Jeff"

♥ Greg, Sharon & Stephanie Black "In Memory of our precious Son Jordan. Missing you more each day. Love you forever & always. Love, Mom, Dad & Stephanie"

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## Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

## ***November 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: Mary Hartnett, 5704 Drexel, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

### ***November Craft Day***

Our Craft Day will be on November 27, 2021 at The Plymouth District Library, Plymouth, MI from 10:30 am until 1:00 pm. We will be making a Christmas Ornament for your child. Cost: \$3.00

Examples of the ornament and a sign up sheet will be at the November TCF meeting.

Please contact Kathy Rambo (734-306-3930) to save a spot for this craft day or if you have any questions.