

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



November 2018
Volume 30, Number 11

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 1 -- First
time tables, sibling table, Infant loss
table, topic table: "How do you manage
to be grateful after the loss of a child?"

November 17 - Crafts - see page 8

November 20 - 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

December 9 - Candle Lighting-
7:00 pm - Kellogg Park, Plymouth

Surviving the Holidays

If this is your first year at surviving the holidays since your child died, it is important that you accept that there are no magic words to get you through November, December and January. I'm sure you already know these months will not be the fun days you have experienced in the past. Rather than fun days, let's try to at least make them no worse. Give yourself permission during these months to fall apart when you need to and you'll probably need to! That person you lost is very important and you have that right. Better still, you have that need.

Let's talk first about tears. When you need to cry, do it! Tears are healthy. They are a sign that you are doing well, for you are allowing your grief, rather than denying it. You can't move ahead through the grief process until you've become well acquainted with the normal signs of grief. The people who care about you may feel uncomfortable when you are obviously grieving. If they haven't experienced this loss themselves, they don't understand your needs now, any more than the old proverbial man on the street. Remember how unprepared you were for the deep pain of grief? It's important that you let those caring people know that you are profoundly changed by this tragedy.

It's the time of year when friends and neighbors plan parties. Some may invite you no matter if it's the last thing on

your mind. If you do decide to attend, please leave the back door open in case you need to escape. Some may mistakenly think it's possible to keep you so busy that you'll forget that your child died. You know that's impossible. No matter how well intended these plans are, they are the wrong plans for your family. Don't worry about the impact on your friends.

Thanksgiving can cause problems if you aren't ready to sit around a turkey trying to act thankful! It probably is going to be awhile before you have that ability again. You may consider having pizza that day and just pretend it's just another day. Grief can make you do strange things!

You may find you need to change lots of things that have been the ways you have observed the holidays in the past.

For instance, you may decide not to have a Christmas tree this year. Some will see this as weird, but those of us who have made that same decision think it makes perfect sense. Maybe you'll ignore the holidays and run away to places where holidays aren't uppermost in most minds— maybe the beaches in Florida or California or the skiing in Colorado or a cabin in North Georgia. Maybe this is a good time to explore the treasures of New York City, Washington, D.C. or New Orleans.

You will survive the holidays better if

(Continued on page 4)

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 available to members only.



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

you take control of them. Some think they have no control of anything but, if you feel that way, you probably haven't explored the possibilities that are available to you. Your brain is very curious. If someone suggests things that are different, it rushes around madly trying to come up with a few. Here's a plan for you.

First, get input from your family members for their suggestions. You already know that small children don't take too kindly to changing anything. Maybe they'll be happy about seeing what Santa brought. Afterwards, go to a nearby skating rink. Have hot dogs for all later. Also, consider some of the things in the previous paragraph.

Maybe your needs keep you at home. If so, plan to do it the easiest way. Can another member of your family have the meal? Can others bring favorite items of food to help with the meal? If not, can you have the meal on Christmas Eve. Some people do that instead of having it on Christmas Day. It leaves Christmas Day itself not so rushed.

Any change seems to help. Go to a different place of worship. It's okay to cry. Sit in the back so you can either cry in peace or, if you feel a need to you can leave. If you feel Christmas cards are needed this year or a very few presents, could a relative or friend help with the addressing and shopping? If you must shop yourself, select a place where there is less atmosphere such as music and decorations. Take advantage of the discount stores.

Things don't have to be perfect. Give up perfections this year. Everyone will understand. Don't over do. You're already tired. Grieving is exhausting. Next year or the one after that or whenever, you'll be ready to resume some of the old traditions. Maybe not! Some traditions may never be done again. It's up to your family.

Take care of yourself physically. If you are in a depressed state, don't make it worse by over drinking or overeating or too much caffeine.

Take time for you. Read in a quiet place. Exercise by running, walking

or swimming. Rest. Eat nourishing food. Establish priorities and make a list of them. Check them off as you accomplish them. This helps to maintain control.

Seek help if you need it. Call one of the telephone friends listed in your newsletter or call one of your friends. Seek professional help if you feel you need it.

Whatever you do, don't isolate yourself! Withdrawal is not the answer. It's important to know that you are not alone. Others out here care and understand. I am one of them. We do not have to walk this lonely road alone.

Your attitude is important. You can/will survive. You have greater strength than you know. You have already survived the worse thing that can happen. Stay flexible. If the plans you made don't seem right now, dump them! Do something on the spur of the moment that does seem right. Care not if other people don't agree or that your brain isn't too excited about it. Outsmart them all!

The New Year is ahead. Let's hope for better days. The holidays will come again and one of these days you and your family will have figured out how to survive the holidays now that things have changed for the better.

Know that there will be more peaceful days ahead for you and your family. Take it as a promise!

*Mary Cleckley,
Board of Directors of BP/USA*

How Do You Say Good-bye

If a fir when it falls in the forest makes no noise if no one is near, how do you say good-bye when no one is there to hear? Who do you say good-bye to when the person who's leaving is gone, and all that is left are the memories that you live and relive all alone? You say good-bye to the little guy you taught to ride a bike, and good-bye to the heart-bonded buddy, who went with you to hunt, fish and hike. And finally good-bye to your hero who would be all that you wanted to be, who'd climb to heights never

dreamed of and see sights that you'd never see. Where do you say good-bye when you don't know where he is? Where can you go and feel him close by and not lost in some dark abyss? You can say good-bye in his bedroom where you snuggled and read stories to him, or down by the creek in the deep woods where you taught him to fish and to swim. You can say good-bye by the goal posts where he made you feel so proud, or out on the lake in a bass boat where you debated the shape of a cloud. What do you say good-bye to when nothing is there to see? Do you just talk to the air, or murmur a prayer that something is there listening? You say good-bye to your future that you had planned and barely begun, and to the joy and happiness to grandkids when you finally admit there'll be none. And you say good-bye to the good times and birthdays and Christmas cheer, and hopefully, good-bye to "That Day" which methodically comes round each year. How do you say good-bye and accept that it's over and done? When you can deny it no more, you must close the door and whisper, "Good-bye until then, my son."

Richard Dew Rachel's Cry – A Journey Through Grief

The True Meaning of the Meeting

A misty, cloudy Thursday night in March found me, once again, driving to The Compassionate Friends meeting. Tonight a friend would meet me; she lost her 21 year old son seven years ago in an automobile accident. She has never sought counseling or attended a group meeting. She was always an introvert; the death of her son increased that tendency.

Together we walk to the meeting room. She's asking a few questions, but I'm doing much of the talking. A mom whose only child has been dead for 63 weeks is explaining to this woman who has endured so much for so long about coping with unimaginable loss. There's an irony here. There's also a reason.

Attending my first TCF meeting one year ago was not easy. The pain was brutally raw. The loss was unimaginable. I was reliving the death of my son in my mind, over and over and over and over. I wasn't angry. I was devastated. I wasn't blaming anyone but myself. Could I have done something differently and changed the course of events? This was my big question. My soul was an empty void, my heart broken, as another friend pushed me along into that first meeting. I'm glad she did. It made all the difference.

So tonight my friend signs in for the first time and makes a nametag. We look at the books and brochures. We talk. Melinda greets us: as always, welcoming the newcomer, extending her sincere, sweet and pure condolences to my friend. Other parents talk with us and soon the meeting begins.

Tonight's topic, ironically, is "letting go of the if only's." We all talk about our regrets, how we dwelled on them. Some are still dwelling. Others are moving away from the darkness of regret into the light of affirmation: affirmation of our love for our child, affirmation of the decision to go on and make the best life possible, affirmation to remember the life of our child and honor our child's memory.

My friend joins in, hesitant at first, but soon contributing. Talking of death, of loss, of going forward, of focusing on the positive, of not dwelling on the horror, of eliminating the negative (including people) from her life. I begin to think about her losses (there are many) and her classically introverted personality. Yet here she is openly talking about private pain. And then it hits me. She is among kindred souls in this room tonight. Each of us has had losses of a magnitude that cannot ever be measured. She is comfortable with these gentle people who weep for their dead children, whose voices break in mid-sentence, whose silences often say more than any words could possibly convey.

The meeting goes by quickly. My friend has to leave to pick up a toddler

grandchild. We say quick goodbyes to the others and walk quietly to the parking lot. I mention the Mothers' Retreat, but I know she has made commitments to care for grandchildren while her daughters work. Getting here tonight required a lot of juggling, but I am glad she did it. Her lonely, private struggle has come to an end. Now she knows she is not alone, there are others just like her: kindred souls who need her as much as she needs them.

We go our separate ways in the parking lot and she shouts, "I love you." I love you, too, Sherri, my kindred soul.
Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX

Donald's Trail

Our son Donald died on November 15, 1989, from depression which led to suicide. One asks many times what causes a handsome, intelligent, and sensitive young man to take his life. What could be so bad he saw no other way out of this emotional pain?

Of course, our son experienced teen peer pressures; he had to face alcohol and drugs. He also took on the world's problems. The environment concerned him greatly — the ozone layer fading away, the disappearance of rain forests, and the greenhouse effect. Donald was also concerned about earthquakes, like the one in San Francisco in 1989, months before he died. He took on the problems of his friends, his family and the world. That's too tall an order for anyone to fill.

Out there in nature, we feel a oneness with Donald. No, we cannot physically see him, but we can definitely feel his presence.

A gentle breeze blows there, and the softness of a pine branch embraces my arm. I see the babbling brook, so much in a rush — like Donald was. I feel the warmth of his smile. The rocky ground reminds me of his struggle with things that became obstacles for him. It also reminds me how difficult our lives are trying to trudge the rocky ground without him. Yet, it's not all sadness, it's more like a trail map of Donald's life. Sometimes the trail is smooth

and paved with soft pine needles, and sometimes it's rocky, winding and steep. At the top though are gorgeous views to take your breath away.

I believe Donald cares for this trail also and walks it many times. I'm sure his view is one of even greater beauty than we can see — and one of greater peace than we can know on this side.

Linda Trimmer

TCF York, PA

In Memory of my son, Donald

Holiday Healing

It's been almost two years now, another holiday season rolls around. The second Thanksgiving without you is this week. It's just a stupid day, a day where people eat Turkey and watch football why should I care?

There is no one to visit me this year; there is no one here who cares. The numbness is creeping in. The pain so deep, I can't breathe, I can't think, I can't stand it. All day long I think of you, but why? Why is today any different than any other day?

Is it holiday traditions lost? Is it knowing millions of parents everywhere will be with their children this week but I won't be with you? Is it remembering the closeness and laughter on this day throughout the years? Why do the tears fill my eyes and my heart hurt so?

Maybe somewhere deep down inside I am asking myself what am I thankful for and this question is so very hard since you are gone. When someone first told me to be thankful for the years I spent with you or to be thankful I had you in my life I wanted to punch them and scream leave me alone you don't understand!

But now I understand because I am eternally grateful for those years. Today almost two years since you left this place, my second Thanksgiving without you here I am thankful for all the love we shared. I am thankful for the gift of Motherhood you each gave me, the greatest gift of all.

On the good days now, which two years since you left this place there are more good days than not, but on the

good days, I can't begin to count how many things I am thankful for. But if I had to pick just one thing on Thursday as I say my prayers, I would have to say I am most grateful for each day I spend with both of you tucked safely in my heart!

Deana L. Martin

In Memory of my children, Amanda Suzanne Mills and Logan Robert Mills

You Never Know

You never know when someone might catch a dream from you.

Or something you say may open up the windows of a mind that seeks light;

The way you live may not matter at all, but you never know it might.

And just in case it could be that another's life, though you;

Might possibly change for the better, with a better and brighter view.

It seems it might be worth a try at pointing the way to the right;

Of course, it might not matter at all, but then again, it might.

Unknown

Contributed by Flora Cocora and Christine Hebert

In loving memory of

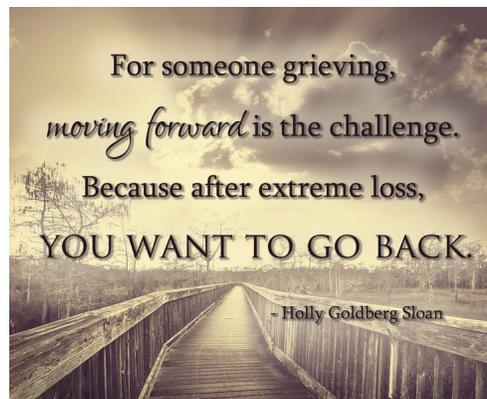
Blaise Hebert (son and grandson),

Nicholas Cocora, jr. (son and brother),

Geroge Subu (brother and uncle)



Livonia Chapter Annual
Candle Lighting-
Where - Kellogg Park
Plymouth, Michigan
When - December 9 - 7 PM



Chapter News

Thank you!

We want to thank Sally & Roger Cassidy for their service to our TCF Livonia Chapter.

Sally has been co-leader for the chapter for 4 years. She was an incredible help to the Newsletter Editor, as she maintained the database for the chapter. Roger has served as a facilitator of the men's sharing table among many other duties within the group.

We wish them well as they move to a warmer climate. They became involved with TCF after their son, Danny, died in 2009. They have been a part of the group as they shared their grief journey and helped many of us.

Best wishes to Sally & Roger They will always be a part of our TCF family and will be missed.



New Sharing Table

We are adding an Infant Loss Sharing Table to our meeting led by Michelle Ciemnicki. Please come and join if you would like to be a part of this sharing table.

Last month, the following was accidentally omitted:

Candy Mallia, whose daughter, Nicole Clouse, Born 10/6, died 10/16; 20 yrs.

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.

♥ Jim & Cathy Whitfield "In memory of their son; Jason."

♥ Glenn & Carol Mead "In memory of Bobby Mead. Ah..the memories of past birthdays. Missing you, loving you & celebrating you. Happy 35th Bobby. Love, Mom, Dad, Katie, DJ, Addison & Heidi" ♥

♥ Diane Arquette "In memory of my son Ricky. There is an emptiness in my hear every day. With each day that passes, it is one day closer to seeing you again. Until then, I love you. Mom"

♥ Elizabeth Golen "In memory of Andrew Golen. We miss you every day Andrew. Love, Mom, Dad, Amy, Jeff & Blair"

♥ Flora Cocora & Christina Hebert "In memory of son/grandson "Blaise Christian Hebert", Son/brother Nicholas Eugene Cocora, JR", brother/uncle Attorney George Nickolas Subu; always in our hearts and prayers"

♥ Lee & Rhonda Temple "In memory of our beautiful little girl; Alyssa. Every second, every minute, every day you are missed, you are never far from our thoughts. Another birthday that we have to miss being with you. We love you pee wee.

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.

Brian & Rebecca Farmer whose beloved son; **Andrew**, Born 9/5; Died 9/7, 26 years

Bess and Fred French whose beloved son; **Brian Findley**, Born 3/27; Died 2/22, 43 years

Pattie Warner-Lee whose beloved son, **Justin**, Born 11/4, Died 6/11, 14 years

SIBS

"To the outside world we all grow old. But not to brothers and sisters. We know each other as we always were. We know each other's hearts. We share private family jokes. We remember family feuds and secrets, family griefs and joys. We live outside the touch of time." —Clara Ortega

Whether your sibling was younger or older, whether the death was sudden or anticipated, whether you were very close to your sibling throughout your lives or experienced periods of separation, you are now grieving.

To grieve is to experience thoughts and feelings of loss inside you. If you loved your sibling, you will grieve. To mourn is to express your grief outside of yourself. Over time and with the support of others, to mourn is to heal.

Consider your unique relationship

Brothers and sisters often have strong and ambivalent feelings for one another. Sibling relationships tend to be complex, characterized by a mixture of anger, jealousy, and a fierce closeness and love. What was your relationship with the sibling who died? I'll bet it wasn't entirely simple.

Sibling relationships are so complex because while we are growing up, siblings are both friends and enemies, teammates and competitors. We play with our siblings, and we fight with them. We share our parents' love, and we compete for our parents' love. We enjoy being part of a family, and we struggle to become individuals.

Sometimes we carry our childhood rivalries and differences into adulthood, and our ambivalent feelings toward our brothers and sisters remain. Some-

times we separate from our siblings completely as adults. And sometimes we become very close friends with our grown-up brothers and sisters.

Yet no matter what your present-day relationship with your sibling was, his or her death is a blow. You shared a long history with your sibling. Your stories began together and were intimately intertwined for years.

Know that sibling grief is important

The loss of an adult sibling is often a significant one. I have had the privilege of companioning many sibling mourners, and they have taught me that they often feel deep pain and a profound sense of loss.

Yet our culture tends to under-appreciate sibling grief. When an adult dies, the myth goes, it is the parents, spouse, and children of the person who died who suffer the greatest loss. We seem to think that siblings are affected less.

Yet the truth is, the more deeply you feel connected to someone, the more difficult his or her death will be for you. And siblings—even when they have not spent much time together as adults—often have profoundly strong attachments to one another.

Yes, your grief for your sibling is very real. And it may be very difficult for you. Allow yourself the time and the support you need to mourn.

To be "bereaved" literally means "to be torn apart" and "to have special needs." When a sibling dies, it is like a deep hole implodes inside of you. It's as if the hole penetrates you and leaves you gasping for air. I have always said that we mourn significant losses from the inside out. In my experience, it is only when we are nurtured (inside and outside) that we discover the courage to mourn openly and honestly.

Remember—you are not alone, and you are not forgotten. No, your love does not end with the death of your brother or sister. You can and will carry your sibling with you into the future, always remembering your past and what he or she brought to the dance of your life.

Taken from an article by Alan Wolfert

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 Thursday 7-9; 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

November 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)

Mail to: Rhonda Temple, 25164 Hanover St., Dearborn Heights, MI 48125

November Craft Day

Our craft day will be at St. Timothy's Pres. Church on November 17th starting at 10 am.

We will be completing the ornaments for the 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 as you probably remember last year at the park brrrrrr!!! Any questions please contact Rhonda at 313-477-9889.