

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



October 2022
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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:

October 6 - Monthly Chapter
Meeting see page 7

No Craft Day this month

**October 18- 6:00 pm. TCF Dinner at:
Grand Tavern 37714 Six mile Rd.
Livonia. It is in the Laurel Park Mall.**

Contact Kathy Rambo (734-306-
3930); you can text, call or e-mail her at
Katjrambo@gmail.com.



Our Livonia chapter is making a new name list of our children, grandchildren and siblings that will be read at the Candle Lighting ceremony held in Kellogg Park each December.

This list has become too large to read with over 1000 names since it has not been updated in several years. Even if your names have been on the list for years, this is a brand new list and you will need to contact us by either email or phone, if you want to be included. If you would like your child, grandchild or sibling name read this year (2022) at the Candle Lighting, please email your name, your phone # and the name you want read to: stevenscd57@gmail.com or you may call our TCF number 734-778-0800 with the name/s. Please submit your names by September 30th, 2022.

Thank you all for understanding.
We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are the
Compassionate Friends.

Halloween and Beyond

I was preparing to go out to purchase candy for the "great pumpkin day," when I thought of other upcoming holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, and New Year's Day. These days can threaten us bereaved families so much. This year marks the fifth holiday season since my son Douglas' death and I still have a fleeting desire to run and hide. Although last season was not as terrible as the one before, I know I'll shed tears again this year during some lonely and sad moments. These are very private moments of grief for me now.

For those of you who do not attend support meetings, our group's newsletter may be the only link you have to other bereaved parents. Please take time for yourself during these holidays. Take time to cry and to be alone. Refrain from taking on assignments from others who cannot know your exhaustion. Ask for what you need. I know it is tough to tell someone else that you hurt and need something from him or her. But you need not pretend to be okay when, in fact, you are not. An honest request will usually be met with at least some sort of understanding and helpfulness.

Healing is a slow process requiring much work. You know those who say that time will heal all wounds have never experienced great loss. What they

(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 only to members



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

do not know ... and cannot know ...is that grief work is not just the passage of time, but the pain, the suffering and the struggle to reclaim a full life which occurs over time.

Time is not the healer; it is your own effort, your own strength, and your own determination that makes healing possible. Take all the time you need to heal your spirit and your will to live again; Be good to yourself. Remember the healing is possible through your effort and determination, not simply the passage of time.

*Shirley Corrigan,
BPUSA of North Texas*

The Last Trick or Treater

It's late Halloween night,
The candle in the pumpkin is nearly out. The candy is nearly gone.
The doorbell rings one last time.
It's a little boy in costume
With a jack-o-lantern for his treats.
Only he has no candy
And he has no one waiting for him
In the dark.
As he leaves, he stops, turns around
And waves to me...

Could it be?

*Barbara April,
TCF, Richmond, VA*

Suggestions for Coping with Your Child's Days

Two days of each year stand out as the pits for most bereaved parents—the anniversary of their child's death and their child's birthday. Over and over parents ask, "How do you get through those two painful times?" The response is the same as the question, "How do porcupines make love?"—Very carefully.

I read somewhere that even if your mind forgets the anniversary or traumas you have experienced, your body remembers. Pneumonia was the final cause of our daughter's death in September, 1974. Each September and each February (her birthday month) I developed pneumonia, although I had never had it before in my life and was

not consciously thinking of having it. The year our TCF chapter started broke the pattern, and I haven't had it since.

Knowing you will remember, here are some practical suggestions garnered from reading and listening to others talk. Soetimes the anticipation of how awful the day will be adds to the torture. Plan something away from home, a shopping trip, a business trip. You won't forget but distractions can help from focusing on agonizing memories.

Seek out a special friend who will let you share your memories and distress and who will permit you to cry, if you must. Talking and crying are cathartic and a part of healing.

Think of something you can do for someone else in memory of your child. Give a pie, a book, a bouquet of flowers or a visit to a person who is lonely (another kind of debilitating pain).

You don't have to tell the person you are doing this in memory of your son or daughter, the thoughtful act can be a secret between you and your child. You are passing on some of the love you shared.

Take flowers to the cemetery and talk with your child. Does this sound like lunacy? I hope not because every time I go to the cemetery I talk with Tricia. Whether we admit it to others or not, don't we all talk to our deceased children at times? If someone sees my lips moving at the cemetery visit and fails to understand—that is his problem, not mine.

Say thank you aloud or as a silent litany during the day to God (or whoever) and to your child for the beauty of his/her life and for the enriching opportunity to experience the unique being that was your child.

If you stay at home with your grief, then, by gosh, wallow in it if you want to. Suffer your misery to its depths, cry, rant, rave, be resentful. We are brainwashed with "look on the bright side" and the power of positive thinking. I personally believe that periods of very negative thinking often release a residue of emotions and feelings

which makes eventual positive thinking possible. As with a physical wound, pain is a part of healing. Pain signals that your body is still alive and is working on this affront to its mental and physical health. Later when your wound is healed or getting better, part of your pleasure at the release comes from being able to remember how much it hurt.

For ten Septembers I have not been able to erase Tricia's death day from the calendar, but each year I face it better. Sometimes I still have a tightening in the chest and a lumpy leaden knot in my stomach or I permit myself to ask a few sad, unanswerable questions. Allowing myself to feel whatever my true feelings dictate, I have finally learned to slow the sting of grief, instead of denying it or fighting it. Her birthday has become a time of happy remembering. Often I wear something of hers on that day and let my love flow out to her, wherever she is. I'm so thankful I had her, even in the face of loss.

How do you get through these anniversaries? You simply live through them as best you can, sometimes using them as a yardstick for measuring your personal healing. Maybe you can say, "Last year I cried all day, but this year I cried only a few hours." The death day may never be a good day, but we can't remove it from the 365 any more than we can bring our child back to life. And that, of course, is why the anniversary days are so painful, they intensify our great longing to erase the death. Each anniversary faced can be a step in acceptance and healing.

*Elizabeth B. Estes
TCF, Atlanta GA*

I know now that
we never get over great losses;
we absorb them and they carve
us into different,
often kinder, creatures."
--Gail Caldwell

Lessons from My Son

After you were born
my life became a challenge
Seeing your poised big sister
who did everything right
you escaped out of your crib
knocked the houseplants over
decorated a closet wall
with a bright blue marker.
You didn't hesitate to scare me
at eight months pregnant
waddling like a beached whale
with a trip to get stitches
when you fell in the bathtub
telling jokes and laughing
as the doctor sewed your chin
naming the stitches 'my itches'.
I can still see those bright eyes
the excitement over a frog,
picking green tomatoes,
covered in birthday cake,
drinking pool water,
climbing a pecan tree,
kissing a neighbor's puppy
and running naked down the cul-de-sac.
From you I learned the art of patience,
the joy of mothering a son,
that there are never enough
hours for cuddling and reading.
You taught me well
although you were so young.
And within my heart,
I will always hold my gratitude for
you.

*Alice J. Wisler, TCF, Wake County NC
In memory of Daniel Wisler*

Are You New to The Compassionate Friends?

We want to welcome you, but somehow that word isn't right—this is not a group anyone wants to join. All of us wish no one ever had to walk through that door or receive this newsletter. So when we say welcome, perhaps what we really mean is we're so sorry—but we are glad you've found us and hope you will find support at TCF.

Many members of TCF were hesitant to attend that first meeting. We didn't know what to expect. Would we be forced to talk about our child? Did TCF members all share the same faith? Did we have to make a donation

or commit to anything? The answer to all these questions is no. We'll listen if you wish to talk; we are members of all faiths and none; there is no cost; and you may attend as often as you wish and stay for as long as you wish. Just come.

Our few rules are simple ones and designed to ensure that TCF is a safe and comfortable place for those grieving a child's death. We request that members maintain confidentiality within the group, and we ask you to respect everyone's right to their individual beliefs. We don't tell each other how to grieve; we just walk together along this most painful of journeys.

Having made the difficult decision to attend, some of us old-timers remember being surprised or disappointed at what we found there. Perhaps we were hoping our grief would begin to ease but instead we woke the next morning feeling even worse. Already overwhelmed with our own pain, now the grief of others weighed on our mind. The parent who was sadly remembering a daughter's death 10 years ago frightened us; would we still feel so sad after all those years? And what about those folks laughing and drinking coffee? How can they seem so carefree?

Perhaps talking about the death of a child isn't such a good idea after all.

But thousands of TCF members around the world would say it was a good idea, just not an easy one. Many forced themselves to attend at first, remembering the leader's recommendation that it takes three meetings before a new member should make a decision about TCF. Others wished there was a meeting every week. Everyone is different.

Those of us who continue to participate, sometimes for a year. Sometimes forever, slowly discover what makes TCF work for us. First, it's good to know you're not losing your mind even though it may feel like it. It's strangely comforting to know that others understand your confusion and face similar difficulties. Sharing our own stories and listening to the stories

of others ease the isolation that many bereaved families experience.

As the months pass, we learn that while the experience of grief has some universal components, each of us will grieve as individuals with our own timetable. Many of us who thought grieving had a distinct beginning and end, with definable stages along the way, find that our theory doesn't make much sense in the real world. Grief is more like love; loud at times, quiet at others, with a truth that can and will live on forever.

One day we look at the parent who cries for the daughter who died 10 years ago with a new understanding. His everyday life is no longer eclipsed by pain; we visit with him regularly at the coffee table. But TCF is the place he can bring his memories and his grief and talk about the child he will always miss and love. The thought that we, too, may want to be involved with TCF for many years does not seem as frightening as it did those first months we hesitated before walking in the door.

It isn't easy getting here, of course. But we don't hesitate anymore. We unlock the door and stand there, hoping that they—and we—need not walk alone.

Mary Clark, TCF, Sugar Land, TX

The Mask

I have a face I put in place;
It's what I wear when folks are here.
For those who only want to see
the way they think I ought to be.
I live in times that have no light,
Just cloudy darkness, endless night.
I no longer see the sun,
I laugh but never feel the fun.
When I arise to start the day,
I stumble as I make my way.
I don't know who is really me,
I'm not the one I used to be.
I have no heart to fill with joy,
I lost it when I lost my boy.
The future is so bleak to me,
I choose to not let others see.
So when people stop to ask,
I hide behind my smiling mask.

Dianna J. Brendle

SIBS

Please Don't Overlook Me!

I know my size is smaller my hands
are littler
my legs are shorter,
but my HEART
can hurt just like yours. I'm a CHILD
You're an adult...
Please don't overlook me!

I know my vocabulary isn't the great-
est
my attention span lacks longevity my
logic sometimes seems irrational,
but my MIND
can question death just like yours can.
I'm a TEENAGER
you're an adult

Please don't overlook me!
I know my needs seem less important
my feelings seem less controlled my
actions are hard to understand,
but my BODY
needs a hug just like yours does. I'm
YOUNGER
You're older,
Please don't overlook me!

I know tears are hard to show,
fears are difficult to face,
death means not coming back,
but my SOUL
searches for reassurance just like yours
does.
I'm HURTING
and you're hurting too...
Please don't overlook me!

*TCF Sibling Page,
Carson City, NV*

On Your Birthday

I wrote the date this morning,
Paused,
And felt the room grow cold.
It always does
When I remember
All of it-
Down to the last petal
Tossed by winds
Above the upturned earth.
This time the child
Does not leave so easily.
It would have been your birthday.
Soon, I shall be
As old as you will ever be.
*Wanda Trawick,
TCF/Acme, PA*

You're Here, Now You're Gone

You're here.
Now you're gone.
It went just that fast.
Where'd it begin?
Where'd it end?
Like a flash of lightning in the sky.
So bright and full of life.
Now gone and full of emptiness.
How'd it start?
Why didn't it stop?
No one knows, but everyone cares.
Your spirit is flowing in the air.
You're not here, but you'll never be
gone.
You will always rise with the morning
dawn
You hold my heart
It will never be torn apart.
*Catherine Ludlow
in memory of her sister, Cynthia, who died*

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

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

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

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

Regular meeting: Thursday, October 6 at 7:00 pm. First time tables; topic tables *“What are some lessons your child(ren) taught you or are still teaching you?”*

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 is on back page.

- ♥ Mike & Mary Hartnett in memory of Michael; “There is not a day that goes by that we don’t miss you bud. Love you, Mom, Dad, Katie, Dakota & Brooklyn
 - ♥ Tom & Connie McCann in memory of: our sons: Ryan “Ryfro”, Tom Jr. , Bryan “Bryfro” Soupis (considered a son to our family), Mark “Sparky” Abbott, Joe Coffey, Jim “Jimmy” Vick.
“Happy Birthday Ryan “Ryfro” 10/26, We love you & miss you.”
-

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

Spirit Gifts

Grief is such an individual journey. We are cast on its path without our consent, enveloped by a depth of pain we never dreamed existed. We all have times when despair and loneliness threaten to engulf us.

But we do have one companion on this lonely, unsought road: our child who died. I think there is never a moment in the day when a part of me is not connected to Philip, to our years together and to our present relationship. Our journey through grief is a good-bye to the physical presence of our children, but it is never good-bye to their spirits and to the essence of

their beings. Philip lives inside me now, and the same gifts he gave me when he was physically alive are still available to me through his spirit. In some ways, those “spirit gifts” are stronger, because they are contained and undiluted within me.

When the days get unbearably hard, when I think of all this wonderful young man missed by not getting to live out his life, I try to remember to focus on the present Philip, the one inside me. I try to integrate his gifts into my life, sometimes seeing through his eyes, thinking from his heart and mind. Often when I walk in the hills, I’ll hear his voice: “Pay attention,

Mom.” (He noticed the details in nature so much more than I.) No matter how old your child was who died, the essence of this unique being remains within you forever. It is through us and others who knew them that our children continue to live and affect our present world. Though not in the way we hoped and expected, our beloved children are still alive.

May the spirit of the child who lives so deep within your heart help you through this month and through every moment of the re-establishing of your life.

Catherine (Kitty) Reeve
TCF, Marin Co. & San Francisco, CA

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

October 2022

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

After October

If there be a perfect month, for me,
it is October... with days and nights
like laughing fauns,
with mornings bright and sober
when wind will dance in sudden
glee
to do the autumn sweeping
or cloud and fog and wistful rain
can move a heart to weeping.
and in October You were born,
four days before November...
and four years later you were gone,
my little son, my only son,
I love you and remember...
Sascha Wagner,
TCF, Des Moines, IA