

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



September 2021
Volume 33, Number 9

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:

September 2 - Monthly Chapter
Meeting - see info about meeting on
page 7

September 11 - Craft Day
See page 7.

September 21 : 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

September Memories

Many of our members have lost children of school age. Even for those whose children died before they could go to school or after they were finished with school. September often brings painful memories. Seeing children with brand new clothes and the latest craze in lunch boxes and book bags, lined up for the bus brings bad memories for all of us. For some, we see children our child's age. progress to the next grade when he or she will never have that experience. For some, we remember putting our child on that bus, the last minute rush to replace outgrown clothes and buy school supplies.

For some, the pain is from the dreams we had of seeing our child go to school. dreams that our child never lived long enough to bring to fruition. Some of us have younger children who are now "passing" the age of our dead child, who should have been the older brother or sister.

In my case I have one daughter left, and I remember shopping for back-to-school clothes for two. I can't help but wonder what size Colleen would be wearing now. She'd be 12. Colleen rode in one of those little buses because she had a handicap. My mom used to hold her at the front door of her house. swaying back and forth. saying. "Tick tock. here comes the bus." I often think of

that when I see one of those little buses. Even after five years. I still look for #77, her bus.

I guess I'm trying to say two things. First, we're all in this together: we experience different variations of the same pain. Second, we all have to expect that moments of nostalgia and longing will be with us ALWAYS. The pain does dull somewhat with the years. but tears will always spring to our eyes at certain moments. The special days will always tug at our heartstrings in ways that non-bereaved parents will never fully understand. At least we have each other, people who know what we're feeling and do understand our pain. I'm glad we can be here for each other.

Kathy Hahn.

TCF Lower Buck

To Know Me

To know me, is to know I worry. I worry even though I know I shouldn't. I worry even though I know it is completely unproductive. I worry, as I breathe.

I was faced with raising four sons as a single mom. Sons that seemed to get into every kind of scrape imaginable, and I found myself facing emergency room visits for stitches and a broken arm or two. I began to restrict their activity, fearful that when they rode their

(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

<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*

***Death leaves a heartache no one can heal
Love leaves a memory no one can steal.
Found on a headstone in Ireland***

bikes something “bad” could happen, or when they roller skated, or when they just played rough as boys often do. I became the over-protective mom I didn’t want to be. I saw other mom’s letting their kids build skate board ramps, and taking them dirt bike riding ... but I was too fearful. Sports? Oh heavens, you know they could get hurt don’t you? So, to a degree I sheltered them from the experiences that they should have enjoyed. Fear robbed them of some of their childhood experiences.

The thing I worried about more than any other was that one day, I would have to bury one of my children. I was so fearful that when they went out, I would literally make myself sick with the “what ifs”. Go to sleep before they got home? Never happen. Fear would paralyze me at times.

“You’ll break the worry habit the day you decide you can meet and master the worst that can happen to you” Arnold Glasgow. God knows, I DID NOT want to have to meet and master this fear ... but it happened and I had no choice but to deal with it.

Shane was a safe, cautious driver who took it so very seriously. He would readily volunteer to be the designated driver so that everyone would safely return from a night out. Shane’s life ended on a stretch of road that is flat and clear for miles and miles. Flat everywhere except for the tiny spot that took his life ... an overpass. Shane’s life ended when at the top of this tiny hill, he was met head-on with a drunk driver who got off the freeway going the wrong direction. A minute or two later, or a minute or two earlier, and he would have had the opportunity to see it and react. BUT, he was killed instantly and I was faced with my worst fear.

In the six years since Shane’s death; I have learned that what everyone said about worry was true. WORRY is such a waste of time. I spent hours, hours and hours fretting about something that happened anyway. Did any of that worry make it not so?

Absolutely not. Did any of that worry make it easier to bear when it did happen? Absolutely not. Did any of my protective measures stop it from happening? Absolutely not.

I coped. I believe it was God and a band of angels that saw me through, but I coped better than all those worries I had conjured up in my brain. It was then I realized I would not live the rest of my life worrying about every little thing. A worrier will never stop worrying completely, let’s be realistic, BUT, I don’t restrict myself: or my boys, from enjoying life out of fear. If it’s going to happen, it will happen whether I worry about it or not. The only thing that worry does is rob us of today’s joy, while it instills a fear of something that may or may not happen tomorrow. I wish I never had to face this fear. I wish more than anything Shane was still here, however, from this day forward, instead of living by fear and worry, I remind myself of a better motto ... Carpe Diem (Seize the day).

*Judi Barkman
TCF/Redland, CA*

What is Left?

When a child dies, you ask, among other questions, what is left? A beautiful, sensitive, intelligent son has chosen to end his life. What can be left after such a crushing blow? Others will point out that you have a spouse, other children or grandchildren, perhaps relatives or friends; they are left. You read books on bereavement, scarcely remembering what you have read; you attend meetings, talk with others who have suffered a loss like yours. If you are fortunate, you have one or two friends who, while they cannot fully understand, are there to love and listen. Perhaps there is a therapist who guides you in your search for an answer. But, for a long while everything you read or hear has little meaning and certainly cannot provide the answer to your question. Or can it? Does all that you have read and heard and experienced finally come together and answered the question of what is left?

For me it does. The answer was thirteen months in coming, but how clear it comes now. I am left. That’s it! I am left and I have been left with the love of my child. It is a new love; it is different, more intense; it is understanding; it need not be reciprocated; there are no strings attached. I love this love of my child. It warms and comforts me. It is a wonderful love, but I cannot keep it. It is too precious to keep to myself. I am left with the love to spare and love to share. It will never run out. My child will always be with me to replenish it. I have found my answer. *I am left to share my child’s love with you.*

Betty Stevens

Feeling Guilty About Moving Forward

Do you, or did you, feel guilty about having any kind of living your life again after the loss of your loved one? I have received emails and comments from people who have felt guilty and I have to put myself in there as well, about doing anything that may make me feel good, or smile, laugh, and so forth.

In the early stages of grief, we are overwhelmed with pain, sadness, heartbreak, a living nightmare. And as time goes by, it sometimes feels that if we have any kind of feeling to smile, laugh, or enjoy - however brief - a moment of fun, we tend to feel guilty about it. I know I felt guilty. It feels that we are not honoring the loss of our loved one who have crossed over, that we should stay in mourning, that we may think that our loved ones may be upset with us or think we may be forgetting about them - and we shouldn’t be smiling, laughing, watching a ballgame or a movie.

I felt this way for a time, until we had a reading with a spirit medium, Vicki Monroe. Our son Billy told us through Vicki that he is ok, healthy and happy. Billy wants us to be happy, not to feel guilty about living our lives; Billy is still so very much with us and wanting us to live our lives to the fullest.

Of course we could never forget about them or they would be upset with us. But that is the effect that the loss of a loved one does to us... it throws us for a major loop, we don't always think straight. We absolutely can grieve the loss of our loved ones. I sure did. We are human, we have feelings; it's a part of who we are. It's just that we should never feel guilty about smiling, laughing, going to a movie or a ballgame, starting to live our lives again... Of course in time. Grieving is different for everyone, and it takes time to start the process of moving forward. And in our own time, which we all have to do and to never feel guilty about moving forward.

Every single loved one who has ever crossed over... if they could get a message across to us, it would be:

I am OK,
I am always with you,
Never ever feel guilty for moving forward,
Live your life to the fullest,
And most of all - I LOVE YOU

Growth Through Gratitude

I remember sitting at the cemetery with my family as we remembered my son Mitch one summer evening. The air was warm and the grass was cool – it was a perfect summer moment. Yet in our hearts was a dark cloud of grief, and I wanted so much to shield my family from that pain and sorrow.

To each family member I handed a pendant with Mitchell's finger print, a gift given to our family from a loving client. Each of us held, almost in disbelief, an evidence our son once lived and walked among us. In our hearts we asked ourselves, "How could this be?" It didn't take long before we started reminiscing about Mitch – we laughed and cried as we talked about the happy times and the sad times. Most of all, we shared our gratitude for all the good things in our life, Mitch being one of them. Though we were all hurting, a little healing happened on that day.

It was this unlikely summer evening

that I began to experience growth through gratitude.

Three years have passed and my heart and soul are still tender to the touch – and sometimes my sorrow overtakes me and I weep. Yet despite the grief I feel for losing my son, I have learned to live again – and that is a blessing I intend to keep.

At least for me, I have begun to see a relationship between grief and gratitude. At first glance, they would seem polar opposites ... as different from each other as oil and water, fire and ice, love and hate. Yet the more I come to experience grief and gratitude, the more I begin to see they play an important and symbiotic role.

Grief tells our heart things like, "How can I possibly find joy again when so much was lost?" Gratitude responds softly, "Yes, it hurts, but what a blessing it was, even if only a short time."

Grief screams. It commands and demands. Gratitude whispers. It is soft and subtle.

Grief sees only what was lost, while gratitude sees what was gained.

What I have found most interesting about managed grief is that can lead to more gratitude, and where there is gratitude, there is healing. It is not easy. In fact, grief is one of the hardest forms of work we will ever perform in this life. So, as strange as it sounds, I am grateful for gratitude, for I have discovered that is a key to healing.

I am grateful for my wife and kids and that I was blessed with Mitch in my life. I am grateful for a broken heart, for it has taken me to my knees and taught me deeper things.

Though I have come to know the pains of grief and loss, tonight my heart is overflowing with gratitude for the many good things in life. I am happier than I have ever been since I lost my son. Grief still screams inside me – and there are moments where grief is deeper than deep and I weep and weep. But I am also listening to the quiet whispers of gratitude. That gratitude is turning a once barren wasteland of sorrow into a garden

of goodness. An invisible place of peace, not seen with the eye but a place where my mind and heart meet. Grief and gratitude are not so separate; at least for me, they've become one piece.

As far as I can tell, I experience healing and growth when I find gratitude. That is how I am coming alive again. Gratitude.

Chris Jones is a bereaved father and author of Mitchell's Journey, a blog that explores the many facets of love and loss and learning to cope with grief.

The Little Things

Often even the simple tasks of daily living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feelings you had as you passed up his or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child (the same age as yours was) in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food ... you probably didn't even taste it. Or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back the tears?

Sometimes even getting through the day in your own home makes you feel like you've run a marathon and leaves you in worse shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the family laundry could make you cry or that getting a piece of mail in your child's name could suck your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't know the strength you must summon day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely. Perhaps this quote puts it into a nutshell:

"One sad thing about this world is that the acts that take the most out of you are usually the ones that other people will never know about."

David Haddock

Logic Versus Emotion

I was thinking recently about how our emotions play such a strong part in how we feel. After my daughter's death (08-13-2002), a few people pointed out to me that I shouldn't

SIBS

Brothers

Brothers grow together with wind in their hair,
wild schemes in their heads, and
with mud in their raggedy pants.
They look back into one another's eyes, with spirits burning from a common flame.
They wrestle life with such similar hands.
No tree is too tall or hill too high to climb,
for those whose bonds are flesh and set together through time.
Yet the song ever told us that dragons live forever but not the little boys.

Suddenly one of us is all alone, clinging to the memories of wind and mud and hills of stone.

We're still together in our own way, if not but in a burning little flame.

Ken,

Siblings -Tribute to My Sister

You always held within your heart a strength and purpose that few others would have known. My success in life and joy I owe to you for helping me along the way. For the eighteen years that I was blessed to have you in my life, you taught me so many things. You gave me new challenges, and a new place was created in my heart the day you were born. You were there

when I stumbled and fell, and you gently helped me up again. Your little hand I held while rocking you to sleep at times. At darker times it was you who held my hand, always a beacon of light for me to focus on. And, always, when I needed a friend, you were there.

Throughout the years you were always my family. You honored me with your love and trust, and though different than you, always accepted me just as I was. More than my own flesh and blood, you were my sister, and I will always cherish the time we had together. We have laughed, complained, and sometimes wept, but we always persevered. The good times, the bad times, the joy and sorrow, will always bind our hearts as long as I am able to draw my breath.

We traveled together for awhile and our journey was fulfilling, but now our paths have diverged and we had to say goodbye. To my years with you I bid farewell.

Ahead of me lies a life without you, a new definition of myself. For all that I may someday become, you will always be a part of me. On some distant day, when something reminds me of you, I will lovingly think of you and remember the smile you had. From time to time, I will remember the years spent with you and what we have shared. I will always miss your sweet voice and your unconditional support and endless companionship. May we carry that beyond the grave.

For all the smiles and tears, for all of the love and laughter, and, above all, for being the person that you were, I will carry you in my heart. I will always, always love you.

Lisa Sockwell Meredith
Snellville, GA

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 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

September Meeting

Meeting September 2 at 7:00 pm at St. Timothy's Church, 16700 Newburgh Road, Livonia. Please bring your own drink. The church does not require masks so it is your decision to wear one.

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.

- ♥ Ken Ventura "In memory of Kristen"
 - ♥ Jim & Gail Lafferty "In loving memory of Juanita Dennis and her grandson, Tim."
 - ♥ Judy Cappelli "In memory of my son Christopher. I missed you today and yesterday & I will miss you tomorrow & the rest of my life. Seven years without seeing your beautiful smile, I Love you Christopher"
 - ♥ Donna & Craig Storie "In loving memory of our son Donald Storie II"
-

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.

Siobhan & Doug Sendelbach, whose beloved son, **Richard Mullender**, Born 11/22; Died 1/23; 33 years

Logic versus Emotion continued

feel guilty about something I couldn't change. Their advice was logical. But humans aren't like Mr. Spock on Star Trek. You

Logic Versus Emotion continued

remember that Mr. Spock would frequently chide Captain Kirk for doing something illogical, something based on his feelings.

No, we humans are filled with emotional feelings. It's one of the things that separates us from animals. Even though someone might tell me not to linger in sadness or to feel guilty about my daughter's death because it wouldn't change what happened, I still had both feelings. Even though my logic might tell me to shrug off these unpleasant feelings, I couldn't, at least not for some time. And that's the point. Clear thinking, logical human beings are still subject to powerful emotions, even though those emotions will seem illogical to some people.

Do understand that strong feelings of sadness, loss, and guilt are normal after the death of a child, and at some point logic will allow those feelings to lessen. As our logical minds begin to prevail, we may seek positive ways to remember our child (scholarship funds, charitable donations, etc.) and we may seek positive ways of chang-

ing ourselves into better people. At this point our logical minds will push us in a constructive direction and we will feel better. So don't worry excessively about those strong, emotional feelings after the death of your child they're perfectly "logical".

Anne Tyler,
TCF/Sacramento Valley, CA

September Craft Day

Our craft day will be Saturday, September 11, 2021 from 10:30 am until 1 pm.

We will be meeting at the Plymouth District Library, 223 S. Main St., Plymouth, MI 48170. (Parking is behind the library off of S. Union St.) Masks are required at the library.

Please let us know if you are attending by calling Kathy Rambo at 734-306-3930 or email katjrambo@gmail.com.

We will be making Shadow Boxes to put our children's special items in. Supplies are provided. Please bring things of your child for example: trinkets, charms, small dolls, buttons, matchbox cars, jewelry and pictures. These are for small items of your child or items that remind you of your child, grandchild or sibling. Some will not have actual items but you can gather items that remind you of your sweet child. The cost is \$10.00

We will help you design if you would like us to. If you don't feel like crafting and would like to spend some time with our members, you are welcome to come have a cup of coffee and a donut with us. Hope you can be there.



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

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

Endowment

Hope gives us vision for regaining
the tenderness of memories.

Hope carries us through to survival
and healing.

Hope offers us courage
for acceptance and overcoming.

Hope gives us
new spirit and new laughter.

Hope is among the greatest gifts to
be found in time of sorrow.

But hope cannot restore on earth
what is lost to death.

Hope can only go forward
and make us new.

Give space to hope in your life.
Sascha Wagner