

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



September 2018
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The Compassionate Friends is an international self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents and siblings.

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Meeting Information

When: First Thursday of
each month. 7-9 p.m.

Where: St. Timothy's Church
16700 Newburgh Road, Livonia,
East side of Newburgh, 1/4 mile S. of
Six Mile

Coming Events:

NEXT MEETING - September 6 --
Alan Pedersen - read article this page

September 15 - Craft Day - see page 8
St. Timothy's - 10 am to 1 pm

September 16th-TCF Picnic - see info
on this page

September 18 - 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

Special September Meeting

We welcome Alan Pedersen, Angels Across America Tour, to our chapter meeting starting at 7 pm til 9 pm. It is open to anyone who has experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. During this meeting we will not have sharing time. If you choose, we ask that you bring a small dish to share. It could be one of your child's favorite foods.

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. Since the death of his 18-year-old daughter Ashley in 2001, Alan has traveled to more than 1,300 cities speaking and playing his original music. Alan is the past Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends National Organization, a presenter for Umbrella Ministry Conferences, a bereaved father, singer/songwriter and recording artist, producer of education DVD's and an inspirational speaker on grief and loss, and an honored Ambassador of the Bereavement Cruise. Alan's sole mission is to offer comfort, hope, and encouragement to grieving families.

Our evening will be a mixture of learning, laughing and feeling. Alan will share what he has learned on his own grief journey and from the thousands

of other grievors who have shared their stories with him. Alan will offer ideas to consider for those who are grieving and for those who work with the bereaved. Powerful music and down to earth messages will be the focus of the evening.

If you have an interest in sponsoring a butterfly decal you can add your child's name and hometown at this meeting. Alan is honored to have your angel travel with him as he strives to bring hope to those in grief across the country. The Angels Across America Tour began in Newport Beach, CA on January 31, 2018 and will continue through the year.



The Compassionate Friends of Livonia
Would like to welcome you to the
'2nd Annual'
Family and Friends Picnic of Hope & Healing
Sunday, September 16th
12p - 5p
@ Rotary Park - in Livonia
(off 6 mile between Meriman and Farmington)
\$10 per family
please bring your favorite dish to pass
(meat is being donated)
Any questions please contact Rhonda Temple @ 313 477 9889
(alcohol not permitted)



The Compassionate Friends
Livonia Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

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.

♥ Judy Cappelli “In memory of my son Christopher. To some you are forgotten, to others just the past, but to me who loved and lost you, your memory will always last. Forever and always in my heart”

♥ Diane Arquette “In memory of my beloved son; Ricky. Time does not heal. There is a big void in my heart and life. You were beaten to death for no reason. I miss and love you every day. You will remain 32.
Love forever, Mom

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.

Jacqueline Binkert (Jackie) whose beloved son; ***Nathan***, Born 10/28; Died 19/21, 39 years

Loretta Gayle whose beloved son; ***Darrell***, Born 5/30; Died 5/31, 29 years

Loretta Gayle whose beloved son; ***Allantae***, Died 2/23, 27 years

Florence Schneble whose beloved daughter; ***Stephanie***, Died 3/1, 51 years

Reopening of School and No Child!

Summer ends, and across our nation, from the middle of August to the week after Labor Day, schools open for another year. For those parents surviving a child of school age, be that from nursery school to college or university, this can be as trying a time as the holidays.

School buses travel again the busy highways of our cities and the quiet lanes of our countryside. Anxious parents stand with children about to make the first ride to school. Gaggles of youngsters play at countless stops across our land. America's most precious and costly activity is renewed. The children are off to school.

I remember well the silences of the September mornings of those first years. The bus no longer stopped at our home. It simply drove casually by, the people within never realizing it once carried the focus of my love, the repository of my dreams. The drone of its wheels marked anew the mind-numbing dullness of my fragmented senses as it moved its way down the tree lined lane once alive with my son's comings and goings.

It was always possible to avoid "back to school" sales. Seeing young people and their weary parents gather school supplies and clothing was just too much in those earliest years. Somehow, the perfect notebook, the brilliant sweater, the odd-shaped erasers were simply unendurable. The stream of vehicles heading for Cape Cod for that final Labor Day weekend, the last family outing to end the summer, was another scene to avoid. It was a ritual from which we seemed excluded. Could we still be a family without him?

Those years are gone now. Having returned to education, I now have "back to school" buying to do myself. I see the buses arrive to unload their treasured passengers, no longer feeling the emptiness of a bus that drives on, barren of hopes and dreams. But I do and will forever remember the pain of

those unhappy years and sometimes I reflect on the many parents who now feel as I did.

If you are such a parent, if you mourn a child who leaves a school desk somewhere unfilled, I promise that you are not alone in that pain. But even though you are not alone, you know that you are forever marked, that the death of your child or children has altered you in some basic manner.

Perhaps time and much grief work remain before your spirit can yield up the agony and permit a new self to emerge. That time and work was necessary for me, as it actually is for all of us. For me, grief resolution finally recalled me to my original work. I teach. I no longer administer or direct. The need for that fled before bereavement's assault.

I teach math, science, and social studies to sixth grade children, ages 11 to 12 over the course of a year. In wondrous ways they have restored love to my living. There is nothing of an intellectual character with enough value to equal that, so I have given them the love and caring that was mine, evoked by and for Olin. Thus do Olin's gifts live on, called forth and given new lift through the innocent and selfless love of school children.

All who walk this road realize this is not substitution. Such is not possible. But it does reflect qualities of successful reinvestment, something each of us sorely needs.

Today as schools prepare for another year, I look forward to a new group of children. But cautions arise within as well, the legacy of that time over 12 years ago, when the world came to a sudden halt, when the laughter of lifetimes ceased, when dreams evaporated with a morning mist.

For those of us who dare live and love again, for those fortunate enough to have found a reinvestment encouraging the same, there is always risk. After all, tragedy can strike again. Our present or past pain grants no immunity. Students, the children within the school, invited me, albeit unknow-

ingly, to take that risk again, although certainly not at the rich and deep level of father and son. Nevertheless, it feels right, and though I will never again know the depth of love which belonged to Olin and me, I welcome the chance to live once more on its margins.

So schools, which were once just another manifestation of hurt, have helped me to restore purpose and balance to daily living.

There is surely such a reinvestment awaiting all of us, but we must seek the circumstances and create the opportunities for it to occur. I pray that all of us who have not yet had such good fortune may soon do so. All of our children would want this for us as well. With that thought in mind, it is indeed worth striving for that dimension in life once more.

Don Hackett

TCF Kingston, MA

In Memory of my son, Olin

In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled a dreadful distance. You have come, seeking solace, understanding, hope, threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.

In this place you can relax and breathe . . . the coats of others' expectations taken off.

Walk into these few hours as into an oasis where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed.

In this place all names can be spoken; in this place each one's story may be told.

We will not be discouraged by your sorrow; in this place ALL feelings, we enfold.

Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting; we do not count how many tears are shed.

Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage, for the long and winding road we see ahead.

And those we love are pleased we are together, smile down on us, and bless this day, glad for every tiny step we are taking as they send their light to guide us on our way.

Traveling with us as we journey onward, sending strength for what the miles may bring, they are a part of everything we do that matters— in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

Count on Grief

Count on grief to increase vulnerability.

Human beings are most comfortable when they are in control of their lives and circumstances. Death, even when it's expected, represents the ultimate "change in plans." When a loved one dies, our former safety and security no longer seem to exist. Instead, we may experience feelings of helplessness and vulnerability that are frightening, as well as disarming. Yet it is precisely this vulnerability that can break down walls of resistance to new thought processes and open the way for new perspectives.

Count on grief to create change.

Grieving is a walk through unknown territory. Familiar internal and external stabilities disappear in a whirlwind of changing thoughts, feelings, and emotional flux. We are reminded of our pain at odd times and in unexpected ways. Emotions hover near the surface and tears are hard to control. The stress of daily living taxes our protective defenses to the limit. Depression seems to slip in from nowhere, and anger erupts without warning. Because grief requires so much emotional energy, our finesse for social game-playing is greatly diminished. The bereaved meet the world at a disadvantage, continually surprising themselves and others with unpredictable responses to familiar situations.

Count on grief to change social structure.

The bereaved find their social networks changing and transforming around them. Disappointment with family and friends is a common theme. Those we expected to "be there for us" may not be able to meet our needs, and friends we didn't know we had appear "out of nowhere" to fill the void. As

we come to terms with whatever limitations and expectations we have for ourselves, we also become aware of the limitations of others. Not everyone we care about will receive what they need from us while we're grieving. Not everyone who cares about us will be able to fully share our pain.

Count on grief to stress marital bonds.

Grief, like any other stress, complicates relationships. One grieving partner taxes a relationship – two grieving partners find their pain doubled. Because grieving is an unpredictable, moment-to-moment process, couples must be prepared to build flexibility into their union. Marriages are challenged when each expects too much from the other, and neither receives adequate support from social or extended family networks. Marriages are strengthened when each partner feels supported and is allowed individuality and freedom from expectations

Count on grief to define priorities.

The bereaved often find themselves realigning their goals and objectives. For most of us, nothing is easily taken for granted after the death of a loved one. We understand that "now" is the only time there is, and that tomorrow may never come. Relationships are more precious than ever, and we are less comfortable with "unfinished business" relating to those we care about. Because the cares and concerns built into our busy lives pale in comparison to our loss, the emphasis on people versus things takes on far greater meaning.

Count on grief to increase spiritual awareness.

The pain of grief prompts spiritual investigation into both the known and the unknown. Answers we were sure of before are not always satisfying in the context of our present reality. God is questioned and religion is held up for examination. Typically, there are many stages of distancing, moving toward, and moving within old and new spiritual concepts and beliefs. Our struggle for inner peace and unity

seizes many priorities. In the majority of cases, our connection to ourselves and the universe becomes far more defined.

Count on grief to strengthen compassion.

Grief tears down the boundaries between ourselves and others. Bereavement enhances our humanness and strengthens our ties to the world around us. Our loss is a life-changing event; we will never again be the people we were before. Pain somehow opens us to greater levels of awareness and a greater capacity for compassion and understanding. Bereavement provides the catalyst to become more giving, more loving, and more fully aware.

Count on grief to define the past and open doors to the future.

For the bereaved, the world is completely new. The death of a loved one becomes a reference point around which we define where we've been and how we structure a path for tomorrow. Grief provides a "crash course" in some of the most profound lessons life has to offer. As bereaved individuals, we find ourselves with fewer answers but far more insights. In time, we learn there is no loss without gain and no sorrow without joy. As death closes doors behind us, new doors open before us.

Invisible Scars

you can't see the scars
the marks left from grief
the fear
the anxiety
waiting for the other shoe to drop
waiting for the next terrible thing to happen
trying as hard as you can
to just stay positive
trying as hard as you can
to remember why you should stay positive
the scars of grief are so much
deeper than the skin
not visible to those
who have not walked in your steps
they are not red and bleeding

no bandages to cover them
yet so visible to those who know
recognized in a look
seen in the lightness of a marker on a
balloon
in the dried tears of running mascara
in the joy a small trinket left at the
cemetery brings
in the camaraderie of being
a mom to an angel
our scars are not seen with the eye
quite simply because
they are felt with the heart.
Sarah Casale, Parker's mom,
TCF, Leesburg, VA

HOPE

It is the gift of hope which reigns
supreme in the attributes of The Com-
passionate Friends.

Hope that all is not lost.

Hope that life can still be worth living
and meaningful.

Hope that the pain of loss will become
less acute and above all else, the hope
that we do not walk alone, that we are
understood.

The gift of hope is the greatest gift that
we can give to those who mourn.

The Rev. Simon Stephens,
Founder of TCF

Borrowed Hope

Lend me your hope for awhile,
I seem to have mislaid mine.

Lost and hopeless feelings accompany
me daily.

Pain and confusion are my compan-
ions.

I know not where to turn.

Looking ahead to the future times

Does not bring forth images of re-
newed hope.

I see mirthless times, pain-filled days,
and more tragedy.

Lend me your hope for awhile,
I seem to have mislaid mine.

Hold my hand and hug me,

Listen to all my ramblings.

I need to unleash the pain and let it
tumble out.

Recovery seems so far distant,

The road to healing, a long and lonely
one.

Stand by me. Offer me your presence,

Your ears and your love.

Acknowledge my pain, it is so real and
ever present.

I am overwhelmed with sad and con-
flicting thoughts.

Lend me your hope for awhile.

A time will come when I will heal,

And I will lend my renewed hope to
others.

Reprinted from Bereavement Magazine,
September 1989

Standing

People say

“Oh you are doing so well, you are so
strong, you are an inspiration!”

We do not feel strong.

We feel shaken to the core,

Saddened beyond belief,

Pain beyond comprehension,

Forever changed.

What do they see that we cannot see?

Julie Short

TCF Southeastern Illinois Chapter In
Memory of Kyra

What about Parents of Troubled Children?

At one of our meetings we discussed
a subject that is not new. “Why did
MY child have to die? He was so
good. I was a good parent, a good per-
son. There are so many ‘bad’ kids out
there whose parents probably wouldn’t
care. Why couldn’t it have been one
of them?” Those thoughts probably
sound familiar to many of us. Let’s
look at them from a different perspec-
tive.

Perhaps the child was especially good
or gifted. However, it is quite com-
mon, in our grief, to remember only
the good things, sometimes even put-
ting the child on a pedestal.

In the beginning, there is nothing
wrong with that. We need all the com-
fort we can find. But it is wise for us
to remember some of the trying times
which humanize our dead children yet
do not diminish our love for them one
bit.

What about the parents of a troubled

child? Do they really hurt less or care
less? I think not. It is the nature of
a parent to nurture, to care for and
to love their offspring. To love them
more than life itself. The parent of a
troubled child might have a harder
time adjusting to their loss. Their par-
enting job may have been very diffi-
cult and heartbreaking. Their list of “if
onlys” may be longer than ours.

What are their memories? The imme-
diate ones may be very sad and pain-
ful. They may have to dig deeper into
the past to remember the good times.
For these parents, the desire to go back
in time may be very intense.

Guilt may also be more intense. We
all make mistakes, some wrong deci-
sions; we are not perfect. Why do we
expect it of ourselves? We are human
beings, subject to all the human frail-
ties. So, if some children go through
rebellious times, it does not make
them bad kids, or their parents bad,
either. Learn to forgive yourself for
being human!

We tend to forget that our children’s
lives are influenced by many things
outside the family. Peer influence and
pressure is tremendous. Once children
enter school, it becomes more difficult
to “control” and influence them. They
are pulled from all directions. Yet
parents assume responsibility for all of
the problems.

I hope that parents who have gone
through troubling times with a child
who has since died will realize that
no harm is meant by bereaved parents
expressing thoughts such as those
cited earlier. There is not one bereaved
parent who would wish this pain on
anyone else. Although we hear those
words spoken, what we are really
hearing are the sounds of pain and
anguish. Another form of the old ques-
tion “WHY?”

No matter how your child lived, and
no matter how he died, our hearts
go out to all parents who are suffer-
ing. The bottom line is, we love our
children no matter what. That is what
unconditional love is all about.

Mary Ehmann,
TCF, Valley Forge, PA

SIBS

NAMASTE - The Light in Me Salutes the Light in You

I believe that we are here on this planet to experience what it means to be a Spirit in a physical body. The greater the experience, the deeper it touches our soul. This includes pleasure and pain, happiness and sadness, hope and despair, lightness and darkness. For we cannot know one without the other. This is a time to experience our grief. I pray that we all give ourselves that right and honor our grieving process. Through grief we heal. These are the things that I grieve for:

- I grieve for the loss of my only brother.
- I grieve that I will never come home

to see him sitting in the living room to say hello.

- I grieve that we will never laugh together again, that I will never again experience that rich and unique humor that only he and I shared.
- I grieve that this world will no longer get to enjoy his humanness and his many gifts.
- I grieve that I will never see my brother in love, that I will never see him as a father or with a family of his own.
- I grieve that we will no longer share and inspire each other with the music that we love.
- I grieve that we will never get to work on a creative multi-media project together. This was a vision I held for the future.
- I grieve that I didn't share enough of

my life experiences with my brother, and that I could have opened my heart even more.

- I grieve for all the people that Jason touched and the feelings of pain and loss that they are experiencing. This is what I grieve for. Through death new life is birthed and though we cannot see it now, from Jason's death we will all experience new life. If we allow ourselves to grieve fully, this new life will become apparent. I love the spirit who gave me the privilege and pleasure of being my brother and I am grateful to experience 24 years of his beauty on this planet.
- Jeff Curnutt

Grief is OK

Grief is normal; grief is OK. Grief is the way your body has to say that you love the son, daughter, brother, sister, even a friend that died; But sometimes it makes you cry.
Steve Hom, Age 10
TCF/Hinsdale, IL

Promise

I'll cry with you, she whispered, until we run out of tears.
Even if it's forever.
We'll do it together.
There it was a simple promise of connection.
The loving alliance of grief and hope that blesses both our breaking apart and our coming together again.
Molly Furnia



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

September 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

September Craft Day

Our September 15th, 2018 Craft Day will be held at St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church. from 10 am – 1 pm. We will be making a no-sew carry-all bag from your child's t-shirt; maybe a favorite school, favorite team, cartoon or super hero shirt. Any t-shirt will work and if you need any help, let us know.

Charli Johnston will be leading us for this cute bag! Please bring fabric cutting scissors if you have them. There will be a sign up sheet and examples at the September chapter meeting. Any questions, please call Kathy (734-306-3930) or Gail (734-748-2514).