

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



September 2015
Volume 27, 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:

NEXT MEETING -September 3

- Newcomer table, sibling table, topic table: In the article *Evolving Through Grief*, the author suggests some ways to cope. Could you share some of the ways you have learned to cope with your grief on those especially bad days?

September 15 -TCF Dinner-sign up at meeting or call Kathy 734-306-3930 or katjrambo@wowway.com

September 26 - see page 8



Grave Words

It's funny how the things I know don't always intersect with the questions I have about life. I know ritual is important to us as human beings; it's the basis for holidays and religious rites. It gives us comfort, it's healthy, it's normal.

I was asked recently if it was okay for parents to build shrines and immediately replied, "yes!"

In that reply, came an answer to an issue I've had for nearly a year. Ross's things are packed in my basement since he died. He shared a room with his brother, and it became necessary for my surviving child's mental health that these things be packed away. I have not looked through them since that first week after his death. I have, however, designed a chest for his things. My dad built it. It's beautiful, stained, varnished and shoved in a closet where I couldn't see it.

I pulled it out a few weeks ago and put it crosswise in my hallway where I would be forced to (1) trip or (2) do some-thing with it. I tripped a lot.

During this conversation on shrines and ritual, I realized what I needed to do. There needs to be a special Box-Filling day. I didn't need to consult the calendar for a date —there is one fast approaching —one of "those days" where the pain of losing him is more intense, a Ross-Holiday, if you will.

So on that day, I will light candles in his favorite color, play his favorite music, and bring his things up from the basement to be placed in a sacred spot. It will be a hard, but necessary day.

*Peg Rousar-Thompson,
Kenosha, Wisconsin*

Someday

Someday, it won't hurt so bad and
I'll be able to smile again
Someday, the tears won't flow quite
as freely whenever I think of what
might have been,
Someday, the answers to "why" and
"what if" won't be quite as important,
Someday, I'll be able to use what
your death has taught me to help
others with their grief,
Someday, I'll be healed enough to
celebrate your life as much as I now
dwell on your death,
And someday, maybe tomorrow,
I'll learn to accept the things I
cannot change ...
But, for today ...
I think I'll just be sad.
Steven L Channing

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

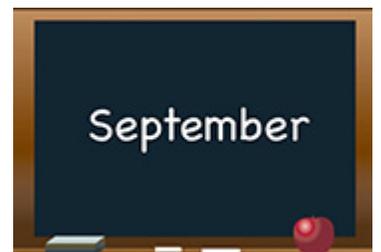
Child Parent, Grandparent, Sibling Date Age

Names only available to people who receive the newsletter



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

Names only available to people who receive the newsletter



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, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to make a donation to help in the work of the Livonia Compassionate Friends. The money from Love Gifts is the main source of income for the Livonia Chapter, and allows the chapter to send out newsletters, rent meeting space, and reach out to those newly bereaved. See new Love Gift form on back page.

PLEASE FORWARD LOVE GIFTS TO: THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS,
C/O: RHONDA TEMPLE, 25164 Hanover St., Dearborn Heights, MI 48125

LOVE GIFTS



- ♥ Sande Powell “In memory of Chad”
- ♥ Diane Arquette “In memory of Ricky Arquette. My dear son, Ricky, my life will never be the same without you. Time does not heal. Love, Mom”
- ♥ Chris & Denise Falzon “In memory of our son, Brian. Wishing you were here to celebrate your 41st Birthday. Love and miss you so much! Mom and Dad”
- ♥ Lisa Pardington “In memory of Max. Thinking of you on your birthday. Forever 20 xoxo. We love and miss you very much. Love Mom, Dad, Claire, Emily & Jack
- ♥ Jerry & Judy Tyrrell “In memory of Shawn. You will never be forgotten. Love you!”
- ♥ Jim & Judy Cappelli & Family “In memory of Christopher; a son and brother. Forever in our hearts. We love & miss you.”

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.

Diane Angeli, whose beloved son, **Adam**, Born 11/1; Died 5/11; 38 years

Sharon Bergeron, whose beloved grandson, **Christopher Paul Bonnici.**, Born 3/30; Died 10/26; 29 years

Frank and Michelle Foster, whose beloved son, **Christopher Paul Bonnici.**, Born 3/30; Died 10/26; 29 years

Heather Baker, whose beloved son, **Kyle.**, Born 5/2; Died 5/29; 18 years



Dancing in the Rain

The word dance seems to be etched into my mind. Recently, a friend shared a quote she had come across: “Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass... It’s about learning to dance in the rain.”

Wow — what awesome words! The image of a storm is a good analogy in understanding our grief. Storms come from nowhere, like a tornado, seemingly destroying everything in their path and leaving our lives in complete and utter shambles. The darkness and dreariness stay while lightning continues to flash, stabbing our hearts with pain. Thunder clamors constantly, reminding us that our children are gone. We can walk in fog for what seems like years as the sleet and frigid cold freeze us in our tracks. The wind howls, imitating our screams and wailing. The rain seems to be endless.

Others, who haven’t lost their children, who are living in sunshine, cry out to us, “Come in out of the rain.” They don’t understand that often we’re just not able to move. The storm has become our world, for however long we need or choose to live there. My own experience of grief tells me that our lives will always be stormier than they were before the hurricanes came and took what was most precious to us. But, we do have a choice. We can stay hunkered down under the false protection of denial. We can lock ourselves up in a protective shell and never come out. Or, we can learn to dance in the rain. However, each bereaved parent must decide what feels best to them. I find myself thinking,

“It’s hard to crawl, walk or breathe without her and she wants me to dance?” She must have forgotten all those times I tried and she said, ‘Mom, you can’t dance!’ Then I realize that she’s not referring to my ability when I hear ‘Dance Mom, dance. Dance in the rain. Dance because you can’t change what has already been done. You have the choice to sit it out or dance. Listen for the music, keep your eyes wide open, go forward, follow the music and dance. Follow me. I am not behind you. I am in front of you. I’m free and I am dancing.’ She taught me to hear the music and her song continues on. Without it, I couldn’t dance. I believe if we allow our children to lead us to dance in the rain that they will eventually dance us out of the storms of pain and into the sunshine of peace.

Evolving Through Grief

When you start to feel your sanity slip, do whatever positive thing you can think of to hold on: pray, meditate, go get a full body massage at a spa, scream at a starlit sky, take a trip to a new place, stare at sunsets, lay in an open field and watch the clouds drift, or do all of these things at once: Just do something for you!

And don’t feel guilty about being selfish about it. You can’t do anything for others if you don’t take care of yourself first. You can’t be loving to others if you aren’t loving to yourself first. Then, when you start to feel a sense of renewal, think about extending the love you still want to express for your child in a way that will benefit others.
Roe Ziccarello

Cemetery Visits

Are you one of those people who have a need to go to the cemetery often? The non-bereaved frown on that as a rule. Many people feel there is something morbid about those visits; that you’re obsessing.

Unless you know the pain of losing someone you love better than yourself, you can’t understand that need. Some

people need to visit every day; others go now and then; and still others never go back once the funeral is over.

There are no rules. If it makes people uncomfortable when you make your cemetery visits, go alone. Don’t feel you need to get anybody’s permission or approval. Call a friend who won’t judge you by the number of miles you travel to and fro.

It is important to understand that how often you go to the cemetery has absolutely nothing to do with the length and depth or your expression of your grief. Do what comforts you, not what pleases others. Your needs should and must come first, especially right now. For right now, do what makes you feel better.

Mary Cleckley,

Dear Friends:

I get migraine headaches. Every migraine sufferer knows these are not the “take two” kind of headaches. They are more like the “lie down in a dark room and hope you die” kind. People who have never experienced migraines often cannot understand this excruciating ordeal. If their own headaches are just the nuisance variety, they may even be impatient and unforgiving. As in most things, understanding is generally defined by personal experience. These people don’t mean to be cruel, they just can’t empathize with anything they haven’t gone through themselves.

Grief is like that too. Just as there are different kinds of physical pain, there are different degrees of grieving. People who have experienced only mild grief may be intolerant of grief that is disabling. (I won’t try to give examples of “mild grief” here or I’ll get in big trouble with somebody!) Believing that they handled their own problem, they tend to think that others should do the same, just as easily.

In my years of connection to the world of the grieving, I’ve seen a lot of people (myself included) who

have spent an inordinate amount of time trying to “win over” the uninitiated. We beg their pardons, we excuse ourselves for being a bother to them, we strain our minds and hearts trying to find ways to help them understand us, we try to follow their advice; and when it all fails, we build on our foundations of guilt, because we believe it must have been all our fault for being bereaved in the first place!

This might make sense to somebody, but when I thought it through, it seemed to me that the shoe was on the wrong foot. I’m not mad at “them” anymore. I realize now that it’s awfully difficult to describe a sunset to someone who was born blind. On the other hand, I need to keep in mind that I have no right to expect those who do not share my suffering to automatically know my needs.

Now, when I encounter people who “brush off” grief and who are critical of those who can’t, I ask them to share with me their deepest sorrow. If the only death they’ve suffered through is that of their car battery, I simply tell them I don’t expect them to understand. If they haven’t experienced grief on a deeper level, there’s no way they can imagine it, so they needn’t even try. I do, however, expect even demand that they believe me when I tell them what it’s like. I not only require that they take my word for how it is, I’ve liberated myself from being apologetic if I can’t take their advice. Never again will I permit myself to become a pitiable victim who is counseled, guided and instructed by the uninformed.

We who grieve intensely don’t need pity, we need understanding. If we can’t get that, we can at least refuse to bend our backs to the whips of pragmatism. We can grieve with dignity and self respect.

The Oscars

Oh, the Oscars... This award goes to the best actors and actresses of their time. These awards are broken

down into different categories, such as drama, comedy, action, horror and so on. As these awards are given out, there are large screens, so everyone can watch the actors play their parts, to the best of their abilities. They also have tributes to the best actors who appear on stage and screen. While these actors go to collect their lifetime achievement awards for their fame and success, they usually get a standing ovation in honor of their great acting abilities. But I would like to take this one step further.

I know of a group of actors that would put the hall of famers back to square one, with lessons to learn. These people come in all kinds of races, sizes, and ages. They act with the best of the best; but, not only when the cameras are rolling. They have learned to deliver award-winning acts in all categories, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, until the final curtain falls. No matter what the role calls for, from drama to comedy, they are the tops.

But, to my surprise, there are no Oscars, no recognition, and they ask for none. They are the only ones who know how good they are, and for the most part keep it a secret.

Near the end of 1994 I became part of this group. They have taught me, along with my family, how to act to the best of our abilities. We work on these roles, from the time we awake until we go to bed. Each day we learn a whole new different role. So, I tip my hat to these people who are silent, who taught me well, and I hope to do the same for the newcomers. So, here’s to you, my fellow actors on this journey, may we be together until we meet our children again. “The world is a stage, and life goes on.”

Marlene Boylan

I do not ask that you forget your dear departed. I want you to remember. I only ask that you remember more than the moment of death, more than the funeral, more than the house of mourning. Remember life! Remember the whole, not the final page.

Rabbi Maurice Davis, Baltimore

This column is dedicated to providing ideas to help you find your way through the grief.

From:

Janice Harris Lord

A great fear is forgetting some things we don’t want to forget. Many parents find it helpful to write down a half-dozen or so wonderful memories. Get them out and read them often. [This is especially important for parents of children who died after a protracted period of substance abuse. The horrible memories from those terrible months or years need to be supplanted by the happier memories from better times. Ed.] You can save other memories too such as clothing and personal items. Use these, along with your writings, from time to time, to cherish the memory. Remind yourself of the good times when you find yourself walking in the valley of grief.

Time

Time can never erase,
The memory of your face;
Nor the passage of the years,
Stem the volume of my tears.
You are with me for always,
In my heart throughout all days;
Then in my dreams nightly,
Your star shines ever so brightly.
I want your spirit to remain,
Inside of me, despite the pain.
To forget you would be a curse,
Because no memories would be much worse.

You were born a part of me,
Now you live within the heart of me;
Forever precious, forever young,
My beautiful, darling little ones.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

In Memory of my angels, Michelle, Jerry and Danny

I Am Your Sister and Always Will Be

“I am your sister and always will be.”

That’s how Susie signed her cards to me. After a while, she shortened it to, “I am...”

And of course I knew the rest of it.

Susie was two and one-half years younger than I. She was alive one evening talking on the phone to Mom about the Oscars and to Dad about moving. The next day she was found....

Whatever it was--it ended her life and changed mine forever. There was a wonderful side of my sister that I didn’t pay enough attention to. She was a kind and loving person, always ready to shelter lost animals and lost souls. When she was in a good mood,

her smiles warmed my heart. Yet I spent most of my life wishing that things were different: wishing that she thought more of herself, wishing that she would take my advice, wishing that she were happier, wishing that we could accept each other.

Now, for two years, I’ve done nothing but wish she were here so we could have another chance to work at our relationship. Now, I wish that I had been able to give her my unconditional love & support. (She needed it and deserved it.) Now, I wish that I could have been with her that night so she would not have been alone. Now, I wish that I would have held her in my arms and told her how very much I loved her.

Because, Susie, I am your sister and always will be.

Michele Walters

Kaliedoscope

He shattered his life into a thousand pieces, casting a kaleidoscope of light and shadows.

To you he may have seemed broken, but to me he was beautiful.

I remember...

The brightest blue, the laughing eyes of a child at play.

Charcoal gray, the suit of a young boy, handsome and full of dreams.

Ivory white, smooth keys beneath the talented hands of a youth, searching for a song.

Muddled orange, the bouncing ball passed fleetingly from hand to hand in a teenager’s game.

Olive drab, the uniform of a young man seeking meaning, seeking himself.

Yellow, the speeding car that symbolized the beginning, the end, freedom and capture.

Dull red, day in and day out, the shirt of a man paying a price of wasted days.

Shadow black, a place deep within.

A man too young to die was lost where no loved one could reach to shine the light.

Empty, the world without him in it. For a while it seemed that life had lost all color.

Now, though, when it seems my world is filled with shadow black, I will think of a clear and bright blue, And I will try to remember a child’s laughter.

Stephanie Rice,

Robert’s sister

TCF NE CT Chapter

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

Dave and 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 Thursday7-9; 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



**The Compassionate Friends
Closed Facebook Groups**

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of closed Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. These pages were established to encourage connection and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings grieving the death of a child, grandchild or sibling.

TCF - Loss of a Child

Moderators: Donna Goodrich, Dave Roberts, Cathy Seehuetter, and Goody Tendall

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/407123299460580/>

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Barbara Allen, Mary Lemley, Diana Wittkopp and Karen Zaorski

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1515193738693712/>

TCF - Loss to Suicide

Moderators: Leana Leyes, Cathy Seehuetter, Donna Adams and Barbara Reboratti

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1550029471893532/>

TCF - Loss to Homicide

Moderators: Debbie Floyd and Kathleen Willoughby

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/924779440868148/>

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss

Moderators: Susan Peavler and Tiffany Barraso

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1511758585777339/>

TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Still-birth

Moderators: Kelly Kittel and Kenzie Janzen

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1416535188654265/>

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Andrea Keller and Barbara Allen

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1516508415263760/>

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

Moderators: Tracy Milne and Keith Singer

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/>

TCF - Loss of a Grandchild

Moderators: Betty Jeanne Farrel and Jennifer Sue Hale

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/421759177998317/>

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

Moderators: Robin Landry and Rebecca Perkins

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/858226880883307/>

TCF - Loss to Cancer

Moderators: Kari Olson and Michelle Setzer

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/903539646362818/>

TCF - Men in Grief

Moderators: Gary Odle and Mark Rambis

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1614661475452607/>

TCF - Crafty Corner

Moderators: Gail Lafferty and Kathy Rambo

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/663193450477232/>

TCF - Loss of Your Only Child/All Your Children

Moderators: Lisa Ridge and Vicki Woods-Ozias

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/976514755722145/>

TCF - Loss to Mental Illness

Moderators: Sherry Cox and Annette Swestyn

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1481781792114726/>

TCF - Loss to Long-term Illness

Moderators: Pam Adams and Debbie Gossen

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/833665880062696/>

TCF - Loss of a Child with Special Needs

Moderators: Collen Hines and Donna Reagan

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1150750608285413/>

Sharing the Loss

I shared my loss with someone today.
It was heavy on my heart.
It did not take the pain away.
But, at least, it was a start.
I found I wasn't the only one who had lost a child so dear.
There were others who understood.
there were others who would hear.
They said that time was the only thing that would take the pain away.
And so I sat and listened, to all they had to say.
They made it a little easier for the grief I could not hide,
I shared it with them freely, no longer keeping it inside.
No, it did not take the pain away, but it was easier to bear.
Just knowing they were listening, just knowing I could share.

Jeanette Dawson

BP/USA Marion County, FL

Promise

The colors of life change as we go through grief. We begin black and white, then gray settles over us seeping into pores, surrounding us, smothering us for a long period of time, then slowly the colors change, we may not even be aware of their changing till one day we see a rainbow and know it was meant for us...



Thank you to The Cappelli Family for the generous donation to our Livonia chapter. The family hosted a Memorial Golf Tournament in honor and memory of their son,
Christopher David Cappelli.
We thank you for your support to our chapter.

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

September 2015

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



Craft Day

Our craft day will be held on September 26, 2015 at St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church from 10 am until 1 pm.

We will be decorating large boxes of matches. You can use them at home or for gifts. Whatever your imagination will give you!

There will be examples and sign up sheet at the September meeting.

Cost: \$2.00 Supplies provided.
Any questions, email Gail at angel4gail@tds.net or call 734-748-2514.