

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



January 2026
Volume 38, Number 1



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

Chapter Leader

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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:

January 8 -7:00 pm - Meeting:
see page 7

January 20th, Tuesday, at 6:00 pm.
TCF Dinner at: Archie's Tavern 37714
Six mile Rd. Livonia. It is in the Laurel
Park Mall.

Contact Joyce Gradinscak,
734-560-6883, you can text or call her.

No Craft meeting until further notice.

Change of Meeting Date!!

Please note that due to the first Thursday falling on New Year's Day, our meeting will take place on January 8th!

Wishes For Bereaved Parents For the Coming Year

To the Newly Bereaved, we wish you patience - patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

To the Bereaved Siblings, we wish you and your parents a new understanding to each others needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To Those of You Who Are Single Parents, we wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.

To Those of You Who Are Plagued with Guilt, we wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances and that your child knew that.

To Those of You Who Have Suffered Multiple Losses, those who have experienced the death of more than one child, we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life again.

To Those Of You Who Are Deeply Depressed, we wish you the first steps out of "the valley of the shadow".

To Those Experiencing Marital Difficulties after the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To All the Fathers, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, and to cry.

To Those With Few Or No Memories Of Your Child, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and THAT YOUR GRIEF IS REAL.

To Those Of You Who Have Experienced The Death Of An Only Child or of All Your Children, we offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

To Those of You Unable To Cry, we wish you healing tears.

To Those Of You Who Are Tired, exhausted from grieving, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

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>
Lisa Cherry	Russi Arden	January 07	52 yrs
Sam	Dee Banicki	January 20	30 yrs
Jason	Cheryl Beuther	January 08	43 yrs
Adam	Verna Birk	January 25	18 yrs
Blake	Brian & Kim Bowman	January 21	14 yrs
Amy	Pamela Brozack	January 28	39 yrs
Jeffrey	Jeff and Pat Callebs	January 20	27 yrs
Brandon	Cheri Castro	January 14	27 yrs
Costas Dario Cottos	Tara Tarez & Peter Cottos	January 29	10 mos
Addison Anne	Michael and Maureen Donahue	January 13	17 yrs
Joshua James	Christine & James Dragston	January 29	21 yrs
Adam	Roxanne Eaves	January 04	36 yrs
Nathan	Iskander and Susan Farooq	January 25	17 yrs
Shannon	Penny Gaber	January 09	31 yrs
Vedaant	Ashish Garg	January 18	21 yrs
Peter Morris	Ken & Karen Godlewski	January 13	41 yrs
Danny	Pamela Harris	January 21	45 yrs
Steven Michael	Virginia Herrick	January 20	27 yrs
Joel	Paola Hillebrand	January 30	32 yrs
Laura	Neil Hivala	January 23	33 yrs
Camilla Anzures	Ami Hogan	January 12	n/a
Brent	Bonnie Holbrook	January 18	57 yrs
Hannah Lynn	Jon & Lynn Jarrett	January 26	15 yrs
Jeffrey V. Parker	Brendolyn Jasper	January 22	35 yrs
Scott Stephenson	Dave and Charli Johnston	January 31	23 yrs
Derek Gravelle	Josie Knorp	January 15	36 yrs
Robert Wooten	Amy Lawson Sister	January 27	49 yrs
Andrew Jr.	Trish & Andy Lesondak	January 15	23 yrs
Emily	Graddie & Robyn Liddell	January 22	1 day
Stephen	Maria Elena Lopez	January 29	42 yrs
Zane (son in law)	Beverly McDonald	January 01	25 yrs
Randy C. Gardner Sr	Bernice McNair	January 11	59 yrs
Natasha	Marcia Mims	January 05	41 yrs
Kenneth M	Kenneth and Debbie Napora	January 31	42 yrs
Brian Patrick	Pat and Janet O'Donnell	January 15	18 yrs
Alex	Cheryl Oliverio	January 19	21 yrs
Marin Elizabeth	Alisha and Thomas Person	January 13	1 day
Michael James Reilly, Jr.	Michael & Karen Reilly	January 18	51 yrs
Jason Quick	David and Lynn Robertson	January 29	25 yrs
Grant	Craig and Marcia Rodeheffer	January 25	1 day
Matthew	David and Cass Sampson	January 14	25 yrs
Richard Mullender	Siobhan & Doug Sendelbach	January 23	33 yrs
Amaya Hardy	Amber Shaw	January 18	14 months
Aaron Robert	Beth Ann Simon	January 03	21 yrs
Aaron Robert	Robert and Rosalyn Simon	January 03	21 yrs
Luke Stano	Mary Clare Solky	January 29	10 yrs
Frank Yurkovich	Paula Stanko	January 14	25 yrs



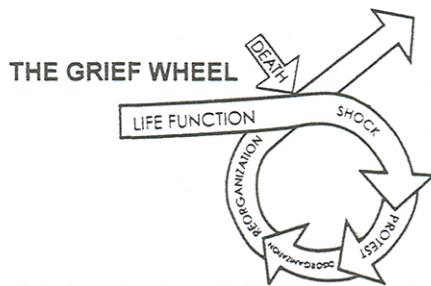
January

Justin J. Bolin	Cindy Stevens	January 05	35 yrs
Carter	Katie and Blair Still	January 23	n/a
Donald Craig	Donna Storie	January 17	35 yrs
Kelly Ann Daroczy	JoAnne Tappan	January 24	n/a
Ian Thrasher	Victoria Tessmer	January 31	42 yrs
Peter Kornblum	Michael Conway & Catherine Thayer	January 26	40 yrs
Adam Guetschoff	Deb and Ed Tieppo	January 5	18 yrs
Kayla	Missy & Greg VanCoppennolle	January 2	16 yrs
Laura	Robert and Mary Vitolins	January 23	15 yrs
Kenneth Carter	Yvette Warren	January 5	42 yrs
Paula	Patsy Watkins	January 3	26 yrs
Sean Watts	Daria Williams	January 23	29 yrs
Jennifer Schons	Rick and Bev Woodard	January 14	38 yrs
Tynan	Rick and Bev Woodard	January 14	6 yrs
Camden	Rick and Bev Woodard	January 14	4 yrs
Let Us Celebrate Their Births			
Kevin	Ben and Tara AuBuchon	January 17	2 mos
Craig	Thomas Birmingham	January 12	31 yrs
Brian Joseph	Paula Bohn	January 26	33 yrs
Jeffrey Kucharski	Mary Burkett	January 13	31 yrs
Alex	Mark Burnstein	January 30	30 yrs
Brandon	Cheri Castro	January 10	27 yrs
Ryan	Julie Colby	January 6	24 yrs
Dominic Duhn	Gabriella & Drew Duhn	January 28	20 yrs
Dominique	Kevin & Sonya Fischer	January 1	23 yrs
Tony	Lois Glover	January 2	21 yrs
Simon Manson	John & Diane Guerin	January 11	21 yrs
Tyler	Patricia and Gregory Haywood	January 11	26 yrs
Courtney Nicole	John and Brenda Hernandez	January 23	18 yrs
Ruben Guzman III	Dora Hinojosa	January 8	45 yrs
Brittany	Katrina Hogan	January 14	19 yrs
Freddie Jaeger	Karen Jaeger-Howard	January 9	29 yrs
Michael James	Geneva James	January 25	52 yrs
Dakari D Phillips	Alfreda Jenkins	January 19	40 yrs
Nick	Pat Katsilas	January 4	24 yrs
Guy Nathan	Jack and Pam Kinsey	January 1	23 yrs
Eric	Todd and Diane Lambert	January 21	26 yrs
Courtney	Laurie Layton	January 22	23 yrs
Emily	Graddie & Robyn Liddell	January 22	1 day
Stephanie	Wayne and Patricia Loder	January 21	8 yrs
Zane (son in law)	Beverly McDonald	January 1	25 yrs
Michael	Bill and Nancy Miller	January 18	42 yrs
Olivia Helen	Robert & Michelle Mockeridge	January 19	7 months
Brandon	Marilyn Mootsey	January 8	22 yrs
Todd	Judy Nesler	January 4	48 yrs
Kenneth Homer-Ray Bentley	Terry L. Norris	January 31	27 yrs
Timothy James	Jim and Diana Owens	January 25	26 yrs
Italya Marie Young	Pamela Penn	January 11	22 yrs
Marin Elizabeth	Alisha and Thomas Person	January 13	1 day
Amber	Justin and Manda Puttock	January 15	8 yrs
Steven	Claire & Gene Richmond	January 4	57 yrs
Elizabeth(Beth) Ann	Carol Mulkey-Ritz	January 6	48 yrs
Grant	Craig and Marcia Rodeheffer	January 25	1 day
Todd	Al and Cary Rogers	January 15	30 yrs

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

To All Others with Special Needs
that we have not mentioned, we wish
you the understanding you need and
the assurance that you are loved.

*Joe Rousseau,
Former National TCF President*



The Grief Wheel

This is called the Grief Wheel. It is simply a visual representation of some of the more typical stages of grief. After the initial shock comes a period of anger; then disorganization; and finally a reorganization of our lives as we seek to go on. Many go back and forth between the stages. But the real point is that eventually we do return to life. But note we do not come out of the “wheel” the same person that we went in. We do go on-- but we are changed forever after the loss of our child.

Many people say they go forward on a different and higher plane, finding they are more sensitive to others; have rearranged their priorities in life; or strengthened their faith. Some change careers, do more charity work, or find a cause with great meaning to them. What is important is that we should expect to change--and the changes we make that are positive are things we can do in our child's name. It doesn't make the hurt ever go away, but it can help us heal.

Rich Edler, TCF South Bay/L.A., CA

Another Year Without My Child

It's a new year and I am marking it, for the fifth time, without my child. Last month was the fourth anniversary of his death. This is one more milestone in the journey of a bereaved parent. The new year brings the promise of new adventures, happiness

and prosperity to others. To bereaved parents it adds another dimension to our loss. It also brings the opportunity to look at where we are and how far we have come.

I remember the first new year's day without my son. What an empty, hollow feeling I had on January 1, 2003. My world had ended, the shock was still systemic in my mind and body, and I counted the days since he last walked, talked and laughed on this earthly plane, dwelling on the passing of days, hours and minutes since the moment of his death. I was frozen.

Looking back at that time, I recall just how the pain felt; unlike other pain, the pain of losing a child is never forgotten. I feel the familiar jolt that rocked my mind and body each time I awoke to remember that my son had died. I remember the misery of slogging through endless, meaningless days. I remember the tears, the second guessing, the anger, the guilt....I remember it all. I still bounce in and out of those emotions; this will never end. It has moderated greatly, but it never ends.

Now I am more focused on my son's life. Details about his life spring into my mind....happy times, maturing times, good times and funny times. I remember it all with the clarity that only a mother can possess. And so, that is how I will begin this new year....remembering the life of my child but never forgetting the loss. I am a different person than I was before my son died. I feel as though a lightning bolt struck me on the day of his death, and now I perceive the world from a different vantage point. I have simplified my life from what it once was. I have many new friends who share the experience of losing a child; I have permanently removed old friends from my life who simply couldn't accept my grief and were fearful of talking about my child. I have a new understanding of the problems that other parents face...problems that a mother of one never has to address. I have become more solidly spiritual. I have gone through Dante's

seven circles, walls and gates of hell and emerged as the unique person I should have been all along. People change. Bereaved parents change a great deal. I no longer dread each new day. I no longer weep silently every night. I no longer ache from head to foot with the pain of losing my child. I read, I write, I stay active in the community. I work in my small business, doing what I want to do and what I must do. I go to museums, to movies, to stage plays. I listen to music, watch television and work in my home and yard.

Amazingly, my word recall and memory are returning. Forgetting names, events, people, destinations and other critical factors of daily life was something I dealt with for over three and half years. I thought I had lost my mind until I started talking to other parents. I have begun doing memorization exercises... something I probably should have done three years ago. I am learning that the journey through grief lasts for a lifetime. Each stage is different, each sudden, poignant memory is paralyzing and each new day brings an opportunity to evaluate progress.

Much has changed during the past four years. Much will change throughout my life. Each of us experiences the loss of our child at the deepest level of our psyches. Yet each of us comes to this place with a different set of experiences and a unique genetic composition. I cannot compare myself to others. I can only mark my tiny steps forward with a sense of wonder at the resiliency of the human mind and spirit while simultaneously accepting that I am not in control...at any moment a flash of the past might bring me to my knees. I have learned to go with it.

I have found hope for the future. It certainly isn't the future I had envisioned. There will be no late night talks with my son, no holidays or birthdays shared, no participation in my son's children's lives, no cards, no handmade gifts. That door was closed by lawsuit happy former in-laws who have no standing in my life today.

I have crawled through the mine-fields and dodged the bullets of some pretty mentally unbalanced people and survived. I have faced the abyss of losing my only child while enduring the cruelest of sniping, the worst of intentionally inflicted pain. I did none of this with grace and finesse... I merely got through it. I survived. I became stronger by letting go of my anger. I found hope by remembering the goodness that is my son and by leaning on friends who had lost their children. These friends were there for me when I so desperately needed the comfort of kindred souls: Compassionate Friends who reached out to me gave me the glimmer of hope when all seemed forever lost and living was almost intolerable.

Now the healing process has completed its circle. I am here for those parents who need me. Strangely this helps me to heal as well. I reach out to others who are new to the process of grief, and I tell them that there is hope. One day the sunrise will again be beautiful and you will find peace within yourself. You will remember your child's life, you will honor your child's life and you will forever be changed by your child's death. But always, always, your child will remain in your heart. This is my truth to all who wish to know. Lean on us, for we have been where you are today. We will walk with you on your journey toward hope, peace and resolution. It is in this place that the healing will begin. This is a new year.

Annette Mennen Baldwin , TCF, Katy, TX

What I Wanted

I wanted to hold your sticky little hand as we walk through the park. To hear you squeal as I push you high on the swing and to hear you say "One more time, Grammy" as I caught you at the bottom of the slide.

I wanted to watch you splash in the wading pool in my back yard and to lay on our backs in the cool summer grass and talk about the shapes that clouds make. I wanted to lift you from the tub and wrap you in a towel hold-

ing you close as I pat you dry and hear you beg for one more bedtime story before I turn off the light .

I wanted to sing to you songs of joy in the morning, action songs during the day, soft lullabies full of love as darkness falls and of course Alice's Restaurant at Thanksgiving.

I wanted to watch you grow from baby to little girl to young lady. To see you dressed up for your first prom. To comfort you after your first heartbreak. To cry with joy on your wedding day. I wanted you so much.

Nina Bennett - Grandmother

What About Laughter?

Grief is such a serious thing. It breaks your life apart, and it leaves you confused and powerless. Grief is pain beyond words; grief is relentless force and grief will not yield the field without an enormous struggle. And yet in the middle of all this emotional hardship there is often a deep and resonant intuition saying "life goes on." And does it also say "you'll heal"? Is there something in our spirit that keeps us breathing, waiting for the daylight, and ready (even against our will) to live again?

Surely, tears are inescapable at times of such grief— but what about laughter? Does it seem as if griever's know that both tears AND laughter will help us to keep going, to live again, and to enjoy life again someday? And in time, can we come to see laughter as an affirmation of our dead children's lives? We would not want to tell them would we, that their life is the cause of unremitting sadness from this day forward?

When you can, make your life ready for laughter.

Reprinted from *LARGO*, Dec. '96

Wounded Heart

"Your broken heart requires at least as much care as a broken bone. With proper care you can be confident that you will heal. The same powerful forces that mend a broken bone will heal your emotional pain, but a wounded heart needs time and proper care to heal." ~Harold Bloomfield, MD~

If someone fell and broke a leg, people would rush to their aid. They wouldn't stop to even think about it. Yet, when it's our hearts that are broken, few rush to our aid, and even fewer understand.

At first, we receive the cards and phone calls wishing us well and telling us "if there's anything I can do"... but they soon taper off to a trickle. Then we begin to hear that we must "get on with our life," we can't let it get us down, and we're told just how soon we should be "back to normal"... we're given a deadline of sorts. When we don't follow the acceptable standards for healing, we are thought to "need help.... the professional kind ... and we're told that we are "in denial..

These same people, who seem to have all of the answers, not only have never experienced the loss of a child, but also tend to not want to get too involved ...too close to our pain. They would rather stand off to the side until we're back to our old selves ...whatever that is! They're uncomfortable when we speak of why our hearts are broken and they don't mention it for fear of reminding us of how our hearts broke in the first place... as if we could ever forget.

When they ask us, "How are you?".... it's more a greeting than a question. They don't want to hear how we ache inside, how lonely and empty we feel how desolate we feel. Why ... because they can't fix it. They can't make us whole again. And unlike a broken bone that's healed, we will never be as good as new.

We will be forever missing a part of what made us the person that we once were. When our child died, so did a part of our heart and where that piece was, now there is nothing ... only a gaping hole that nothing and no one can ever fill.

Unlike a broken bone, we will not mend in a few weeks ... in fact, we will never fully mend. We learn to live without that piece of our hearts ... to live with our loss, to survive ... one day at a time!

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

A Sibling Dies: For Don

It is January first. My heart twinkles once again because the holidays are over. How can a season of light bring so much dark? Thirty years ago, on Christmas morning, my brother died in our home by suicide in a very violent manner. He was 23; my other brother was 24; and I was 19 years old.

Our family of five was irretrievably shattered. Don, my brother who died, was so much a part of us. He brought so much joy in his living and then so much pain in his dying. Who am I to grieve him still? The memories well up every December like a deep dark night unbidden. Anger, sadness, rejection, guilt become my Christmas ornaments. "Give me back my family – give me back my Christmas, you creep. Give me back your laughter,"

I want to shout at him. Who am I to miss him? Who am I to rage when he was the one in the grips of a pain so untenable that he could not speak of it, but only act upon it? Who am I to cry?

Well, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor after all. One doesn't get there on a water slide, if you know what I mean. When Christmas rolls around, I do my dance with grief once again. Some years, it's a waltz; other years a tango. It doesn't seem to matter if it's two, 20 or 30 years since my brother died; I get out my dancing shoes. I don't go looking for pain like some wacky masochist. It finds me.

Some years I announce – around November 25th, "I'm over this." I act accordingly. I shop for Christmas cards and don't go near my dancing shoes. It doesn't matter. They find me. It's not like I didn't have therapy. I've had dance therapy, art therapy, regu-

lar therapy, travel therapy, friendship therapy, biofeedback/hypnosis therapy, cream puff therapy, swimming therapy, forgiveness therapy, spiritual community therapy, law school therapy ... Law School therapy? The fun had to end somewhere.

Seriously, losing a sibling is heart wrenching and no laughing matter. It took me 10 or 15 years to truly laugh again, let alone make light of myself. That just happened this year. No doubt, because I am writing of it, rather than speaking of it which I rarely do. It feels safer to write.

Other than to therapists, I've spoken of his death to three people in 30 years. Who could understand, I felt, and why diminish his being or expose myself? I adored my brother Don – he made me laugh like a monkey. I adore both my brothers; as a child they were my world. Not very healthy perhaps, but it worked for me.

Home life was chaotic and quite frightening because my father was more than a little nuts. My mother's energy was spent containing his insanity and keeping our bodies and souls together. She was part steel, part angora. We never spoke of Don after his death. The community ostracized us; my father took a trip down devil's lane, and my mother mourned my brother until the day she died. I'm sad to say that we never had Don's picture in our home again, because the pain was too severe. It seems we could not get past it. We went to our separate

(Continued on page 7)

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 Vitols - A father's grief - (313) 882-8632

Gail Lafferty - Sudden Death - (734) 748-2514

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



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

Meeting is Thursday, January 8th. (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE of REGULAR DAY) . Newcomers table and topic tables.
Topic: As we go into the New Year, can you make some resolutions that pertain to your grief or is it still too hard to think about a future without your child, sibling or grandchild?

A Love Gift -No dues or fees are required to belong to The Compassionate Friends. We have all paid the ultimate price, the loss of our loved ones. Parents and others may provide financial support for our chapter through Love Gifts. It is a beautiful loving way to remember our loved ones. Love Gift form is on back page.

- ♥ Susan Steinberg in memory of **Shannon**; “Happy Heavenly 57th Birthday My Dear Girl. We love you so much and miss you always. Love Forever-Mom, Dad, Todd, Chris & Ajax”
- ♥ V.Robert Vitolins in memory of **Laura Vitolins**; “We miss you very much. Love, Mom, Dad, and sister Karen”
- ♥ Matt & Cindy Stevens in memory of **Justin**; “Missing you so very much. Still can’t believe it has been 13 years. You will always be in our hearts forever.”

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

Andrew (Andy)	Carol Rommelare	January 21	28 yrs
Destinee	Paul Sanders	January 24	17 yrs
Todd Jeffrey	Jan Santomauru	January 22	49 yrs
Caleb	Gary Sarnowsky	January 17	23 yrs
Michael	Pat Schrocka	January 13	36 yrs
Samantha Huckabee	Linda Spears	January 9	31 yrs
Joe	Roslynn Standriff	January 19	16 yrs
Shannon	Susan & Raymond Steinberg	January 10	46 yrs
James Patrick	Jim and Pat Stevens	January 2	28 yrs
Carter	Katie and Blair Still	January 23	n/a
Madalyn	Darin Szilagy	January 16	7 yrs
Madalyn	Faith Szilagy	January 16	7 yrs
Justin Lee Couch Jr	Erica Tomalah	January 13	3 mos
Derek	Dawnne Toppa	January 9	31 yrs
Ethan	Matt and Mina Twork	January n/a	7 yrs
Shawn	Jerry and Judy Tyrrell	January 22	49 yrs
Jakob Berens	Angela Webster	January 15	19 yrs
Mark	Celeste White	January 25	47 yrs
DeJuan Z. White	Crystal White	January 13	15 yrs

corners and quietly mourned.

It was different years ago; so much remained hidden. Self-healing groups were non-existent; shrinks were stigmas, and the Catholic Church unforgiving. I couldn’t save him. I was the last person he talked with on Christmas Eve. For months, I barely spoke and relived the shock daily. I ate a lot. Death by mashed potatoes. That was sure to bring him back. I retreated into a private world for several years where if I wasn’t dead, I’d sure like to be.

This is grief. And it does soften over time. It softens like water softens rock, in its flowing, gentle, rushing, mysterious way. It softens like a sweet whisper of a memory that lulls you to sleep, knowing that love knits

the bones of despair together, tighter, stronger, more curious, more delicious than ever before. Knowing that the fires of your being burn the dross of despair. Knowing that the chamber of the heart is strong beyond measure and can take it and transform the pain into joy. Joy for having known this person, for a day or 10 years or two months. Joy for having the courage to be. For knowing yourself in many garments. For taking a risk to love anyone again: a neighbor, a friend, a cat, a lover, a stranger, yourself. The broken heart opens and mends itself in the middle of the night, when no one is there but many are listening. Joy seeps into me. After all, I’m entitled. I’m a survivor.
L. Nicole Dean



Livonia members of TCF stood in frigid temperatures to remember their children “gone too soon.”

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

January 2026

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

Pictures Speak

Can pictures speak? They do to me. They tell a story, a story of happiness, of love, of fun, of heartbreak. I look at the pictures of you Emma, and you speak to me through your smiles. I can hear you saying I am ok, I am here with you, I have not left. I stare at your pictures and look into your big blue eyes and I see your soul as alive as ever. Pictures can speak, if you LISTEN.....

*Nancy Fisher
TCF South Bay/LA, CA*