

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



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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:

August 3- Monthly Chapter
Meeting see page 7

**August 15- 6:00 pm. TCF Dinner at:
Grand Tavern 37714 Six mile Rd.
Livonia. It is in the Laurel Park Mall.**

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

No Craft Day

Communicating with My Child

Eighteen months ago, I dedicated a bench to Philip. It's in a space Philip would like, out in the natural world, with abundant wildlife and wonderful views across hills and sea.

I go there often to spend time alone with my beloved son. I sit on the bench, look at the vistas, and remember our family as it used to be. I talk to Philip. I make him promises; I ask for his guidance. I muse on what his life would be like now. I tell him how deeply I love him, how missing him gets harder with each passing year. I tell him about his brothers, about his sister-in-law and his little nephew, both of whom he never met. I tell him how important he is to us. I tell him that we will never forget him, that though our lives are five years past his death, we still think of him all the time and want him with us. I tell him that I am having a terribly hard time accepting that he has died, and that I am doing the best I can.

I have no idea if I am communicating with a Philip who has survived death or with myself, who hopes he has. Sometimes I think I feel an impatient nudge, a sort of, "Get on with it, Mom, it's not what you think" message. Sometimes I feel his arms around me in compassionate understanding. Sometimes I don't

feel any response at all.

I am grateful for these private times with my child. Whether he lives on in some other sphere—and how I hope he does!—or whether he resides only in our deepest hearts, there is an honoring of him in these conversations, a recognition of his existence and its importance, that matters very much to me.

I believe that we all need to find our individual ways of keeping the channels to our children open. My conversations with Philip may seem odd to some people, but they are right for me. I encourage you to honor your own private ways of communicating with your beautiful child, whatever they are. If you are searching for the channel that will work for you, consider what some other bereaved parents have found helpful: poetry, painting, journal writing, hiking in the natural world, daydreaming, music, meditation, lighting candles, wearing a deceased child's clothing, sitting in his/her room, playing a sport she/he loved, among many, many others. May the time spent in private dialogue with your child bring you peace-filled moments, a renewed sense of connection, and strength to continue the difficult journey we are all on.

Kitty Reeve
TCF Marin County and San Francisco

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 to members...



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

How Long

How long does it take to pull yourself back together? That's one of the most often heard questions from those in the early days of bereavement. There's no one answer that's always right. It's not $64+36 = 100$. It all depends. Maybe the sun is shining, maybe a flower blooms. Perhaps something is funny... and you laugh. Maybe a storm ends with a rainbow. But there are also days when nothing good seems to happen. Do you really have to be one hundred percent every day? Be fair to yourself. You knew your child would stumble now and then when learning to walk. It's reasonable to assume you will be the same as you now try to learn to walk without him/her. Just take one step at a time. It will help you to walk through one hour at a time and one day at a time.

As the days go by, perhaps adding to thousands of days, you'll realize you have acquired some energy...and your life again has some semblance of shape. Not the way it used to be, but better than it's been. Some things seem to get done. Remember, there will be down days...days when nothing goes right, nothing gets finished. If you do demand some daily success of yourself, small list of easy to achieve, relative mindless jobs for those days might be useful. My list includes pulling weeds, washing floors or windows, polishing silver or copper pans. You probably have some good ideas to add. The point is - be reasonable. Don't set large goals.

Some days one weed pulled, one pot polished can be counted as a huge accomplishment. You don't need to meet someone else's standards.

Joan Schmidt

Just Let Me Be Sad

We live in a world where - if you have the means - pain and suffering are to be avoided at all costs. We are always looking for the next "quick fix" to alleviate discomfort with the least amount of effort required. In many cases, this

means treating the symptoms while ignoring the root cause of the problem. In the United States, we live in a society so uncomfortable with emotional pain that when someone dies, society expects the outward mourning period to end once the funeral is over.

When the bereaved do not cooperate with these prescribed time tables, they are often accused of "wallowing" in their grief. They are indignantly told to "move on" and "get over it." Do these statements mean prolonged outward grief is a sign of weakness? Maybe self-pity? Perhaps it means they think the bereaved secretly enjoy the pain, and the attention it brings? For those of us who have lost someone dear to us, we know that it could not be further from the truth. If we could, we would give ANYTHING to not feel this pain. The hidden meaning behind these statements is that our outward projection of sadness is an unwelcome reminder of all the negative emotions they've managed to stuff deep inside until the pain went away. I see it kind of like "out of sight, out of mind." So which is healthier? To bury the pain, only to have it lie dormant until some tragedy unearths it again - but this time stronger and more painful? Or to acknowledge that there is no quick fix to alleviate the overwhelming pain of losing someone you have built your life - and in some cases, your identity - around?

I would equate the first option to following the latest fad diet to lose weight quickly without exercising or changing your eating habits. Maybe you'll pop some appetite suppressing pills and lose weight in the short term, but the chances of you keeping the weight off are slim, and the reality is that the next time you try to lose weight, it will likely be harder than the time before. The second option would mean facing the harsh reality that transforming your body to a stable, healthy weight requires permanently changing your eating habits and amount of regular exercise. It probably even requires you to readjust your

expectations of what your ideal body should look like (sadly, most of us will never look like supermodels or pro athletes). In other words, the second option is HARD WORK, but it has the greatest likelihood of becoming a permanent reality.

But if I'm being honest here, I have to admit that given the opportunity, I would have gladly chosen to bury the overwhelming pain when my daughter died. Suppressing pain and emotions is what I had done my whole life until that point. The fact is that the pain of losing someone I loved MORE than my own life was too much to bury. I reluctantly - and resentfully - took on more pain than I could bear. I did so because I had no other choice.

For the first time in my life, I learned how to slowly take small steps with that unbearable load on my back. I learned that by sharing my story and my pain with others - whether it was support groups, counseling, or with other bereaved individuals - the load was reduced, even if it was only a very slight amount each time. By reducing the load over months and then years, it became easier to carry. I have since come to understand that the load will never fully go away, but I have learned how to balance it with the rest of my life. And as time goes on, the balance will become easier still. That is not to say that occasionally, the load won't suddenly feel nearly as heavy as it did when my grief was new. And when it does, I'll remember how to go back to taking small, careful steps until it feels lighter again.

To all those who cringe in discomfort when they see me experiencing outward emotional pain, I say this: just let me be sad. My intention is not to make you feel uncomfortable. I don't expect - or want - you to follow in my footsteps. But I do expect you to respect the path I have been forced to take on my journey through life. I truly hope you never have to carry this load yourself.

Maria Kubitz

TCF Contra Costa County, CA

In Memory of my daughter, Margareta

For My Compassionate Friends

How is it that I know you?
How'd you get into my life?
Sometimes when I look at you,
It cuts me like a knife.
I do not want to know you,
I don't want to cross that line.
Let's both go back into the past,
When everything was fine.
You've held me and you've hugged
me,
And dried a tear or two,
Yet, you're practically a stranger,
Why do you do the things you do?
Of course, I know the reason,
We are in this Club we're in,
And why we hold on to each other
Like we are long-lost kin.
For us to know each other,

We had to lose a kid,
I wish I'd never met you,
But, I'm so thankful that I did.
Marilyn Rollins
TCF Lake/Porter Counties, IN

Missing You

I just can't believe it...
The sun still rises and sets,
The moon and stars still shine,
The flowers still bloom, The birds
still sing.
I expected a change in everything
I just can't believe it...
It still gets dark and light,
The ocean still has waves,
The rain still rains, The wind still
blows,
Is it because they do not know?
I just can't believe it...
I thought the world would stop

When in my house I found
an empty chair, a missing smile
I thought it would stop
For just a while.
I just can't believe it.
Gretta Viney
TCF Yakima, WA

About two months after my son Max died, I attended my first TCF meeting. At first it was hard listening to other parents stories because I was in so much pain myself. But as I continued to attend, the meetings helped me realize I wasn't alone there was help and healing there. These TCF parents shared of themselves and gave me "hope" that I could survive the death of my beautiful boy.
Gail Lafferty, Max Christopher's Mom
Livonia Chapter, Livonia, Michigan

Memorial on a Brief Life Loss of an Infant ...

His heart beat; his legs kicked; His arms moved.
Then one day it stopped.

Hardly a human lifespan,
Yet an eon of remembered fact: Of anticipation.
Of what our baby would be like.
Of a crib filled with love and happiness.
Of a tiny baby we would carefully watch grow.

For eight months he grew inside me ...
Long enough to have memory forever remind me
that I never saw him,
Never held him, never felt his softness,
Never counted his toes,
Never knew the color his eyes.

Long enough to tell me and retell me of the Death-paled hands
not quite covered by the gown he never got to wear home;
Of all the stuffed animals he never got to cuddle; of a small casket;
The smell of moist earth, and tears.

In my hand I hold an obituary, A statistical report,
A map to the cemetery lot where he was buried.
A picture of his casket . . .

Souvenirs.
We are all sorry,
We know how you feel, they say..
Thanks, but you can't know,
For I don't feel . . . not yet.

It all went so fast-love-anticipation Where has it all gone?
Mary Eggell, TCF, Central Coast Chapter, CA

SIBS

A Letter to My Sibling

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together. Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagine I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief. There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful

you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

Mary Lamourex
TCF Marin County, CA

Memory in Light and Shadow

Your picture is there in shadow and light,
But your spirit is with me and forever bright.

You are forever lovely in my mind's eye.

You are forever smiling while I still cry.

Little sister so quiet and shy
Eyes as blue and wide as the sky,

Memory of a day years ago
Came last night as I sat in repose.

Fresh as a summer breeze,
Sharp as the sting of a bee.

For a moment, the empty space,
Filled with your beauty and grace.

Honeysuckle entwined in your hair,
Pink, baby cheeks and skin so fair.

Digging to China with tiny hands,
We sat in our happy childhood land.

Under the oak tree in sun made lace
Red Mississippi dirt smudged your face.

I look at your picture when I pass by
When I see your face, I smile and I cry.

I long to go back to the sweet day,
To return to the happy, innocent play.

Just one day isn't too much to ask,
A few hours to go back to the past.

A lifetime of friendship,
A bond of kinship.

My thoughts often stray
To that sweet summer day

Little sister so quiet and shy
Eyes as blue and wide as the sky.

Author Unknown

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

Kathy Rambo - Sudden Death - (734) 306-3930

Remember that our chapter has a Facebook page. It is a closed page, so you just need to search for The Compassionate Friends of Livonia, Michigan and ask to join.

TCF CHAT ROOM: www.compassionatefriends.org

The chat rooms are moderated and are open at different times. There is one open most evenings from 10-11 p.m. They are all moderated which means that all the chat rooms have a trained facilitator in them.

National Mailing Address: 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808 Wixom, MI 48393

Phone: 877-969-0010; Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

OTHER TCF CHAPTERS IN OUR AREA:

Ann Arbor: Mike Fedel: MikeFedela2@gmail.com; 734-998-0360 ; 3rd Sunday, 2:30 to 4:30 pm - First Presbyterian Church (Vance Room) 1432 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

St. Clair Shores: 2nd Wed. Kathy Joerin ; 586-293-6176, kjmac21@aol.com

Detroit: Kellie West Outer Drive Methodist Church, 12065 West Outer Drive, Detroit ; 2nd Wed., 6:30 - 8:30; 734-660-9557.

Troy: St. Paul's Methodist Church, 620 Romeo, Rochester, MI 3rd Thursday 7-9; Tina@586-634-0239

South Rockwood TCF Chapter: Southwood United Methodist Church, 6311 S. Huron River Drive, South Rockwood, MI 48179; 3rd Tues. of month meeting - 7 pm; Sheri Schooley, Leader; Contact Karen 734-672-7469

Tecumseh TCF Chapter: First Presbyterian Church, 211 W. Chicago, Tecumseh, 4th Sunday of the month, 2-4 pm, Marsha & Jeff DiCenzo 517-918-5608 & 517-358-1883



PLEASE REMEMBER
Siblings are welcome to attend
the Livonia Compassionate
Friend meetings. We ask that
you be at least 16 years old.

Livonia Chapter Page

Regular meeting: Thursday, August 3 at 7:00 pm. As usual, there will be a First Time Table and tables for “older” members. For the latter, the topic: Do you remember the first person that really helped you after your child(ren) died? Recall for the group how they helped you and how you felt.

A Love Gift is a gift of money to Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but may also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, simply a gift from someone who wants to make a donation to help in the work of the Livonia Compassionate Friends. Love Gift form is on the last page.

- ♥ Nancy & Ralph Green in memory of: Steven Frederick Green
 - ♥ Susan Wobig in memory of: Michael Ryan: “Happy Birthday and Angel Day. Love You and Miss You, Mom”
 - ♥ Ken & Eve Ventura in memory of: Kristin; “Happy 35Th Birthday in Heaven, Angel “
-

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.

Christine Motko, whose beloved daughter, **Tricia Miller** born 12/31; died 3/04; 46 years

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

The Gift of Someone who Listens

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile,
That first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers Who
told us of ways to deal.
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.

Nancy Myerholtz
TCF Waterville/Toledo OH



*Ever have a memory that
sneaks out of your eye and
rolls down your face?*

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

August 2023

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



***Be sure to take a look at
the chapter's new website:
<https://www.tcflivonia.org>***