

# The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

## Livonia, Michigan Chapter



**July 2025**  
**Volume 37, Number 7**

**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:**

**July 3 -7:00 pm - Meeting: see page 7**  
**July 15th, 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.**

**\*\* If any of you who are having**  
**the newsletter mailed to you would be**  
**willing to receive it online, we would**  
**appreciate it. The cost of postage and**  
**printing has continued to go up. Just**  
**email Brenda at**  
**brendabrummel@me.com**

### **No Vacation**

There is no vacation from your absence.

Every morning I awake I am a bereaved parent.

Every noon I feel the hole in my heart.

Every evening my arms are empty.

My life is busy now, but not quite full.

My heart is mended, but not quite healed.

For the rest of my life every moment will be lived without you.

There is no vacation from Your absence.

*Kathy Boyette,*  
*TCF, MS Gulf Coast Chapter*

### **Healing and Hope**

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, which control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, "It's different with me! You don't understand!" This is the "normal" response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face.

Fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way who have learned that, out of this morass of loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope. Though small and fleeting at first, this

hope becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child's death. And this healing will occur even though there is still no understanding of "Why?"

It is by working through our guilt (both real and imagined), facing our anger including anger at God and even at the dead child, crying our way through our despair (with carefully chosen professional help if necessary), that the loneliness will lessen, and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought gone forever. Each one must use one's spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process.

Full recovery—in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear never to return—will not occur, although the term "recovery" is used. I prefer the term "healing," a process whereby our lives come to a new "normal." Healing implies (a) our accepting the unacceptable (the death of our child), and (b) our slowly learning to resume productive relationships with others. This is done all while we continue to love and miss the dead child.

Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may

*(continued on page 4)*

# Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

*This month, we remember the children who are so deeply and sadly missed. Please take a few moments to place them and their parents in your thoughts.*

## **Let Us Remember Them Always**

<i>Child</i>	<i>Parent, Grandparent, Sibling</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Age</i>
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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*

slow the process by failing to do our grief work, but we cannot stop it!! One of the greatest hindrances to our healing is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time! Perhaps the greatest obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive—ourselves, the dead child, others involved with the child's death, even God if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others.

We enhance the healing process when we do our grief work, when we have gratitude for the time we had with our child, when we recall the happy times we experienced with our child (or during pregnancy, if that's all we had), and when we pick up the shattered pieces of our existence (as our child would want us to do), slowly resuming productive living. No matter where you are in your journey toward healing, bolster the hope that arises within you. Your healing is probably the best memorial you may erect to your dead child!

*Robert Gloor*

*TCF Tuscaloosa, AL*



## Names in Granite

Several years ago, on a visit to Washington, D.C., I visited the Vietnam War memorial. I knew a young man who died during the war and whose name appeared on the Memorial. I made a point of finding his name of the Wall; it was a moving experience for me. After I located his listing, I stood at the Memorial, reflecting on his life, his surviving child and wife,

and thought about what this Memorial must mean to them.

This is a Memorial that was born in controversy. One veteran called it, "the black gash of shame." Another veteran thought the Memorial did little to lift the spirits of the men who fought in the Vietnam War. In fact, a second monument was built on the site to pacify those who expressed initial dissatisfaction. As years have passed, however, and millions have visited the Memorial, it has come to be a place of healing and peace.

People may wonder about its success as a tribute to the men and women who fought and died in Vietnam. But I don't. As a TCF chapter leader and editor of our chapter newsletter, I have come to understand the meaning of the Vietnam Memorial and its message to all of us.

We have a column in our newsletter titled, "That Their Light May Always Shine...Our Children Loved and Remembered." This column lists the day a child died, his/her name, and the child's parents. We call these "remembrance dates" rather than anniversary dates, thereby avoiding a word that connotes celebration and jubilation. Occasionally and accidentally, I have omitted a child's name. Invariably, when this happens, I receive a phone call from a very distraught parent who wants to know why their child's name did not appear in the newsletter.

In fact, recently, a mother called to inform me that I had omitted her son's name. This child died five years ago. I asked why this error caused so much pain. She said, "When his name appears in the newsletter each year, it is the only time I ever see it in print. It is a sign to me that he lived and to anyone else that reads the newsletter. Maybe everyone else has forgotten that he lived, but I remember and the newsletter reminds others. Then I know I am his mother."

I understood, as never before, the importance of the written word, or as in this case, the written name. Any person who questions the impact of

a black granite wall listing 58,132 names has never experienced the death of a child.

*Cissy Lowe Dickson*

*TCF, Houston Bay Area Chapter*

## "I Can Only Imagine"

I can only imagine  
What our hearts would feel  
If that day had never happened  
If your death had not been real

I can only imagine  
What our eyes would see  
If they hadn't shed a million tears  
Pleading, Why you? Why not me?

I can only imagine  
One where all your dreams come true  
You fell in love and took a wife

I can only imagine  
What a wonderful father you'd be  
What names you'd give your children  
Would you be anything like me?

I can only imagine  
If I'll live to see the day  
When the mere thought of you  
No longer takes my breath away

I can only imagine  
If things had ended differently  
A family of four, now a family of three  
But the one that's missing  
should have been me  
When our work is done  
And our time to go has come  
Our arms at last again will hold  
Brennan, our beloved son  
I can only imagine...

*Tom Murphy*

*Greater Cincinnati TCF~ E. Chapter, OH*

## The Sounds of Silence

The sounds of silence are everywhere—it is the silent pain of the loss of our son Andy, it is the silence of our home because one of our children is gone, and it is the silence

of the sudden quiet that comes over people when we mention Andy. We have become both better and worse in the six years since Andy died of cancer at the age of 22. We are better because we are able to get on with our lives and even enjoy ourselves occasionally. We have gotten worse because, as the years go by, we feel his loss more deeply. We feel his loss every time we participate in a celebration marking some milestone of our friends and relatives or their children. We feel the loss because any celebrations of our own will always be incomplete—one person will always be absent and not there to celebrate with us or to enjoy his own milestones. The pain of his absence is always present at these events. When Andy died, the pain of his loss was a sharp acute screaming pain that tore a hole inside of us. Now, the pain is a silent quiet steady pain. The hole is still inside us, covered by a scar, but it is still there. It doesn't scream out loud any more but instead just remains as a quiet steady and never-ending ache and sadness—a silent pain. The silence of our home is a different kind of quiet. By now, if Andy had lived, he probably would have been out on his own. We would have been “empty nesters” anyway. But, when a home becomes empty because of the death of a child, it is a different kind of empty nest. Our daughter, Lesley, is married and out on her own, the way it should be. But, Andy is gone for a different reason. So, the silence of our empty nest is not the silence of knowing we raised two children and now they are both out leading their own lives. Instead it is the silence of a home that is empty because one child is gone forever—of having to deal with the reality that phone calls only come from one child, not two; that only one child stops by for a visit, not two; that one child is forever gone from the nest. There is a silence in our home that often seems to pervade every space. It is a sad silence, not the temporary quiet of a happy home.

And then, there is the silence of relatives and friends when we talk about Andy—not about his death but about the things he did while alive. It is as if Andy has become a forbidden topic because he died, as if his death wiped out the 22 years he did live. It occurs when a relative whispers that our son died when someone asked how old he was—like his life and what happened to him was a big secret. It occurs when people suddenly get a funny look on their faces and don't know what to say next when you mention something about Andy. It occurs when you get the feeling that people want to avoid you because you remind them of a horror that could happen to anyone. It is a silence that reminds you that your emotions and feelings are different from that of others and that you will always have to live with the sounds of silence resulting from your son's death.

*Mel Winer*

## The Fear of Forgetting

When my daughter died just after turning four years old, one of my biggest fears has been that she will be forgotten. But lately, I've been asking myself what does that really mean? What am I really scared of?

The idea that she will be forgotten is actually two separate fears. The first is that due to the notion of “out of sight, out of mind,” friends and even family will stop thinking of her and, in essence, “forget her.” In reality, this is the natural course of life. I have beloved relatives and dear friends who have passed, and yet I rarely think of them. Does it mean they didn't exist, or had any less impact on my life? No. Nor does it mean I love them any less. What it does represent is that life goes on, and current matters occupy our minds.

I think my fear is actually rooted in the reality of family and friends no longer talking about my daughter or – from my perspective – thinking of her, which feels as though it further isolates me from the “normal” world.

It has been years since she died, and yet the pain is ever present and my daily thoughts are still filled with memories and longing for my daughter. Other than the news sensationalizing death and destruction to grab our attention for ratings, our society tends to not want to talk about grief or the lingering pain of loss after the funeral is over. So I go about my business and lead two lives: the “normal” one that goes about living a “normal” life, and the “private” one where I still struggle to figure out how to work through the pain of grief while learning to once again embrace the love, joy, and adventures that surround me.

The second part of my fear has to do with me and my memory. With my daughter no longer physically here, memories of her have become precious commodities. Those few memories of specific moments captured in time allow me to momentarily remember not just who she was, but remember life before the pain of her death forever changed me and my world. But with every passing day, and with all the new information coming in, those memories tend to get crowded out and forgotten. All those everyday moments that I took for granted at the time have already faded into the abyss of memories lost to time. It makes me sad that her older brothers say that they have very few specific memories of her. It makes me sadder that her baby brother never had the chance to meet her, and will have to rely on our stories and descriptions of her if he ever wants to get to know her.

To combat this fear, I have tried to write down as many memories as I can – even if they are mundane. I keep them in a journal, and some I post to [www.aliveinmemory.org](http://www.aliveinmemory.org) to share them with others. This way I can refer back to them and share them with whoever is interested in reading them. Her brothers can read them and share them with their eventual families.

But lately, I wonder is my fear of forgetting my memories really necessary? Does it make me a bad mother

*(continued on page 7)*



# SIBS

## Do I Have To ?

Mom, do I have to stop loving my brother because he is not here?  
Will I forget all about him because he's not near?  
I remember all the things we did together, even though we were very young.  
I laugh and feel warm each time I think of a particularly funny one.  
Sometimes I get so angry that he's no longer here to share,  
But I know he knows it's only because of how much I still care.  
I miss him, so even though at times we didn't agree,  
Just knowing he was there made things feel safe for me.  
He always felt he had to be my strong, protective big brother,  
And that's a bond we'll always share

forever with each other.  
He tried to protect me even when he, too, was just scared.  
No, I won't stop loving that big brother of mine,  
Not now, not ever, not till the end of time.  
He will always be a part of what makes me be me.  
And that's the part of our love that will live eternally.  
*Jackie Rosen,  
TCF N. Dade/S. Broward, FL*

## Sibling Grief

With each passing year my grief is absorbed deeper inside of me. It's not something strangers can readily see anymore. It's not an excuse for friends to avoid the topic. It doesn't bring sympathy. It's in me, but it's part of me, unrecognizable. If I didn't tell

you, you would never know. My body has adjusted to the extra weight, and my mind has learned to acknowledge it but not to give in to it.

Seven years. Ten years. Thirty years. We know we're functioning and smiling and making new memories. We may feel guilty when we catch ourselves lingering a little less in front of our lost loved one's photograph. We make commitments to renew our attention to the memory. We remember our siblings while we talk to people over lunch, but we pretend like we're listening. The feelings go through us like a rush, but it doesn't happen as often as it used to happen. And no one knows. Has anyone made sense of it yet?

I never knew my mind could be dominated by a single thought every day for years and still not get in the way of the progress of my life. The hands on the clock continue to turn, and the sun rises every morning. I'm thinking, "I wish Chris were here," and I'm thinking it constantly. Even though the grief is not on the surface, the missing is as strong as it ever was. We can't explain it, but we want to share it. We might not break down, but the strength of the grief never fades. We just keep on living with it and do the best we are able to do. I miss my brother.

*Scott Mastley,  
Atlanta TCF - In memory of my brother,  
Chris Mastley*

Author of the book, *Surviving a Sibling*



## 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  
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](http://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](http://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, July 3rd. Newcomers table and topic tables. Topic: Are you afraid of forgetting somethings about your child, sibling or grandchild? What are some ways to keep the good memories “alive” even after many years?

\*\*\*\* *If any of you who are having the newsletter mailed to you would be willing to receive it online, we would appreciate it. The cost of postage and printing has continued to go up. Just email Brenda at [brendabrummel@me.com](mailto:brendabrummel@me.com)*

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**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 back page.

- ♥ Sandi Weiss in loving memory of **Scott Weiss**: “Can’t believe it’s been 13 years since you have been gone. Miss you every day. Love, Mom “
  - ♥ Tom & Commie McCann in loving memory of **Tom Jr. on his Angel Day 7/15 & Joe Coffey on his Angel Day 7/26**: “In memory of our sons Ryan “Ryfro”, Tom Jr., Bryan “Bryfro” Soupis considered a son to our family, Mark “Sparky” Abbott, Joe Coffey, & Jim “Jimmy” Vick.”
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Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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that I can’t remember more moments I shared with her? Of course not. Does it mean my love for her will fade with the memories? Absolutely not. While I wish I could remember more specific memories of time that I shared with her, I will try to be content knowing that I will never forget how much I love my daughter, or how much she means to me. I will never forget her personality quirks, her vivid imagination, and endless creativity. And I will never forget how her life – and her death – have helped me grow tremendously in my understanding of this life and how best to live it.

*Maria Kubitz*

### Let the Rain Come Down

When you’re all alone in the darkness, gray sky up above  
With a heart so badly broken, you lose someone you love  
Your mind is filled with questions, there’s no answers to be found  
That’s when you have to stand underneath that cloud  
and let the rain come down  
Let it rain, till the storm is over  
Let the pain wash over you,  
Let it rain, till the clouds give way to a sky of blue  
Let it rain till the sun breaks through.

*Alan Pedersen  
Angels Across the USA*

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

***July 2025***

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

