

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



March 2024
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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:

March 7 - Monthly Chapter
Meeting see page 7

**March 19 at 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 meeting this month

**March 23 - 1:00 pm Annual Bowling
Fundraiser - see this page**



The Compassionate Friends

15th Annual Bowling Fundraiser

In loving memory of all the children who died too soon

Saturday, March 23rd, 2024 at 1:00 pm
(Registration will begin at 12:30 pm sharp)

Vision Lanes
38250 Ford Rd
Westland, MI 48185
(On Ford Rd & Hix)

Please let us know if you will be joining us so we can reserve lanes

Cindy Stevens @ 734-837-3722

Or Mary Hartnett @ 313-550-5410

\$25 per person

(Includes: 2 games (9 pin no tap), shoes, 2 mystery game drawings, 2 slices of pizza & pop)
Additional Raffle Tickets will be sold for 50/50 drawing and Prizes

Please make check out to: The Compassionate Friends (Livonia)
Mail to: Mary Hartnett 5704 Drexel St, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Seasons

For some reason a thought popped into my head. Maggie was born in the winter and died in the winter. Justin was born in the summer and died in the summer. There were many years between life and death for which I am eternally grateful. So many happy memories that spanned all the seasons.

Whether your child lived for hours, days, weeks, months or years you will find happy memories. They may be locked up in your grief if you are newly bereaved but mine surfaced rapidly. I truly hope yours do too.

I was thinking that our grief has its seasons. Denial, Anger, Depression and Hope. Denial comes when you get

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Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

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

Let Us Remember Them Always

Child Parent, Grandparent, Sibling Date Age

Names available only to members



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

the phone call or knock on the door. I think grief begins here. Anger – you want to blame someone or something for the loss of your child. Depression is as though we're in a fog and don't know if we can go on. We either can't sleep or want to sleep all the time. We've lost interest in what we used to enjoy. We gain weight or lose weight. Hope is when we've accepted our loss and we're going to be OK in our new normal a step at a time. Grief, unfortunately, hasn't gone away for me and I don't expect it will. It's like a computer program running in the background, just as seasons do. It's always there; always in our minds whether we realize it or not. Some days we're aware of the weather, other days we're not. I don't deal well with rainy days and those are the days my grief program pops up. I'm fatigued and sad. Others love the rain and their program stays in the background. It's been 12 years since Maggie died and I haven't dwelled on it for several years. But there are triggers, like birthdays or holidays that cause a storm of emotions in me.

Like the seasons associated with weather they dovetail; one turning slowly into the next. There is nothing we can do to hurry Spring, just as we can't hurry Hope. We have to ride it out. Everyone grieves differently and at their own pace. We can look to the weather to see that's true. As each season turns we sometimes don't know how to dress. As parents, grandparents or siblings in grief we are sometimes at a loss for how we should feel. Is it alright to laugh, for example? I think it's time to laugh when you are ready to laugh.

Unlike the earth's seasons our seasons of grief (above) may not come in that order. Let them happen. Treat yourself as if you're in emotional intensive care. In a few days it will be 2 years since Justin left us. I feel I'm in the Hope season but others still surface. It will be a while yet.

Use the seasons of denial, anger and depression as your least favorite seasons. Hope is like Spring when

flowers bloom and the rain cleanses the earth. We start anew. Wishing you a happy Hopeful Spring!

Marilyn Andreatta

Hurricane Houses

We grievors remind me of people who live by the ocean, where they build sturdy, good looking homes which offer most spectacular views. One can tell how their owners cherish these well-tended houses with shiny clean windows like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea.

But then, there comes a hurricane. In a matter of minutes the treasured, handsome houses are struck, broken, swept away by wind and water, covered by an avalanche of uncaring sand.

I have wondered, weren't the people afraid of another hurricane? Yes, of course, they were afraid, but there was no better place in all the world to live, and so they would stay, they would risk it all again.

I understand those people in their hurricane houses. My life, too, has felt like a hurricane house at times. My children died, one by drowning and one by one suicide – leaving me broken and swept aside by a storm of tragedy, overwhelmed by loss.

Yet, if someone asked me about it today, I would say that, while I was bitterly hurt and hopeless then, I see that my place in life is still the finest because I once had my children. I have learned to accept the lonely beach. I build another house and now a changed "me" lives there in those rooms filled with welcome feelings and cherished memories.

I think that a veteran griever will know what I mean, while a "hurricane house" may seem impossible for most newly bereaved parents. Perhaps we will all understand next year or the year after that. There is no hurry.

To honor the legacy of times remembered, to find a new view of life, and for the sake of those who survived with us, many of us have decided to stay on the dangerous beach and to restore our hurricane house with its

shiny, clean window like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea.

Sascha Wagner

You're Just a Thought Away

Distance takes us far apart
And darkens my today,
I have to keep remembering -
You're just a thought away.
When the world is too confusing,
And times are hard to bear,
I pull your precious meaning,
Your bright spirit, from the air.
And if I sometimes drift
Into a lonely state of mind,
I gather up the memories
Of the days now left behind.
And though you're not beside me,
I can tap into my heart
And draw upon the warmth and love
That now lives while we're apart.
And with these fond reflections
On the times when you were near,
I sense a little bit of what
it's like to have you here... -

Bruce Wilmer,

TCF Brisbane, Australia

The Grieving Person's Bill of Rights

Though you should reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain "rights" no one should try to take away from you. This message is intended to both empower you to heal and to help you decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

You have the right to experience your own unique grief.

No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell you what you should or should not be feeling.

You have the right to talk about your grief.

Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief.

You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.

Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you may feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits.

Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.

You have the right to experience grief "attacks."

Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but it is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.

You have the right to make use of ritual.

The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More important, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you that rituals such as these are silly and unnecessary, don't listen.

You have the right to embrace your spirituality.

If faith is part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry at God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.

You have the right to search for meaning.

You may find yourself asking, "Why

did he or she die?" "Why this way?", "Why now?". Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the cliched responses some people may give you. Comments like, "It was God's will" or "Think of what you have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.

You have the right to treasure your memories.

Memories are one of the best legacies that exists after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.

You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.

Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant of you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

Choosing Life

"It will never be the same. Never." As a bereaved parent, you have often heard or said these words to express grief's profound feelings of sorrow and disorientation. Your life has suddenly taken an unexpected course that appears both uncharted and endless. Bewildered, you vainly search for pathways back to your former life, until you confront the reality that there is no way back. Your child is dead forever. It is then that you may say, "... never the same."

This is the aspect of grief that Simon Stephens calls "The Valley of the Shadow." It is that very long time between the death of your child and your reinvestment in life. The between is not supposed to be a permanent resting place. Although some people do take up residence in the valley, it is a transition from the death of your child to life with renewed purpose.

The key to this transition is yourself. You must choose between life and the

valley. You and only you can decide. And you must make that decision again and again, each day.

Giving in to the hopelessness of the valley is tempting. Choosing to move on toward life requires a great deal of work. You must struggle with the pain of grief in order to resolve it. It is a daily struggle full of tears, anger, guilt and self-doubt, but it is the only alternative to surrendering yourself to the valley.

Little by little you choose to move on. Little by little you progress toward the other side of the valley. It takes a very long time, far longer than your friends or relatives suspected. Far longer than you had believed – even prayed – that it would be. When one day you find yourself able to do more than choose merely to live but also how to live, you will know you are leaving the valley of the shadow. There will still be more work to do, more struggle and choosing. The valley, however, stretches behind rather than in front of you.

When you have resolved your grief by reinvesting in life, you will be able to realize that nothing is ever "the same." Life is changed. We would not have it be otherwise, for that is the valley of the shadow. Change has the promise of beginning and the excitement of discovery.

Life is never the same. Life is change. Choose life!

Marcia F. Alig

TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey

Your Compassionate Friend

I can tell from that look, friend that you need to talk,
So come, take my hand and let's go for a walk.
See, I'm not like the others, I won't shy away,
Because I want to hear what you've got to say.
Your child has died and you need to be heard,
But they don't want to hear a single word.
They tell you your child's "with God" so be strong.

(Continued on page 7)

SIBS

A Sibling's Memories

As the youngest child in the family, I was the tagalong. I could never run as fast, or play as hard, as my older siblings. My sister, barely 3 years older, pushed our relationship into a competition that she always won. My brother, 5 years my senior and a male role model, was my protector. I can still remember his clothes, blackened with the musty darkness of our tree house, and the sweaty smell of the perspiration of play. I could never keep up. He knew that when he took my hand, I would lean on his shoulder, where I could feel his blood pulsing through his veins. He would vault me on his back, where I clasped my hands around his neck. He smelled of minty

shampoo and musk, as if he were an older man. He was 10.

On days when he was away, and I was alone or scared, I would open the door of his bedroom and let the whirlwind of air envelop me.

I would close the door carefully and lie on his bed, the powdery scent of his sheets surrounding my body like a security blanket. Then I would rise from my reverie, and look at his metal airplanes and the rest of his stuff. The sound of a door slamming would snap me out of my trance. I would run from his room.

Now, 12 years later, I am 17 and my brother is dead. But his presence rushes back to me when I sort laundry. The musty smell of his clothes resides in my memory like yesterday. And when things become too rough

and I need my protector, I slip into his room to see his stuff, and the moment lingers.

*Samantha Stritter
TCF, North Andover, MA*

Why Can't I Let Go

You were always my hero.
I always wanted to be like you.
You were my younger brother,
Still, I always looked up to you.

You were always there for me,
Even when things were at their worst.
You helped me through my hardest trials,
And we always made it through.

Now as I sit here, writing these words,
Remembering you and times gone by,
I'm trying to say good-bye.
Nineteen years are just too many,
To just let you go,

I can't believe you're gone, you died,
And left me here alone.
Some days I'm fine, some days I'm low,
But most days, I just miss you so.

It was you and me,
But now, what do I do?
Each night I ask why? Why I'm so angry?
Why I can't cry?
Why I can't let you go?

I know we'll see each other again, But
the years seem so long.
I long for the day I'll see you again.
Waiting for me with open arms.

Brother, I love you and miss you so.
But now I need you most.
This time in my life is oh so hard,
I just can't let you go.
Stephen Welch

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



PLEASE REMEMBER

Sibings 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, March 7 at 7:00 pm. As usual, there will be a First Time Table and tables for “older” members. For the latter, the topic: What season of Grief are you in?

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.

♥ Robert & Brendolyn Jasper in memory of: **Jeffrey Parker** : “Happy Heavenly Birthday.”
Love, Mom, Dad & Kimberley

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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.

Charmaine Giasson, whose beloved son, **Ramon Guzman**, born 7/11; died *na*; 31 years

Sarah Pollack, whose beloved son, **Julian**, born 7/3; died 9/22; 31 years

Carol L. Shelley, whose beloved daughter, **Connie Nowrocke**, born 11/24; died 12/22; 59 years

Carol L. Shelley, whose beloved daughter, **Christine Shelley**, born 2/9; died 10/17; 39 years

Carol L. Shelley, whose beloved daughter, **Cynthia Frasier**, born 10/31; died 7/9; 57 years

They say all the “right” things that
somehow sound wrong.
They’re just hurting for you and trying
to say,
They’d give anything to help take your
pain away.
But they’re struggling with feelings
they can’t understand
So forgive them for not offering a help-
ing hand.
I’ll walk in your shoes for more than a
mile.
I’ll wait while you cry and be glad if
you smile.
I won’t criticize you or judge you or
scorn,
I’ll just stay and listen ‘til your night
turns to morn.
Yes, the journey is hard and unbearably
long,
And I know that you think that you’re

not quite that strong.
So just take my hand, ‘cause I’ve got
time to spare,
And I know how it hurts friend, for I
have been there.
See, I owe a debt you can help me
repay For not long ago, I was helped
the same way.
As I stumbled and fell, thru a world so
unreal,
So believe when I say that I know how
you feel.
I don’t look for praise or financial gain
And I’m sure not the kind who gets
joy out of pain.
I’m just a strong shoulder who’ll be
here till the end -
I’ll be your Compassionate Friend
Steve Channing
TCF Winnipeg
In Memory of my daughter, Kimberly
Susanne Channing



In place of the Balloon Launch in May, we have decided to be more global friendly, and are transitioning to this new idea. We will write a message to our child, grandchild or sibling, on a colored ribbon, and hang it on a wrought iron fence. These will stay up through May and June to celebrate Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day. We will still include the bagpiper and other music to keep this evening special.

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

March 2024

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

