

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



March 2022
Volume 34, Number 3

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

Chapter Leader

Joyce Gradinscak
Mary Hartnett
Cindy Stevens
(734-778-0800)

Newsletter Editor

Brenda Brummel
10531 Calumet Trail
Gaylord, MI 49735
231-585-7058
bbwriter59@aol.com

Treasurer

Mary Hartnett
5704 Drexel
Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

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 3 - Monthly Chapter Meeting - see info on page 7

March 12 - **CRAFT** meeting -
see pg 8

**March 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.



The Compassionate Friends

13th Annual Bowling Fundraiser
In loving memory of all the children who died too soon

Saturday, May 14, 2022 at 1:00 pm
(Registration will begin at 12:15 pm)

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: 3 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

The Pit of Grief

The day my child died, I fell into the pit of grief. My friends watched me struggle through daily life, waiting for the person I once was to arise from the pit, not realizing she is gone forever. The pit is full of darkness, heartache and despair; it paralyzes your thoughts, movements and ability to think. The pit leaves you forever changed, unable to surface the person you once were.

Some of my pre-grief friends gather around the top of the pit, waiting for the old me to appear before their eyes, not understanding what's taking me so long to emerge. After all...in their eyes, I've been in the pit for quite some time. Yet, in my eyes, it seems as if I fell in only yesterday.

Not all of my pre-grief friends gathered at the top of the pit. Some are helping me with the climb out of the darkness. They climb side by side with me from time to time, but mostly, they climb ahead of me, waiting patiently at each plateau. Even with these friends I sometimes wonder if they are also waiting for the pre-grief me to magically appear before their eyes. Then there are the

casual acquaintances (or maybe even family members), you know, the ones who say, "Hi, how are you?" when they really don't care or really don't want to know. These people are the people who sighed in relief that it was my child who died and not theirs. You know, the "better you, not me" attitude.

My post-grief friends are the ones who climb with me, side by side, inch by inch, out of the pit of grief. They have

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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

<i>Child</i>	<i>Parent, Grandparent, Sibling</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Age</i>
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Names available to members only.



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

no way of comparing the pit climber to the pre-grief person I once was. You see, they started at the bottom of the pit with me. They are able to reassure me when I need strength. They have no expectations, no memories, and no recollections of how I “should” be.

They want me to heal, to smile more often and find joy in life. But they’ve also accepted the person I’ve become: the “Person” who is emerging from the pit.

Cindy Early,

TCP/Seattle-King County, WA

When You Wish Upon a Star

Every time I am in a group of bereaved parents, I hear people say things like, “I wish my child hadn’t died” or “I wish I had him back.” Those wishes, unfortunately, can never come true. Another wish I hear is “I wish my friends (or church, or neighbors, or relatives) understood what I am going through and were more supportive.” This is a wish that has some possibility of coming true if we are able to be honest and assertive with the people around us. What do we wish others understood about the loss of our child? Here is a partial list of such wishes:

1. I wish you would not be afraid to speak my child’s name. My child lived and was important.

2. If I cry or get emotional if we talk about my child, I wish you knew that it isn’t because you have hurt me; the fact that my child died has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry and thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.

3. I wish you wouldn’t “kill” my child again by removing from your home his pictures, artwork, or other remembrances.

4. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn’t think that if I have a good day my grief is all over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.

5. I wish you knew that the death of a child is different from other losses

and must be viewed separately. It is the ultimate tragedy and I wish you wouldn’t compare it to your loss of a parent, a spouse, or a pet.

6. Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn’t shy away from me.

7. I wish you knew all of the “crazy” grief reactions that I am having are in fact very normal.

Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and the questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected following the death of a child.

8. I wish you wouldn’t expect my grief to be over in six months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for us. As with alcoholics, I will never be “cured” or a “former bereaved parent,” but will forevermore be a “recovering bereaved parent.”

9. I wish you understood the physical reactions to grief. I may gain weight or lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all, develop a host of illnesses and be accident-prone, all of which may be related to my grief.

10. Our child’s birthday, the anniversary of his death, and holidays are terrible times for us. I wish you would tell us that you are thinking about our child on these days, and if we get quiet and withdrawn, just know that we are thinking about our child. Don’t try to coerce us into being cheerful.

11. It is normal and good that most of us re-examine our faith, values, and beliefs after losing a child. We will question things we have been taught all our lives and hopefully come to some new understanding with our God. I wish you would let me tangle with my religion without making me feel guilty.

12. I wish you wouldn’t offer me drinks or drugs. These are just temporary crutches, and the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have to hurt before I can heal.

13. I wish you understood that grief changes people. I am not the same person I was before my child died and I never will be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to “get back to

my old self,” you will stay frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. Please try to get to know the new me – maybe you’ll still like me.

Instead of sitting around and waiting for our wishes to come true, we have an obligation to teach people some of the things we have learned about our grief. We can teach these lessons with great kindness, believing that people have good intentions and want to do what is right, but just don’t know what to do with us, or we can sit and wait, I believe our children would want us to help the world understand.

Elaine Grier

TCF Atlanta, GA

A Thousand Little Moments

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of all the things I lost the day you went away.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the pain I feel in my heart that never fades away.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the piece of my soul that you took with you that day.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the time we’ve lost and the games you’ll never play.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of all the memories we never got to make and all the words I never got to say.

But a thousand little moments each and every day also remind me of all the things I’ve gained in the short amount of time you got to stay.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the love I hold within my heart that will never fade away.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me that the missing piece of my soul will be restored when we meet again on my final day.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me to be thankful for the time we had and reassure me

that you hear my words every time I pray.
And a thousand little moments each and every day remind me that I am one moment closer to the day that I'll once again see your smiling face.
Tracy Smith
In Memory of my niece Madison Lynne Smith

Mind Games

Mind games it can happen anywhere, anytime. Driving along the highway, I think: suppose, just suppose I turn my head quickly, will you suddenly be sitting next to me? Will you be humming along to a song that was a particular favorite of yours? I swear I can hear you. I want so much to hear you singing loudly and a bit off-key again.

Or perhaps I'm in the supermarket and I see someone with long, blond hair - is it you? My heart thumps. I want so badly for it to be you. People glance at me strangely and I realize I am standing in the middle of the aisle weeping. Even the special foods you loved can reduce me to tears. I'm tempted to buy your favorites and prepare them for when you come home for supper.

At night when I climb into bed, I scrunch over toward the middle, this gives you room to sit next to me the way you would after coming home from a late date. My senses are alive with you. I can smell your special perfume and feel your long, slender fingers with the pearl ring Daddy gave you for graduation. I can hear your laughter. I will you to stay with me until I fall asleep.

Then there are the times when I consciously call out your name in the silence of the house. My mind knows there will be no response, but in my heart I hear you answer me and for that split moment you are there at the top of the stairs as surely as I am at the bottom. Barbara...Barbara...Barbara... Your name is a litany. I suppose that behavior could be considered quite strange. What does one make of it? Weeping in supermarkets, calling to one who is not here. Oh, but in that

fraction of a second when one feels one's loved one close, that feeling, although bittersweet, soothes and comforts a splintered heart. Mind games... it can happen anywhere, anytime.
Bunny Placco,
TCF/Greater Providence, RI

Feed the Cat?

My son is dead-and you expect me to feed the cat? Isn't it amazing how society is so rigid in their expectations? There are rules you know ... steps we must all take ... "Whoever set these standards obviously has never lost a child, the core of your heart and soul. It just doesn't work that way.

Simple every day tasks are impossible to complete. The only constant in your upside down world is pain, unlike any pain you have ever known. Shortly after your child's death, you are expected to return to your job, take care of your household, pay the bills, and yes, feed the cat! It has been a year for me, since I lost my son, and I still go blank mid act. I stand in a store with no idea what I came in for, or I cry over bananas because Lee loved them. I can go from laughter to tears in 1.1 seconds.

The Compassionate Friends has been a life saver (or perhaps a heart saver) for me. Only those who have experienced the same heartache will understand when you say I need to be alone, but I can't stand to be alone! Each grieving parent must heal in his or her own way, in his or her own time. One step forward, 15 back, spin around and start over, only to repeat the same progress, one step forward, 15 back, spin around ... You get the picture. But you don't have to heal alone. You need not walk alone. Join us, we know you're not crazy-just a grieving parent. We do care.

Ann,
TCF/Roseburg, OR

You Are Braver

You are braver than you will ever know. You may not realize it but you are valiant, magnificent and strong in spirit. You are courageous. You have endured and somehow survived the

most horrific injury that anyone in this life can suffer. Your child has died. But somehow you have miraculously found the strength to still breathe in and out. And after a while, you managed to put one foot in front of the other and have tried to the best of your ability to adapt to a strange new world; one that exists without your precious child in it. A world you must step out into and face every day without any outward signs that you are altered for life. If you were to wear your most grievous wound displayed on the outside of your body like permanent stigmata, would people recoil from the sight or would they perhaps offer compassion and understanding for your piteous condition? That's why you are so brave. Although no one else can see how horribly injured you are, you are still doing your best to function and participate in this life. I want to challenge you to be brave just once more. If you have not been to a Compassionate Friends meeting, please muster all of the strength and courage you have and walk in the door for that first meeting. We'll help you from there. We care. We understand. We too have the same wounds as you. We need not walk alone.

Janet G. Reyes,
TCF/Alamo Area Chapter, TX

Energy Drain

It is surprising to me that much bereavement literature omits mention of the huge energy drain which comes with grief. If you are newly bereaved and have yet to realize that nearly all your energy is required just to deal with these many emotions you are confronting, then let me assure you that this is the case. Don't expect yourself to complete projects within the same time frame as you were once able to, nor expect yourself to be able to dazzle customers and clients with your pizzazz or gust.

It simply takes too much energy just to dress in the morning, to make the simple decision to eat, to stifle tears in public, to keep your anger from

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SIBS

Everything is a First

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, and the first birthday.

Thoughts about my brother Dave, will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me ... NEVER.

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality.

Forget? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere- love and concern were translated into

strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say-nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be: Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer. "I am mad. Dave died at the age of 17. I'm angry that my parents have to go through this. I'm confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I'm fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am

courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be STRONG."

Lisa Ann Jones, TCF/Avoca, PA

To My Brother

A laugh when I was crying
A giggle when I needed it
A good reality check when I was being dumb
The truth even when I didn't want to hear it
This is what you gave me
You gave me a person I could laugh with
A person that I could fight with
A person that could make anybody laugh
A person that could make the sun shine on a gloomy day
This is the person you gave me
Fear for where your life was going
Fear of what might happen to you
Fear of how deep you were getting into it
Fear that I might lose you
This is the fear you gave me
Hurt when you would tell a lie
Hurt when you would think I believed you
Hurt when you would blow off plans
Hurt when you would use me
This is the hurt you gave me
Sadness when you let the drugs take your life
Sadness when you left me here
Sadness when I realized I won't ever see your face again
Sadness when I realized you won't ever make me laugh again
This is the sadness you gave me
Memories of playing together when we were little
Memories of serious talks together
Memories of making each other laugh when we were down
Memories of hugs and comfort
These are the memories you left with me
For Justin and others who've lost loved ones to substance abuse

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

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: 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 Thursday7-9; 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, March 3rd at 7:00 pm. First time tables; topic tables *“Did you or do you find yourself playing Mind Games with your child(ren)?”*

From your leadership: Our February Chapter meeting will be held inside the church, unless we hear different due to covid concerns. Please check our Livonia Facebook page for any updates.

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.

David & Phoebe Parr, whose beloved daughter, **Elizabeth Laura**, Born 8/16; Died 12/17; 4 months

Pete & Jena Stacey, whose beloved daughter, **Sophie**, Born 10/22; Died 11/23; 16 years

Joycelyn White, whose beloved son, **Dakarri**, Born 04/02; Died 8/13; 30 years

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 on back page.

- ♥ Janet Tomassi in memory of her son, Joseph; “In Memory of our son Joseph. Always in heart”
 - ♥ Glenn and Carol Mead in memory of their son, Bobby; Seven years and your still in our hearts and memories every single day. Ww love you always. Mom, Dad, Katie, DJ, Addison & Heidi “
 - ♥ Cincy and Matt Stevens in memory of Justin; “Loving you and missing you. Forever in our hearts. Love, Mom and Matt.”
 - ♥ Brendolyn Jasper in memory of Jeffrey Parker; “Happy Heavenly Birthday. Love Mom and Kymberlee”
 - ♥ Greg and Patty Haywood in memory of Tyler; “Happy 27th Angel Day. We miss you and love you with all our hearts.”
-

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

inappropriately erupting. There is very little energy for anything else. Everything will take longer than you think, including grief recovery. You will, however, gradually rediscover yourself and build a new life. Your life will be a rich and full one where the memories of your child will no longer produce pain. In fact, those memories will enrich your life. And that’s the truth!

Meanwhile, conserve your energy when and where you can, and allow yourself time to grieve. Those people who deny their grief delay the process. The quicker way to recovery is straight through the grief, not around it.

*Shirley O,
TCF/Denton, TX*

Grief is the price
we pay for love
Queen Elizabeth II

Longing For One More Day

An Old Irish Prayer

When we lose someone we love, it seems that time stands still. What moves through us is a silence... a quiet sadness... A longing for one more day... one more word... one more touch... We may not understand why you left this earth so soon, or why you left before we were ready to say good-bye, but little by little, we begin to remember not just that you died, but that you lived. And that your life gave us memories too beautiful to forget.



In the next few months, we will be redoing the list that is read at the Annual Candle Lighting in Kellogg Park. This last year, we had over 1000 names, as we have not updated the list in several years. Starting next month, we will put in a form and a process to have your name(s) included for the December 2022 Candle Lighting Event.

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

March 2022

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



March Chapter Craft Day

We will be making bracelets at our Craft day on March 12th at the Plymouth District Library, Plymouth Mi 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The bracelet is made with beads, buttons, charms and special thread. All supplies are provided but if you have charms, or buttons from your child, please bring them as they truly add to your bracelet. There will be a sign up sheet and examples at the March meeting. Any questions please contact Kathy (734) 306-3930 you can call or text her.