

# The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

## Livonia, Michigan Chapter



**September 2022**  
**Volume 34, Number 9**

**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:**

**September 1** - Monthly Chapter  
Meeting see page 7

**September 10**- Craft Day -  
see page 8

**September 20- 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.



Our Livonia chapter is making a new name list of our children, grandchildren and siblings that will be read at the Candle Lighting ceremony held in Kellogg Park each December.

This list has become too large to read with over 1000 names since it has not been updated in several years. Even if your names have been on the list for years, this is a brand new list and you will need to contact us by either email or phone, if you want to be included. If you would like your child, grandchild or sibling name read this year (2022) at the Candle Lighting, please email your name, your phone # and the name you want read to: [stevenscd57@gmail.com](mailto:stevenscd57@gmail.com) or you may call our TCF number 734-778-0800 with the name/s. Please submit your names by September 30th, 2022.

Thank you all for understanding.  
We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are the  
Compassionate Friends.

## What Would He Tell Me About His First Day of School?

Okay, I didn't think it was going to bother me this much. I've been saying for weeks that I couldn't wait till school started to get Scott and Ashley out of my hair...

So here it is, the eve of the first day of school, and I'm thinking, "What would tomorrow be like if Nicholas were here?" His turn finally comes to stand outside with backpack and new shoes, waiting for the big yellow school bus... What would he come home and tell me about his first day of school?

And what about the kids—his class? Will I forever look at these kids and wonder "what if?". They don't even know that they're missing a classmate...

This is harder than I thought it would be. Another milestone of life—first day of school—that Nicholas (and I) missed. The thing is, nobody will think of this. It's not a birthday or Mother's Day or Christmas. It goes by unnoticed except by a mother with kids too excited to sleep tonight—one starting fifth grade, one starting second grade and one...

*Linda Moffatt,  
TCF, St. Louis, MO*

# 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>
--------------	-------------------------------------	-------------	------------

*Names available to members to protect privacy.*



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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

## Butterflies and Visions

The daughter of a friend of mine was killed in an auto crash a short time ago. In one of our telephone conversations she hesitantly told me that her surviving son had “a vision” of his sister. I could tell by the way she was telling the story that she wasn’t sure just how I would react. She told me her son is an intelligent and stable person and wouldn’t make up something like this. I could almost hear the relief in her voice when I told her that his experience is not an unusual one; a large number of grieving people report similar experiences.

Actually, nearly half of the grieving population have a sensory experience that involves their deceased loved one.

Grievers report seeing, hearing or strongly feeling their loved one’s presence. Others report an event or occurrence that assures them that their loved one is safe and happy.

Various theories attempt to explain this phenomenon, but none are conclusive. For those of us who have had these experiences, the only important conclusion we need is that the experience was real and meaningful to us. You may be able to explain the presence of a purple butterfly over the grave of my three-year-old granddaughter on a sunny afternoon, but for me it was a message from Emily saying: “Grandma, I’m okay.”

Coincidences might explain it, but this was certainly significant for me, considering that purple is a color I wear often and butterflies are one of my favorite things.

These experiences may be hallucinations or coincidences, but nonetheless, a lot of us are having them. Personally, I’m glad of it.

Margaret Gerner  
TCF/St. Louis, MO

## Gerard’s Presence

It has been five years since we lost

our son Gerard, but he continues to remind us of his everlasting presence in our family’s lives.

On the morning of our daughter Nina’s wedding day, she placed a flower arrangement along with her wedding invitation on the tomb of her brother Gerard. That invitation read: “To my brother, please hold my hand on this special day and give me a sign that I know you are with me. My wedding will be far from complete without you beside me, but I know you will be in my heart.” Later that day, after



the wedding mass had ended, everyone was given a butterfly to release in memory of my son. As each lovely butterfly escaped into Heaven’s sky, only one unique butterfly remained on the front of Nina’s wedding gown.

Nina waited patiently for that butterfly to follow the rest, but it did not. She began to brush the butterfly away, and with great determination the butterfly just fluttered at her feet. Yes, Gerard was at her side that day making a special moment with his graceful spirit.

At our home, Gerard’s picture is always kept on our kitchen table along with a dry rose. One day, as I returned home from work, my husband greeted me with a curious question, “how were you able to keep that rose attached?” Looking across the room, I noticed Gerard’s rose resting on the handle of our coffee pot, which was located on the other side of the kitchen. Realizing that no one had been at our home that day, I knew it was just another one of his beautiful hello’s to let us know that he is with us.

It has been five years, but every day is like the first. Time has not healed our hearts. Our lives remain so lonely, but we continue to cherish every memory of our happy times.

Our letter to Gerard,

*Until we get together again, maybe you can do a special favor for Dad and me? While we are apart, I want*

*you to keep us in your heart and in your mind. Just close your eyes and imagine us here. Imagine us smiling and thinking such thankful thoughts of you, for we spend so many quiet moments missing you and knowing how hard it is to be apart. Imagine us saying how wonderful it is that you’re always with us and how much we look forward to feeling your warm touch. Gerard, you are cherished in our hearts. We love you and miss you, Mom and Dad*

Patty Jackson-  
Gerard’s mom, TCP/Orlando, FL

## You Are Not Alone

When your child has died, suddenly it seems like all meaning has been drained from your life. When you wake in the morning it’s difficult to get out of bed much less live a “normal” life. All that was right with the world now seems wrong and you’re wondering when, or if, you’ll ever feel better.

We’ve been there ourselves and understand some of the pain you are feeling right now. We are truly glad that you have found us but profoundly saddened by the reason. We know that you are trying to find your way in a bewildering experience for which no one can truly be prepared.

When you’re newly bereaved, suddenly you find yourself on an emotional roller-coaster where you have no idea what to expect next. Here are thoughts some of you may be experiencing or feeling (many of these will apply to bereaved siblings and grandparents):

### **Psychological**

• Your memory has suddenly become clouded. You’re shrouded in forgetfulness. You’ll be driving down the road and not know where you are or remember where you’re going. As you walk, you may find yourself involved in “little accidents”

because you’re in a haze,

• You fear that you are going crazy.

- You find there's a videotape that constantly plays in an endless loop in your mind, running through what happened.
- You find your belief system is shaken and you try to sort out what this means to your faith.
- Placing impossible deadlines on yourself, you go back to work but find that your mind wanders and it's difficult to function efficiently or some days at all. Others wonder when you'll be over "it," not understanding that you'll never be the same person you were before your child died and the passage of time will not make you so.
- You find yourself reading the same paragraph over and over again trying to understand what someone else has written.

### **Emotional**

- You rail against the injustice of not being allowed the choice to die instead of your child.
- You find yourself filled with anger, whether it be at your partner, a person you believe is responsible for your child's death, God, yourself, and even your child for dying.
- You yearn to have five minutes, an hour, a day back with your child so you can tell your child of your love or thoughts left unsaid.
- Guilt becomes a powerful companion as you blame yourself for the death of your child. Rationally you know that you were not to blame - you most certainly would have saved your child if you'd been given the chance.
- You feel great sadness and depression as you wrestle with the idea that everything important to you has been taken from you. Your future has been ruined and nothing can ever make it right.

### **Physical**

- Either you can't sleep at all or you sleep all the time. You feel physical exhaustion even when you have slept.
- You no longer care about your health and taking care of yourself-it just doesn't seem that important anymore.
- You're feeling anxiety and great discomfort-you're told they're panic attacks.

- The tears come when you least expect them.
- Your appetite is either gone or you find yourself overeating.

### **Family & Social**

- If you have surviving children, you find yourself suddenly overprotective, not wanting to allow them out of your sight. Yet you feel like a bad parent because it's so difficult to focus on their needs when you're hurting so bad yourself.
- You find that your remaining family at home grieves the loss differently and you search for a common ground which seems difficult to find.
- You've been told by well-meaning people, even professionals, that 70-80-90 percent of all couples divorce after their child dies. You are relieved to find that new studies show a much lower divorce rate, from 12-16%, believed to be caused by the "shared experience" aspect of the situation.
- Old friends seem to fade away as you learn they cannot comprehend the extent or length of your grief.
- Things you liked to do which seemed so important before now seem meaningless.
- Others say you'll someday find "closure," not understanding that closure never applies when it is the death of your child.
- Fleeting thoughts of pleasurable activities bring about feelings of guilt. If your child can't have fun, how can you do anything that brings you enjoyment?
- New friends come into your life who understand some of your grief because they've been there themselves.

*The Compassionate Friends Website*  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### **Musings**

Isn't it strange that things we once took for granted, have changed so much? Things like the soft wings of a brilliant colored butterfly, or the radiant colors in the sky at dawn and sunset or perhaps a song we heard in passing or a movie, we once took for granted. But now, these very same

things can bring on tears and leave us feeling a deep sense of longing. Why? Are these not the same as before? What changed? We did. The things we once took for granted are now viewed with much more than human eyes. We now experience these things through the eyes of a broken heart.

I believe grief gives us a very different view on things. A heart bruised and broken by loss has a new tenderness and compassion. Just look inside yourself at how your views have changed. I also believe this is our children speaking to us saying "look at the beauty and know that I am still near."

*Sheila Simmons*  
*TCF / Atlanta*

### **Living Life Is Still an Effort**

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year. I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted .... such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept, I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic". What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer



# SIBS

## For A Moment

I thought I saw you today; he looked  
just like you,  
for a moment I pray but no - as he  
turned around it  
wasn't you, I found.

I felt like I was losing my mind.  
He had the same build, he had the  
same hair.

I hoped no one noticed, when I looked  
over his way  
the tears I cried, the confusion I felt  
while I  
continued to stand there and stare.

-Judy Prather to Glen, age 14  
Atlanta GA

## The Bitter Tears of Love

### Lost

Because of my status in society  
I can look below to poverty and realize  
no matter how frustrated I get, I will  
always be very lucky to have a family  
who loves and cares for me.

But still the tears roll down my face  
and my cheeks are forever stained  
because I know as long as I live  
my heart will always be pained.  
I was left in shock, pain, and fear,  
left with your unspoken words which I  
will never hear

But in my days of sorrow when I feel  
that I will fall

I can only repeat the phrase to myself,  
"It is better to have loved and lost than  
to never have loved at all."

Peter Smith, age 15;

## The Elephant in the Room

There's an elephant in the room.  
It is large and squatting,  
So it is hard to get around it.  
Yet we squeeze by with "How are  
you?" And "I'm Fine." And a thousand  
other forms of trivial chatter.  
We talk about the weather.  
We talk about work.  
We talk about everything -except the  
elephant in the room.  
There's an elephant in the room.  
We all know it is there.  
We are thinking about the elephant as  
we talk together. It is constantly on our  
minds.

For you see, it is a very big elephant.  
It has hurt us all.

But we do not talk about the elephant  
in the room.

Oh, please say her name.

Oh, please, say "Barbara" again.

Oh, please, Let's talk about the el-  
ephant in the room.

For if we talk about her death,  
Perhaps we can talk about her life?  
Can I say, "Barbara" to you and not  
have you look away? For if I cannot,  
then you are leaving me

Alone ...

In a room ...

With an elephant

Terry Kettering

### 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](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

**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



## Let Me Go First

My big brother was so good to me  
When we were kids, he always let me  
go first.

The night he died, he looked up at me,  
smiled his little crooked smile, and  
said,

"Sis, this time let me go first."

Connie Danson,

Eulogy for her brother, Frank Darnell  
from the book "Forever Remembered"

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, September 1 at 7:00 pm. First time tables; topic tables *“From the article on Musings, what are some things you took for granted in your “before” life that have changed since you have experienced the grief for your child(ren)?”*

---

**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

♥ Judy Cappelli in Memory of my son, Christopher; “I just really miss you.”

---

## 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.

Marilyn Bardocz, whose beloved son, **Adam**, Born 3/29; Died 3/22; 22 years

William Bardocz, whose beloved son, **Adam**, Born 3/29; Died 3/22; 22 years

Eileen Dziadosz, whose beloved son, **Janson**, Born 8/9; Died 6/13; 42 years

Marcia Mims, whose beloved daughter, **Natasha**, Born 12/3; Died 1/5; 41 years

---

## Let Us Celebrate Their Births

---

*continued from page 5*

to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked, It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and

mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time, we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin,  
TCF/Katy, TX*

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

*From The Prophet, by Kahlil Gibran*



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

## September 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



### September Craft

We will be making bracelets at our Craft day on Saturday September 10th from 10 am to 1 pm, at Kathy Rambo's house. The address is: 1476 Penniman Ave. Plymouth. 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's clothing please bring them as they truly add to your bracelet. There will be a sign up sheet and examples at the September meeting. Any questions please contact Kathy: Katjrambo@gmail.com or (734) 306-3930. You can text, or call.