

# The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

## Livonia, Michigan Chapter



**April 2021**  
**Volume 33, Number 4**

**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:**

**April 1** - Monthly Chapter Meeting -  
see info about meeting on Page 7

**Craft Day News - see page 8**

**April 20: 6:00 pm** TCF Dinner-at  
Richard's Family Restaurant, 39305  
Plymouth Rd., Livonia 48150. For more  
information, call Kathy 734-306-3930  
or katjrambo@gmail.com

**July 2021-** Virtual International TCF  
Conference. More details to follow.

### **The Wounded Heart**

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now - right now - it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending.

Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger, and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life. A wounded heart not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess - to swell and undermine - erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed.

The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

*Nancy Green*  
*TCF Livonia MI*

### **Easter and Passover Seasons of Grief**

The season takes on a new meaning when a child dies. The snow of winter melts into the first breath of spring. How well I remember the first spring of

my grief. I looked forward eagerly to its coming. Surely when the long dark days of winter are past, spring will be better!

How surprised was I at tears springing forth with the discovery of each new crocus and every bursting bud and spring flower. Yes, spring was beautiful, but oh, so sad, that first year without my son to share it with. For suddenly, I realized that it was he who gave me my first bedding plants for Mother's Day each year.

And now, the Lenten Season unfolds once more, and I'm aware of other bereaved parents who will withdraw to the privacy of their personal and painful world of memories with this new season for them. Ash Wednesday ... Easter... Passover ... these are totally new experiences in the first year of grief. The liturgical words are a thousand years old, yet tears blur the painful newfound meaning.

*TCF Seacoast, NH newsletter*

### **Four Steps to Grief Recovery**

People who are grieving want to get better, but often don't know where to begin. The goal is not to "get over" the loss but rather, to integrate with other life events. Although there are no formulas that guarantee the resolution of grief, the following exercises have

*(Continued on pg 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**

*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*

helped many bereaved people regain control of their lives and, eventually, make peace with their loss.

**STEP ONE - Talk About Your Loss.** What you have just experienced could be one of the most traumatic events of your life. If you feel depleted, depressed, or angry, you are normal. And the most important thing you can do to reduce the pain is talk about your loss. You may get the message from family and friends, that you are abnormal or should be over your loss, so you may need to seek out other listeners. People you know who have had a similar loss are usually the most helpful, although empathetic family and friends can be as helpful. Support groups are great place to talk and counselors can be wonderful sources for short-term grief therapy.

**STEP TWO - Read books and stories of people who have experienced a similar loss.** In this society, we have very little, if any, experience of normal grief. The most common reaction most people have is that they feel they are going crazy. By reading other's words, they find out they are normal, their actions are normal and their thoughts are normal. It is usually very comforting and reassuring. These stories also give you the idea of what your journey will be like and how long it will take. This helps reduce the paralyzing fear you may feel. And finally, stories offer encouragement. You know others have made it through grief and that helps give you the strength to continue on your personal journey.

**STEP THREE - Write about your thoughts and feelings.** By getting your thoughts and feelings on paper, they become less vague and more concrete. They become easier to deal with and usually less frightening. Sometimes you may feel like you are going in circles and not getting any better. By writing, you will be able to see your progress. We suggest you make a diary. As time goes on you will probably write less and less frequently, showing your pain is lessening. Writing is also a great substitute when you feel you

need to talk, but no one is available—like late at night.

**STEP FOUR - Exercise your body.** Bereavement is the most stressful life event. To handle this stress and keep it from building up in your body, you need to do some form of body work. This could mean walking or playing tennis or it could mean refinishing furniture or hitting a pillow or punching bag. It is a great way to release your anger in a constructive way. Studies have shown that bereavement lowers your body's immune system and exercise helps combat that effect.

*TLC Group, Dallas TX*

### *Grieving Is A Lonely Job*

I don't care what anybody says, grieving is a very lonely job. Friends and family try to help in their own caring way, but, sometimes it's almost too much effort to try to explain how you feel inside.

In fact, I'm not so sure that there are words to describe the feeling. It isn't "physical pain," and I don't know if "emotional pain" is any more descriptive. It's just a feeling that's always there. The sadness, the loneliness and the helplessness. On the outside, of course, no one would know. From the beginning people would always tell me how great I looked or how well I was doing. What did they expect? Sometimes I'm tempted to ask, "Well, how do you expect me to look?" But I don't. They mean well. They just don't know what else to say.

Oh, it's true, the last 15 months since my 17 year-old son, Shane, was killed in a motorcycle accident with his friends, I've come a long way. Life is good and I have much to look forward to each day. A challenging job, terrific friends, a great family, including Shane's 14-year-old brother, Zachary. But there are days when it's just not enough.

It's interesting how your entire perspective about life changes when you're forced to endure a personal tragedy. I call it my "BIG DEAL SCALE". Losing Shane was the "biggest deal" I've ever experienced.

It gives me a tool in which to measure the trivial ups and downs of life. We all have the strength to endure a tremendous amount of pain. We just have to get it in perspective. It doesn't come easy. I consciously work at it everyday. I wonder if it will ever go away. Sometimes I hope it doesn't. I guess it's my way of remembering - of holding on.

My biggest source of strength comes from Zachary, though. My heart aches for him; knowing how close he was to Shane. The first few days after the accident, he said, Shane was my idol. He always helped me and taught me "things".

It's hard for me to imagine what it must be like for him. Still sleeping in the same room that they shared for 13 years. Although, now he sleeps in Shane's bed. And does his homework at Shane's desk. He says he likes it like that. I guess it's just his way of remembering ... of holding on.

Months ago when Zachary asked when the "hurt" would stop, I didn't have an instant answer. Grieving is a lonely job, to be done in individual time frames. But, what I did tell him was, "Trust me. The pain will eventually fade, but the memories will last a lifetime."

And just the other day he said to me, "You're right, Mom, the hurt is much better." I can see it in his face, in his eyes. He has matured so much this last year. It seems like he was just a baby when this all happened. Now, I can see so much of Shane in him. And, I know that if he can handle this "job" he can handle anything. And so can I.

*Susan Hedlund,  
TCF Portland, OR*

Grief is not some clean, linear, predictable state. To the contrary, grief is messy, painful, stunningly frightening, random and suffocating. It is also necessary for our very survival.

To grieve that which is loved and lost is as essential to our survival as breathing.

*Dr. Joanne Cacciatore*

## Newly Bereaved...

Dear Parents..

I suspect you are wondering how you will ever make it through this loss. You feel an overwhelming load of grief that you wonder if you will be able to survive, or at least maintain your sanity. It is absolutely horrendous. I do not know of any experience that is as wrenching and tearing as the death of your child.

Death first visited me when I was eight years old. My father just fell over dead of a heart attack. My mom died a year and a half later. I have lost a step-father, a step-mother and a father-in-law to death. But of all these experiences, none has been as profoundly grievous as the death of our son. Nothing in my life has ever caused me to feel so ripped apart as the death of our son.

I remember driving home alone from the hospital the day he died. I remembered only because I could not stop sobbing. I remember the burial; I could not stop sobbing, there, either. I remember a year later attending the memorial service for the child of a friend of ours. Marilyn and I fell apart and went to pieces all over again. We said to each other, "Will we ever get over this?"

No. You don't ever get over it. You don't ever forget. In time you move beyond the pain, yes. In time you come to believe that you will survive and not lose your mind. In time you feel restored and whole again. But you never forget the loss of your child. I think that is good. We can move beyond, but we cannot forget; we do not want to forget. I think that is the way it must be.

It also must be that you wander sometimes aimlessly through the wilderness of anguish before you reach the promised land of peace and healing. It will take time. More time than we like to think. Each of us grievers needs to wrestle with the demons and dragons and despair of crazy thinking before we can begin to feel any kind of restoration and return

to a sense of wellness and wholeness. Pay no attention to those who would have you "get it over with" or "pull yourself together" or "get on with your life." Grieve your loss as you must, not as others dictate. God knows I feel with you in your loss. I want you to believe that the feelings you feel are normal even though they may frighten you and cause you to think that you are losing your mind. In all this, love yourself. Embrace yourself; and if you have a spouse, embrace each other. Share your feelings. Be patient with yourself and each other. And you will slowly move through the valley of the shadows and finally step into the sunlight once again. There are many of us who share in your feelings. And even though you may not know us, believe that we walk with you in spirit, on your journey.

*Dr. William Miller is a writer and pastoral counselor. His son Karl Andrew, died when 3 days old.  
TCF Southwestern Manitoba newsletter*

## The Timetable of Grief

Society has a tendency to limit the time of mourning that is considered acceptable. That time may be three days, three weeks or three months. But sooner or later the grieving person gets the message that it's time to stop grieving and start living. People become uncomfortable with the grieving person. They grow weary of hearing of the pain over and over. This is natural. People not in grief don't want to be reminded of death. They want to get back to their lives and happy thoughts. The grieving person, however, needs to tell the story over and over. There is no timetable for grief. Each person grieves in his or her own way and they will take the time needed to resolve the grief.

What then, is the grief process? Grief counselors state that raw grief (uncontrolled sobbing at least once a day) may last months. This is a time of overwhelming emotions. The grieving person has sleeplessness, loss of appetite or overeating. Often physical pain in

the stomach or heart area, inability to concentrate, feelings of confusion, numbness, or anger.

Later, and the time will vary from person to person, the heaviness of grief will lessen. There will still be difficult days, sometimes for no reason at all, but there will also be some "good" days. This is the time for "reinvesting", where the grieving person begins to build a new life. Sadness still continues and there may be occasional crying, but more and more energy is devoted to getting on with living. That shift is one that happens naturally and cannot be forced. The timetable of grief is an individual one, requiring love and patience.

*The Bear House Chronicles,  
The Dougy Center Portland, OR*

## Spring Tears

When the sun's sharp brilliance echoes in the luminescent blue, a grim oppressive darkness stabs my aching heart anew.

It's golden glow upon my face, the warmth of winter's sun holds the promise of renewal when the icy months are done.

It is this vow of nature's resurgence in the Spring that bows my head, and breaks my heart - unlocks my suffering for you will miss again the beauty of this time of year, the growing warmth, the sunny days when life will reappear.

For nature has no power over death that holds you still. And though I know, I still resent Spring's early daffodil... Oh, would that I could speak to Mother Nature face to face! To beg she work her magic on your lonely resting place.

Why can't it be your rebirth when the grey cold days are gone? Why might you not live again to see Spring's fresh new dawn... and feel the warmth of sunshine, relish in the greening earth... to open arms embracing life, why can't it be your birth?

You were so young, your life so new when death crept through the door.

## SIBS

### It's the Music that Bonds the Souls

The room you once lived in,  
Doesn't look the same.  
The people who used to call you,  
Never mention your name.

The car you used to drive,  
They may not make them anymore;  
And all the things you once treasured,  
Are boxed behind closet doors.

The clothes you set the trends by,  
Are surely out of date.  
The people you owed money to,  
Have wiped away the slate.

Things have changed and changed  
again  
since you went away,

But some things have remained the  
same  
Each and every day ...

Like this aching in my heart,  
A scar that just won't heal,  
Or the way a special song,  
Can change the way I feel.

Brother, you must know that the music  
bonds us and will keep us close;  
Because secretly I know deep in my  
heart;  
It's the music you miss the most.

So let the world keep on turning,  
And time can take its toll.  
For as long as the music keeps playing  
You'll be alive and dancing in my soul

*Stacie Gilliam,  
TCF/N. Oklahoma City, OK*

## What Was He Really Like?

After meeting a friend that I had  
not seen for quite some time and  
exchanging catch-up information,  
something wonderful happened to  
me. This beloved friend expressed  
the usual condolences over the loss  
of my brother but went on to post the  
question "What was he really like?"  
My eyes must have sparkled like  
fire. The question itself ignited an  
unbelievable response. Unleashing  
all my memories, I began immedi-  
ately bursting at the seams.

Oh, he was so kind and gentle.  
He was so seldom angry that you  
remembered the exact moment when  
he lost his temper because it just  
didn't happen that often. And he was  
so good at telling stories. Believe  
me, he could embellish a story. His  
left eye would wink, and he'd get a  
silly grin on his face as if he weren't  
going to tell you the ending. By then  
he'd spout out the ending, knowing  
that he had teased you once more.

And oh, he was so respectful to  
Mom and Dad that I wanted to slug  
him sometimes. He would always  
tell me that I wouldn't get into  
trouble if I'd just keep my mouth  
shut! And never, never could I  
outlast him at night. He would come  
in from a date at midnight and still  
have enough energy to watch the late  
movie. Brilliant -- why he never had  
to crack one book in high school.

And I could have gone on and on. I  
told my friend that I didn't want to  
keep her and that I certainly didn't  
mean to get so carried away, but so  
few people ask me that question. She  
told me that she would have liked to  
have known him. This instance may  
be a rarity with friends who have not  
experienced the death of a loved one.  
But may we, in the Compassionate  
Friends, keep asking each other over  
and over, "What was he really like?"

*Julie Cameron,  
TCF /Louisville, KY*

### 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 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



## A Note from our Chapter Leadership .....

Our next meeting will be on April 1, 2021. We will have a virtual meeting via Zoom starting at 7 pm.

Our meeting place, St. Timothy's Pres. Church, is still limiting our group from using the church. Please contact Gail (angel4gail2016@gmail.com) if you are interested in being included in our Zoom meetings. Your email addresses will be kept on file to use on any future Zoom meetings.

Our May meeting will be a Balloon Release at the church at 7:00. Please check newsletter or facebook page for update.

Please remember siblings are welcome to attend the Livonia Compassionate Friend meetings. We ask that you be at least 16 years old.

Please take good care of yourselves ... and be safe..

***WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE, WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS***

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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 on back page.

♥ Nancy & Ralph Green "In memory of Kelly Ann Tappan Daroczy. Kelly was the only daughter, third and last child of JoAnne Tappan who has passed away. Joanne was our Livonia Chapter newsletter editor for more than 10 years"

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Let Us Celebrate Their Births - continued

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## 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.*

Gabriella & Drew Duhn, whose beloved son, ***Dominic***, Born 1/28; Died 9/3; 20 years

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And in my grief, beloved child, I'll  
ask forevermore  
the reason why the earth's renewed  
when Spring comes 'round each year  
...yet in your grave you're silent still  
and I, condemned, am here.

*Sally Migliaccio  
(Borrowed from TCF Manhattan)*

## Peeling the Onion

The best definition of grief I know is:

"Grief is like peeling an onion; it comes off one layer at a time, and you cry a lot." I like the onion analogy because it allows for the individual differences in grief. If one hundred people were given an onion, no two onions would be alike, and no two people would peel the onions the same way. We do it in our own way.

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

**April 2021**

If any of you would be willing to get the newsletter via the internet,  
*please email me. Thanks, Brenda Brummel*

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**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: Rhonda Temple, 25164 Hanover St., Dearborn Heights, MI 48125

**Craft Day News**

Craft Day will be starting up again on May 1st. There will be more information coming in the May newsletter about what we will be doing and where. We're hoping it will be warm enough to meet outside. Watch for info in the newsletter and also on our The Compassionate Friends of Livonia Michigan facebook page and if you haven't joined that page, please do. Thank you!  
Kathy Rambo & Gail Lafferty

