

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



December 2017
Volume 29, Number 12

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:

NEXT MEETING -Dec. 7- *There will be a candle lighting at our December meeting. People are asked to bring a small dish to pass. There will be shortened sharing sessions and then the candle lighting will be during the last hour of our meeting.*

No Craft Meeting in December

Dec. 19 - 6:30 pm TCF Dinner-at Brann's Steakhouse (39715 6 Mile, Northville, MI) sign up at meeting or call Kathy 734-306-3930 or katjrambo@gmail.com.

Dec. 10 - 7 pm - Annual Candle Lighting



Please join us on December 10, 2017 at 7:00 pm at Kellogg Park, Plymouth, MI for our Candle Lighting. Family and friends are invited. Candles will be provided. There will be a candle light vigil, music, poems and reading of our children's names. You can register your child at our December chapter meeting or by calling 734-778-0800.

We Can Make It

During the holiday season, both Christians and Jews light candles in celebration of their respective faiths. As they do so, even the darkest rooms become warm and bright from the glow of a candle. Then we can ask ourselves, how powerful or sinister can the darkness be if it can be overcome by the light of one little candle? There is then a message in this for all of us. When the darkness seems to overwhelm us, and it can be

a mental and spiritual darkness as well as the darkness of a winter night, we need to be reminded that it is powerless to withstand the smallest bit of illumination. So as the world grows colder and darker during these winter months, we as bereaved parents must do what people of many faiths have been taught to do at this season. Light a candle in someone's life to make the darkness and fears flee. A little bit of light is all that most of us need, but oh, we need that little bit so badly.

Bettye & Sam Rosenberg

Here It Comes Again

Here it comes once more, the Holiday Army in its annual march against us. Its generals are called Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukah, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. No respecters of the heart broken and emotionally wounded, its troops are merciless and they take no prisoners! We will participate in their joy and nostalgia or they will mow us down with their militant tanks of holiday spirit. Sometimes they declare war on us openly, with no shame or remorse. Sometimes they wait for us in ambush. Their intelligence operators have been working diligently all year, waiting for the Thanksgiving Day trumpet signal to begin their attack. They don't seem to be satisfied to 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 on emailed and mailed versions only.

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.

Jacqui Aronoff and Michael Kinsella, whose beloved daughter, **Olivia**; Born 2/04; Died 10/7; 20 years

Andy and Michelle Clemnicki, whose beloved son, **Dylan**; Born 8/2; Died 8/11; 9 days

Carmen Gutierrez whose beloved son, **Marc Anthony**; Born 11/1; Died 9/17; 17 years

Verna Kemp, whose beloved son, **Kevin**; Born 12/6; Died 8/12; 37 years

Robert and Michelle Mockeridge, whose beloved daughter, **Olivia**; Born 1/19; Died 8/24, 7 months

Eric and Katherine Keydel, whose beloved daughter, **Kristin**; Born 10/3; Died 11/19, 31 years

April Zick, whose beloved son, **Michael Jordan Marzouq**; Born 4/26; Died 4/26

Never dismiss all that you are doing as you grieve. The getting up, the keeping on, the struggle through when all you want to do is be with them. That takes guts. That takes courage.

That takes the likes of you, wonderful and beautiful you ~ Maureen

their celebrations and dinners and festivities unless they can recruit ALL of us into their ranks.

Actually, we wish them well. All we want is for them to leave us alone and let us mourn in peace and quiet. We prefer our “Silent Nights” to their “Deck the Halls” and “Jingle Bells.” We don’t intentionally spoil their fun; it’s just that our pain makes them uncomfortable. They’ve been conditioned to believe that the “Holiday Season” should have no blemish of suffering or lack of frivolity. We must not only bandage our wounds in their presence, but cover them with taffeta and sequins beads. They are convinced that all we need is to “put on a happy face” and all our sorrows will magically evaporate. In their mad pursuits of happiness, they shoot us with the bullets of shopping, piped-in music, special holiday foods, gift wrapping, cards, decorations, and joyous children with happy smiles, parties and gift exchanges.

The most devastating bombs they drop into our lives are the images of reunion, times of greeting and hugging folks who are much loved and sometimes not often seen for a while. They may only be separated by geography, but our absent loved ones cannot cross the chasm of loss that looms before our tear-filled eyes. They remind us of things we should be grateful for, and we are more thankful for many of those things that they can ever imagine. They prod us with their spears of delightful togetherness. We would not dream of attacking them in these battles for holiday survival. With our noses pressed against the glass that divides us, we actually long to be able to be part of their happiness. We remember the times we joined in their fun and we, too, were part of the army of nostalgia and joy. Our broken hearts and bleeding wounds do not excuse us from being gracious, however.

Grief does not give us permission to be rude and selfish. While we take no overt action against their aggression, we are not without defenses in these

battles. We can shield ourselves with kind but direct and simple explanations. We understand your need for celebration, but this year we prefer quiet and private reflection and meditation. Right now, it’s hard for us to function in large groups and to appreciate laughter and high spirits. Our energy is so limited; we’d appreciate some one-on-one time with you in a quiet atmosphere. We can gently remind them of how important it is to remember those we love that are gone. These are statements that clarify our position without judging or criticizing them for theirs. In kind and non-threatening ways, we can tell them what’s good for us. We can also exercise the muscle of our sense of humor. It will take some effort on our part, but so does anything that is worthwhile and good for us.

We can teach ourselves not to fall into the trap of thinking that our grief makes us the center of the universe. We can limit our demands that others treat us in “special” and “deferential” ways because of our pain. We can cut them a little slack and remember that once upon a time, we were just like they are now. It’s good and healthy for us to review our perspectives now and then, and decide if we’re being fair and reasonable. We can express our life in simple and unhurried ways without all the expensive and often hysterical hype that the holidays can generate. And we must exercise the expression of our love, it reminds us ever more dramatically of our need to both give and receive love while we are here.

Whenever we can take some control in our situations, we empower ourselves, and we feel less like victims in what seems like a war of “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” Any time we can educate and inform with mercy and compassion, we have given a true holiday gift of love that will keep on giving forever. May your season be filled with genuine blessings of peace.

*Andrea Gambill,
Bereavement Magazine*

The Mirror

In the larger bathroom in our home is the bigger vanity where the rack for the curling irons and blow dryer is located. In the cabinet under the sink are all the hair products used as preparation for another day begins. Today as I stood in that bathroom ready to style my hair, I looked into the small mirror. The feeling of being alone swept over me like a sudden summer thunderstorm, and knocked me back to when you were still here.

Each morning there was a race to get to the blow dryer or curling iron first. Or you would come in and interrupt me in my daily process with a playful nudge to get me away from the mirror so you could apply your make-up. There would usually be enough noise to cause your stepdad to ask, “What are you two girls up to now, and is anything broken yet?” Scott would usually leave for work claiming that having two women in the house was too much to handle early in the morning, and all that hair spray was bad for his lungs.

Gone now are all those voices, giggles, and clanging of the make-up bottles. Your brothers aren’t yelling to get us out of the bathroom. No longer is the smell of your perfume in the air. There is no one yelling as if an alien being had landed, “Mom, you need to come here!! I can’t get my hair to do anything today! Will you please help me style it or French braid it before I’m late for school?!” I really long to hear, “Thanks, Mom, everyone liked my hair today.”

I remember so many talks as we got ready for our day. No matter what was planned, we had our few minutes in front of the mirror. I remember your friends coming over to get you to style their hair for something special. It could take hours and gallons of hair spray, but you usually had a great finished product. I think a lot of times, your friends just wanted to talk, and this was a perfect way to do it.

I am the only woman in the house now. I have the mirror to myself,

but I'd rather share it with my best friend and daughter. We had some good times in front of that little mirror, didn't we, Kim?

I have to continue with my morning routine. Thanks for all the memories. I would rather be creating new ones, but I am glad for what I do have. I miss you, Kim!!

*Bonnie Harris-Tibbs
Richmond, VA*

How Many Stockings Shall I Hang?

What a torment! Funny how you worry what your friends will think; for days I worried, finally, I hung three upon the fireplace wall, and laid one gently on the mantle. But that was last year! And this year I shall hang all four above the fireplace. For this year the confusion of the mind has found new answers, with conviction! For it does not matter whether my oldest daughter lives in Tucson, or

my youngest son is dead; they are my children, my family, and as long as we hang the Christmas stockings, we shall hang all of them.

Shirley Melin TCF,

Another Christmas Without You

The snow is falling gently on this December morn.

I seek the warmth of times before when memories weren't so worn.

Remembering in Christmas past how festive all would be.

But celebrating still does not come easily for me.

Sweet child of mine I know that you would want me to partake

In all the season offers and give thanks for heaven's sake.

I'm getting there but giving thanks is something hard for me to do

When all I see is spending another Christmas without you.

I'll do better next year; I know you've heard that before

But it seems each year I do take part in Christmas a little more.

There was a time when you first left I simply hid away. Now look at me out shopping and it's almost Christmas Day.

Sweet child of mine I do the best I can to carry on

But Christmas just isn't Christmas since you've been gone.

It has lost the magic and there's nothing I can do

But do my best spending another Christmas without you.

Merry Christmas Sweetheart, Love,
Dad

Alan Pederson

*left at Ashley's grave on December 25,
2007*

A Blessing of Permission

Close your eyes, and place your open hand upon your heart. Breathe in deeply, and slowly exhale. Relax, and breathe in again, and exhale. And breathe once again.

This day, I give you a Blessing of Permission.

Permission:

*to take the time....
as much time as you need...
to heal through your pain and grief.

Permission:

*to feel your own heartbeat
and acknowledge that YOUR life continues to be important to others,
even strangers,
in ways you may not even realize.

Permission:

*to cry whenever tears come....
triggered by a song,
a fleeting sense of recognition,
a memory.
Tears are energy releasing,
and may even help you sleep...
tears can be healthy,
not something which you ever have to hold back
nor apologize for.

Permission:

*to laugh and to move forward with your life,
knowing that laughter is healing
and does not diminish the love you have for your loved one....
laughter can honor it.

Permission:

*to move through what “should” be done,
at your own pace,
and not allow others to dictate when you should make changes...
or how you should feel.
Your timing is yours.

Permission:

*to question and to feel what you are feeling,
and not allow yourself ,or others, to mask your feelings
by stifling what you need to do for yourself.

Permission:

*to forgive yourself and your loved one for whatever needs forgiving....
and to consciously extend and accept that forgiveness.

Permission:

*to honor the person you were to your loved one...
the care you gave;
the wisdom you taught;
the affection you shared;
the good and the hard lessons learned
which you taught each other;
the life you lived together.

You were a gift to your loved one, and must remember that you still are a GIFT to others.

The love you hold for your loved one is still here, in this world.

It has not disappeared because of your loss.

Every single day, every single minute, that love remains....

and this world is better because of your love.

Keep it alive.

Speak the name of your loved one.

Remember and share stories with those you trust.

In doing so, you give others permission to share their memories of your loved one too....

and that keeps love shining in a world that is suffering so.

Your hearts are connected to the losses of people everywhere,

and that sensitivity for others expands your own heart.

The energy of compassion heals in ways we cannot imagine....

thank you for being this blessing of safety, understanding, and hope for one another.

Sheila Simpson, Gaylord, MI

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.

♥ Glenn & Dorothy Laswell “In memory of Christine Kramis. We love & miss you so much.
Love, Mom, Dad & Tammy”

♥ Aileen Cummings “In memory of Lola. Missing you & thinking of you this Christmas and always.
Love, Mommy, Charlie, Ruby & Daddy in heaven”

♥ Judy Cappelli “In memory of my son, Christopher. Happy Birthday Son, time passes but not one day goes by that you are not here in my heart. I love you Christopher”

♥ Matt & Cindy Stevens “Love you Justin, miss you each and every day. Xoxo”

♥ Tim & Jan Anstett “In loving memory of Erika Kelly. We love & miss you. Forever in our hearts”

♥ Mary Himm “To our darling daughter Maureen – you are so missed!”

SIBS

Eternity

Eternity. Seems like forever. Maybe it is forever. At least that's how long it seems since my brother, Sean, died. Eternity also has another meaning for me. Eternity is the cologne that Sean used to wear.

Every time I even catch a scent of it I turned around looking for Sean. For the first two years after Sean died, every time I smelled Eternity I began to cry. Then I realized that, cologne smells differently on each person.

After those first two years, I would smell it and not recognize it. I would like the cologne that someone would have on and I would ask them what it was. For a while it seemed as though everyone I asked wore Eternity. After several times of asking and being

upset by the answer, I just stopped asking. My husband and I have been married for 4 ½ years and he is still not permitted to wear Eternity.

I was at work one day about a year ago and I smelled a delicious smell. I followed it all around the building. I never did find the source of the smell. I comforted myself by thinking that Sean was there telling me he was alright. I had been having a hard time and missing him terribly.

About a week later, the smell returned and it was right outside my office door! I quickly turned the corner and there was a salesman that worked with me. I asked him the old question, "What cologne are you wearing?" His answer, "Eternity." The smell was identical to how it smelled on Sean.

I have never obsessed about something, but I guess I have about Sean's

cologne. I began to think about how strange it was that someone who would only live for nineteen years would wear a cologne called "Eternity." Then I had a wonderful thought. What if by wearing Eternity, Sean was telling us that's how long he would love us and how long he would be with us? Maybe my husband will get a bottle of Eternity for Christmas this year.

Traci Morlock, BP/USA Bereaved Sibling

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

People ask me "How are you"? Here is my answer. "I am mad Dave died at age 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I hope things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be STRONG."

Lisa Anne Jones, TCF Avoca, PA

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

Dave and Charli Johnston - Suicide - 734-812-2006

Joe 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: PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522; Phone: (630) 990-0010; Toll Free: (877)969-1101; 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

Pinckney TCF Chapter: The Christian House of Prayer, 9949 McGregor Road, Pinckney, MI; 2nd Monday of the month, 6 - 8 pm; Jimmy Batchelor - 734-277-9705

Tecumseh TCF Chapter: First Presbyterian Church, 211 W. Chicago, Tecumseh, 4th Sunday of the month, 2-4 pm, Rose Hatchett, 517-270-3308.



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

December 2017

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

First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas without her being here.

Yet the world is singing round me, joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor and brave the sights and sounds, a few moments worth of shopping, and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it, find a path through holidays, look for shortcuts, good ideas,

some directions through the maze. Then I find at last the answer: I'll include her symbolically.

And the giving becomes perfect; her love's flowing down, through me.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest – After the
Death of a Child*