

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



February 2018
Volume 30, Number 2

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 - February 1- First time tables, sibling table, topic table: Do you remember your visit to a Compassionate Friend Meeting? How long did it take for you to be more comfortable or, if you are still fairly new, what has helped you to return?
February 17- Crafts - see page 8
February 20 - 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.

Grief Healing on Valentine's Day

We've barely made it through the holidays of December and January, and now the stores are filled with hearts and flowers and candy, all of it in celebration of the gift of love. But February 14 can be a difficult day for those of us who are grieving, and for some it will be the first Valentine's Day since our precious Valentine died. For us there is no celebration; there is only grief.

Sometimes, for fear of "letting go," we may find ourselves "holding on" to our pain as a way of remembering those we love. Letting go of what used to be is not an act of disloyalty, and it does not mean forgetting our loved ones who have died.

Letting go means leaving behind the sorrow and pain of grief and choosing to go on, taking with us only those memories and experiences that enhance our ability to grow and expand our capacity for happiness.

If our memories are painful and unpleasant, they can be hurtful and destructive. If they create longing and hold us to the past, they can interfere with our willingness to move forward in our grief journey. But it doesn't have to be that way. We can choose which parts of life we shared that we wish to keep and which parts we wish to leave behind. We can soothe our pain by thinking of

happy as well as sad memories. The happiness we experienced with our loved ones belongs to us forever.

If we decide to do so, we can choose to embrace Valentine's Day as a special day on which to commemorate our loved ones and to celebrate our love for them. Death ends a life, but it does not end the relationship we have with our loved ones who have died. The bonds of love are never severed by death, and the love we shared will never die either. For Valentine's Day this year, we can find a way to honor our loved ones, to remember them and to show them that our love is eternal.

We can build a piece of "memory time" into that particular day, or we can pack the entire day with meaning. Think of it this way: *It's much easier to cope with memories we've chosen than to have them take us by surprise.* Whether we are facing Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, an anniversary or birthday, or any other special day of our own choosing, we can immerse ourselves in the healing power of remembrance. We can go to a special place, read aloud, or listen to a favorite song. We can celebrate what once was and is no more.

Personal grief rituals are those loving activities that help us remember our loved ones, and give us a sense of

(Continued on page 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 by subscribing to the newsletter

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.

Candy Clouse, whose beloved sister; **Christina Munson**, Born 5/18; Died 2/8; 23 years

Joan Harruson, whose beloved daughter; **Nicole Thompson**, Born 4/14; Died 8/15; 23 years

Dawn Posiad, whose beloved son; **Jarrold**, Born 4/27; Died 10/1; 38 years

Rochelle Lichorobiec, whose beloved son; **Jonathan**, Born 2/12; Died 7/29; 27 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.

♥ Greg & Donrita Blackwood “In memory of Miss Amy Blackwood”

♥ Susan Steinberg “In memory of Shannon, God’s gift to us”

♥ Walt & Judy Dever “In loving memory of our son, Josh, and our son-in-law, John.

We carry you both in our hearts every day.”

connectedness, healing and peace. Creating and practicing personal grief rituals can also help us release painful situations and unpleasant memories, freeing us to make our memories a positive influence in our lives. What follows are just a few examples of personal grief rituals. The ideas are as unique and as varied as the people who invented them; think of ways that you can adapt them and make them your own. You are limited only by your own imagination.

- *_If you're a writer, write.* It could be an article, an anecdote, a story, a poem, a song, a letter, an obituary or a eulogy. If you don't want to write for someone else, keep a private journal and write about your feelings as you journey through your grief.

- *_Buy a very special candle, decorate it and light it in honor of your loved one.*

- *_Purchase a book - perhaps a children's book - on coping with the loss of a loved one, and donate it to your local library or school. Ask the librarian to place a label inside the front cover inscribed "In memory of [your loved one's name]."*

- *_Plant a tree, bush, shrub, garden or flower bed as a permanent growing memorial to your beloved. Mark the site with a memorial plaque, marker, bench or statue.*

- *_Memorialize your beloved in cyberspace by lighting a virtual candle at [Light a Candle Online](#).*

- *_Write a special note, letter, poem, wish or prayer to your beloved, go outside, attach the paper to a balloon and let it go - or place it in a vessel and burn it, and watch the smoke rise heaven-ward.*

- *_If you are harboring bad feelings or regrets, gather symbols to represent those hurtful or painful situations, events, or feelings from your past, place them in a container and hold a private burial or burning ceremony, saying goodbye and releasing them as you do so.*

- *_Ask relatives, friends, co-workers and neighbors to gather their contribu-*

tions, and put together a scrapbook or box of memories containing mementoes, letters and photographs of your loved one.

- *_Celebrate the life of your loved one by continuing favorite traditions or eating favorite foods.*

- *_Select a Valentine card that you wish your beloved would have picked for you, and mail it to yourself.*

- *_Give yourself a gift from your loved one that you always wished he or she would have given you, and think of your beloved whenever you use it or wear it.*

Love Never Dies

Last night, in the glow of freshly fallen snow,

I felt for the first time in months

A sense of peace.

A feeling of wonder overcame me and I looked around to see if you were there.

Later, I thought to myself –

Why did I need to look?"

I know, as surely as I know how to breathe,

that you are with me always.

You are closer to me now than ever before and the only difference is that, instead of opening my eyes to see you, now I must open my heart.

Sandy Goodman

How Long Will This Pain Last?

Though winter's delicate, lacy snowflakes may remind us of the lace-trimmed hearts of February's Valentines, the "mourning" heart seems frozen in time. The bitter winds of loneliness blow mournfully through our souls. Death has tapped us on the shoulder, introducing his brother, Grief, who has moved into our hearts to take up unwelcome residence. Weary and exhausted by our pain, we have little energy to evict the intruder. It's hard for us to remember that the sun still faithfully shines behind the clouds that have obscured our vision. "Love" is apparently the thought for the season, and we are reminded of its

tenderness at every turn. But a piece of the fiber of our lives has been torn away, and love seems a vague and unfulfilled promise that belongs only to others. Hearts and flowers, lace and love, romantic verse and melody seem to have abandoned us as we grope in the darkness of our beloved's absence. Will the pain ever end? Will the hope of joy and renewal once again warm the frozen places in our hearts? Gradually, as the hurt begins to soften, and the thawing relief of healing slowly begins to melt the icy grip of our pain, hope does begin to "spring eternal."

Roses, traditional in February's favorite holiday, remind us that summer will return (even if it is not on the traditional calendar's schedule!). It's unlikely that we will ever again perceive the usual symbols of love in quite the same way as before, but in many ways our concepts of genuine love will be stronger, richer and less assailable. Frivolous and shallow affection are absent from our thoughts. Deeper commitments and more demonstrative attention have become our new marching orders. In costly lessons, we've learned firsthand how fragile and fleeting life can be, and we are now resolute in our determination to announce to our remaining dear ones the importance of our bonds with them. We abandon the intimidation of "limits" such as the archaic notions that a "man" mustn't cry or say, "I love you," or that we're too busy just now to pay better attention to someone's needs.

As little by little our pain softens and recedes, and we learn that suffering is but for a season, we also learn that LOVE doesn't die. In our emotional lives, Valentines can now take on a new significance as precious reminders of the love that still exists on both sides of life.

Faces of Grief

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When You See Butterfly

When you see a butterfly,
Think of me.

When you see a shadow,
Don't be afraid.
When you see a light,
Think of good things.
But, when you see a butterfly,
Think of me.

When you see a cloud,
Don't be afraid to try and grab it.
When you see a raindrop,
Open your mouth, Let it fall in.
When you feel a hand touch you,
Don't jump away.
When you get all tingly,
Let the feeling last.
When you feel loved,
Cherish it forever.
But, when you see a butterfly,
Think of me.

When you feel like you've lost your way,
Remember I am there to guide you.
When you feel like no one is there,
Make sure you know I am.
When you feel like I am gone forever,
Make sure you feel like I am there.
When you think you've grieved too much,
I know there's always another tear.
But when you see a butterfly,
Think of me.

For you know that I am always with you,
In every way, shape and form.
I am always there to protect you,
Even through dangerous storms.
Know that I am right behind you,
In whatever fate decides to put you through.

For I may be gone,
But I am around
So, when you see a butterfly
Think of me.
Brytani Russell

First Timer

I'm standing before a door:
beyond it The Meeting takes place. My hands are trembling. I'm very scared and there are tears starting to well up in my eyes. Through the door I can hear voices, even laughter. This can't be the right room! Do they really know my pain? That's what I've been told. I will never again be able to laugh like them. Please give me the strength to do this. We sit together and each person gives an account of what has brought them here. There is so much pain I can barely speak through my emotions. Yet, they all listen and as the meeting ends someone touches my hand. I'm at the door again. Please give me the strength to go through. As I take my seat I see familiar faces. They smile and I try to smile back. Do they know how hard this is for me? Was it ever them? There are so many sad stories. Maybe they do feel my pain! I shed more tears. This time I'm able to ask a few questions through muffled sobs. Still, they all listen and as the meeting ends, someone touches my hand. I've prayed for strength many times as I've entered this room. Each time, as stories are shared, I realize they do know my pain. I feel stronger now so I can share without crying. I realize that all along they were easing their own pain by helping me through mine. A new person comes through the door and takes the seat next to me. The newcomer sheds many tears as attempts are made to talk through muffled sobs. We all listen and as the meeting ends and I touch a hand. 5

SIBS

There is a lake inside me, made of tears and sadness and grief. When my brother died, that lake rose out of nowhere and drowned me completely,

for a very long time. The water covered me.

I saw, heard and felt the world through it's distortions.

I moved slowly, held down by the weight of it.

Huge waves would suddenly seize me and dash me against the shore leaving me dazed and exhausted.

Sometimes the lake overflowed completely, obliterating everything around it, covering all it's surroundings in my tears, in my sadness.

I couldn't breathe. I couldn't see or

find a way out, and I was too weighed down to try. I drowned.

For a long time.

As time passed, the water became stiller and clearer. I was dashed against the shore less often.

The overflows became rivers, then streams.

I began to make out the odd shape in the distance.

I was still drowning but I felt like I was learning to swim a little bit, having some control over how I drowned.

One day, to my surprise,

I realised my eyes were above the water and I could see some way into the distance.

A huge wave crashed down and I drowned once more.

My surprise turned to grief that what I used to be able to see, was no longer there.

Gradually, I became more used to the view, even though I still missed what I used to see.

My head stayed above water for longer.

Sometimes an arm stretched out to feel the air.

Often currents pulled me under. Sometimes waves knocked me down. And I drowned for a little while again.

But I remembered how to swim and how to pull myself upright.

These days, seven years later, most of the time

I am standing, with only my feet in the lake.

The lake is still there, but somehow the weight of it round my ankles makes me stand stronger. And all those years learning to swim and stand upright again taught me that I might not stand in the same place, or in the same way, but that I am still able to stand.

There are still storms, and rain, and the odd hurricane.

And every now and then, a tidal wave that still has the power to knock me down, knock the wind out of me and make me fight for breath.

Make me lost in the currents and the waves for a while, make me retreat to the bottom of the lake.

But I am no longer drowning.

I am standing.

I wish my brother was standing with me, but then I would most likely be standing in a different place, have learnt to swim a different stroke.

And I know that my brother is pleased to see me standing, he helped me learn to swim again, And he held me upright when I found standing hard, when it exhausted me,

when I would have gladly sunk back into the lake.

I know he's happy that he can see me above the water, so his view of me is clear.

So, I'm standing.

I know some of you are drowning right now, and some of you are just trying to learn to swim. I know it feels like the lake is endless and the water will never let you go.

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 Thursday7-9; 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.



And some days you wish you could just give up and be swallowed completely.

But if I can swim, if I can stand, you will too.

They say if you fight the current too hard, you will drown from exhaustion, and the best thing to do is float until the water brings you back to somewhere calmer, or to shore.

If you get exhausted trying to swim, trying to stand - float for a while till you get your breath back, and you'll find your swimming legs again later.

And one day, you'll find yourself standing. You will, I promise.

And when you're above the lake, give your loved one a smile, because they will have been waiting patiently for a clear view.

SIBBS Winter Issue 2001

My 26 year old son died from injuries from an auto accident and as an organ donor.

The organ donor bracelets phrase, "Life Goes On" inspired me to write this on the 3rd anniversary of his death.

Life Goes On

It's true what they say, when a child is born,
a mother's heart is no longer her own,
It runs and skips and giggles and grins,
And crawls in her lap, for a kiss on the chin,
But where goes her heart, when that child is gone,
Is it true what they say, that life goes on.

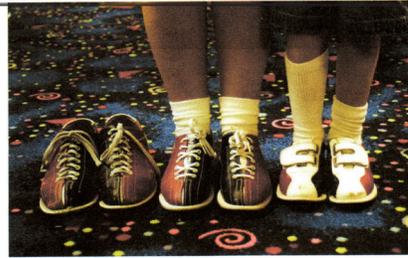
A thousand ninety-five days & the clock still ticks,
3 whole years, the months - 36,
Does the passage of time mean it should make sense,
Can loss be measured in time increments.
As I yearn for the day when I'll again see my son,
Is it true what they say, that life goes on.

I still breathe in and out and arise every day,

And work, and struggle, and yes, even play,
Things will get better, I've been told many times,
But "different" is the status for those left behind,
Time can't heal all wounds nor break all bonds,
Can it be true what they say, that life goes on.

In the air and wind, I feel your strong embrace,
And your kisses from butterflies that land on my face,
I see your smile in the beams of the sun,
The twinkle of your eyes now shines in Eden,
And I hear your laugh in the lyrics of song,
Is it possibly true, that life goes on.

It's strange to think that your heart still beats,



The Compassionate Friends

10th Annual Bowling Fundraiser

In loving memory of all the children who died too soon

Saturday, March 10, 2018 at 1:00 pm

(Registration will begin at 12:15 pm)

Westland Bowl

5940 N. Wayne Road

Westland, MI 48185

(On east side of Wayne Rd ¼ mile north of Ford Rd just past Red Lobster)

Any questions please contact Cindy Steve @ 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)

Additional Raffle Tickets will be sold for 50/50 drawing and Prizes

Please make check out to: The Compassionate Friends (Livonia)

Mail to: 25164 Hanover St, Dearborn Heights, MI 48125

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Inside some stranger, whom I'll never meet,
Does he know he carries a heart of gold,
From my sweet boy, who will never grow old,
So many lives saved by your own,
Yes - it's true what they say, that life goes on.

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.

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

February 2018

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



Craft Day will be at the Plymouth District Library, 223 S Main St., Plymouth, MI. 48170 on Saturday, February 17th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. We will be making explosion boxes using photos of our children. You can use up to 20 photos and we also have sayings you can use instead of a photo. There will be examples at the February meeting. You may sign up at the meeting, or by calling Kathy Rambo at 734-306-3930 or Gail Lafferty at 734-734-2514. Cost: \$3.00