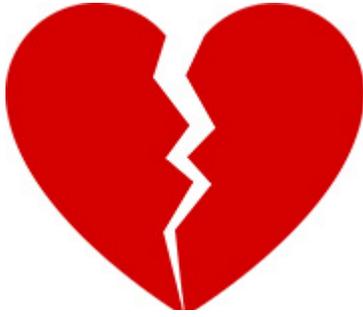


The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



February, 2019
Volume 31, 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

NEXT MEETING- February 7 - First
time tables, sibling table, Infant loss table,
topic table: From the article, This I Can
Share, what are some things unique about
your grief, and what are some thing we all
have in common?

February 2 - 10 a.m. - Plymouth Library
see page 8

February 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

March 23 - Bowling Fundraiser - - page 3

The Holiday of Love

Valentine's Day is a day of remembering our loved ones with small gifts and great feelings. When your child was living, did you often remember him/her on Valentine's Day with a card or a balloon, perhaps a gift of candy or something special that was wanted? So, why stop that tradition?

Remember your child with love on this special day; a single rose left at a grave; a special holiday balloon to float around the house, reminding you each time you look; a special photo in a nice frame to sit on the mantle.

These are ideas in an article from an old Bereavement Magazine. It seems like a pretty good idea too! What better way to celebrate the "Holiday of Love" than by enjoying fond memories of your child.

Try making his/her favorite dinner and treating the family.

Use special photos scattered around the table to talk about some fun facts about him/her.

It's important to show the others in the family how much they are also loved so don't forget some small Valentine's gifts for them, too!

Just because our hearts are broken, we don't need to ignore the "Holiday of Love."

*Art Rogers,
Hinsdale, IL/BPUSA*

Broken Heart & Mended Heart = February

Valentine's Day marks the first day of the second month of the death of my daughter, Cathie. Isn't it funny how, when after you have lost a child, you note the holidays? The first year I still had not really realized that she was "dead". I was numb. I can remember wondering if I was going crazy and then I thought I must have not been a good mother... just because I had not - could not - cry. I was a totally empty vessel, devoid of any and all feelings.

The second year I think I made up for all the crying I did not do that first Valentine's Day as I bought some of those cute little Valentine's Day cards for my only living daughter, Carie, to give to her little schoolmates. I knew I was not going crazy. I knew I had been as good a mother as I could have been. I knew I had loved them both very much. I knew I STILL LOVED BOTH OF THEM. The tenth year I found TCF. I found a name for all the feelings I had been going through in these past years. I found that I was a BEREAVED PARENT. I discovered that I was not alone on this roller coaster ride of emotions... I was not alone anymore. I learned to smile with warm memories as I watched other small children buy their packs of Valentine Day Cards.

(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 only to members..

Let Us Celebrate Their Births



February



The Compassionate Friends

11th Annual Bowling Fundraiser

In loving memory of all the children who died too soon

Saturday, March 23, 2019 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 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)
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

This is my seventeenth year as a Bereaved Parent. I don't cry much anymore... just once in awhile... and not for Cathie; I cry for me and my loneliness for her. Instead, I smile a lot with all the happy memories I have of the Valentine Days I was able to have with her. Now, when I cry on Valentine's Day it is for the newly bereaved parents who must suffer this day, this month, without their children. Yet I also find comfort in knowing that they NEED NOT WALK ALONE either, for TCF and I are here for them. In fact, I think I will go out and buy a pack of those small Valentine Day cards and send them to all my Compassionate Friends. Cathie would like that... yes she would.

Cherie Gordon,

TCF North Dade/South Broward, FL

Snow Angels

It's winter now...inside and out. The earth lies cold and still, asleep and waiting. The wind moves harshly, sending its icy fingers across the land and across the face, stinging anything that remains exposed and open. The sun shines, but does not warm, and the sky crackles in the frosted glare. Everything lies silent, frozen in place, waiting...

Frost leaves tiny etchings on the windowpane and the sun catches shadows from the leafless trees. The breath freezes as it is released, and even the air is stiff. Some animal's sleep deep within the caves of the earth, while others roam the winter land dancing lightly on paws or wings dusted with snow.

Winter is the time of silence – caught in the frozen mist. The sun bathes the landscape with faded light, but snowflakes fall and catch the glow. Each facet of each flake reflects the winter's cold light and makes it dance across the windowpane, across my face pressed to the glass, looking out but really looking in.

Sometimes I feel as frozen as the land, especially now in winter's time. Even the ache is gone, replaced by a vast nothingness that seems as endless

as the falling snow. I can't remember anything—not his eyes, his voice, his touch, his face. My memory has been swept clear by the intensity of the pain. I cannot remember anything of the happiness that we must have shared. I know we must have had happy times...my grief is too severe to have been purchased with only minor moments of joy. Every teardrop leaves an icy streak across my cheek, and I measure the depth of my love by the intensity of my hurt. I loved him SO much! I miss him SO much! Especially now, in winter.

Winter was our time; a time to snuggle deep into quilts and sip hot chocolate. Time to bundle up and race across the frozen yard, dragging the sled behind us, headed toward some great adventure. It was our time to listen to the echoes that rang through the woods, always returning our call, always answering our cry.

Long walks, longer talks and hands to hold were the magic moments in winter. No icicles could thrive between us! We shared our hearts, our hands, our very spirits. We mingled our love and our joy and set it free in winter. The "us" we became thrived in winter, unburdened by the need to be anything except alive. There was no one to impress in winter—they were all asleep in the cave or out playing with us! It was a child's delight this winterscape.

We made angels in the snow; our arms moving swiftly as if they really fly. We'd plop down; face up, in the freshest drift of snow we could find. And then, moving our arms and legs back and forth, back and forth, we created snow angels—magical beings with great powers. Getting up without ruining the angels was always a challenge. Over the years we perfected the technique and grew expert in our skill.

If you were good, you didn't leave any traces of yourself in your angel print...no boot marks, no mitten lines, no hint of human space. If you closed your eyes and pretended to really FLY, and if the snow was just

right, the snow angel was perfect. If the sun wasn't too warm and the wind laid down, the snow angel would last a long, long time. I wanted it to last forever, like youth and dreams.

We shoveled snow and made snow forts in the winter of our childhood. We rode our sleds down the steepest hills, fearless in the face of foolishness. We raised our hands in the air when we should have been holding on. We cheered and laughed and sang and thought life could not possibly get any better. We never counted the hours or marked the passage of the days in winter—it seemed endless. All of our lives together lay ahead of us then. Winter was another adventure waiting to happen, another snowball to make, another dream to catch.

Winter storms brought out great shouts of glee, and the snowscape came alive with hundreds of colorful mittens and jackets and scarves and boots. I must have worn out a dozen pairs of mittens, and I know I "lost" several pairs of gloves. Mittens were more our style, though bare hands were really needed to shape those snowballs into instruments of victory! Ah, those snowball battles, our fort, our sled, our angels in the snow – our love captured forever in the timelessness of a world gone asleep, frozen in time.

We were only children the, innocent of the twist and turns that life has to hold. We were too busy living to gather in memories that now must sustain us in winter's grief. It's winter, inside and out, and like so much else in the dreary landscape, my heart is as frozen as the pond across the road. Yet, in the thin dawn's light, tiny scratches of memory zigzag across the surface and begin to trace a pattern of life lived and love shared. I cannot forget you, even in the darkest wintertime. The "we" we once were, is forever captured in winter's memory, brought to light with each falling snowflake.

Winter...a time of frozen land and frozen hearts, of leafless branches and barren dreams. Winter...a time

to shovel snow and cherish what little sun appears. Winter...a time to remember, a time to hold tight to the love that really never leaves. Sometimes we forget the reason behind our pain, and then it only seems empty and frozen. If only we will remember! If only we will claim the pain that was the promise of winter sled rides and never-melting snow angels.

Claim it! Grasp it! Hold it tight; this love that tingles in the coldest reaches of your being. It is still there, not as we dreamed it might be, but within us still. It is winter's gift—these memories that come, silently, with the drifting snow.

Don't forget! Don't despair! Don't move to a warmer climate in search of peace. The warmth still lies within, deep with the memories of your heart. Just grow quiet and find the path to memory where the snow is always deep and the sun sparkles and the sled is swift and time stands still. Find your mittens and pull on your boots. Winter is here now, and there isn't much time to make one more angel in the snow. Come on...the snow will soon melt into candy hearts and then into plastic eggs and finally into flowers that will decorate our sled hill and make snow angels only a memory.

Somebody should invent a way to keep my angel in the snow from melting. I wish somebody would. I can't keep remembering all by myself. I can't ride the sled alone or defend the fort. I can't make a snow angel all alone. YOU are a part of every thought, every breath. YOU are always here, cast forever into memory, woven with bittersweet threads—a snow angel waiting in the winter of my grief to listen the pain.

Somebody should say thank you for winter...thank you for angels in the snow.

Darcie Sims

Bereavement Magazine 1-2/1995

“Do Not Say I Did Not Know Him.”

I know you try to help me with your words...but there are times when your

soft words cut like a knife.

You say, “at least you did not have him long enough to get to know him: losing him would hurt more than.”

“Impossible,” my heart cries out to you!

It could never hurt any more or less than what I am feeling and hurting now. I knew this child from the moment he was conceived; I dreamt of and longed for this child. I knew this child before his first kick and when he moved, my heart moved, and I rejoiced.

I knew my son as I gazed into his forever-sleeping eyes, and touched his still wet hair.

I knew his soul as I counted his tiny fingers and perfect toes, and traced the sole of his foot and the palm of his hand with my finger.

I knew my son, too, as I caressed his downy cheeks and touched his nose and the furrow of his brow.

I gazed at his tiny little ears that would never hear the songs of this world and touched the tummy that would never know hunger or pain.

Do not tell me I did not know my son. I know him better than myself and better than this world and the God who would take him from me.

You have gone on before us, darling. Wait for us, sweet Zackery and we will hold you once more; sweet is the knowledge that we know you as dearly as you know us, our son. Our hearts and souls are one! Forever one!

Lyn Paczolt, TCF – Marion County, FL

This I Can Share

I have not experienced the death of my only child,

but some of us have.

I have not experienced a child dying by suicide,

but some of us have.

I have not watched my child fight a terminal illness,

but some of us have.

None of us would dare say “I know just how you feel”.

Even if our experiences are similar, No two situations are exactly alike.

But I can say

I remember the pain when my child died.

I remember the feelings of insanity. I remember the feelings of aloneness.

I remember wishing I could die.

I remember wanting to share something with my child, but he wasn't there.

So, my friend, our experiences have parts in common

And parts that are different!

So, why should we listen to each other?

Do we have anything to share?

Do you know what heartbreak feels like?

All of us do.

Do you know the numbness of grief?

All of us do.

Do you know what it's like to have empty arms?

All of us do.

So, let's learn what we can of our commonalities.

We loved a child, but our child left too soon.

THIS WE CAN SHARE WITH YOU

Marilyn W. Heavlin

Grief Work Is

Allowing the pain of grief to engulf your spirit.

Taking one more breath when part of you wants to die.

Getting up in the morning when your body feels like it weighs a thousand pounds and couldn't possibly move.

Eating delicious food and finding it tasteless.

Putting clothes and makeup on without a reason.

Putting thought into a decision that affects others when you couldn't care less.

Returning to everyday activities when only a part of you is really there.

Going through the treasures of your child's life and death—and then talking about something else—for a while.

Smiling through tears.

If you have done any of these, your “grief work” has begun.

When does it end? After five years the load is lighter. I am comfortable with that.

Nancy Green

TCF, Livonia, MI

SIBS

Love Letter to My Kids

You are great kids. You have always been great kids, although I haven't always been a great mom. After your brother died, I was hardly any kind of mom at all. I was so lost in my own grief, I wasn't there for you. You were bewildered, scared and hurt, but I couldn't seem to reach out to you beyond my own pain. I was like a day-old helium balloon drifting along, not sure whether my place was with you or with your brother.

I didn't drift for long. You grabbed my string and yanked me back! The yowls and shrieks still ring in my ears: "Mom, all my underwear is dirty!" or "Mom, I'm starved!" or "Mom, he punched me!" Your brother was being cared for by his heavenly Father, but

you needed your earthly mother. It was your need for me that saved my life.

I'm sorry that your brother's death robbed you of your childhood. While other kids fretted about what to wear or which movie to see, you wondered when the tears and sadness would ever end and if we would be a family again. If I could have shielded you from such great sorrow, I would have; but I couldn't.

Your lives were changed forever, and the future was uncertain, but you kept going. You supported and inspired me as we traveled that rocky road of grief together. You talked about your brother when no one else would say his name. You kept his picture in your rooms and proudly pointed out to friends, "This is my brother." You used his things, but gently. You reminded me of the cute, funny things he said

and did. You included him in your bedtime prayers. You still do. Some day I believe you will tell your own children about your brother. Thank you for keeping his memory alive.

Because of the tragedy you experienced, you are more mature than other kids your age. You possess strength and courage beyond your years. You are resilient; little things don't get you down. Best of all, you are kind, sensitive, and compassionate to others. I adore you. You are my life.

Love, Mom
Patricia Dyson,
TCF, Beaumont TX

Shared Thoughts on Shared Grief

We often call bereaved siblings the forgotten mourners. Frequently friends and family treat them as secondary grievers, and the approach is "How are your parents doing?," therefore, giving siblings the impression their grief is not as significant as parental grief. Often we hear the ridiculous suggestion that siblings should be strong, and take care of their parents. When siblings cannot reduce the parental grief, they feel they have failed, which adds to their low self-esteem.

Our longest lifetime relationship is usually with our siblings. We count on them to always be there for us. We share with them our innermost secrets, as both children and adults. We even expect them to be there for our unborn children, as well as support when our parents are aged. They are our confidant, our best friend, our idol, our advisor, and sometimes they are younger and we are the same things to them.

When our sibling dies we no longer feel so invincible. We worry who will be next, and quickly learn how final death is. Our family is disrupted, our sibling position changes, we may now be the oldest, the youngest, or the only child. We cannot avoid the pain of grief. Our parents are different now, they are so consumed with their own grief that they cannot be the parents that we want them to be for us. 6

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

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.



This lessens our security. Everyone's personality has changed. We not only have to adjust to the new person we have become, but also to the difference that the whole family has undergone. Sometimes it is very difficult to be in the home when it is so filled with pain and so much of the laughter has turned to tears. Frequently friends are easier to talk to than our family. The fear of losing another family member makes the parents so overprotective that they take away the care-free feeling of life, which adds to the stress of sibling grief.

When our loss is at an early age, it is not uncommon to later grieve as an adult for that person. I was 12 years old when I lost my first sibling. My brother was 30. I later went through an entirely different grief cycle as an adult. At the age of 12, I felt my brother was much older. As I got nearer and surpassed the age of 30, I then realized how young he was. This stirred up new emotions.

The hurting and healing causes us to redefine our priorities in life. Grief

frequently causes us to have more compassion for hurting people. We learn to appreciate people more than things, and frequently a life-long commitment is made to make the world a better place. It is our choice to decide what we will do with the experience we have so painfully endured.

*God Bless, Marie Hofmockel,
TCF Valley Forge, PA*

Heavy

That time
I thought I could not
go any closer to grief
without dying

I went closer,
and I did not die.
Surely God
had his hand in this,

as well as friends.
Still, I was bent,
and my laughter,
as the poet said,

was nowhere to be found.
Then said my friend Daniel,

(brave even among lions),
"It's not the weight you carry

but how you carry it –
books, bricks, grief –
it's all in the way
you embrace it, balance it, carry it

when you cannot, and would not,
put it down."
So I went practicing.
Have you noticed?

Have you heard
the laughter
that comes, now and again,
out of my startled mouth?

How I linger
to admire, admire, admire
the things of this world
that are kind, and maybe

also troubled –
roses in the wind,
the sea geese on the steep waves,
a love
to which there is no reply?
Mary Oliver from Thirst.

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.

- ♥ Mom & Kym "In memory of Jeffrey Parker. Happy New Year, Love and Miss you!"
- ♥ V. Robert & Mary Vitolins "In memory of Laura. We miss you each day and we will always love you"
- ♥ Carol & Glen Mead "In memory of Bobby Mead. Remembering our son Bobby. We remember you in the morning, in the night when we view the stars, hear your favorite songs. You are always with us. Always! Love, Mom, Dad, Katie, DJ, Addison & Heidi
- ♥ Tom & Connie McCann "In memory of our son, Tom Jr. on his birthday 2/16. Love you & miss you!"
- ♥ Tom & Connie McCann "In memory of our sons, Ryan "Ryfro", Tom Jr., Bryan "Bryfro" Soupis considered a son to our family & Mark "Sparky" Abbott, Joe Coffey, Jim "Jimmy" Vick"
- ♥ Sharon & Dave Curson "In memory of David C. Jones. Miss you every day, Love you always & forever"
- ♥ Nancy Gleim "In memory of Ryan Houston Gleim 4/23 – 4/11"
- ♥ Timothy W & Norita Sullivan "In memory of our son Capt. Iwan T. Spolsky USAF"
- ♥ Mary Krill "In memory of John Jerome & Joel J Krill. I miss you very much"
- ♥ Walt & Judy Dever "In memory of Josh Dever and John Strasser. You are always in our hearts!"
- ♥ Gabrio & Elizabeth Mulatti "In memory of our son Gabrio Mulatti & our daughter Andria St. Louis. Forever in our hearts – Forever missed!"
- ♥ Susan Steinberg "In memory of Shannon. Shannon, we celebrate your special birthday with so much love and so many tears. You are in our hearts always and forever, we miss you every minute of every day. Mom, Dad, Todd, Chris and Ajax
- ♥ Cindy & Matt Stevens "In memory of Justin. Always in our hearts. Miss you, love you Justin"
- ♥ Michele & Ray Schmidt "in loving memory of our sweet niece, Erika Anstett on her 16th Angel day. Love, Aunt Michele & Uncle Ray
- ♥ In memory of Michelle, missing and loving you forever. Love you so much! Mom & Christie Johnson

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

February 2019

Grief is like living two lives. One is where you pretend that everything is alright, and the other is where your heart silently screams in pain.

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



February Craft

Our February 2nd, 2019 Craft Day will be held at Plymouth Public Library from 10 am – 1 pm. We will be painting rocks with some new twists using other paint pens and mod podge. Since this craft day will be on the Saturday before our meeting (due to room availability), please contact

Kathy (katjrambo@gmail.com) or Gail (angel4gail2016@gmail.com) so we know how many are attending.