

# The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

## Livonia, Michigan Chapter

# JULY



July 2020  
Volume 32, Number 7

The Compassionate Friends is an international self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents and siblings.

### Chapter Leader

Joyce Gradinscak  
Mary Hartnett  
Cindy Stevens  
(734-778-0800)

### Newsletter Editor

Brenda Brummel  
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### Treasurer

Rhonda Temple  
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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:

**July 9th** - Zoom meeting at 7:00 pm

**July 18th** - Craft Meeting - see pg. 8

**July 21** - 6:30 pm - Chapter Dinner:  
TCF Dinner-at Richard's Family  
Restaurant, 39305 Plymouth Rd.,  
Livonia 48150.  
Call Kathy 734-306-3930 or  
katjrambo@gmail.com

**July 31-August 2** - Virtual National  
Conference - see page 7

### Chapter Leadership Change

We would like to welcome Mary Harnett, Michael's Mom and Cindy Stevens, Justin's Mom to our Chapter Leadership. They are joining Joyce Gradinscak, Adam's Mom, who has been leading our group for 8 years. Joyce, Mary & Cindy will be sharing the duties of a Chapter Leader and we

wish them well as they lead our Livonia Chapter in memory of their sons.

Catherine Walker, Brandon's Mom, has been a leader for 6 years and will be stepping down. We want to thank Catherine for her help in leading the chapter and helping members deal with their grief and being there for all of us.

**A Note from our Chapter Leadership** ..... Due to the July 4th weekend, we will have our meeting on **July 9th!** This meeting will be a Virtual Meeting via Zoom. St. Timothy's is still limiting groups using the church as they have just starting having their church services recently. Please come and join the Zoom meeting, it's easy and we can help you if you are hesitant. Please contact Gail (angel4gail2016@gmail.com) to get the zoom invite.

For craft and dinner info, please look at the last page and the calendar.

If you need additional support, these members have offered their phone numbers in addition to our TCF Livonia Chapter number (734-778-0800):

Joyce Gradinscak – 734-560-6883      Catherine Walker – 248-921-2938

Mary Hartnett – 313-550-5410      Cindy Stevens – 734-837-3722

Judy Cappelli – 734-674-1073      Kathy Rambo – 734-306-3930

Gail Lafferty – 734-748-2514

Please take good care of yourselves.....we want you all to be safe.  
Remember: We are all in this together.

We need not walk alone; We are the Compassionate Friends.

# 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 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*

## Normal

I was jokingly asked recently what normal meant by a friend and I thought about it and jotted these things down. It is amazing what can become “normal” to us. I’m sure you could all change the names and a few circumstances and your normal is very close to mine.

Normal for me is trying to decide what to take to the cemetery for Christmas, birthdays, Valentine’s day, and Easter.

Normal is discussing with a friend in the Netherlands how different funeral customs are there than here. Discussing how much both our sons loved trains and how the train sets now collect dust.

Normal is talking to a fellow musician at the Sandhills symphony practice and the conversation going toward how you felt after your child died.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with chat buddies who have also lost a child.

Normal is feeling like you know how to act and are more comfortable with a funeral than a wedding or a birthday party. Yet, feeling a stab of pain in your heart when you smell the flowers, see that casket, and all the crying people.

Normal is feeling like you can’t sit another minute without getting up and screaming because you just don’t like to sit through church anymore. And yet feeling like you have more faith and belief in God than you ever have had before.

Normal is going to bed feeling like your kids who are alive got cheated out of happy cheerful parents and instead they are stuck with sober cautious people.

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile when you realize someone important is missing from all the important events in your family’s life.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand “what if’s” and “why didn’t I’s” go through your head constantly.

Normal is having the TV on the minute I walk into the house to have noise

because the silence is deafening.

Normal is staring at every blonde little boy who looks about kindergarten age. And then thinking of the age Isaiah would be now and not being able to imagine it. Then wondering why it is even important to imagine it, because it will never happen.

Normal is every happy event in my life always being backed up with sadness lurking close behind, because of the hole in my heart.

Normal is seeing Ian in his long black coat and hat at the cemetery visiting his brother’s grave and thinking, how could this be normal? He shouldn’t have to be going through this.

Normal is seeing other kids that are Ian and Isaac’s age teasing and playing with their brothers and sisters that are Isaiah’s age and feeling so envious of them.

Normal is seeing Isaiah’s classmates from church and Sunday school and wondering why he can’t be with them. Why him?

Normal is playing my flute for a performance and feeling really great about doing well, followed by an immediate down after thinking how Isaiah would have said, “That was beautiful Momma” (whether it really was or not).

Normal is telling the story of Isaiah’s death as if it were an everyday common place activity and then gasping in horror at how awful it sounds. And yet realizing it has become part of our normal.

Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child’s memory and their birthday and survive those days. And trying to find the balloon or flag that fits the occasion. Happy Birthday? Not really.

Normal is my heart warming and yet sinking at the sight of a penguin. Thinking how Isaiah would love it, but how he is not here to enjoy it.

Normal is getting up early to exercise (when I really hate exercise) because I know my mental health depends on it.

Normal is disliking jokes about death, funerals, and bodies being referred to as cadavers when you know they were

once someone’s loved one.

Normal is being impatient with everything but someone stricken with grief over the loss of their child.

Normal is feeling a common bond with friends in England, Australia, Netherlands, Canada, and all over the USA, but yet never having met any of them face to face.

Normal is a new friendship with another grieving mother and meeting for coffee and talking and crying together over our children and our new lives. And worrying together, over our living children.

Normal is not being able to rest until you get the phone call that your 15 year old with a school permit has arrived at school just fine. And having the courage to let your 17 year old not call after driving to school because he is insulted that you need to check on him.

Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned house, or did laundry, or if there is any food in the house.

Normal is wondering this time whether you are going to say you have 2 or 3 children because you will never see this person again, and it is not worth explaining that one of them is in heaven. And yet when you say only 2 to avoid that problem, you feel horrible as if you have betrayed that child.

Normal is feeling terrible hurt when you see your child’s power point presentation at a parent teacher’s conference and that child has listed only one brother. Then you realize the way the information is set up there really is no logical place to list the brother who has died and went to heaven. And how awkward that must of been for him to think about the problem.

Normal is avoiding McDonald’s and Burger King playgrounds because of small happy children that break your heart when you see them.

And last of all normal is hiding all the things that have become normal for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are “normal”.

*Vicki Windham,  
TCF North Platte NE*

## First TCF Meeting – A Story of Survival

I attended my first TCF meeting three weeks after my Nina died. I was lucky to have a funeral director who was involved in TCF and passed the information on to me within days of her funeral. I remember that I counted the days until that first TCF meeting. I needed to be around other people who were devastated like I was ... who knew how hard it was to get out of bed in the morning ... who knew the difficulty of waiting for that beloved child to come through the door and of course never did. I wanted to be around others who didn't expect me to be "normal" again.

But the evening of the first meeting I remember sitting in my car in the parking lot for what seemed like forever. When I finally made the decision that yes, I was going to go in, I trudged up the sidewalk and saw the sign on the door that said, "The Compassionate Friends Support Group" and suddenly my legs felt like they had been dipped in cement. To enter through that door meant I was part of a group of people that I never wanted to be a part of.

There was nothing that frightened me more from the time my first child was born - than the possibility that I would lose any of my children. I always included in my prayers each evening that God could do whatever he wanted to with me, but please, please never take my child. So to enter that building meant I was one of them – that the reality was, I was one of "them". When I walked in the meeting room I was greeted by a woman who gave me a huge hug and made me feel that I was in the right place.

She introduced me to another woman who had lost her child suddenly through an accident just as I had. Since then that woman has become my best friend. As everyone went around the circle and introduced themselves and said how long it had been since their child died (some

even 10 years before) I remember having conflicting feelings. On the one hand, how could they be laughing and finding joy in their life again. But on the other hand, maybe that meant I too would survive the worst loss- that I would find my smile and laughter again. I felt safe there. I felt understood there. And I didn't want to leave that cocoon of understanding and go out in the real world that still went on as if nothing happened - that didn't understand that the world I had known had ended on May 11, 1995.

Five years later I am co-leader and newsletter editor and have rarely missed a meeting. And five years from now I still plan to be there so that I can greet that person attending their first meeting, look into their eyes where I know I will see the same hollow look mirrored in my own when I was newly bereaved, and let them know that if I survived the unthinkable, they can too.

*Cathy Seehuetter,  
St. Paul, Minnesota TCF*

## How Do You Say Good-bye?

How do you say good-bye to your dreams?

Dreams of dresses and bows and little girl things.

Tea parties and dress up are what I dreamed of.

Dreams of a little girl I so very much love.

How do you say good-bye to a life you created?

To all the plans I had made as I anxiously waited

For my little girl's birth to make us a family.

For now, instead of two we would be always be three.

How do you say good-bye to the life you had planned?

That now lay still and quiet in her mommy's hands.

How do you say good-bye when you should be saying hello?

Will somebody please tell me

How to let my baby go.

*Jodie Haley, Erin's Mom  
Oklahoma City, OK*

## I Try

I try so very hard every day my son,  
to make you proud of me, your Mum.  
Sometimes I think I fail you even  
though I don't mean to,

It's just so difficult some days, not to  
cry the whole way through.

I try to honour your memory but at  
times it's not enough!

The emotions overcome me and I need  
to yell and shout!

Please talk to me my precious one, I  
need to know that you're about.

I wonder if you hear me? Or are my  
words in vain?

Sometimes I know you're with me and  
other times so very far.

At times I even imagine, you are sit-  
ting with me in the car.

Oh how I pray you can see inside my  
hurting soul and my broken heart.

For then you would know of how  
much I hurt and why it's so unfair!

You know words are just not enough!  
My love is an infinite feeling which

bathes my very being,

My soul is filled right up with the love  
I have for you!

Nothing could ever shake my love,  
For you are my number one son.

You will never leave my thoughts or  
my prayers.

You are my Sunshine, You are my  
light!

I will love you now and forever.

Eternal Love Mum xxxo-

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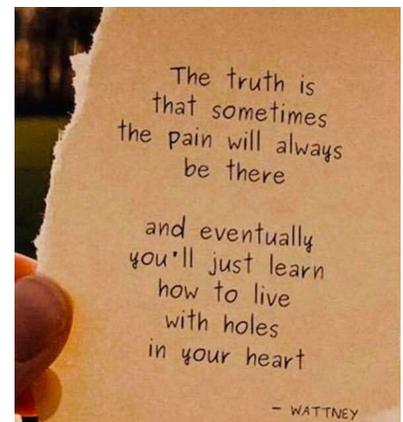
*Roxanne Beetham*

*Mum to her beautiful son*

*Michael James Charles Beetham 26th*

*April 1989—4th February 2008*

*(18 yrs 10 mths)*



# Livonia Chapter Page

**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.

- ♥ Tom & Connie McCann “In memory of our son, Tom Jr on his angel day 7/15 & Joe Coffey on his angel day 7/26”
- ♥ Tom & Connie McCann “In memory of our son’s Ryan ‘Ryfro’, Tom Jr, Bryan ‘Bryfro’ Soupis considered a son to our family, Mark ‘Sparky’ Abbott, Joe Coffey & Jim ‘Jimmy’ Vick”
- ♥ Glenn & Dorothy Laswell “In memory of Christine Kramis. We miss you everyday and we love you very much. Love, Mom, Dad & Tammy”
- ♥ Sandra Weisl “In memory of Scott. Thinking of you always. It’s been 8 years. Love you forever, Mom”
- ♥ Scott & Laura Sinclair “In memory of Eric William. We love & miss you so much - Love, Mom & Dad”
- ♥ Lee & Rhonda Temple “In memory of our sweet girl Alyssa! 14 years you have been in heaven. You are forever missed and always loved. Love, Mom, Dad, Justin and Brandon”

## Annual Picnic

Due to the Covid 19 virus, it has been determined that we will have to cancel the Annual Picnic. Although we know this a favorite and valued event for the chapter, it is felt that for this year, we will have to cancel.



TCF’s Virtual Conference will provide an important opportunity for our community to connect in a way that is feasible right now. It also offers the opportunity for many people to attend who may not have been able to do so in the past for a variety of reasons.

The three-day conference will include:

Keynote Sessions	70 plus workshop choices
Sibling Sunday	Candle Lighting Ceremony
Sharing Circles	Silent Auction
Entertainment	

Additional information:

The conference will take place on a Zoom platform with an online registration system.

Registration fees for the three-day event will be \$65 per person (early bird registration) and \$85 per person after July 17th.

Information about the TCF Walk to Remember along with more conference details will be shared in the coming weeks.

Training and orientation will be offered prior to the conference for attendees who may need some extra technology support in order to participate.

Registration will open soon, and we will make an announcement with a registration link provided when that happens. For now, please save the dates and look forward to connecting virtually with your TCF family through an enriching and inspiring virtual event.

## July’s Child

Fireworks-race toward heaven  
Brilliant colors in the sky.  
Their splendor ends in seconds  
On this evening in July.  
“Her birthday is this Saturday,”  
I whisper with a sigh.  
She was born this month,  
She loved this month

And she chose this month to die.  
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks  
Glowing briefly in the dark  
They are gone too soon, and so was  
she  
Having been, and left her mark.  
A glorious incandescent life,  
A catalyst, a spark ...  
Her being gently lit my path

And softened all things stark.  
The July birth, the July death of  
my happy summer child  
Marked a life too brief that ended  
Without rancor, without guile.  
Like the fireworks that leave images  
On unprotected eyes ...  
Her lustrous life engraved my heart ...  
With love that never dies.  
*Sally Migliaccio*

Night Alone

It is 4am in the morning and I cannot sleep. This is a regular occurrence for me in grief. The month of July sleeplessness is always at its worst. I lost my brother in the month of July. I remember the weeks following after we lost Bry that I would be up for nights at a time, miserable in pain and crying so hard that my eyes would be swollen shut the next day.

I feel so alone in the middle of the night. I feel I am the only person up right now in the world with this pain, however I know even alone there are others like me. I am aching for one

more glimpse of my brother, struggling to think of our last conversation or just praying that magically I could hear his giggle again.

The sleepless nights are here to last. I will never sleep like a baby again!  
*Siblings Walking Together, Posts from www.siblingsgrief.com*

Extra Space on the Fourth of July

When we sit at a picnic table,  
 There is an empty space.  
 When we sit on a car to watch the fireworks,  
 There is extra space.  
 When we use our sparklers,  
 One box is more than enough.  
 We have lots of extra space  
 On the Fourth of July  
*Kelly Maxwell*

A Boat.....

When you lose someone close to you, the earth beneath your feet feels as though it has disappeared and absolutely nothing seems solid anymore. You are in a vacuum where nothing is real. You see the world in a surreal sense and you don't feel connected to it anymore. You've lost every sense you once had and something inside you has died too. So you struggle to cope with two losses, that of your loved one and that of yourself. Your only solace is a small rowing boat that will carry you through your grief.

You step onto your boat with your loved one knowing that for now, all you can do is drift. You feel you have no direction, there is just you, your grief and many unanswered questions. You sit facing your loved one who is your only companion, having so much to say but all you can do is cry. You feel that you could shed an ocean of tears and you will. You will cry for every unkind word you ever uttered. And cry for not telling them how much you love them, every single day. There will be tears in the moments that they cannot share your joys and in your darkest hours when they cannot hold you and make everything better.

Although you fear the vast waters of life surrounding you with your loved one, you know that you are safe. For they will take your hands and assure you that things will be okay because they are always with you. They will never abandon you and when the world becomes unbearable they will give you strength to carry on. One day you will realize that your loved one is everywhere, always with you and that their love is a beacon of light guiding you home.

*Lovingly written and submitted by Ms Jacqueline Cairns, TCF, Qld in loving memory of her brother, Colin Cairns, 12.12.76 to 7.12.95*

**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

**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, Rose Hatchett, 517-270-3308.

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

July 2020

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



The July Craft Day will be July 18, 2020 from 10 am to 1 pm at the home of Kathy Rambo. We will be making string bracelets which we had planned to do before the virus hit. Supplies are provided and if you have buttons from your child's clothes or charms that were theirs, please bring those along to add to your bracelet. Cost is \$5.00. Any questions, please call Kathy at 734-306-3930.