

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



June 2018
Volume 30, Number 6

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

Chapter Leader

Sally Cassidy
Joyce Gradinscak
Catherine Walker
734-778-0800

Newsletter Editor

Brenda Brummel
10531 Calumet Trail
Gaylord, MI 49735
231-585-7058
bbwriter59@aol.com

Treasurer

Rhonda Temple
25164 Hanover St.
Dearborn Heights, MI 48125

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 - June 7 -- First time tables, sibling table, topic table: bring an item that belonged to your child or something that reminds you of him or her to share.

June 9 - Craft Day - see page 8

June 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

July 27-29 - National TCF Conference St. Louis, MO - for information www.compassionatefriends.org

Men Do Cry

I heard quite often "men don't cry"
Though no one ever told me why.
So when I fell and skinned a knee,
No one came by to comfort me.
And when some bully-boy at school
Would pull a prank so mean and cruel,
I'd quickly learn to turn and quip,
"It doesn't hurt," and bite my lip.
So as I grew to reasoned years,
I learned to stifle any tears.

Though "Be a big boy" it began,
Quite soon I learned to "Be a man."
And I could play that stoic role
While storm and tempest wracked my soul.
No pain or setback could there be
Could wrest one single tear from me.

Then one long night I stood nearby
And helplessly watched my son die.
And quickly found, to my surprise,
That all that tearless talk was lies.
And still I cry, and have no shame.
I cannot play that "big boy" game.
And openly, without remorse,
I let my sorrow take its course.
So those of you who can't abide

Save the Dates!
See page 7 for details.

A man you've seen who's often cried,
Reach out to him with all your heart
As one whose life's been torn apart.
For men DO cry when they can see
Their loss of immortality.
And tears will come in endless steams
When mindless fate destroys their
dreams.

*Ken Faulk
TCF/Northwest Connecticut*

A Man in Grief

To be a man in grief,
Since "men don't cry" and "men are
strong"
No tears can bring relief.
It must be very difficult
To stand up to the test
And field calls and visitors
So she can get some rest.
They always ask if she's all right
And what she's going through,
But seldom take his hand and ask,
"My friend, but how are you?"
He hears her crying in the night
And thinks his heart will break.
He dries her tears and comforts her,
But "stays strong" for her sake.
It must be very difficult
To start each day anew
And try to be so very brave--
He lost his baby too.

Eileen Knight Hagemeister

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

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.

Cindy Weber whose beloved son; **Jason**, Born 3/3; Died 11/3, 44 years

Cindy Weber whose beloved daughter; **Jackie**, Born 3/13; Died 6/1, 5 years

Daria Williams whose beloved son; **Sean Watts**, Born 6/13; Died 1/23; 29 years

Who Was That Person?

An Eight Year Perspective

Who was that person?

He looks like me. He talks like me. But I don't know him any-more.

Who was that person?

He had so many friends. He was popular at cocktail parties and told good jokes. Today, he seeks out one person he can really talk to and that is enough. His telephone Rolodex is a lot smaller, but so much more important.

Who was that person?

He had such different priorities. He skated over life, like an ice skater on a frozen pond. He never thought about how cold the water was. Now he has a totally new perspective on the world. He reaches out to people who hurt because he knows how they feel. He has been there. He has felt the ice water.

Who was that person?

He had an orderly chronological sense of time. Now the world is divided forever into simply "before" and "after."

Who was that person?

He used to rush through dinner or cut the family vacation short to get back to the office. Now he thinks back to the family times as the most wonderful times of his life. He knows what is irreplaceable.

Who was that person?

He used to worry about so many imaginary troubles, most of which never happened anyway. Now he spends most of his time in the present. He appreciates today's sunset, daisies, simple things and good friends. He knows how precious each moment is.

Who was that person?

He used to think about what he wanted to get out of life. Now he thinks about how grateful he is for the gifts he has had.

Who was that person?

He used to measure his goals in terms of where he was going. Now,

he focuses more on what his life will be about. He asks less and less why his child died, and more often, "Why did he live?"

Author Unknown_— _

My Missing Piece

62 years I have been searching
for my missing piece
At 21 they told me it was for the best
I tried so hard to believe
At 21 I cried and they told me
I should pull myself together
I tried so hard to believe
I tried so hard to stop
At 21 they told me there would be
other children
I tried so hard to see it their way
At 21, alone I went on
as if nothing had happened.

At 26 there were more children
They said, "See, everything is wonderful"

I said yes, and it was,
but my piece was still missing
Secretly, I thought I must be a bad
mother
I should be happier
And so life went.

A creeping sadness I couldn't shake
62 years I waited for someone
to ask and say, "how hard for you"
Someone said it and the missing piece
has been found, reborn
My baby, my child, my dreams
You were my first step
into believing in the future
You, my child, my missing piece
So many years I was isolated
from you and myself
Now my pain is clean
I still don't know WHY
but I know I have a right to grieve
And remember
And acknowledge
What you mean and meant to me

Strange, now at 83

I truly feel like I can go on
*Written by an 83 year old mother in
treatment for a complicated grief reaction
62 years after the death of her baby.*

Random Observations

Father's Day is fast approaching... bringing with it promises of happiness and tears. Memories drift in and out, in no particular order... of ringlet games, slumber parties, rock music and boyfriends. I embrace each one for a moment, then carefully tuck it away once again. How "male" our house has become since Kim died...

Sometimes I don't feel like much of a father anymore. I lose my temper more quickly these days, doubt my ability to make correct decisions, and I tend to get lost in my thoughts more often... much to the chagrin of my son.

Being a parent has never been an easy job... being a single parent trying to raise a teenage son while desperately trying to recover from my daughter's suicide is something else again!

Sometimes I think, "Who would blame me if I gave up?" We all know how easy it would be to grab a bottle and sink into the gutter or to end our own life! Who would blame me... no one! No one... except Kim.

For, as easy as it is to lie down and feel sorry for myself, I can't do that anymore because I know that's not what I should be doing... and if Kim were here, she'd be the first one to tell me so. She'd also get after me to take better care of myself, stick to my diet and start getting out more.

So why is it so difficult? Why do we, as bereaved parents, find it so hard to get "back into the swing of things"? Is it really so difficult to laugh and have fun again? I believe that each of us holds the key to answering those questions deep in our hearts. I believe that before real healing can take place in our lives that we must learn to give ourselves permission to get better. Allow yourself to be human, to make mistakes and to not always be the "best that you can". Surely we did not expect perfection from our children who died... so why do we expect it from ourselves?

Remember when your child did something that made you mad... even furious? Did you hold it against them

forever? Certainly not! You did what any other normal parent would do - you struggled through your feelings and found a way in your heart to forgive them. So, just for a moment, become your own parent... and forgive yourself!

I am convinced that by doing this, not only have I made my life (some-what) more worth living and can see now that the light at the end of the tunnel is not the oncoming train that I thought it was... but also believe that I have made Kim proud of me, too. And that's a good feeling to have once again!

Give it a try, you've got nothing to lose!

*By Steve Channing TCF/Winnipeg
(Steve's daughter, Kim, completed suicide at the age of 13,)*

The Miscarriage

There has been a death in the family.

No eulogy, no coffin.

No funeral, no black.

And yet,

there has been a death in the family.

No undertaker, no hearse.

No cemetery, no grave

And yet there has most assuredly been a death in the family.

No belly, no fullness.

No lifeline, no baby.

There has been a death in the family.

Linda Warner Smith

TCF Portland OR

Grief Isn't a Summertime

Song

June is a season of beginnings.

School is out summer begins. Graduation occurs, freedom begins. Weddings are held, marriage begins.

June is also a season of endings. Schools ends, graduation closes the chapter of high school antics and freedom from responsibility. Weddings mark the ending of bachelorhood, the dating game, ready cash and freedom.

June could probably be best described as the "Hello" and "Goodbye" month, for each hello has an accompanying goodbye, and each goodbye opens the possibility of a new hello.

Families gather to celebrate the triumph of youth over studies and to witness the march of the newlywed down a flower-strewn path to the reception (where the happy couple will enjoy their last non-casserole meal for many years to come). It is a month of remembering and for re-awakening grief as we mark the celebrations of hello and goodbye by the number of empty chairs at the table or by the missing faces in the family picture. We didn't expect to hurt in June. We thought IT would be "over" by then. Grief doesn't seem to fit as well in June (like the bathing suit we had last year).

Grief is understandable in the fall and winter months. We can wrap ourselves in woolly shirts and heavy sweaters and hide away in the winter. We can spend long hours turning the pages of the scrapbooks while the snows rage outside the window, reflecting the rage within.

Even in spring, grief has a place. We brace ourselves to begin anew just as the tender leaves and blossoms speak of a renewing earth. But by June, by the time we gather to celebrate the family's passage into summer, grief should be OVER.

Grief has little place at the graduation ceremony. Grief seems wrong at the wedding table. Grief doesn't fit at the beach (where nothing fits as it should except on those who has never tasted the sinful deliciousness of a chocolate bunny). Grief isn't a summertime song. Grief doesn't belong on the playground. Its rhythms are all wrong for the gentle sounds of waves washing on the beach. It doesn't feel as good as the warm sand beneath our bare feet, and a heavy heart has no place in the garden. The smell of coffee brewing and bacon frying over an open flame should not be accompanied by the memories of other campfires and other cookouts. Summer should be a fun time, a time free of the burdens of grief.

The sounds of June should be those of carnivals, circuses, "Pomp and Circumstance" played by the school band,

the tinkle of the ice cream-truck bell and the music of children laughing. The winds are warm and gentle, the air slightly moist and the only clouds are those high, fluffy ones that look like marshmallows. We lie on our backs in the grass and gaze at those clouds in June, seeing all sorts of wonderful shapes. Do you remember those warm, easy days of cloud watching?

June is the month for that, not for suddenly seeing loved one's face etched in that skyward fluff. June is for skipping pebbles across the pond, not for seeing the reflection of tears in the water's ripples.

June is the month for camp, swimming holes, fishing trips and salads. It's the month for flying kites, mowing lawns and hanging wash on the line. It's the month for running barefoot and picking dandelions and watching beetles wander across the sidewalk. It's the month for pulling weeds and sitting under the tree in the backyard and daydreaming.

But for many of us, June seems to be a painful month. Each glorious moment brings renewed hurt and emptiness - each bird's song a reminder of someone not there to listen with us. Each blossoming flower is an empty joy - no dandelion bouquets to be delivered or received - no footprints beside ours in the sand. June is Father's Day, Flag Day, Graduation Day, Wedding Day, Hello Day and Goodbye Day (a card seller's dream month!). June is thirty days of summer, filled with what should have been and what is no more; highlighted by buzzing bees and dazzling garden gifts. How can grief survive such a summer song?

In June, I sit in my rocking chair, tucked away in a corner of the porch and watch the water, wash across the stones near the shoreline. And grief finds me. I run to my mountains, hiking to the remotest points, yet grief finds me. I listen to the playground music, lost in the songs of a son I no longer know; I bake cookies with a recipe I can no longer share with the cook, but grief still finds me in June.

We mark the passage of time by the

tides of those around us. We measure moments by the events of others; baby's first step, first day of school, graduation, first job, marriage, promotions, moving, death. We may lose track of all time, yet we never forget the day. And when thoughts of that day creep into our June time, we squirm and squiggle and feel out of sync with the rest of the world who have "gone fishin."

Grief has endured the winter with you; it has become a part of you. Not like an overcoat that you can shed when it gets too warm, but rather like a thread in your tapestry – a living part of who you are. We cannot "get over" grief, there are no seasons for grief. It is a part of who we are – but only a part.

At first it consumed us, seemingly replacing all parts of us. It overtook all our thoughts and emotions, wiping clean the memory banks and leaving only pain in its path. But as we have struggled through the months and years of this journey, grief has changed with us. We are different than we were before, not better, not stronger, not worse, not weaker – just different!!

But the seasons march on and soon it will be the heat of summer and then the sliding into fall and once again we will drift into winter, always carrying our grief with us.

June is a month of memories, and they flood us almost whimsically. Yet, it's when the day is gentle and the song is slow that the heart is open and summertime flows even into the winter places in our beings.

Grief is now a part of our hellos and good byes. It always has been, we just didn't know it before. So, even though it doesn't feel quite right, bring your grief into June and into summer and let it live. Recognize it, address it, and let it go, casting it in small pieces onto the waves and winds that clear the canvas every day in summer.

Grief isn't a summertime song, it is a lifetime song; but it doesn't have to be a sad song forever. Let it begin to become gentle in your memory. Don't be so afraid that you will forget that you hold too tightly to the pain. Just as you still remember those summertime's of your youth, rest assured you will never forget the melody of the love you shared!

Come join me on the porch and swing a bit in the summer breeze. The memory winds come calling anytime, even in the summer.

Darcie Simms

Alan Pedersen to Perform at September Meeting



Alan Pedersen is an award-winning speaker, songwriter and recording artist. His inspirational message

of hope and his music have resonated deeply with those facing a loss or adversity in their lives and have made him one of the most popular and in-demand presenters in the world on finding hope after loss. Since the

death of his 18-year-old daughter Ashley in 2001, Alan has traveled to more than 1,300 cities speaking and playing his original music. Alan also successfully served four years as the Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends, the largest grief organization in the world.

Using his original music, anecdotes and stories drawn from his own experiences and the shared journeys of the bereaved, Alan travels the nation, as both the founder of ANGELS ACROSS THE USA mission and keynote speaker, workshop presenter at many prestigious conferences including: The World Gathering on Bereavement, The Compassionate Friends National Conference and The National Gathering of Bereaved Parents of the USA.



The Compassionate Friends of Livonia
Would like to welcome you to the
'2nd Annual'
Family and Friends Picnic of Hope & Healing
Sunday, September 16th
12p – 5p
@ Rotary Park - in Livonia
(off 6 mile between Meridian and Farmington)
\$10 per family
please bring your favorite dish to pass
(meat is being donated)
Any questions please contact Rhonda Temple @ 313 477 9889
(alcohol not permitted)

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 our daughter. Happy Birthday, we miss you. Love, Mom, Dad and Tammy"
- ♥ Flora & Nicholas Cocora "Family of the late Blaise Christian Hebert. In loving remembrance of Megan Schroeder and Bethany Ann Galdes"
- ♥ Sandra Weisl "In memory of Scott Weisl. Happy 48th Birthday Scott. Miss you so much! Love you forever, Mom"
- ♥ Lynn & Hal Pape "Happy Birthday sweet Steven"
- ♥ Michelle & Andy Ciemnicki "In memory of our baby boy Dylan"
- ♥ Cindy & Matt Stevens "In memory of Justin Bolin. Always in our heart. Happy Birthday"

New at This: The Loss of My Brother

I lost my only brother one year ago on March 1, 1999. He was 38 years old and he died unexpectedly. I never in my life had lost anyone close to me. My family consisted of me, my brother, and our mom and dad. I was the older sister by almost 3 years.

Our family lost along the way great grandparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and moms and dads. Relatives who died of natural or illness related deaths at an old age. I went through life taking things for granted; never taking the time to tell my brother, especially in the last few years of his life, that I loved him. I just thought he

knew it. We go around thinking our loved ones know how we feel. They read our minds. Well I hope that to all who read this: Stop, Think, and Listen. Tell your family your loved ones, you love them. I had heard that before but I never paid attention to it. Someone would say, "pick up the phone and tell someone you love them and are thinking of them." But I thought it wouldn't come in my life, not for a long time, anyway, death knows no age.

My brother Jimmy didn't always live nearby and do you know what? I couldn't drop a postcard in the mail just to say "Hi, thinking of you, love, your Sis." I was too involved with my life and problems to take the time to do something that just took a few seconds to write.

Now a year has come and gone and not a day goes by that I don't think of

my brother. I wake up to think of him. Then there are the nights I wake up and think of him, too. I have photos of him to keep his memory alive. Is this what grieving is? They say time heals. No! I don't ever want to heal, because if I heal I will not think of him, as much and I don't want a day to pass where I don't think or talk to him. Most of his life he was forgotten about, so I've made a promise to myself that in death he will never be forgotten. He is still with me and our family. He had a strong bond when it came to protecting his family and I know he is still watching over us.

My brother never married nor left any children to carry on his name. He was kind and gentle, handsome young man who left us much too soon and I would give anything to change the past; not to change God's will but to change my thoughtlessness. If you can learn one thing from this, I hope its to take the time in your busy lives to say to your child, parents, siblings, spouse, anyone you love...tell them "Hi! I love you, I was thinking of you. I miss you."

Whatever fits your situation. But please just let them know, because life is here one second and the next second its over. Ask my mom...She came home one day in March 1999 and saw her son, my brother, happy, full of life go into the bathroom to take a shower and he'd be right out. The next thing she saw was her son, my brother, dead on the floor.

His death has taught me to tell my loved ones how much I love them and that death can come to anyone at any given time. So learn this and live this and never forget it.

*Elizabeth Leaf Fisher – His Sister
TCF – Los Angeles*

To the memory of my brother, James, "Jimmy" and to all those "Jimmies" in our lives. Please don't forget them, know matter what.

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 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.



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

June 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

June Craft Day

The craft day will be June 9th from 10 am to 1 pm at the Plymouth District Library, Plymouth, MI.

We will be making butterfly cards using adult coloring pages. There will be an example at the June meeting and a sign up sheet. An example will be posted on the Livonia Facebook page also. Any questions please call Kathy or Gail.

Buttons Available

If you would like a button made with your child's picture, contact Laura Myers (lmyers@twmi.rr.com).