

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



June 2022
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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
10531 Calumet Trail
Gaylord, MI 49735
231-585-7058
bbwriter59@aol.com

Treasurer

Mary Hartnett
5704 Drexel
Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

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:

June 2 - Monthly Chapter Meeting
see page 7

June 18 - *CRAFT meeting* - pg 8

**June 21- 6:00 pm. TCF Dinner at:
Grand Tavern 37714 Six mile Rd. Livonia.
It is in the Laurel Park Mall.**

Contact Kathy Rambo (734-306-3930); you can text, call or e-mail her at
Katjrambo@gmail.com.

August 6-7 - TCF National Conference,
Houson, Texas

[https://www.compassionatefriends.org/
event/45th-tcf-national-conference/](https://www.compassionatefriends.org/event/45th-tcf-national-conference/)



Our Livonia chapter is making a new name list of our children, grandchildren and siblings that will be read at the Candle Lighting ceremony held in Kellogg Park each December.

This list has become too large to read with over 1000 names since it has not been updated in several years. Even if your names have been on the list for years, this is a brand new list and you will need to contact us by either email or phone, if you want to be included. If you would like your child, grandchild or sibling name read this year (2022) at the Candle Lighting, please email your name, your phone # and the name you want read to: stevenscd57@gmail.com or you may call our TCF number 734-778-0800 with the name/s. Please submit your names by September 30th, 2022.

Thank you all for understanding.
We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are the
Compassionate Friends.

There's No Law Against Grieving--Even for Men

Two years have now passed but I still remember that day like it was yesterday. If you are reading this, then you have probably lived that day, too. It may have been slightly different—but still the same. Even though there was a bunch of relatives and friends in the waiting room with me, it was like I was completely alone.

I had been called to the hospital less than an hour before. There had been a car accident. My wife was injured but not in danger. But no one would tell me anything about my 8 year old Stephanie or 5 year old Stephen who were riding in the car with her. I had been led to a waiting room, hoping for word from the emergency room doctor. The minutes seemed like hours. Then the doctor came in. Stephanie was in critical condition and would be flown to Children's Hospital. But they were unable to revive my precious Stephen.

The words echoed over and over in my brain. "Your son has died." The shock and the grief struck me at the same time. I had expected them to come in and tell me the kids were injured but would be just fine thanks to the excellent efforts of everyone involved. After all, that's the way it always happens

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Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

This month, we remember the children who are so deeply and sadly missed. Please take a few moments to place them and their parents in your thoughts.

Let Us Remember Them Always

Child Parent, Grandparent, Sibling Date Age

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*

(Continued on page 7)

on “Rescue 911.” But that wasn’t the way it happened this time! I only half remember being led back to my wife where I broke the news to her.

A moment later when I had been led into the corridor, someone asked me if I wanted to see my son. I don’t even remember my response—just walking down the hallway, a nurse on each side holding my arms. All I could take were little half steps. My legs had no strength. Through the tears I could see all the nurses and hospital personnel stop everything they were doing and stare at us. Apparently they hadn’t seen a grieving father before.

Finally we reached the emergency room at the end of what seemed like the longest corridor in the world. The door swung open and I spotted my son lying on a table at the far end of the room. I was helped to him and then left alone. Waves of grief overcame me as I looked at Stephen’s sweet face, laying there as if asleep. And the realization that I would never hear his laugh, I would never see him smile, I would never feel his kiss again. After a few minutes a nurse came back and told me I would have to go because my daughter was being loaded into the helicopter and I should give her some words of encouragement, even though she might not be able to hear me. I did that and I was driven to Children’s Hospital where Stephanie died later that night.

The grief that I felt was so intense. The shock was incredible. This couldn’t be happening. Both of my children were dead.

I remember the newspaper reporter who showed up at my house the next day. I had gone home to get some clean clothes and take a shower. On my way into the house she approached me. We sat on the porch and both cried and grieved as I related to her the story of the wonderful life I had spent with my children. This reporter never once stared at me with that critical look that I have seen from others. If translated into words, it would be “Men don’t cry.”

So often men are not allowed by society to grieve. They have to be strong for their wife and their remaining family. How many bereaved mothers have told me that “He holds it all in. He never cries. He never talks about our dead child.” They want me to meet their husband because maybe I can get him to understand it’s okay to open up and feel grief.

I was fortunate that I grew up in a family where it was okay to let my feelings show. If I was beaten up by the school bully, my father and mother let me know it was okay to cry. When the first person I was really close to died, my grandmother, no one told me it wasn’t alright to grieve. And this upbringing stuck with me. If I’m in a store and Bette Midler’s song “God is Watching Us From a Distance” (Stephen’s favorite tune to sing) comes on, I’ve given myself permission to cry, right then and there. If I read a poem that touches me, I’ve given myself permission to let it all out. And if I hear about the death of another child, I’ve given myself permission to feel my grief all over again.

The only thing bad about men grieving is that society looks down on us because we are not “strong.” After losing both my children, I really don’t care what society thinks. Only a small percent of them have had a child die, and they understand my feelings. The rest of them don’t. And, God willing, they never will. If you are a man and having a hard time allowing yourself to grieve, look at your inner being. Are you better because you haven’t grieved? Or are you worse? Have your feelings of frustration from not grieving affected your relationship with your spouse or remaining children? Our deceased children would, no doubt want us to accomplish something meaningful with our lives. They would want us to go on living. Maybe it is time to grieve so that we can move forward with our lives.

Wayne Loder

TCF Lakes Area, MI

*In Memory of my daughter and son,
Stephanie and Stephen Loder*

Thoughts About Progress

One thing that is frequently discussed at our meetings is the despair of thinking you are on the road to “recovery,” when all of a sudden you seem to be back at square one. But are you really? Let’s keep in mind most of us have had no previous experience “recovering” from the loss of a child. Therefore, we have no point of reference – it’s all new to us. Actually the “roller coaster” of emotions is perfectly normal. In the very beginning most of us seem to vacillate between dead numbness and excruciating pain. Constant crying, to not a tear left – just dried up and limp. We actually are living minute-to-minute. After a couple of months we might actually have a few hours that we have not cried or felt that deep overwhelming despair. Then, WHAM – back to where we started. We tend to panic and think something is wrong with us. Let’s be realistic! There is something wrong – terribly wrong: we have each lost a child.

Let’s be fair to ourselves. We started to play a role to the outside world. Like the old song says, “laughing on the outside – crying on the inside.” We want to be acceptable to society. “You are doing so well,” we hear. If only they knew! We may feel we have to fool others, but let us really be honest about our feelings. To deny our feelings, particularly to ourselves, is to block the road to recovery. Remember that recovery in this case does not mean, “getting over it,” it means to gain control of our lives again.

So, let’s not worry about what other people think, say, or expect. Our friends (well meaning as they are), sometimes members of our family, even someone who has lost a child, should not sit in judgment. Each person grieves differently, due to a person’s general makeup and the relationship with the dead child. Unless someone has totally withdrawn from everything and everybody over a lengthy period of time, the chances are all is in the realm of normalcy.

Only after we have walked down the long road of grief and can look back, remembering those early days and weeks, can we see we really are not on square one again. We have just slipped backwards for a time. That is all.

Allow yourself that, and then strive forward again. It takes time, a lot of time! We tend to expect too much from others, others expect too much from us, and therefore, we tend to expect too much from ourselves.

Mary Ehmann

TCF Valley Forge, PA

How Does It Feel

One of the difficulties bereaved persons face is how to explain to us how they FEEL, when they are grieving. What does it FEEL like to be in the skin of a bereaved person? Is it similar to other experiences in our lives? Is there a way we can relate on some level to the pain of grieving persons when we are not grieving ourselves?

Most people can't allow themselves to go to the place where they could actually see themselves in the dark hole of grief. We don't want to believe it would be that bad for us, that we have the inner resources to minimize grief's hold on us, unlike our grieving friends. But if we can just connect their feelings with some feelings that we have experienced ourselves, then maybe, just maybe, we can begin to comprehend the impact of grief on a person's life. Then, after you connect with any of these feelings you need to remember to multiply your own feelings, times 100, to get closer to the bereaved person's experience.

Here are some feelings that I've experienced while grieving or that I've heard other bereaved persons describe:

GRIEF is like being in a bubble. You are no longer a part of the world around you. Everything sounds muffled. You hear conversations, but it's like the words have no meaning. Nobody can reach you. There is an uncomfortable distance that has been created between you and those who don't understand grief.

GRIEF is like looking through a one-

way window. You can see others, but they can't see you. You feel invisible to others. It's hard to understand how the world can go on when life has stopped.

GRIEF is like wearing a heavy weight on your chest. You have trouble breathing. Sometimes your body takes deep sighing breaths in an attempt to get more oxygen. Sometimes you have anxiety attacks. And your heart actually aches. The location of your grief spot is right under your sternum close to your heart. It's no wonder that your chest hurts.

GRIEF is like wearing a heavy coat with all the pockets full of rocks. The grief literally weighs you down and slows you down. Grief is not only emotionally exhausting, but physically exhausting also. Because the warm glow of life is not pulsing through your body, you may find it hard to keep warm. After a while that heavy coat of grief will begin to feel comfortable, and you may decide you don't want to take it off.

GRIEF is like being a traveler on a high-jacked plane. It is as if you have been taken to a foreign land where you do not know the language or the culture. Soon you learn you can never return to the world as you knew it. Grief can be pretty scary. You do not want to be there. You probably don't know how to grieve and you may not know what is expected of you. When you try to speak to your friends, they may not understand you. Your friends know you have "gone away" for a while, but they assume you will return and be the same old you they once knew. But then you begin to realize you will never return to that place again and that others may never know or understand this.

GRIEF is like the stages of love; first falling in love and being totally preoccupied by your new love, then becoming comfortable as you begin to trust that your love will always be with you. In grief, as when you first fall in love, your heart longs to be with the person who has died. Your desire to touch him/her is overwhelming. Most other

parts of your life seem unimportant in comparison. Then slowly, normal life begins to creep back in and you find that your grief no longer demands the high maintenance that it first required. You will have created a special space in your heart where you can carry this departed loved one with you at all times, even as you go about other things.

In grief you realize, **DEATH ENDS A LIFETIME, BUT NOT A RELATIONSHIP.**

Pat Schwicbert, R.N., TCF Online.

My Dad Is a Survivor

My dad is a survivor too
Which is no surprise to me.
He's always been like a lighthouse
That helps you cross a stormy sea.
But, I walk with my dad each day
To lift him when he's down.
I wipe the tears he hides from others.
He cries when no one is around.
I watch him sit up late at night
With my picture in his hand.
He cries as he tries to grieve alone.
And wishes he could understand.
My dad is like a tower of strength.
He's the greatest of them all!
There are times when he needs to cry
Please be there when he falls.
Hold his hand or pat his shoulder
And tell him it's okay.
Be his strength when he's sad
Help him mourn in his own way.
Now, as I watch my precious dad
From the Heaven's up above...
I'm so proud that he's a survivor..
And I can still feel his love!

Kaye Des'Omeaux

Dedicated to all dads who have lost a child and were forced to survive.

With all that I have been through,
all the hurt, all the pain, all the
struggles that have come as a result
of losing you, I'm still forever
grateful I had you.



SIBS

Another Milestone

I recently faced another milestone in my life. I graduated from college. It was an eventful day that was highly anticipated, but yet, the day was lacking in some respects. It wasn't the weather; it was a beautiful day. It wasn't the party afterward, either. It was the fact that my brother George was not here to celebrate with me.

I have faced other milestones without George, and not by choice. He was such a big part of my life growing up that it has been strange celebrating anything without him. He was there when I had my first boy/girl party. He was there when I went on my first date. George watched me go to my first semiformal dance, too.

But years have gone by since I have been able to share any joy over my accomplishments with George. I know he is watching over me. And somewhere, in an empty chair on the college green, he smiled and cheered when they called my name.

*Lee Ann Martelli,
Sibling Leader
TCF, Cumberland Co., NJ*

You Don't Answer

I remember when we were kids, we'd play that game where you were supposed to stay hidden. But when I couldn't find you, it was the end of the game, And you'd always answer when I called your name. At the cemetery it's peaceful and I can be alone.

There your memory breaks this heart of stone.

For in my heart lies the tears and the pain,
Because you don't answer when I call your name.

*Erin Hall
TCF, Northern Virginia
In Memory of Her Sister, Elaina Ranel*

Eternity

Eternity. Seems like forever. Maybe it is forever. At least that's how long it seems since my brother, Sean, died. Eternity also has another meaning for me. Eternity is the cologne that Sean used to wear. Every time I even catch a scent of it I turned around looking for Sean. For the first two years after Sean died, every time I smelled Eternity I began to cry. Then I realized that, cologne smells differently on each person.

After those first two years, I would smell it and not recognize it. I would like the cologne that someone would have on and I would ask the what it was. For a while it seemed as though everyone I asked wore Eternity. After several times of asking and being upset by the answer, I just stopped asking. My husband and I have been married for 4 1/2 years and he is still not permitted to wear Eternity.

I was at work one day about a year ago and I smelled a delicious smell. I followed it all around the building. I never did find the source of the smell. I comforted myself by thinking that Sean was there telling me he was alright. I had been having a hard time and missing him terribly. About a week later, the smell returned and it was right outside my office door! I quickly turned the corner and there was a salesman that worked with

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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
- Marlene 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: 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808 Wixom, MI 48393
Phone: 877-969-0010; 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

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, Marsha & Jeff DiCenzo 517-918-5608 & 517-358-1883



PLEASE REMEMBER
Sibs are welcome to attend
the Livonia Compassionate
Friend meetings. We ask that
you be at least 16 years old.

Livonia Chapter Page

Regular meeting: Thursday, June 2nd at 7:00 pm. First time tables; topic tables *“Could you identify with some of the descriptions on how it feel to be grieving? Could you add some other descriptions?”*

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 is on back page.

- ♥ Mary Bodnar in Memory Of: Michael Lee Gagnon “Mike, we love & miss you more each year.”
Love Forever & Always, Mom, Rich & Curtis
 - ♥ Susan Wobig in Memory Of: Michael Ryan “Love you & miss you.” Love, Mom
 - ♥ To: Diane in Memory Of: Eric & Rebecca “Both Free Souls lost too soon.”
 - ♥ Jim and Gail Lafferty and Bonnie and Jack P. in loving memory pf Nan, Joye Gradinscak’s sister
-

Let Us Celebrate Their Births



Thank You to Matt and Cindy Stevens and Mike and Mary Hartnett for the wonderful job they did on our Bowling Fundraiser. Thank you to all donated Gift Baskets which were appreciated very much. And, thank you to all who attended. It was a great success and will allow us to continue the important mission we do to help bring comfort to those who have lost children, siblings and grandchildren too soon.

Eternity continued

me. I asked him the old question, “What cologne are you wearing?” His answer, “Eternity.” The smell was identical to how it smelled on Sean.

I have never obsessed about something, but I guess I have about

Sean’s cologne. I began to think about how strange it was that someone who would only live for nineteen years would wear cologne called “Eternity.” Then I had a wonderful thought. What if by wearing Eternity, Sean was

telling us that’s how long he would love us and how long he would be with us? Maybe my husband will get a bottle of Eternity for Christmas this year.

Traci Morlock

BP/USA Bereaved Sibling, St. Louis, MO

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

June 2022

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: Mary Hartnett, 5704 Drexel, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

June Craft Day

Our June craft day will be at the Library located at 223 S. Main St. Plymouth Mi. The date is June 18th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. We will be making tiles using our child's photos. Bring a 4x6 photo copy. We will have poems, and sayings.

Brenda Smith has offered to do some cut outs from her Cricut to fit the 4x4 tiles. Examples will be at the June meeting. There is no charge for this. I would like everyone to come and help with prepping for our Crafty Corner room at The TCF National Conference. Please text, call, or E-mail Kathy at: (734-306-3930 or Katjrambo@gmail.com).