

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



May, 2019
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The Compassionate Friends is an international self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents and siblings.

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Meeting Information

When: First Thursday of
each month. 7-9 p.m.
Where: St. Timothy's Church
16700 Newburgh Road, Livonia,
East side of Newburgh, 1/4 mile S. of
Six Mile

Coming Events:

NEXT MEETING- May 2-
Annual Balloon Lift - See page 7
May 11 - Craft Day 10 a.m. - Home of
Kathy Rambo - see page 8
May 21 - 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 19-21 - 42nd Annual National TCF
Conference, Philadelphia. For info, go
to : www.compassionatefriends.org

What Grieving Moms Want for Mother's Day

Acknowledgement is what grieving mother's want most for Mother's Day, suggests a survey by www.thecomfort-company.net a website that specializes in meaningful sympathy gifts. The online survey asked, "What can others do to ease your pain on Mother's Day?" Over 80 percent of the 200 respondents answered, "Recognize that I am a mother."

"While Mother's Day is generally considered to be a day of celebration, for many women it is a day of pain and loss," says Renee Wood, former social worker and founder of the Comfort Company. "It's important to remember those moms who have had a failed pregnancy or have lost a child at any age."

In response to the survey result, The Comfort Company has issued a list of ten simple ways to reach out to a grieving mother on this difficult holiday.

Recognize that they are a mother. Offer a hug and a "Happy Mother's Day." Send a card to let them know you remember they are a mother even though their child is not with them physically.

- Acknowledge they have had a loss. Express the message, "I know this might be a difficult day for you. I want you to know that I am thinking you."
- Use their child's name in conversation. One mother responded, "People

rarely speak his name anymore, but when they do it's like music to my ears."

- Visit the grave site. Many a mother felt it was extremely thoughtful when others visited their child's grave site and left flowers or a small pebble near the headstone.

- Light a candle. Let the mother know you will light a candle in memory of her child on Mother's Day.

- Share a memory of a picture of the child. Give the gift of a memory. One mother wrote that the "greatest gift you can give is a heartfelt letter about my child and a favorite memory with them.

- Send a gift of remembrance. Many mothers felt a small gift would be comforting. Suggestions included an angel statue, jewelry, a picture frame or a library book donated in the child's name.

- Don't try to minimize the loss. Avoid using any clichés that attempt to explain the death of a child ("God needed another angel.") Secondly, don't try to find anything positive about the loss ("You still have two other healthy children")

- Encourage self-care. Self-care is an important aspect of the "healing the mind and spirit effort" according to several mothers. Encourage a grieving mother to take care of herself. Give her a gift certificate to a day spa or any place where she can be pampered.

Renee Wood

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



May

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

Happily Ever After

If you're looking for an answer this Mother's Day on why God reclaimed your child, I don't know. I only know that thousands of mothers out there today desperately need an answer as to why they were permitted to go through the elation of carrying a child and then lose it to miscarriage, accident, violence, disease or drugs.

Motherhood isn't just a series of contractions; it's a state of mind, from the moment we know life is inside us, we feel a responsibility to protect and defend that human being. It's a promise we can't keep. We beat ourselves to death over that pledge. "If I hadn't worked through the eighth month." "If I had taken him to the doctor when he had a fever." "If I hadn't let him use the car that night." "If I hadn't been so naïve, I'd have noticed he was on drugs."

The longer I live the more convinced I become that surviving changes us. After the bitterness, the anger, the guilt and the despair are tempered by time, we look at life differently. While I was writing my book, *I WANT TO GROW HAIR. I WANT TO GROW UP. I WANT TO GO TO BOISE*, I talked with mothers who had lost a child to cancer. Every single one said that death gave their lives new meaning and purpose. And who do you think prepared them for the rough, lonely road they had to travel? Their dying child. They pointed their mothers toward the future and told them to keep going. The children had already accepted what their mothers were fighting to reject.

The children in the bombed out nursery in Oklahoma City have touched more lives than they will ever know. Workers who had probably given their kids a mechanical pat on the head without thinking that morning were making calls home during the day to their children to say, "I love you."

This may seem like a strange Mother's Day column on a day when joy and life abound for the millions of mothers throughout the country but it's

also a day of appreciation and respect. I can think of no mothers who deserve it more than those who had to give a child back. In the face of adversity, we are not permitted to ask, "Why me?" You can ask, but you won't get an answer. Maybe you are the instrument that is left behind to perpetuate the life that was lost and appreciate the time you had with it.

The late Gilda Radner summed it up pretty well. "I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned the hard way that some poems don't rhyme and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what is going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity."

Erma Bombeck

Sometimes

Sometimes in the middle of the night as I read, wash dishes, fold clothes, or sit quietly and pontificate about this or that, I hear your voice. The sound is so clear. "Mom," you say.

Sometimes I answer back in an automatic response. I wait for a brief moment and then your voice is gone. I am startled and I freeze in place, not moving, not breathing, not blinking, just listening.

Sometimes I think I see you in a store or on the street, walking that unique walk that was yours alone. I look twice and realize it is not you. But it was a brief moment of joy to see that special walk.

Sometimes I think I have lost my mind. But most of the time I am thankful for these little reminders. Perhaps it is my mind giving me a sense of you. Perhaps the keeping of you in my heart brings this peace to me.

Sometimes when I come home from work, I find something on the counter that wasn't there that morning. A sock, a small socket wrench, a matchbox car. I ask my husband if he came home during the day. He didn't, of course. I wonder about these things, but then I also get comfort from them.

Sometimes I wish I could talk to you just one more time. I would simply listen to your voice, your excitement, your disappointment, your happiness, your enthusiasm, your concern... whatever you might be feeling. That would be enough. I don't need great revelations, just a conversation, just your voice.

Sometimes I could just scream at the inequity of your death. You, my only child, the one who gave purpose and meaning to my life, are gone forever from this plane. But then, I get a grip on my sanity and stop thinking negatively.

Sometimes I meet a newly bereaved mother and I see myself. I know her heart, I understand her torment, and I feel the pain that has wrapped her in its horrible, crushing grip. I listen to this mother whose world has been gnarled into a grotesque shell of life, and I ask about her child.

Sometimes I accept my reality, sometimes I don't. But I always keep you in my heart, taking you into the future as far as I, myself will go. And that has to be enough. I cannot change the past. I can only live today and plan for tomorrow.

Sometimes though I am glad that my mind allows me these little forays into a parallel reality. These give me peace. In this world, peace is as ethereal as a fine mist near a waterfall.

Sometimes, reality is just too harsh.
Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX

Ask My Mom How She Is

My Mom, she tells a lot of lies, she never did before. But from now until she dies, she'll tell a whole lot more.

Ask my Mom how she is and because she can't explain, she will tell a little lie because she can't describe the pain.

Ask my Mom how she is; she'll say "I'm alright." If that's the truth, then tell me, why does she cry each night?

Ask my Mom how she is; she seems to cope so well. She didn't have a choice you see, nor the strength to yell.

Ask my Mom how she is, "I'm fine,

I'm well, I'm coping."

For God's sake Mom, just tell the truth, just say your heart is broken.

She'll love me all her life, I loved her all of mine.

But if you ask her how she is, she'll lie and say she's fine. I am Here in Heaven. I cannot hug from here.

If she lies to you, don't listen, hug her and hold her near. On the day we meet again, we'll smile and I'll be bold. I'll say,

"You're lucky to get in here, Mom, with all the lies you told!"

Grief Fatigue

Do you ever feel like me? Right now, I am utterly tired of grief. I don't want to hurt, cry or feel empty. I want to scream. I am sick of it. I can't get away from the always aching pit in my heart and soul. I search for understanding. I do all I can in the memory of my child who is gone and the others like her. I try to move into life again. I smile, I laugh, but inside I ache, my soul literally burns inside my body. This ache in my heart grows worse and harsher each day. Some say it gets better. WHEN?? This is what I want to know. When in this life am I going to feel better? I learn to live like this. It has not eased or vanished. I just cope better. Inside me I desire my child. Outside I act fine and dandy! I want to

feel whole, confident, full, happy, all the things that are so long gone I can't remember them. Oh, what I wouldn't give for the bliss of ignorance once more.

*A Bereaved Mom
St. Paul, MN*

Missing And Valuing On Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a special day, and special days are hard after the death of a child. It is a normal and natural thing for either parent, for the first few years after the death, to zero in on who is missing, rather than who is left—and I was no different.

Fortunately for me, not long after the Atlanta Chapter formed, a local psychiatrist, Dr. Victor Gonzales, spoke one evening shortly before Mother's Day. He told of his parents' loss of their first two children. His story of how his life had been influenced and molded by his Mother's reaction touched me. He spoke of how he and his siblings who came later were forever denied his Mother's happiness and joy. She was unable to value what she had left as much as what she had lost.

Dr. Gonzales said he spent a great deal of his childhood trying to make his mother happy, always failing and

always feeling there must be something lacking in him that caused him to fail. The picture in my mind of him and his siblings always trying and always failing, through no fault of their own, made a great impact on me. I was determined from that day forward that my daughter would not have to lament later in life that she had been denied my happiness and joy because her brother had died.

On Mother's Day now I make room for both missing and valuing, for they are not, I have discovered, mutually exclusive. Now when I go to the cemetery with my rosebud on my day, my daughter has no part in my needs while I am there. When I come home, my son doesn't interfere with my acceptance and appreciation of my daughter's expression of love. She gives me a gift on my day and I give her one in return. It's probably the best gift I could possibly give her – my happiness and joy for life. She is as important as what I have lost and I know her worth. If you are fortunate enough to have surviving children, I hope you, too, are able to value as well as miss. There's room for both, you know.

*Mary Cleckley BPUSA
Atlanta, GA*

*(continuation of
May Birthdays)*

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.

- ♥ Aunt Michele & Uncle Ray Schmidt "In loving memory of our niece, Erika Anstett. We miss & love you! Forever in our hearts!"
- ♥ Tom & Connie McCann "In memory of our son Ryan "Ryfro" on his angel day 5/10"
- ♥ Tom & Connie McCann "In memory of Bryan "Bryfro" Soupis on his birthday 5/15"
- ♥ 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"
- ♥ Cindy & Matt Stevens "Happy Birthday Justin, love you & miss you so much"
- ♥ Elizabeth Golen "In memory of Andrew. Love you forever Andrew! Love, Mom, Dad, Amy, Jeff, Blair & Rose"
- ♥ Mary & Mike Hartnett "In memory of Michael. Michael Anthony, Happy Birthday in heaven bud! We love you & miss you so much! Love, Mom, Dad, Katie, Dakota & Brooklyn"
- ♥ Susan Steinberg "In memory of Shannon. Shannon, another year has passed without you. Miss you so, so much. Mom, Dad, Todd, Christopher & Ajax"
- ♥ Sonny & Brenda Fields "In memory of Jordan John. We miss you so much, love forever and always!"

A Mother of Sorrow

I hate to look at my mother
 To see her in so much pain
 Wrinkles hiding her countless tears
 That would otherwise pour like rain.
 I hate to see her hurt so much
 But silently hold it in
 Struggling to beat the heartbreak
 When she knows that she can't win.
 I hate to listen to her cries
 Which she tries so hard not to show
 Grasping on to everything
 I wish she could let go.
 I hate to watch her smile so bright
 And know that it's all fake
 Sure she's "happy" every day
 But she's acting for our sake.
 I hate competing with the sorrow
 And I can't bring back my brother

Drew is up there watching you
 He's living, loving, and laughing—
 Mother.
 Kristy Sheldon
 Ashtabula, OH

My Thoughts of You

I miss your goofy laugh,
 I miss your temper tantrums,
 I miss you bugging me for money,
 I miss your punches in the arm,
 But most of all I miss you
 So I will remember
 Our good and bad times,
 And share them with others,
 So that I can keep you
 Alive in my heart.
 DeAnn Kouse, TCF
 Louisville, KY

I Want to Say...

I want to say I'm sorry for many reasons left unsaid
 I want to say I miss you and the life that we once led
 I want to be forgiven and forgive myself as well
 I want to hold my head up high and no longer sit and dwell
 How do you learn to love yourself after perfecting self-hate?
 I want to shout ' I miss you so' yet knowing I'm too late
 So much time has already passed but one thing remains
 The thought of you brings warmth to me and that will never change
 We all make mistakes in life, Lord knows I've made a few
 Please know that doesn't change the fact I truly cared for you
 The love we shared may have been brief, and now it's just our past
 But the impact that you have left on me will forever last
 No matter where we go from here, no matter where we've been
 What I miss most of all, is not my love, it's my friend

Dedication: In memory of my sister,
 April

Lisa M. Tate

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.



Livonia Chapter Page

Butterfly, Balloon, and Bagpiper Band

In a place not far from where we live
Sad Souls assembled, strangers if you will
Compassionate friends sought relief from
their daily doom
Remembering the Children that died so very
much too soon

Bagpipes, balloons and butterflies
Inspired memories mixed with muffled cries
In their choking heart unique way
They placed arms around this distinctive
day

A hundred helium containers cling to the
ceiling above
Surrender their escape to grasping hands
seeking love
An army of color carry messages tied to
tails of string
To be released in perfect purpose towards
fulfillment in spring

Their heads stand far from the floor
Pull it down, let it go, it does even more
Playing with buddies bouncing around in
the room
Innocent blessed outsiders see just a balloon

Coming Date to Remember

September 14

Third Annual Family Picnic at Rotary
Park in Livonia. From 1 to 4 pm. Fam-
ily and friends welcome. More info to
follow.

Moving outside family and friends seek
relief from confusing fears
Where butterfly lives are measured in
moments not years
Yesterday's caterpillars cast shadows with
their fragile flights
Bringing hope for the hopeless to survive
lonely nights

Some monarch miracles take a break and sit
in the sun
Preparing their wings for the days dainty
fun
One flies off to a loving place
Another lands close to the hapless face

Rubber bubbles eager to begin their
journey to the stars
Dance in the air with their notes from near
and afar
They push against the breeze eager to sail
Assuring those gathered their mission will
not fail

Time decrees the release inspiring sighs and
subtle cheer
Assembled see their new found friends
flying without fear

Bring family and
friends to our Annu-
al Balloon Lift. Bal-
loons are provided,
as well as cards on
which you can write
messages. If you
want, bring a small
plate of one of your
child's favorite food.
A shortened sharing
session will follow
the balloon lift.



Reds and greens, blues, yellows, white and
pink
Rise together encouraging a life to stand
back from the brink

Towards their new home up in the endless
skies
They bob and weave to a place where no
one dies
Owners of love remain with a smile or
maybe a tear
For the gift of the children who are there
instead of here

The bagpipers' soothing song whistles
gently in the wind
Lending comfort while softening any sin
Heavy hearts have earned this brief helping
hand
From the butterfly, balloon, and bagpiper
band

Pat O'Donnell / TCF Family / Bereaved
Dad & Brother

Michigan Conference Basket
Our Livonia Chapter (in memory of all
our children who have died too soon)
will be donating a Michigan basket to
the 2019 TCF National Conference
for the Silent Auction held in Phila-
delphia, PA in July. If you would like
to donate please bring your items to
the May, June or July meetings. These
items can be anything Michigan,
sports items, jams, jellies, Saun-
der's items, chips or coffees. Our
only limits are wine bottles or large
glass items which are hard to ship.
Thank You for being involved.

Sibling Sharing Table

We encourage siblings to attend our meetings and meet
Amy Golen who will be leading this table. Contact Amy at
313-283-8136 or email at aegolen@gmail.com.

Infant Loss Sharing Table

Our chapter is now offering a sharing table for Infant Loss/Stillborn &
Miscarriage. Please contact Michelle Ciemnicki with questions at
734-276-3149 or email at michellejurcak@gmail.com.

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.

Lisa Brown whose beloved granddaughter; **Kloe Halstead**, Born 9/23; Died 4/22; 8 years
Elphonso Murphy whose beloved son; **Maurice**, Born 10/07; Died 4/12; 24 years
Selena Reed whose beloved son; **Dillon**, Born 5/21; Died 7/7; 18 years
Tom and Heidi Rich whose beloved son; **Kyle**, Born 3/4; Died 2/15; 26 years
Anita Daniels-Rosser whose beloved son; **Maurice**, Born 10/07; Died 4/12; 24 years

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

May 2019

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



May Craft Day

Our Craft Day will be on May 11, 2019 at the home of Kathy Rambo from 10 am. until 1 pm. We will be decorating tiles with a different technique. One of our members, Monica Imielowski, will be showing us how to do this craft, in memory of her son, Andrew.

We will have examples of this tile at our May meeting and a sign-up sheet. We need to know if you are coming just to have enough supplies.