

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



October 2018
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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

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- October 6 -- First
time tables, sibling table, topic table:
"Do you wear masks? Are there people
with whom you don't need to wear
them?"

NO Craft Day in October

October 16 - **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

Halloween and Other Masks

The month of October brings with it a smorgasbord for the senses. We can hear the crunching and crackling of leaves under our feet. We can see the brilliant reds, oranges and yellows splash the earth. We can feel the magical approach of winter in the air. October is also for Halloween, a date synonymous with masks. As bereaved parents we have, at various times, worn many and varied masks. We have masked our feelings of despair, sorrow, and anguish for the sake of our loved one, friends and acquaintances. We have masked our feelings of anger and bitterness for the traditional belief that a kind God would not do this to innocents. Most importantly, we have masked the person we have become, the person that has evolved after living through the death of a child. Let us celebrate the month of October by beginning to take off some of our masks!!! A very positive and helpful way to begin this process is to attend the next TCF meeting. Share your sorrow, your fears, your bitterness, and disappointment. Above all, share your progress and triumphs through the arduous journey of grief. When you enter a room of caring and supportive people who have shared your grief, there is no more reason to wear a mask.

Cathy Crawford,

Halloween

It is here, this day of merriment and children's pleasure. Gremlins and goblins and ghosties at the door of your house; and the "other children" come to the door of your mind. Faces out of the past, small ghosts with sweet, painted faces. They do not shout. Those children no longer march laughing on a cold Halloween night, they stand at the door of our mind; and you will let them in, so that you can give them the small gifts for Halloween; a smile and a tear.
From WINTERSUN by Sascha

With a Little Help from My Friends

Feelings and emotions.....our lives are now about feelings and emotions. Our children have died under different circumstances and at different ages, but the reality of our child's death is the same for each of us.

Science now tells us that people can die of a broken heart. The heart is not damaged, there has been no heart attack, but the emotions are so great that the heart malfunctions and people die. Each of us was convinced when our child died that we, too, would die and the cause would be our broken heart.

But we didn't die. Initially, we lived in a state of shock. Then as time pro-

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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

gresses we live in a state of suspension, depression, anxiety, grief, anger, resentment, overwhelming emotions and deep, deep sadness. We ask ourselves how anyone can move forward after this terrible loss. A parent's worst fear is now our reality each morning, each night, each day for the rest of our lives.

Or is it? The answer to that question is as complex as the universe and as simplistic as a paperclip: we shape and define our reality. We take control of our perspective.

We can choose to remain angry. We can choose to walk the nightmarish tightrope we have designated for our lives. We can choose not to forgive. We can choose to remember our child's death and not our child's life. We each will choose to perceive this tragedy differently throughout the process ...from the death of our child until we, ourselves, die.

For those of us in the Compassionate Friends organization, the choice is one of hope. Hope that we can laugh again, hope that we can take the edge from the pain, hope that our child's story will be remembered and told over and over again, hope that we will grow and learn to deal with the worst loss a human can endure. We each hope to learn serenity and find peace.

The process is a long one. The Compassionate Friends are important new companions on this journey because our lives are now divided into two segments: before our child died and after our child died. Many friends from before cannot understand why we don't get on with life. Some avoid us, others berate us, cajole us and generally irritate us because we can't "get over" this loss. Some people from our life before step toward us, stand by us and listen. These people will remain in the second segment of our lives. This second segment is now thought about as the "after our child died" portion. The people we meet in Compassionate Friends understand us. They are us. They listen and speak with their hearts. They have each experienced

the loss of a child. They hurt with us, and their pain is as real as ours. We learn from each other.

Finding where we fit into the puzzle of life is not an easy task. Our Compassionate Friends will help us on that journey. Some will be years into their grief; some will still be in shock over the recent death of their child. But each of these people chooses to be here for us. They choose to share their pain and their methods of coping and regaining a semblance of a life. They choose to visit with us each month, talk to us on the telephone, e-mail us and be there when we need them. These new friends share our burdens, our heartaches, our triumphs and our biggest tragedy. They help us to focus on the permanently altered core of our being: the loss of our child.

Speaking openly, repeating our child's name and our pain is cathartic. Getting feedback from others who share in our growth is a positive, reinforcing necessity. For if we are to become the person we want to be, we need to hear what others have to say about their journey, their child, our journey and our child. We need to tell them what we have to say as well.

With tears and broken hearts we gather to talk and listen, to share and suggest, to ask and to answer. For we are the Compassionate Friends. We are kindred souls who come from every walk of life but who are bound together by one all-encompassing loss. Our children are dead. We choose to explore our loss, our feelings and our emotions together.

One day each of us will see a new day dawning and feel at peace within ourselves and the world. We will hold our child in our hearts as we gaze upon the beauty and wonder of life on this earth. We will think about our child with joy...joy that our child lived and loved and laughed. And we will remember the continuing hope provided by our Compassionate Friends that helped us find this new place of peace.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

*In memory of my son, Todd Mennen TCF,
Katy, TX*

Letting Go of Guilt

Quite often, the first feelings that overtake a mother or father following the death of a child are feelings of extreme guilt. Thoughts of "if only" seem to relentlessly keep returning. "If only" I had taken her to the doctor sooner. "If only" I had not given him the car keys when I knew the roads were icy. "If only" I had not turned my back to answer the phone. "If only" I had not left him playing alone in the bathtub. Guilt is such a heavy burden of grief to carry around! How does a parent move beyond the guilt of losing a child? How can a parent shed the painful feelings of inadequacy? How does a parent ever find a way to let go of the guilt? The most difficult step in releasing the tight clutch that guilt holds on a parents' heart is dealing with the reality of the loss. "My child died" are often the most difficult three words that will ever come from the mouth of a parent. Those words are hard words, yet they are words that are necessary to say and to understand before being able to rid oneself of guilt. When we live in an "if only" emotional environment, we have not yet come to the full realization that child loss has actually occurred. We are still working through the mental "if only" reasoning which continues to wreak havoc on a parent's heart. When a parent lives in an "if only" state, the reality of the child's death can never be completely accepted. As painful as it is, a parent must at some point make the hard choice to accept the reality that the child has died. Because a parent's primary role is to nurture and care for the child, a parent often has a feeling of deserving punishment when a child dies. That is simply another way of expressing the heaviness of guilt. A parent often wrestles with the thought that "because my child died, I do not deserve to ever smile again." Guilt continues to prevent many parents from moving forward in this difficult journey we call grief. It takes a lot of concentrated effort, hard work, and support from others to be able to

forgive oneself and finally let go of the gnawing feeling of guilt following the death of a child. Until a parent makes the decision to leave the heavy weight of guilt behind, joy can never return to a heart that has been so deeply wounded by the loss of a child. Letting go of guilt is a decision that must be made. There is no timetable for making that decision, and others cannot force that decision on any parent. Eventually, a parent will come to the realization that the child's death is real, and there is a hard choice to be made; to continue to live in the guilt of the loss, or to let go of that heaviness of guilt and begin to experience a bit of peace and joy once again. Letting go of guilt requires a real effort to put an end to the "if only" questions. Letting go of guilt means that a parent no longer blames himself for the death of the child. Letting go of guilt means forgiving oneself and accepting oneself. Letting go of guilt means being gentle with oneself and allowing time for healing to take place. Letting go of guilt is one of the most difficult parts of grief work. It takes a lot of energy, understanding, and patience. But when guilt is finally set free, a parent's heart can begin to walk the journey of healing through child loss.

Clara Hinton

Searching

Once again, my list has vanished; it was here, but now it's missing. Keys and glasses disappearing; books and letters--overdue. I'm forever searching, searching, they must be here, and I need them! Could it be that what is missing, what I want this very minute--could it be that what I'm REALLY searching for, my child, is you?

Joyce Andrews

TCF Sugar Land, TX

A Visit

I did something today that no man should have to do. I weeded around your grave. The sun was starting to set. I could hear the crickets in the

trees. I could feel the coolness of the autumn on the evening breeze. The same coolness I can feel creeping into my heart. As I bent to kiss your stone good-bye, it was warm. Once again, you have told me your love still lives; just in a different place.

Gregory M Hutson

Waiting for Answers

Years ago I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul.

But when I walked out into the spring, air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory?

During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared were true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed.

My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm

on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said, "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

Mary Clark

In memory of Max

TCF, Sugar Land-SW Houston Chapter,

Feelings

We feel sad

for what we have lost..

We feel happy

for what we had.

We feel poor

for the empty places.

We feel rich

for we have each other.

We will cry

for what we can't have.

We will laugh

for our memories abound.

We will hurt

for the love we can't give.

We will rejoice

for the love we have received.

We will be restless

for our lives are not whole.

We will be peaceful

for we know it is not forever.

We will love and miss you forever and always.

Flora A. Cocora and Christina Cocora Hebert

TCF Livonia, MI

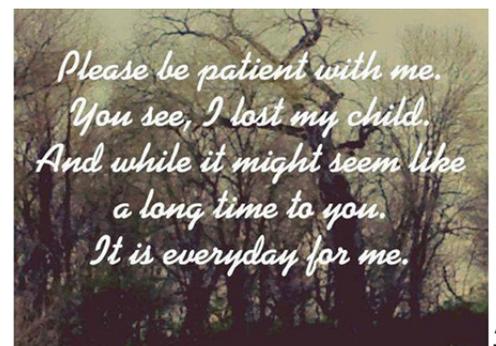
In loving memory of 3 generations that passed away in just over six months:

Nicholas Eugene Cocora, Jr. (son)

Blaise Christian Hebert (grandson)

George Nicholas Subu (brother)

Remember not how they died, but how they lived.



2nd Annual Picnic

“Thank you to all of the special parents, family and friends who attended our 2nd Annual Compassionate Friends – Livonia Picnic. Also a big ‘THANK YOU’ to Jan Schatz, Carol & Mike Antczak, John & Sherry Temple, Judy Cappelli, Matt & Cindy Stevens, Mike & Mary Hartnett, Joyce and Robert Gradinscak, Gail Lafferty, Kathy Rambo & Mike for all the help they provided to make this wonderful event a success!! “



Let Us Celebrate Their Births

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.

- ♥ Mike & Mary Hartnett “ In memory of Michael Anthony. Michael, it is hard to believe you have been gone 4 years. We love & miss you every single day. Love, Mom, Dad, Katie, Dakota & Brooklyn”
- ♥ Flora Cocora “In memory of son, brother, uncle; Nicholas Eugene Cocora Jr, son, brother, uncle, grandson; Blaise Christian Hebert, brother, uncle; Attorney George Nickolas Subu”
- ♥ Ruth Hanna “In memory of Stephen”
- ♥ Denise & Christopher Falzon “In memory of our son, Brian. 25th Anniversary should mean joy, instead it is a cruel reminder of how long you have been gone. We miss & love you every day Brian”

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.

- Lori Hiller whose beloved daughter; **Lindsay**, Born 11/9; Died 7/19, 18 years
- Marg Jo Gregory whose beloved son; **Robert**, Born 4/8; Died 4/18, 29 years
- Lindsay & Dave Bernardi whose beloved son, **Llewyn Lewis**, Born 6/2, Died 6/2, 1 day

SIBS

Only Surviving Siblings; Am I an Only Child Now?

In families of only two children, the siblings often look out for and protect each other, which make the loss of one even more difficult for the surviving child. The brothers and/or sisters looked forward to a long and enjoyable future, never thinking that they would be separated. There was the assumption that the siblings would grow old together, reminiscing about the past. Not only are there the intense sadness and feelings of total devastation, but the surviving sibling may feel a huge sense of responsibility for the future care of the parents. While both siblings are alive, there

might not be much thought about the loss of a parent, as they believe they will always be there to help each other make decisions when the time comes; that they would always go through everything together. Another concern is that the surviving sibling won't have any family to rely on to remember the past. With the loss of a sibling, we are left with an immense grief and a "new reality" that we never wanted, never asked for. The anguish and loneliness are overwhelming. Those who have no surviving siblings to share their thoughts, feelings, memories and pain are left to deal with a wider range of issues. Bereaved parents often have a hard time with the question, "How many children do you have?" Many only surviving siblings also have a hard time dealing with similar issues.

They may not be up to explaining what happened. It often depends on the relationship to the person asking. The best choice is to answer whichever way is easier emotionally. Another question surviving siblings often ask themselves is, "Am I an only child now?" The sibling who has died will always be their brother or sister, but they may want to spare themselves the pain of people's reactions to hearing of the death, or just the pain of having to say it, which is hard enough. It is so difficult to process the fact that this one person, who shared the past, will not be a part of their future. It's good to remember that no matter how the question is answered, we will always be an older or younger brother or sister.

Daniel Yoffee

Need to Talk to Someone Between Meetings?

TELEPHONE FRIENDS:

The people listed below have volunteered to take your calls:

Linda Houghtby - Long term illness - (734) 591-3062

Catherine Walker - Loss of Only Child - (248) 921-2938

Charli Johnston - Suicide - 734-812-2006

Joe Hofmann - Drug related death - 734-331-9919

Bob Vitolins - A father's grief - (313) 882-8632

Dana and Brandy Bumstead - Loss of an infant -(313) 447-8144

Kathy Rambo - Sudden Death - (734) 306-3930

Remember that our chapter has a Facebook page. It is a closed page, so you just need to search for The Compassionate Friends of Livonia, Michigan and ask to join.

TCF CHAT ROOM

www.compassionatefriends.org

The chat rooms are moderated and are open at different times. There is one open most evenings from 10-11 p.m. They are all moderated which means that all the chat rooms have a trained facilitator in them.

National Mailing Address: PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522; Phone: (630) 990-0010; Toll Free: (877)969-1101; Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

OTHER TCF CHAPTERS IN OUR AREA:

Ann Arbor: Mike Fedel: MikeFedela2@gmail.com; 734-998-0360 ; 3rd Sunday, 2:30 to 4:30 pm - First Presbyterian Church (Vance Room) 1432 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

St. Clair Shores: 2nd Wed. Kathy Joerin ; 586-293-6176, KJMac21@aol.com

Detroit: Kellie West Outer Drive Methodist Church, 12065 West Outer Drive, Detroit ; 2nd Wed., 6:30 - 8:30; 734-660-9557.

Troy: St. Paul's Methodist Church, 620 Romeo, Rochester, MI 3rd Thursday 7-9; Tina@586-634-0239

Pinckney TCF Chapter: The Christian House of Prayer, 9949 McGregor Road, Pinckney, MI; 2nd Monday of the month, 6 - 8 pm; Jimmy Batchelor - 734-277-9705

Tecumseh TCF Chapter: First Presbyterian Church, 211 W. Chicago, Tecumseh, 4th Sunday of the month, 2-4 pm, Rose Hatchett, 517-270-3308.



There Are Times

There are times when I see a fiery sunset or the silver glow of the moon, and I see my brother and feel the peace that he still exists. But these times are few, and most of what I see is, he is missing. Cry now, my silent tears, quietly, so no one hears. They don't know the pain I go through, day after day, and through the years.

Alissa Roeder, TCF,

Pikes Peak, CO



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

October 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



THANKS FOR COMING

Our chapter wants to thank Alan Pedersen for coming to perform at last month's meeting. We had a good crowd to support him and we want to thank all who came and brought goodies to share.

Thanks to all who put their child's name on the "Angels Across the USA" van to travel with Alan.

What a great evening! Thanks for coming!!