

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Livonia, Michigan Chapter



March 2025
Volume 37, Number 3

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:

March 6th -7:00 pm - Meeting
see page 7

March 18th, Tuesday, at 6:00 pm.
TCF Dinner at: Archie's Tavern 37714
Six mile Rd. Livonia. It is in the Laurel
Park Mall.

Contact Joyce Gradinscak,
734-560-6883, you can text or call her.

Saturday, March 15 at 1:00 pm
Bowling Fundraiser - see this page
and page 7

No Craft meeting until further notice.



The Compassionate Friends

16th Annual Bowling Fundraiser

In loving memory of all the children who died too soon

Saturday, March 15th, 2025 at 1:00 pm
(Registration will begin at 12:30 pm sharp)

Vision Lanes
38250 Ford Rd
Westland, MI 48185
(On Ford Rd & Hix)

Please let us know if you will be joining us so we can reserve lanes
Joyce Gradinscak @ 734-560-6883
Or Mary Hartnett @ 313-550-5410

\$25 per person
(Includes: 2 games (9 pin no tap), shoes, 2 mystery game drawings, 2 slices of pizza & pop)
Additional Raffle Tickets will be sold for 50/50 drawing and Prizes

Please make check out to: The Compassionate Friends (Livonia)
Mail to: Mary Hartnett 5704 Drexel St, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Do You Know Who I Am?

I am flesh and blood, torn mind,
and broken heart.

I feel at times like a wise old woman -
but then in the next moment like a
small child.

I admit total confusion.

I look in the mirror and see someone
I'm not sure I know.

I want an answer; I want a solution -
to a problem that has neither on this
earth.

It seems that nothing matters anymore
and yet at the same time I have learned
that everything does.

That there are millions of people on
this earth.

When one of them dies, it matters.

(continued on page 4)

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

Available to members only....

MARCH

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

*Softly ... may peace
replace heartache
and cherished memories
remain with you always on
your child's birthday*

I ache to a degree that only another who has crossed this bridge could gauge.

And only they can for a moment understand my torment .

Do you know who I am?

I am a bereaved mother - the last thing I ever thought I would be.

My child has died before me, the most unnatural thing in the world.

And my continued being seems the next

most unnatural thing.

A portion of my heart, spirit, and dreams and all thoughts of total peace are with Ryan, never to be recovered to make a whole until I can see him again.

The tears I cry are not for me, but for the beautiful life that ended far too soon.

And the utterly helpless frustration of not being able to do anything to change that.

TCF of Nashville, TN

Love Never Goes Away

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing.” Sound familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouches” can compare with the hurt we now feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet, most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have. So...we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can’t live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few commonly recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable... some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don’t have that measure anymore. All

we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, and to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember.

Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.

Don’t push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and their moments... but don’t expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don’t get over grief... it only becomes tolerable and livable.

Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost – try thinking the good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn’t lose our child... HE/SHE DIED. We didn’t lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn’t love so very much it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I’m very, very glad I loved.

Don’t let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!
Darcie Sims

Spring Comes Again

In the first year of bereavement, spring is often a painful time of year. Nature reminds us of rebirth when we are not yet ready for it. Easter arrives with its significance for those of us who are religious. Despite the fact that nature is giving out signals of renewed life, we don’t feel renewed and are uncertain that we ever shall again. The flowers, dogwoods and blooming shrubs remind us of the fact our child cannot experience the beauty, and we are sad.

However, believe me, a time will come when we will feel the stirring of happiness at warm days and green grass and the bursting forth of buds. Then Spring will seem a promise that love, experienced as we have known it with our child, never goes away—is

always there, even when the child is not. The cycles of nature will be a reassurance that as the earth experiences its ups and downs, so will we—that it is natural. Laughter will come, and lethargy, and joy, and tears; but changes will take place just as the earth experiences them, and we will move forward or backward as we can, carrying the love for our child with us. Love does not die, cannot be buried, and continues just as the changing seasons do.

*Elizabeth B. Estes,
TCF, Augusta, GA*

What Do Parents Lose When a Child Dies?

The Loss of a Piece of Yourself:
Our time, our efforts, and our hopes - these are our most precious commodities, the materials of ourselves. We invest them lavishly in our child. How much of ourselves we have invested is not measured by how many months or years the child lived. A stillbirth or the death of a newborn is as great a loss as the death of a young adult. As Linda Edelstein reminds us, “the death of a child is an event that occurs in the (parents) inner and outer worlds.” To take the measure of your loss, we must appreciate the unique place your child occupied in your inner world. Your child’s death robs you of a central piece of yourself, part of what is most you.

The loss of illusions: Our belief that we can protect our children too often turns out to be an illusion. We elaborate other illusions as well: “If I behave right and play by the rules, bad things won’t happen to me.”

“Cancer happens to other people.” “This is a good neighborhood; my kids are safe.” These ideas sit in the back of our minds, seldom invoked, yet powerfully reassuring. When you cannot protect your child, you lose the canopy of illusions that sustained you. Your child’s death delivers a staggering blow to your self esteem. Your job as a parent was to protect

your child, and you could not. No matter what the circumstances of his death, no matter how impossible to prevent or beyond your control, you hold yourself responsible. If what happened to your child happened in another family, you would not hold those parents responsible. Yet you hold yourself to a different measure. With any disaster - earthquake, death, car accident - the trauma arises not only from the event but from its power to rip away our illusions. We stand pitifully exposed to our own helplessness: all that we have done right, all the good we've been has not availed us. When parents whose child has died talk about what they have lost, they always mention the loss of their powerful illusions. These sustain us, and they are a lot to lose. Life goes much harder without them.

The loss of order in our universe: Parents are older, children are younger. Children will grow up. Parents will grow older and die, and their children will bury them. The order of the generations is deeply embedded in our thinking. It is how things are, the way they ought to be, natural and inviolable. A child's death violates this order. Every parent who has lost a child feels that violation. Age offers no statute of limitations.

The loss of the Future: A child's death robs you of your future. Your child is woven through the tapestry of your future, an integral part of the design. When death rips your child from the tapestry, the design is changed, damaged beyond repair. You lose the pleasure and pride that comes from watching her life unfold and her potential flower. You lose the pleasure of her company. Holidays and birthdays turn into hollow, exquisitely painful reminders of her absence. When your child dies, you lose simultaneously on so many fronts. You lose the embodiment of your special hopes, and you lose your second chance. You lose someone who loved you and whom you loved, perhaps more extravagantly than anyone else in your life. In your own eyes you have failed, because you

could not protect your child. You lose a job and a piece of whom you know yourself to be. You are cheated of the natural order of time and generation.

The tapestry of your future has been torn and forever altered.

Barbara D. Rosoff from "The Worst Loss"

Big Plans

Before my daughter died I had big plans. I was an avid gardener. Every chance I got I was out in the yard.

My entire back yard was a butterfly, hummingbird garden. It was a certified backyard habitat registered by the National Wildlife Association and a certified Monarch butterfly way station registered with National Monarch Society. If I wasn't riding my John Deere mower in the front yard, I was probably planting or pruning in the back. I was taking classes to receive my organic gardening license and my husband and I even bought a lovely little 13 acre vegetable farm in Comfort, TX, complete with a homestead on it from the 1920's and a year-round, spring fed creek. I was going to retire in Comfort and raise and sell organic vegetables.

Then Angela died. I thought I was going to die. I lay on the couch for a year. I screamed, I cried, I went to counseling and to TCF meetings. Slowly, I tried to get back into the rhythm of life. My back yard was a mess due to lack of maintenance. My front yard didn't look much better. I half heartedly tried do my gardening.

I didn't have the energy or the enthusiasm I once did. Things weren't as beautiful as they once were. The colors of the flowers weren't as vivid as they once were nor did they smell as sweet. When I planted, the earth didn't feel good in between my fingers like it once did. I started getting horrible headaches every time I tried to work outside. It felt like the back of my head was coming off. I thought that it was either stress or perhaps allergies. I came down with one sinus infection after another. I finally went to a specialist. I needed sinus surgery to correct my abnormally small

sinus passages. After all these years I spent loving the outdoors and gardening, I now needed sinus surgery? It didn't make a lot of sense to me at the time. I now believe that somehow the grievous loss of my daughter was such a blow to me physically that it weakened my defenses and my precarious sinus condition manifested itself.

Take good care of yourself. The loss of a child is the worst blow a person can suffer. When we lose a child we are encouraged to reach out for help through family, friends, clergy, professional counseling, support groups, etc. All of these outlets can be invaluable in helping us as bereaved parents to survive the impossible.

One important aspect of dealing with loss that is often over looked is our physical health. The physical effect that the loss of a child has on our bodies can be just as real and devastating as the impact that it has on us spiritually, mentally and psychologically. Make sure that your doctor is aware of what you are going through. Be careful not to miss your annual checkups. Try to get enough sleep and if you can take a walk and get some fresh air. Come to TCF meetings. You will find empathy and understanding. And most of all, try to keep on loving yourself.

Janet G. Reyes

TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

Memories

We hang on to your memories

They are all that we have left

We cling to them tightly

Afraid that we will forget.

Until we see you again one day

We will make it through

Wrapped in this blanket

Made of memories of you.

-Alan Pederson

Reflections

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations: that life really isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness. Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people

to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time - time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger, TCF Sibling

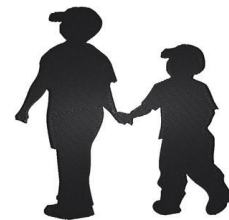
Dear Parents of
"Compassionate Friends":

I am writing to let you know how I feel and maybe how some of the other siblings feel. There have been times when my parents start really getting extra down about my brother. I usually leave the room. I feel that no matter how hard I try, I will say or do something that will hurt them more, or that they won't understand what I'm really trying to say. They already feel enough pain. I really love

them and I understand enough about how they hurt, but I'm just not good at saying what I feel. It seems like it never sounds right. I also hold my emotions back from them. I always hear it is best to let it out, and I do, but not in front of my parents. I'm afraid they might try to hold their emotions back in front of me, so I won't get upset. I've had rough times for the past couple of years, and I'm still having hard times, so I'm always afraid they will hold back if they see me getting upset. I know that would just hurt them more when they try to hold it back. I love to talk about the good times my brother and I had, but I'd just rather be alone when I cry for him. Just once in a while my sister and I can talk about him, but that's the only person I can really talk to. I hope and pray with all my heart that my parents will understand, but I just can't talk to them. I miss my brother a lot, more than I think they really realize. I love and care for them too much to go and upset them even more. Maybe I'm wrong, but please parents, understand how I feel. May we always be close.

*Love,
Sibling*

*There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept, things we don't want to know but have to learn, and people we can't live without but have to let go.
~ author unknown*



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
- Gail Lafferty - Sudden Death - (734) 748-2514

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 Thursday 7-9; Tina@586-634-0239

South Rockwood TCF Chapter: Southwood United Methodist Church, 6311 S. Huron River Drive, South Rockwood, MI 48179; 3rd Tues. of month meeting - 7 pm; Sheri Schooley, Leader; Contact Karen 734-672-7469



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

Livonia Chapter Page

Meeting is Thursday, March 6th. Newcomers table and topic tables. Topic: Topic: What led your child, grandchild or sibling to get his or her name?

Please note the information about our annual Bowling Fund Raiser. As a part of that, we are asking if anyone would like to donate a basket for the basket raffle, we would greatly appreciate it. Please bring to meeting in February or March or call Mary or Joyce and they will arrange to pick it up. Some ideas for baskets: Lottery Ticket, Craft Basket (adult one or kid one), Foodie Basket, Movie Night Basket, St. Paddy's Day, Game Basket, Wine basket to name a few.

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.

- ♥ Helena King in memory of **Mariano**: "I miss you everyday. I love you." Grandma
 - ♥ Rob & Joyce Gradinscak in memory of: **Adam**: "20 years of missing you." Love, Mom, Dad & Jamie
 - ♥ Christopher Falzon in memory of Brian: "Miss you **Brian**." "Love You, Mom and Dad"
-

Let Us Celebrate Their Births

Being Public Takes Its Toll
When one is pretending, the entire body revolts. Anais Nin

As we attempt to return to our jobs or our social life, or just to leave the house to do errands, we may feel that we must hold our heads up and keep acting brave. So we talk about things that don't interest us instead of talking about what plagues our heart and mind. We reluctantly agree to do things in which we do not have the slightest bit of interest.

All of this takes a tremendous amount of energy. But it does something else, too. Our bodies are under a great deal of stress as we work through our child's death. Trying to create and maintain an artificial front contributes to that stress. And stress, of course, manifests itself in many ways throughout the body - in headaches, rashes, insomnia, digestive disturbances, the inability to concentrate, and the im-

pulse to fidget or be on the move. We may also have more colds and flues as well as unexplained pains in various parts of our bodies.

One of the kindest things we can do for ourselves is to behave, as much as is possible and reasonable, in accordance with our deepest needs and desires. We can greatly reduce the amount of time and effort we put into doing what only seems socially required.

I will not push myself into false situations or require myself to perform in a way that differs significantly from my truest self. I will take care of myself by not forcing certain actions or responses, regardless of the pressure put on me to do so. My self, my body comes first, and I need to remember that my body will revolt against pretending.

*Carol Staudacher
From A Time to Grieve*

It Will Be Another Birthday Without You

The sun will shine, roses bloom,
geese fly throughout the sky

stocks will trade, the weatherman predict,
politicians debate

it'll seem like another day, just a day,
same 24 hours not a special holiday

But to this mother who will stand at the
grave lifting balloons into the sky

serving angel food cupcakes
with rainbow icing coated with tears

fluctuating between emotions:
the grief over death, the celebration
over birth

For this mother it will be yet another
birthday without you.
In Memory of Daniel

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

March 2025

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

The Weaver

The pattern of my life has changed,
for life has brought a sorrow:
The pattern must be rearranged,
to fit a new tomorrow.

Altho' my eyes are blind with tears,
altho' my heart is weary,
Tomorrow's duties still appear, even
though today is dreary.

The pattern of my life is mine,
a thing that must be finished.
Though time has altered its design,
its brightness has diminished.

A little kneeling by my bed,
some hours of quiet grieving,
And then I must take up my thread
of life and carry on the weaving

*Huntington Beach, Ca -S. S. Simon &
Jude, Blessing of Memories Service*