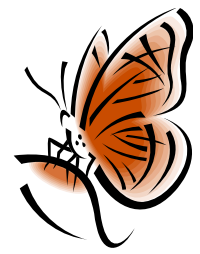


The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

April, 2014 Newsletter



A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents



Chapter Leader Notes from Toni

PUZZLES FOR ALL

My mother recently moved into an assisted living home in Minnesota. It is the original college building called, Old Main, where she took classes in 1942-43. It has been renovated into lovely apartments, a theater, exercise spaces and an elegant dining room with white tablecloths that once was the library.

Each time I have visited, I have been very interested in the "puzzle table" that is situated on the 2nd floor by a seating area of leather couches and solid, traditional style furniture. The table is very large with heavy ornate chairs. There is a feeling of permanence about the room. There are usually two puzzles laid out at a time and residents come and work on the puzzles as they choose. So most of the people in the building have a part in assembling the puzzle and restoring it to it's beautiful, intended, and once whole picture.

I and others have often described life, after a child has died, as a completed puzzle that was beautiful in its' entirety. More beautiful than we knew, until all of the puzzle pieces were cruelly picked up, shaken about and thrown back on the table with one key piece missing. Try as we may, we look at the puzzle and just don't have the will to put it back together again. We know it will never be as beautiful as it originally was.

Our families are like the puzzle and it takes a lot of work to put all of the chaotic, painful, silent, angry and sorrowful pieces back together. It takes some conscience thought and deliberate action. Some families may be able to speak to each other and try to determine what might work for their family and other families find that more difficult. Friends, religious leaders, website chat rooms, books and support groups are all resources available to help grieving families who are seeking help; help to ease the pain and help to put their "puzzle" -their lives and families - back together.

Just as with the residents at Old Main, the assisted living facility, it takes many people to restore the "picture puzzle". With each person who works on the puzzle, there is a new perspective and a fresh eye as to how it can fit together again. In addition, each person who works on the puzzle has a sense of satisfaction when it is completed - even if a key piece is missing. It will never be the same with a missing piece but it can be beautiful. Beautiful in a *different* way. Beautiful because you and your family survived and tragedy and worked at restoration and a new picture.

This analogy can go on and on, but I think it is important for all of us to remember that there are other people and resources to help us through our grief, especially the first few years. Often when you require some help from others, you end up helping them as well.

The Compassionate Friends is one of the resources available to help grieving parents and
(Continued on page 2)



GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but donations can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of your chapters. Love gifts are acknowledged each month in the newsletter.

**Thanks to Leslie & Shirley Heise
for sponsoring the newsletter in
loving memory of their daughter,
Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth**

**Thanks to Patricia & Craig Rosemann
for sponsoring the newsletter in
loving memory of their daughter,
Lisa Marie Rosemann**

"Gifts of Love" in remembering our children and siblings help to pay for Newsletters, Postage, Books for our Lending Libraries and Resources, Memorial Services, Candle Lightings, Telephone and Outreach, and Dues to the National TCF Office. Thank you.

Meetings

April 24, 2014 – 7:30 p.m.

Millburn Congregational Church
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL

There will be viewing the video "After A Child Dies". The video discusses the grief process as well as how The Compassionate Friends can help. Approx 20 mins.

Waukegan meeting

May 1, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL
Open discussion

(Continued from PUZZLE FOR ALL on page 1)

grandparents and siblings. There is camaraderie born of grief, sharing, listening, and learning. If you haven't been to a group meeting for a while, we invite you back. You may well have

valuable information to share with the group . . . to share is to heal.

I would also like everyone to consider attending the national Compassionate Friends' conference which is being held at Hilton O'Hare, Chicago on July 11-14, 2014. This is a unique opportunity for people from our area to attend such an information-filled conference that addresses almost every situation and emotional state that grieving families experience. (See page 4)

Registration fee for 18yrs + (prior to 6/6/14) = \$90.

Registration fee for Siblings (9-17 yrs) = \$40.

College Students (student ID required) = \$40.

Spanish language workshop w/sharing session (only) = \$20.

(Fee waived if registering for conference)

There is an additional cost for the Friday afternoon luncheon and the Saturday evening dinner which is followed by a candle lighting ceremony that ends the conference.

TCF Walk to Remember (Sunday morning) = \$20.

Please visit the national TCF website for more information: www.compassionatefriends.org

HAPPY SPRING TO EVERYONE!

"It is in that moment when we are brave enough to share our thoughts with a fellow griever and they nod, smile and understand that we know that we are not alone."

- The Grief Tool Box



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN APRIL & MAY



Each month we remember the children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments, place them in your thoughts, and remember them on their day together with their parents. None of us ever forget our special days and messages that say "I care" help us to get through them. Our children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <i>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</i> | April 2 | Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise |
| <i>Mike Reardon</i> | April 10 | Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon |
| <i>Scott Ewing</i> | April 11 | Son of Renee Ewing |
| <i>Miguel Gonzales</i> | April 11 | Son of Julia Llanos |
| <i>Rogelio Lopez Jr.</i> | April 12 | Son of Angelina & Rogelio Lopez |
| <i>Alyssa Carranza</i> | April 15 | Daughter of Luz Barrera Granddaughter of Angel & Raquel Gasco |
| <i>Jammi Hui</i> | April 25 | Daughter of William & Joyce Hui |
| <i>Bryan Cantafio</i> | April 29 | Son of Jerry Cantafio |
| <i>Rachel Salomonson</i> | May 2 | Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson |
| <i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i> | May 3 | Daughter of Alana Anderson |
| <i>Carlos Cantu</i> | May 18 | Son of Mateo & Lucy Cantu |
| <i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i> | May 9 | Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech |
| <i>Rob Petit</i> | May 15 | Son of Nancy Ervin |
| <i>Sven Christian Reinhard</i> | May 28 | Son of Astrid Reinhard |
| <i>Adam Michael Laufer</i> | May 30 | Son of Charles & Diana Laufer |

ANNIVERSARIES

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| <i>Mike Cantafio</i> | April 1 | Son of Jerry Cantafio |
| <i>Ryder Erickson</i> | April 3 | Son of Jenny Erickson Grandson of Pam & Mike Corrigan |
| <i>Jim O'Connor</i> | April 7 | Son of Kay O'Connor |
| <i>Selene Martinez</i> | April 8 | Daughter of Manuel & Lidia Martinez |
| <i>Karli Brooke Weidenhagen</i> | April 17 | Daughter of Jim & Adrienne Weidenhagen |
| <i>Shannon McCarty</i> | April 18 | Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hays |
| <i>Bryan Casaca Martinez</i> | April 23 | Son of Lesly Martinez |
| <i>Lisa Rosemann</i> | April 25 | Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann |
| <i>Edward G Davis III</i> | April 28 | Son of Edward G Davis Jr. |
| <i>Anne Thomson</i> | April 30 | Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson |
| <i>Donette Klawonn</i> | May 1 | Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn |
| <i>Carlos Cantu</i> | May 3 | Son of Mateo & Lucy Cantu |
| <i>Josh Summers</i> | May 3 | Son of Tina Carlson Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong |
| <i>Roger Alan Segebarth</i> | May 6 | Son of Reuben & Joanne Segebarth |
| <i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i> | May 15 | Daughter of Alana Anderson |
| <i>Anthony (Tony) Clemente</i> | May 16 | Son of Becky Wolf |
| <i>Adam Michael Laufer</i> | May 19 | Son of Charles & Diana Laufer |
| <i>Steven Anthony Sostre</i> | May 19 | Son of Jorge Sostre |
| <i>Roman Gabriel Cano</i> | May 21 | Son of Simona & Daniel Rhodes |
| <i>Rusty Anderson</i> | May 30 | Son of Forest & Christine Anderson |

Please let me know if I have omitted a child, misspelled a name or have published an incorrect date. I know how important it is to bereaved families to have their children remembered. vszech@comcast.net - 847-573-1055

2014 TCF National Conference



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Chicago, Illinois, will be the site of the 37th TCF National Conference on July 11-13, 2014. "Miles of Compassion through The Winds of Hope" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national conference experience. The 2014 conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, just minutes from the airport. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Early registration for the conference will be \$90.00 for Adults, \$40.00 for Children (9-17), and \$40.00 for Full-Time College Students.

The Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 9300 Bryn Mawr Ave., Rosemont, IL 60018, is now accepting reservations for TCF's National Conference. To make your reservation, please access the following link, which will take you directly to TCF's reservation portal on the Hyatt's website. Conference attendees are receiving a discounted room rate. We anticipate a large attendance for the conference, so we encourage you to make your reservation as soon as it is convenient for you.

[Make Your Reservation](#)

Reservations can also be made by calling the hotel directly at 888.421.1442 and please mention The

Compassionate Friends when reserving your room. Please visit Rosemont's website, www.rosemont.com, for information on local area dining and activities.

Grief

By Annamaria Hemingway

How can we define what it means to enter the dark underworld of grief? We can use words such as pain, anguish, misery, shock, loss, and fear, but language itself cannot articulate the complex set of emotions that are experienced during a time of great loss. How is it possible to describe a metaphorical tidal wave that throws you onto the shore of a deserted island with no compass or adequate provisions, and leaves you stumbling, lost, and confused as you try to find your bearings? How can one give voice to the way the ice-cold arms of grief wrap themselves around you and penetrate your deepest defenses, leaving you shivering and numb? Grief is a land of shadows that speaks its own universal language – the language of suffering and sorrow that embodies the enormity of loss.

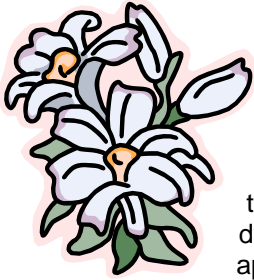
For every individual, "little" deaths can be experienced in every day life. The loss of a relationship, a job, or a cherished dream can bring great heartache, but none can equal the devastation of the death of a loved one. Nothing can remind us more of our impermanence in earthly existence, and that we have no control over the forces of nature that govern our own unique destiny.

Less than a hundred years ago, it was impossible to escape the reality of death and loss as epidemics of childhood diseases, shorter life spans and limited medical knowledge resulted in death and dying as being a part of everyday life. Support for those in the grieving process was offered by family members and the community.

Grief was acknowledged as an integral part of life and those in the mourning process openly displayed symbols of their grieving – as demonstrated in the Victorian and Edwardian eras when a black arm band or wearing "mourning" clothing for a certain period of time were a part of the rituals of grief.

(Continued on page 5)

(Grief continued from page 4)



In contemporary Western cultures, the disintegration of the family unit and local communities, combined with advancements in health care and a longer life span have resulted in society adopting the concept of ignoring death, the dying and the bereaved. This approach leads to fear and alienation and leaves us traumatized and feeling alone when the inescapability of death that can claim those of any age or circumstance touches our lives. Grief has its own timetable and is unique to each individual. When we enter the dark abyss of grief, the world we thought we knew becomes an alien planet, and life has no meaning. Time freezes and becomes suspended in a series of flashbacks that replay past cherished memories. They are entangled with an ache so deep that it threatens to submerge you. Often feelings of guilt accompany the loss, guilt for all the things unspoken, and all the things left undone.

Even the world of dreams offers no respite for the pain that invades our psyche, rarely sleeps, and leaves us tossing and turning through so many dark nights of the soul. Our only companion is often fear, an uninvited guest that accompanies the floods of tears that prick their way through hollow, smarting eyes.

Grief reflects not just something or someone that has been lost from the outer world, but can also mirror a similar death in the inner world of the individual, as hope and faith become victims to the ravages of some invisible force that silences the voice of God or a higher power, which surely has abandoned and deserted us.

The author, C.S. Lewis, described his own similar feelings in a diary that he wrote following the death of his beloved wife. These writings were later published in the book "A Grief Observed," in which Lewis recounts his painful journey and his struggle to reconcile the death of his wife to his strong religious convictions. He commented: No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid...at other times it feels like being mildly drunk or concussed. There is a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me. What does everything matter now?

C.S. Lewis eventually emerged through the stages of grief and loss to find that his religious beliefs had strengthened and that he had become a radically changed person through his profound experience.

Grief has a timeless quality and although the pain will lessen, the memory of a great loss becomes forever etched within our deepest being. Rather than trying to escape or ignoring the inevitability of grief touching our lives, we can become strengthened through understanding that grief, like love, ultimately has the power to transform and can offer us the chance to learn what it means to be most authentically human.

The Buddhist scriptures illustrate this teaching in the story of a woman who came from a poor family, and was looked upon with contempt by her husband's relatives. When she gave birth to a son, their disdain changed to respect. However, a few years later, the son died, and the woman became distraught with grief.

She searched everywhere for a cure that would bring her dead son back to life, but could find none. In her despair, she visited the Buddha, to see if he could help her. The Buddha told her to go back to her community and collect a mustard seed from a household where there had been no death. The woman searched for days, believing that if she could fulfill the Buddha's request, her son would be returned to her. But she eventually returned to the Buddha empty-handed, and realized there was no cure for death; it was an irrevocable part of life that everyone had to experience. As he lay on his deathbed, the Buddha reminded his followers of the impermanence of life, and how all things would eventually decay and perish. He encouraged people to accept death as a motivating force that provides a foundation for living life consciously and well.

Grief is the most painful experience we can suffer in this lifetime. It is a deeply emotional struggle to become reconciled to the reality of loss. No conciliatory words or advice can make it any less

(Continued on page 6)



(Grief continued from page 5)

agonizing. The hand of grief will change your life forever but for those in the grieving process, perhaps some comfort may be gained from the notion that grief can enable an inner strength to emerge in each of us, and can ultimately make us more fully conscious human beings.

Author of Practicing Conscious Living and Dying:
Stories of the Eternal Continuum of Consciousness

~reprinted from MissFoundation July/August
newsletter

<http://missfoundation.org/newsletter/vol11/JulAug2007.pdf>
www.missfoundation.org

Reflections

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations -that life isn't fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best 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 - 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 Painful memories of death with Priceless memories of my sister's life.

~by Cathy Schanberger - from *This Healing Journey - An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings*

of the book, *When Bluebirds Fly*, that I shared in the October, 2013 newsletter:

Vicki,

I'm a bereaved parent, mother of Billy, and author of an inspirational memoir, *When Bluebirds Fly*. I was an active member of TCF of Golden Valley, MN, and often refer, in positive light, to the organization throughout my book.

To date, my book is an award-winning finalist in 5 book awards (International, national and Midwest) and it has been approved by the Association of Death Education Counselors, the American Institute of Health Care Professional, and the Minnesota Coalition of Death Education Counselors.

This is very exciting for me, but my greatest rewards come from the emails I receive from bereaved parents throughout the country. These readers have stated that I have put into words what they cannot--that I am speaking for them. (you could also check out the Amazon.com 13 five-star reviews)

My book has been approved by the Centering Group to be sold at TCF and ADEC (Am. Death Ed. Counselors) National Conventions this summer and I have purchased an ad for the summer edition of the WNNWA this year. (I did last year as well)

I, sadly, have just discovered that your newsletter reprinted a review of my book by Richard Berman of the Bereaved Parents of the USA in the Oct. 2013 Newsletter. He claimed my book does not reference a specific statistic, when in fact it does in the reference section at the back of the book (US Dept. of Commerce. Statistical Abstract 63). Although, this statistic may not be accurate today, it was true at the time I wrote the book in 1991. Because he made it sound as if I was misleading my readers, I asked Mr. Berman if he would reconsider correcting his mistake, but he did not respond.

I would love to send you a complimentary copy of *When Bluebirds Fly*, and invite you, or another TCF member, to reach your own opinion about this book which has helped so many.

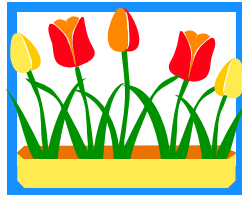
Thank you for your time, Vicki, and the wonderful work you do for so many.

Blessings,
JoAnn Deveny

Whenbluebirdsfly.com

I received the following email in response to a review

SPRING; HOPE OR MORE PAIN



Margaret Gerner
BP/USA – St. Louis, MO

Here it comes! Spring! Flowers blooming, weather warming, the cold of winter is behind us. We're coming up out of our pain. Right? Wrong!

My six-year-old son, Arthur, was killed by an automobile on Friday, May 28, 1971. The Easter before was the last time we were together as a complete family. For years after, spring, and especially the Easter season, began, again, the realization that we were no longer a complete family, and never would be again. Each year brought a new year of pain.

When the first spring came after Arthur was killed, I thought I would be better. Buds popped out, and my sadness was deeper. Easter came, and my pain was no less. The temperature rose, but the coldness in my heart never left.

Many more springs came – and none of them brought the relief I prayed for. For me, the hope and renewal that was supposed to be a part of spring was a lie.

Ironically though, the beginning of the resolution of my grief began in the spring of 1978. My grief, which by this time had become prolonged and distorted, created a number of other problems in my life. Among them was the deterioration of my marriage.

We began seeing a marriage counselor. I couldn't believe it when he told me that it was not only acceptable, but necessary, to face Arthur's death and talk about the pain and emotions I had been encouraged to suppress all these years.

Mine is a long story of struggle and determination, of steps and missteps and pain and sadness and loss. But it's also a long story of change and growth. The beginning of the resolution of my grief may have started then, but it didn't all happen in spring. It took place over many seasons.

Various seasons are significant for all of us. The Christmas holidays may be significant for you. The middle of June may be significant for someone else. A colorful fall may be significant for another. But, for some reason, we are led to believe that spring will bring a lessening of our pain. This is not true. Spring is simply a time of year. It's a date. It's a season. It's symbolic. But, spring is not magic.

Yes, it holds promises, but those promises are only brought to fruition when we work at them. Spring can be the impetus for change. The changes that take place in nature can cause us to do what we need to do to resolve our grief. The beauty of spring can be the factor that encourages us to find beauty in our lives again. Yes, we see growth and change and renewal all around us in spring. But it won't happen for us unless we make it happen.

In early grief, we hardly see spring come. We are so immersed in our pain and desolation that it is hard to see anything. Just as winter comes before spring, dark, painful grief work comes before we begin to see the light of comfortable life again. Don't expect to sidestep the healthy, albeit painful, normal, and long process of grief. Don't endow a season with magic to make changes in you.

Hard, painful grief work is what will get you to the other side of your child's death, not a date on the calendar.

Borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER NEWSLETTER
OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA VOLUME VII
NO. 2, SPRING 2002
(April, May and June)

*Those we love remain with us,
for love itself lives on,
And cherished memories never fade
because a loved one's gone.....*

*Those we love can never be
more than a thought apart,
For as long as there is memory,
they'll live on in the heart.*

*In Memory of Melvin Shannon
2/23/56 - 6/30/00*



We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always welcome. Please include author of any written works. Send your items for the newsletter to Vicki Szech at vszech@comcast.net or 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Libertyville, IL 60048.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive

TCF National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 3696 - PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246

Regional Coordinator, Mary Seibert PH: 815-468-6443 nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

There are seven TCF Internet chat sessions weekly. To participate, visit the TCF home page and select the "Chat" button.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Toni Nesheim 847-223-7353 tonin@sbcglobal.net Rachel Salomonson Age 18 – Auto accident

TREASURER Forest Anderson 847-838-0567 forest.anderson@att.net Rusty Anderson Age 15 – Osteosarcoma

SECRETARY Jenny & Rick Selle 847-249-4776 jennyselle@yahoo.com Lila Ruffolo Age 24 – Auto Accident

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Thelma Perkins 262-279-6178 Andrew C Perkins Age 17 – Auto Accident

LIBRARIAN Kathleen Rettinger 847-922-7456 Alexander Rettinger Age 18 – Of suicide

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Vicki Szech 847-573-1055 vszech@comcast.net Rachel Szech Age 16 – Horseback-riding Accident

NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING Mary Foresta 847-986-4133 Elizabeth Foresta Age 11 – Septic Shock, Heart/Lung failure

PUBLICITY Kari McHugh 262-862-6880 ksmchugh@hotmail.com Pressley McHugh Age 46 days Hypoplastic left heart syndrome

STEERING COMMITTEE Marilyn Grace 847-395-8597 grace.marilyn@gmail.com Megan Grace Age 15 – Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Mary Ann Grazier 847-336-0539 Barry Grazier Age 27 – Auto Accident

Maggie McGaughey 224-406-6644 maggieg00@hotmail.com Jeremy Govekar Age 22 – Hit by train

Charon Sloop 847-623-2264 charronsloop@AOL.com David Sloop Age 33 – Motor Cycles accident

LOVE GIFTS

Enclosed in a check in the amount of _____ to be used as follows (check all that apply):

In loving memory of _____

In honor of _____

Sponsor the newsletter for _____ (month) (\$25 pays ½ monthly cost)

Pay for a book for the chapter's Lending Library _____

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter _____

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be included in the "special days" list each month in the newsletter, you must fill out this form that gives us permission to list this information. If you are making a donation please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends**. Return to Vicki Szech, 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Green Oaks, IL 60048 or call 847-573-1055 or send an email to vszech@comcast.net.