



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

April, 2016 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Toni

A CAPE OF MANY COLORS

Grief is surprising physical. It can alter your gait, your posture, your skin, the brightness of your eyes and the quickness of your movements. It can cause overwhelming fatigue, shortness of breath, weight change and a general feeling of prolonged malaise. It is very real to the bereaved and difficult to explain to people who have never experienced the deep grief of losing a child or a sibling.

Early in my grief, I tried to explain it to people, that overall, I felt like I was wearing a heavy, lead cape, like the ones the dentist puts over you when you have an xray. I explained that it was black and very heavy and I felt the weight of it constantly. I would feel it as I went to bed and felt it instantly when I awoke. There was no relief or escape from the heavy, lead cape for a very long time.

Today, the weight of my heavy, black cape is much lighter. Borrowing from Dolly Parton's song, "A Coat of Many Colors", I can say that parts of my cape have been replaced with lighter and more colorful pieces of cloth. I look at the cape, my grief journey of the last ten years, and see many positive things, each one represented as a different color patch on my perpetual cape.

The color change came slowly, in stops and starts, not in one smooth transition. Life is not smooth and neither is grief.

The patches of color on my cape of grief include one for my surviving son who has grown into a responsible man and father, who cares for his bereaved parents and one for each of my three grandsons. There is a patch for the therapist who helped me through my worst few years as well the many

friends who stepped forward in our darkest hour. There is a patch for planting flowers and watching birds in the yard as it lightens my heart. Another patch of color is for Minnesota State University, Mankato and the annual art scholarship given in Rachel's name. Many colorful patches represent what I have learned about myself over the past ten years. Other patches show how I have learned perspective and priority about problems that others still feel are insurmountable when they are not. There is a patch for the fears that I have shed as I have already experienced the worst that life has to throw at me and I have survived.

There is a large patch of color for The Compassionate Friends, an organization and group of people, who have helped me, in channeling my grief into something positive. The Compassionate Friends has allowed me a safe place to talk about my grief for my daughter, sister and brother - all who passed before their time. I've been able to tell my story and discuss my feelings with people who truly understand and wear similar capes of grief. Talking about our grief and loved ones is healing to all of our hearts.

Today, I am not as burdened with the weight of my cape of grief. It is definitely there and some days are more difficult to wear it than other days, but I am now hopeful. Hopeful, that as I show the colors of my cape, I can help someone else struggling on their grief journey. I am hopeful that the weight of grief will continue to lighten over the coming years for all bereaved parents and siblings and grandparents.

**"And in that moment I swore
that nothing in this universe
could be so heavy as the absence
of the person you love."**

- Beau Taplin



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.

Thank you to Ron & Sue Bycznski
for their donation
in loving memory of
Megan Candace Grace
Birthday February 24*

Thank you to Julia Markich
for her donation
in loving memory of her daughter
Kathy Markich Mazur
Sister of Mary, Helen, John, Andrew, & Michael
Birthday April 9

Thank you to Nancy Ervin
for her donation
in loving memory of her son
Rob Petit

*We apologize for the lateness of this notice but Bycznski's generous donation was forwarded to Texas and then finally to our treasurer in Winthrop Harbor.

"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.

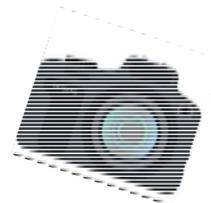


The Compassionate Friends' 39th Annual National Conference is coming to Scottsdale, Arizona on July 8-10, 2016. The Conference will be held at The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess at 7575 East Princess Drive Scotts-

dale, AZ, 85255. Room reservations will open on January 4th, and the room rate will be \$129.00 per night. Please note that each attendee will only be able to reserve two rooms. If your group needs to reserve a larger block of rooms, please contact the National Office to make arrangements for your reservations. Conference registration will open on February 1, 2016.

Please visit www.compassionatefriends.org for more information.

Our Family Portrait



Having our family portrait taken now is a bittersweet experience. We are proud of our family, especially of our new baby son. But you see only three of us in the picture, and we are a family of four. Our first son, you never see, but he is there with us in our hearts. The camera only takes a picture of what it sees.

It cannot see our absent son, or the love we have for him, or our memories, our pain, our longing. I wish the camera could take a portrait of the heart, then other people would see Jonathon Andrew there. You only see one precious son; we always see two.

Lou Ann Tennant - Share Newsletter

Meetings

Northern Illinois Chapter TCF
April - 21 - 7:30 p.m.
Millburn Congregational Church
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL
Open discussion

Waukegan meeting
May 5 - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL
Meeting in Room 4
Open discussion
Enter by church office then down the hall to Room 4 on right.

"Tenemos un cuarto nuevo para las reuniones- Salon 4. Entre por la oficina de la iglesia y sigue en el pasillo al Salon 4.



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. 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

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</i>	April 2	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<i>Michael Sean Gaede</i>	April 8	Son of Maureen Gaede
<i>Mike Reardon</i>	April 10	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	April 11	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
<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>Rachel Salomonson</i>	May 2	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
<i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i>	May 3	Daughter of Alana Anderson
<i>Amanda Lauren Cecchi</i>	May 5	Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	May 9	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
<i>Rob Petit</i>	May 15	Son of Nancy Ervin
<i>Rachel Elaine Robertson</i>	May 21	Daughter of Regan Robertson
<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>José De Jesús Hernández</i>	April 1	Son of Jesús & Virginia Hernández
<i>Ryder Erickson</i>	April 3	Son of Jenny Erickson Grandson of Pam & Mike Corrigan
<i>Selene Martínez</i>	April 8	Daughter of Manuel & Lidia Martínez
<i>Kathy Mazur</i>	April 9	Daughter of Julia Markich Sister of Mary Lund
<i>Mathew Tisch</i>	April 10	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	April 13	Son of Millie Yu
<i>Shannon McCarty</i>	April 18	Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hays
<i>David Nesheim</i>	April 24	Brother of Toni Nesheim
<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>Josh Summers</i>	May 3	Son of Tina Carlson Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Roger Alan Segebarth</i>	May 6	Son of 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



SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY . . . WHY AM I CRYING?

This is a question that comes up every spring, particularly from the more newly bereaved. It is something we have always looked forward to, before tragedy hit. The cold, drab, bleak winter is finally over. Somehow, we thought that magical time would be the magic that would free us from our pain. Unfortunately, not so! Perhaps it is because we see this beauty unfolding, and our children are not here to share it. The devastating knowledge is that "magic" of spring didn't change our feelings. The fact the world seems to go on, just as if nothing has happened, when our world seems to have stopped; seems impossible to comprehend. False expectations. What we tend to forget is that seasons change; where we are in our grief cycle is what controls our feelings.

Just hold on to the fact that spring is a rebirth of what seems dead, as dead as you feel now. It is true, you will never stop missing your son or daughter; however, hold on to the hope and belief that your spring will come again, too. When it does, it will be different. Just as the trees and flowers are not the same, you won't be either. But their beauty is still there, and as you start to come back to life again, you will enjoy different joys in life. We all run on a different calendar, so no time frame can be put on your spring. Just know that your feelings are perfectly normal. It may seem that you are back at square one, but look back, remember what it was like in the beginning, and I think you will realize there has been progress, and there will be more.

□-Mary Ehmann TCF/Valley Forge, PA

Not A Matter of Choice

Our son Keith was 29 years old when he decided to end his life. Keith's death was a suicide. Suicide is a frightening word and it is not only ignorance but fear and stigma that keep people from understanding why someone would take their life. In a way it is easier to think that a person made a "choice", freeing us from knowing the truth.

The word "choice", continues to perpetuate the stigma of suicide. The definition of "choice" is "the freedom in choosing, both in the way one chooses and in the number of possibilities from which to choose." In a pre-suicidal state an individual is overwhelmed in a given situation. They suffer extreme mental anguish and a

painful sense of hopelessness. Their sense of judgment is distorted, and they do not have the ability to make "choices" or options. They literally want to kill the pain and not themselves.

Suicidal people may be unable to restrain themselves from acting on feelings or impulses. This strong impulse to end the pain is because of the depletion of the chemical called serotonin. Serotonin is a chemical within the brain that helps restrain impulsive behavior.

"There is no suffering greater than that which drives people to suicide, suicide defines the moment in which mental pain exceeds the human capacity to bear it. It represents the abandonment of hope." John T. Maltsberger, M.D., past president of the American Association of Suicidology, practicing psychiatrist, and teacher at Harvard Medical School.

Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in the USA and the second leading cause of death for those ages 25-34. About 30,000 of the 650,000 Americans who attempt suicide each year die. Suicide is almost always the result of an illness of the brain, depression.

Our son Keith, died by suicide, and we can only imagine the horrible mental torture he endured. Depression is one of the most terrible and pervasive illnesses of our day. In 1999 the Surgeon General of the United States listed suicide as a national public crisis. Having accurate information about depression is critical. We live in a world where people hang on to old stereotypes, and in order to stop future loss of lives by suicide, we must educate and not let these stereotypes to persist.

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Published:

"Obelisk", The Catholic Charities, Chicago, Illinois, November 2001

"News and Views" NAMI, Cleveland, Ohio, November-December 2001, p.14

"News Briefs" Vol. 20, No. 1, NAMI Ohio, Columbus, Ohio, Winter 2002, p.22

MOTHER'S DAY

Another Mother's Day!
 But a different one this year.
 For you see, I am a mother,
 but my child isn't here.
 I am a mother who is hurting
 for this child who was so dear,
 as I face this and other occasions,
 each and every year.
 I am a mother who feels an emptiness
 over and over again,
 because I miss THIS child
 and all that could have been.
 I am a mother who cared
 as I watched my child grow,
 and truly loved her more
 than anyone will ever know.
 I am a mother who has memories
 and many tears to cry
 over regrets I'll have to live with
 until the day I die.
 I am a mother who is thankful
 for the miracle of birth,
 and all my child has taught me
 about life and my own self-worth.
 I just can't stop being a mother
 just because my child isn't here,
 because the love we had for each other
 will continue for years and years.
 And so...
 On this special "Mother's" Day,
 I will feel pride, love and joy
 which are the parts
 that make me: who I am,
 and what I'll always be - A MOTHER
 just remember that - please?
 By Judy A .

(From HOPE LINE, a newsletter published by
 HOPE FOR BEREAVED, Syracuse, NY

To the Newly Bereaved:

The newly bereaved do not know, and can't believe, that there can be a positive future that includes the love we carry for the children we have lost. This is why we meet, cry scream and hug each other. With time, good things will creep into our lives when we least expect them.

Being with other parents, grandparents, and siblings who understand our grief helps us to find our future lives. There is a future for all of us that includes carrying the love for our children forever as we gradually open to our positive future.

We will never stop loving or missing our children. However, with many small steps over time we can "Integrate a Positive Future With Our Loss". This is our hope. It happens.

--Allen Roth TCF Olympia, WA



Slipping Up the Slide

Did you ever try to climb up a slide when you were a child? Skip the stairs – once you've mastered the slide that way, it seems impossible to pass up the challenge of climbing up the slide itself. Up and inch or two, then back, and on it goes until you finally reach the top.

The more bereaved parents I talk to, the more I know that life after a child's death is like that venture up the slide. Daily decisions and trials push us back ward on that slide. Faith and courage shove us up toward the top. Set a goal to live and work with spirit even though you lose your footing and slide backwards now and then...We will reach the top – TOGETHER.

Mary Pauley, LaGrange, GA. TCF

To Lose a Child

Tears without end
 Days without nights
 Night without day
 Time without forgetting
 Food without taste
 Sleep without rest
 Sorrow without comfort
 Pain without limit
 Emptiness without bottom
 Life without.

—Susan Tawil, TCF Racine, WI



Memorial Day Then and Now

Isn't it strange that in all the decades of my life, that I didn't really think much about Memorial Day until my sweet Nina died? That first Memorial Day was about 2 1/2 weeks after her death. She is buried in a very old cemetery with much history. I drove into that cemetery that Memorial Day and saw all the flags (about 170 of them I think) at each veteran's grave and I paused for the first time in at least three decades and really thought about the meaning of that day.

Last year, while at the TCF National Conference in Chicago, I spoke with one of the bereaved couples that also were attending the conference. The man was telling me about his duty in World War II, and how he survived for days in the ocean after their ship had been bombed, watched as many of his shipmates died, yet somehow he survived. I thought about how that must feel to have survived against all odds, but then decades later lose your own precious child. Who can understand? A lovely lady I met while in Chicago, Jackie, walked in our on conversation. With tears in her eyes, she said to this man, "Thank you so much for our freedom." That really struck me. How I, and I am sure many others, have just taken the freedom we enjoy every day for granted.

I watched "Saving Private Ryan" and that first half hour depicted the horror of the invasion of Normandy during WWII and all the lives lost. In that movie, a mother has been told that all three of her son's have perished in the War. I wonder if I hadn't lost a child if I would have felt the same gut-wrenching pain and sorrow as I did when watching that fictitious mother sink to her knees when told of her son's deaths. It affected me for days afterward.

Classmates of mine were killed in the Vietnam War. I remember being very sad about it, but I don't remember I thought much about it beyond that, about what they had sacrificed their lives for. It was all so far away from home...But now when Memorial Day comes along each year, I remember the mothers and fathers of the soldiers who died for our country, and my heart aches for them. I would like to say to anyone who might be reading this today, who served our country in 'Vietnam, Korea, Desert Storm, World War II, or anywhere else in this troubled world, just as Jackie did last summer, "Thank you so much for our freedom."

God bless every one of you.
 Cathy Seehuetter, Nina's mom forever
 St. Paul, MN TCF

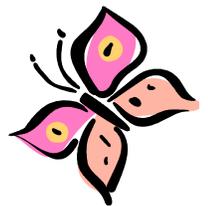
On Butterfly Wings

From earth's caterpillars to heaven's butterflies -
 They soar with the angels from the earth to the sky.
 Their wings seem so fragile, translucent and light -
 But they transfuse our world giving us strength in our night.

In silence they appear like messengers of love,
 Bringing hope and comfort from heaven above.
 These beautiful butterflies so graceful in flight,
 Transport us from darkness to color and light.

So when choosing a symbol to help grieving parents cope,
 What more than a butterfly could best symbolize hope.
 Our hearts stand in awe and hope from within us springs.
 As our hearts take flight - On Butterfly Wings.

By Faye McCord, (TCF Chapter Leader /
 Jackson, MS)
 In loving memory of my son, Lane McCord
 (1/26/65 - 9/13/98)



WHO WAS THAT PERSON?

An eight year retrospective....

By Rich Edler

Who was that person? He looked like me. He talked like me. But I don't think I know him anymore.

Who was that person? He had so many friends. He was popular at cocktail parties and told good jokes. Today, he seeks out one person he can really talk to and that is enough. His telephone Rolodex is a lot smaller, but so much more important.

Who was that person? He had such different priorities. He skated over life, like an ice skater on a frozen pond. He never thought about how cold the water was. Now he has a totally new perspective on the world. He reaches out to people who hurt because he knows how they feel. He has been there. He has felt the ice water.

Who was that person? He had an orderly chronological sense of time. Now the world is divided forever into simply "before" and "after".

Who was that person? He used to rush through dinner or cut the family vacation short to get back to the office. Now he thinks back to the family times as the most wonderful times of his life. He knows what is irreplaceable.

Who was that person? He used to worry about so many imaginary troubles, most of which never happened anyway. Now he spends most of his time in the present. He appreciates today's sunset, daisies, simple things and good friends. He knows how precious each moment is.

Who was that person? He used to think about what he wanted to get out of life. Now he thinks about how grateful he is for the gifts he has had.

Who was that person? He used to measure his goals in terms of where he is going. Now he focuses more on what his life will have been about. He asks less and less why his child died, and more often: "Why did he live?"

Who was that person? He had never heard of The Compassionate Friends. Now they are his best friends. And he knows that by helping someone else through TCF, he also helps himself.

Who was that person? I don't think I know him anymore. Rich and his wife Kitty are founding members of the South Bay/LA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. Son Mark died in 1992 and Rich's

first book "If I Knew Then What I Know Now" is dedicated to him. His following book, "Into the Valley and Out Again" is the story of a father's grief after the loss of his son and the changes in priorities and approaches to life that follow." Rich served on TCF's National Board of Directors for several years including as president of the board. He died in February of 2002. Kitty is the current president of TCF's National Board of Directors.

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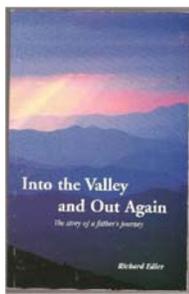
THE SHARING OF GRIEF

I cannot carry this burden alone,
the road is too steep and the pain too great.
I shall only get to the top of the hill
if I am able to lean on a firm shoulder whose
strength lies in the reality
of the feet which bear its weight.

The sharing of grief is the only solution to the crisis that surrounds bereavement in our age. To share a person's sorrow is to accept their reality and to acknowledge the fact that none of us is immune from death.

Rev Dr Simon Stephens, Founder of The Compassionate Friends

*There is a place that we call memory...
A province by itself which, though unseen,
is home and haven to the heart...
And there, in peace and beauty, waiting,
are those with whom we shared our yesterdays.
Nancy Cassell, TCF/Monmouth County, NJ*



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.

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always appreciated. 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

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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 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net Rachel Salomonson Age 19 – Auto accident

TREASURER Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 julyson2@gmail.com Aaron Barrera Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

SECRETARY OPEN – PLEASE VOLUNTEER

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

OUTREACH/INFORMATION Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 julyson2@gmail.com Aaron Barrera, age 29 - insulin reaction subsequent auto accident

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

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

Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com,

Raphael, age 17, suicide

