



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

April 2021 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear Friends,

A few items to share: We have formed a new Steering Committee for our Chapter. We will have our first meeting this month. We will update chapter information in the May newsletter. Your attention please; 1 - We will have a date for the spring Adopt A Highway Clean-up. 2 - We will present a form to update our members' information and 3 - Possible starting dates to meet in-person at our Millburn Church and Holy Family Church in Waukegan.

April, this month has many meanings for me; it tells me spring is coming, the perennials are spouting, I see new buds on the trees and the weather is warming. Yet this is the month 4 years ago that my son, Westley, died. April 19, 2017. It is also the month my daughter, Marlllys, was born - April 29, 1998. I just really don't know what to do with all my thoughts and emotions. I go on many walks alone, sometimes I walk with a dear friend and on the weekends, I walk with my sister, Michell. I always walk by the horse stables near my house.

During the winter months the horses are rarely outside. But come the warmer weather, the horses are out in the fenced yards. There is a group of mismatched horses that

are placed in the largest corral to graze and move around. I will approach the fence and they come over to me and I can pet them and it's amazing. One time, the very tall blond/yellow horse came over to me and rested her head on my shoulder and I stroked her neck and we quietly rested together. I try to carry that calm emotion with me as I go about my daily routine. I'm not always successful, but I try. I tell myself - you're going to be ok, and it's ok to feel sorrow.

I wish each of you the happiness of the season and that you may find peace with the season changing; the sunshine, the birds and the opportunity to enjoy the out of doors, however you may do this.

Take care,
Serving in honor and memory of her son,
Westley.

Susan Banks

***There's no tragedy in life
like the death of a child.
Things never get back to
the way they were.***

i *by Dwight D.
Eisenhower*



GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the passionate 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.

"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.

(Our Children, Grandchildren, and Siblings Loved, Missed and Remembered in April and May)

Jeff Wagner

May 9

Son of Mary Wagner

Amanda Lauren Cecchi

May 10

Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi

Alina Mejdouli

May 12

Daughter of Amada Booras

Timothy James Pitzen

May 13

Missing grandson of Alana Anderson

Amy Fry-Pitzen

May 14

Daughter of Alana Anderson

Anthoney (Tony) Clemente

May 16

Son of Becky Wolf

Adam Michael Laufer

May 19

Son of Charles & Diana Laufer

Roman Gabriel Cano

May 21

Son of Simona & Daniel Rhodes

Rusty Anderson

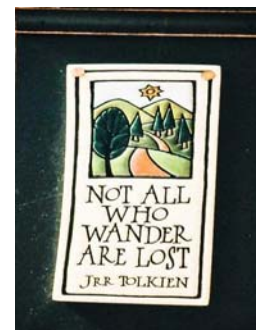
May 30

Son of Forest & Christine Anderson

Embracing Who We Are Now...

After Loss

Still Standing Magazine



One of the most shocking realizations, after losing a child, is the jarring reality of feeling uncomfortable in your own skin. Nothing seems to make sense, or even feel familiar. As if it isn't enough to lose what is most sacred and precious to us, we lose ourselves in the process. Activities or thoughts that once brought us joy don't seem to matter anymore. Nothing is the same. Our relationships with those around us change. Things taste different, smell different, feel differently...or don't feel at all, as a blanket of numbness settles over us, turning the world gray for a time. At first, there is shock and pain, and waves of grief. Then, the world turns gray.

At *Sufficient Grace Ministries*, so many mothers ask us, will I ever feel normal again? It was the only time I called a support group leader during my own grief walk, the desperate moment I needed to hear words spoken from a mother who had walked through this wilderness, reassuring that...

"Yes, life was different. I was different. But, someday, I would feel normal again...a new normal."

A new normal...what is that? And, how long until I get there? And, will I be lost forever? Will I lose me too? And, do I even care?

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**OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED
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>	<i>April 2</i>	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<i>Michael Sean Gaede</i>	<i>April 8</i>	Son of Maureen Gaede
<i>Mike Reardon</i>	<i>April 10</i>	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	<i>April 11</i>	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
<i>Qua'Shawn Wade</i>	<i>April 12</i>	Son of June Andrejewski
<i>Alyssa Carranza</i>	<i>April 15</i>	Daughter of Luz Barrera Granddaughter of Angel & Raquel Gasco
<i>Adrien Gonzales</i>	<i>April 21</i>	Son of Lauren Gonzales
<i>Jammi Hui</i>	<i>April 25</i>	Daughter of William & Joyce Hui
<i>Sean Jones</i>	<i>April 26</i>	Son of Octavine Jones
<i>Timothy Reece</i>	<i>April 27</i>	Son of Joanne Pihoda-Reece
<i>Erin Dinklenburg</i>	<i>May 1</i>	Daughter of Kelli Brooks
<i>Rachel Salomonson</i>	<i>May 2</i>	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
<i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i>	<i>May 3</i>	Daughter of Alana Anderson
<i>John Francis Thumel</i>	<i>May 6</i>	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	<i>May 9</i>	Daughter of Vicki Szech Brother of Andrew Szech
<i>Rachel Elaine Robertson</i>	<i>May 21</i>	Daughter of Regan Robertson
<i>Sven Christian Reinhard</i>	<i>May 28</i>	Son of Astrid Reinhard
<i>Tony Trevithick</i>	<i>May 28</i>	Son of Tony Trevithick Jr.
<i>Adam Michael Laufer</i>	<i>May 30</i>	Son of Charles & Diana Laufer

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>José De Jesús Hernández</i>	<i>April 1</i>	Son of Jesús & Virginia Hernández
<i>Selene Martínez</i>	<i>April 8</i>	Daughter of Manuel & Lidia Martinez
<i>Mathew Tisch</i>	<i>April 10</i>	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
<i>Stephanie Andrea Zamarron</i>	<i>April 11</i>	Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungula Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriguez & Cédar Rojas
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	<i>April 13</i>	Son of Millie Yu
<i>Montana (Monti) Brown</i>	<i>April 16</i>	Son of Donna Brown
<i>Shannon McCarty</i>	<i>April 18</i>	Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hays
<i>Westley Banks</i>	<i>April 19</i>	Son of Susan Banks
<i>David Nesheim</i>	<i>April 24</i>	Brother of Toni Nesheim
<i>Lisa Rosemann</i>	<i>April 25</i>	Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann
<i>Griffin Schumow</i>	<i>April 26</i>	Son of Jeff & Krista Schumow
<i>Edward G Davis III</i>	<i>April 28</i>	Son of Edward G Davis Jr.
<i>Andrew Naydihor</i>	<i>April 29</i>	Son of Kelly Kozel
<i>Timothy Reece</i>	<i>April 29</i>	Son of JoAnn Pihoda-Reece
<i>Anne Thomson</i>	<i>April 30</i>	Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson
<i>Donette Klawonn</i>	<i>May 1</i>	Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
<i>Josh Summers</i>	<i>May 3</i>	Son of Tina Carlson Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Colin Henderson</i>	<i>May 6</i>	Son of Lisa Henderson

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5 WAYS NATURE HAS THE POWER TO HEAL A BROKEN SOUL

BY LOVE WIDE OPEN

When you get to the point that life starts to bring you down, nature can heal. Nature is a powerful tool that humans have become increasingly disconnected from over time. It has the power to heal a broken soul, to mend a broken heart, and probably most notable, has the power to bring you back to yourself.

When is the last time you took a long walk through the woods? The last time you admired the size of the trees, or traveled to the ocean to watch the waves crash upon the shore? Nature and all of its beauty is far more powerful than the individual person. Sometimes when we sit back and allow the power of nature to overcome us, we become aware of how it makes us feel. At that time, we realize our connectivity. We realize that what we are experiencing in nature is what makes up who we are.

We can connect with nature; we can let our problems go into the universe of chaos. We can let go of control, power, stress, negative feelings. We can let nature decide what to do with those things. Nature has the power to heal brokenness, it's true.

Here are 5 ways nature can become a healer for you too:

Relieves anxiety and daily stress: The way that nature can reduce anxiety and alleviate stress is actually quite physical. Studies show that when you are out in nature, getting fresh air, taking a stroll, it not only pulls you away from the daily

activities that cause you stress, but it also decreases blood pressure and increases the heart beating to a healthy level. All of which decreases stress and anxiety. It's science

Takes us out of daily routine: That brings us to our next category. Connecting with nature takes us out of our daily routine. It allows us to leave your cell phone and TVs behind for a moment along with the stress of work, home, or whatever else may be the cause of overstimulation in your life.

Puts life into perspective: When you were out in the vastness of nature, you realize how large the universe really is. You realize how small you are and how short your life is. It helps to put the trivialities of daily life into perspective. It helps you remember what's really important so you can let go of the things that are not.

Helps gain mental awareness: Being present in the beauty of the earth stimulates the brain. According to the website [Psychological Healthcare of Australia](#), "Spending time in nature actually has a physiological effect on the body, reducing blood pressure and the hormone cortisol, which is linked to stress. Being in beautiful outdoor surroundings acts as refreshment for the brain, which can also improve focus, creativity, and problem-solving abilities."

Gives you ample opportunity to let go: Nature is the best teacher of how to let go of negative emotions or things in the past that are tearing you down. Just watch the way the water flows. Watch the waves break on shore, how they wash away the sand and push it back renewed. People in emotions flow much the same way in the universe. When you are in nature and you feel amazing and you have complete mental clarity, it is the best time to let go of your troubles, to watch them be taken away by the waves along with the sand. In the end, nature gives us a place in the universe. Remember, your place although it may seem small is very special and it's yours. When you are broken, try going outside. Nature will know what to do for you.

Borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA, Spring 2020, Volume XXV, No.2



FILLING IN THE HOLES

Lisa Sculley, 1999 BP/USA St. Louis

Today my husband and I went to the plant nursery and bought some flowers and bedding plants to go in our gardens. Spring is here and the weather is beautiful. Not cold at all! But also, not so hot that the thought of puttering in the garden brings a groan of dismay.

I remember my first spring in this house. We were so excited. Our family was nearly complete. Our third son was on his way and we had just had a house built. We were at the plant nursery at least once a week. Our life was busy, bright, untainted by grief.

I remember our second spring in this house. How winter hung on, tenacious, unyielding, both outside and inside our hearts. I remember the first warm spring day, I came home from work early, determined to make SOMETHING grow in my life. Maybe I couldn't get my son to live, but I was going to make something live.

Grief was a raw, open wound then and my anger was deep. I was angry at the world, at God, at everything. And so, I approached my yard, shovel in hand. I decided I had to have a garden in the middle of my yard. I began furiously digging out the grass, making an oval in the center. It took me hours digging out that oval. But I wasn't through. I

then decided I wanted a garden right by my doorway, so I dug out that area too. And then I made big holes and tore out all the roots and stones and other junk.

I made big holes in my yard that day. And in the weeks to come I did fill them with things. Funny thing, as I dug those holes and pulled on the grass, my anger drained away. My salty tears mixed with the sweat of exercise and the dirt and ran off my arms undetected to the outside world. Digging those holes provided an outlet for my anger and my hurt.

Today, I dug some more holes. But this time, my holes were smaller ... and I filled them with small delicate flowers, purple and white. I put bulbs in the ground too, filling other small holes. And I reflected back on another hole. The hole in my heart. No, I can't ever fill it with what "should" be there - my son "should" be almost seven now, full of energy and wanting to plant flowers with Mom. But I have filled that hole with other things ... with love and healing and memories - and with the lessons and the gifts my son gave me. I never saw those gifts that Spring as I was digging out holes in my yard. And, though I would rather have that hole filled with my son's presence, I am grateful for the gifts he gave - and so I will go on, filling holes.

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Like Springtime, let me unfold and grow fresh and anew from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me. Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter of my grief. Life has dared to go on around me and, as I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I adjust my focus to include healing and growth as possibility in my future. Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief, but may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss. ~

Janis Hiel



The Compassionate Friends 2021 Virtual National Conference July 16 – 18, 2021

Dear Compassionate Friends,

The Compassionate Friends' 2021 National Conference was scheduled to be held in Detroit, Michigan this July. We have been actively watching national developments and considering the many issues that are involved for determining how to proceed. As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to have strict restrictions for large gatherings, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the in-person conference in Detroit. We recognize how disappointing this may be to many people in our TCF family as it is to all of us on our staff and board of directors. A lot of thought and consideration was given to this decision, and a number of factors were evaluated before making a final determination.

For those who look to our national conference each year for the important community and connection it provides, a gathering in person this year could not resemble what we have known and hold dear. Though we cannot gather in person for the conference this year, please mark your calendars for July 16 – 18, 2021, for The Compassionate Friends Virtual National Conference. More details will be announced soon about plans for the virtual conference. We will continue to walk this path together, so that We Need Not Walk Alone.

Warm regards, Roy Davies - **Board President**
on behalf of the **Board of Directors** *Roy and Taylor's Dad*

Shari O'Loughlin, MBA, CPC. **CEO - The Compassionate Friends** *Connor's Mom and Patti's Sister*

(Embracing Who We Are Now... After Loss continued from page 2)

Those are the natural wonderings through season of grief I like to call "stumbling through the wilderness awhile".

Finding your way on a path no one would ever ask for, discovering someone you've never known is now wearing your skin...well, it takes some time, and grace, and grit. There is a temptation to just slip away, to live in the depths of the pit of despair, ignoring the light...because sometimes, only the darkness feels real...normal. For a time, it seems as if we have to cling to the sorrow for comfort, as if letting go of it for a moment means we've forgotten. Or without it, we may feel nothing at all. That revelation is frightening, especially when you don't know who you are anymore.



There seem to be seasons in our grief walk, when at first, we want to be surrounded by people who understand our loss, people who are walking with us in this wilderness. We long to hear something that resonates, something that makes sense to our new, broken selves. We may emerge from that season longing for a purpose...some beauty to be born from our pain. We may even pour ourselves into seeking a purpose...pouring out all our grief...and all our desperation to birth something beautiful and lasting...to mother something tangible this side of heaven. That season may or may not remain, becoming part of our new life.

Sometimes, it is a passing season. And that's ok.

We are often hesitant when the next season ebbs and flows into our lives, as the sea of grief does so well. The next season that I've experienced and watched many mothers ponder through, is the desire to live life in the land of the living again...in our new skin. To explore

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(Embracing Who We Are Now... After Loss continued from page 2)

who we are now. And, maybe even to walk away from the heaviness of being surrounded by loss each day. It is a difficult tearing away, as we've found some peace and hope and comfort in this unlikely camaraderie...walking with others who limp in the brokenness. **We love these women like family...and we are used to the heavy cloak of sorrow.** What will life look like if we step away from the haven? Are we forgetting our babies? Forsaking our dear friends? Moving on? Letting go? As if we are somehow betraying our babies, ourselves, our bereaved sisters to just want to learn to live again.

No. While we will heal and joy will be restored in our lives, we are forever changed. Our very personality may even change. We will never get over losing our children. Not that we wallow in grief forever. Not that we will not be fully healed and complete. We will, but we will have a missing place in our hearts until we reach heaven's welcoming gates. A place where a much loved, dearly cherished, longed for and dreamed about life once lived. Now that life lives on in heaven... the place that we are homesick for, at times. **Our children will forever be part of the tapestry of our lives...they are part of who we are.** Please understand that. We can no more deny them than we could our children who walk this earth with us.

So, we tentatively tiptoe back into a life reshaped, redefined, forever changed. It is frightening, and quite honestly at times, exhilarating...learning to live and love and breathe and notice the world around us again through changed eyes...as if seeing for the first time. And even filled with precious gifts...or it can be, if we're brave enough to lean into the reshaping, to even one day...when the time is right...embrace the new pieces of us that emerge and form together into something of great beauty. Something tattered and worn with the battering of great loss and grief, polished around the rough places by disillusionment with everything we thought we could once rely on as truth.

Seventeen years after the loss of my identical twin daughters, Faith and Grace, and nearly 16 years after the loss of my newborn son, Thomas, I feel myself embracing a new reality again. As I walk with more and more families through loss, sup-

porting them as a birth and bereavement doula, walking beside them in the grief wilderness...I feel a new awakening in recent years. A rebellion of sorts...a rebellion of the molds we think we need to squeeze ourselves into as mothers...as women. A rebellion against the idea that grief and healing need to look a certain way. A grace rebellion, of sorts...as I see the incredible need for grace for ourselves...for others stumbling along with us...and even for those broken souls who do not understand us at all. In the course of these years, I've come to surrender some of my ideas of what life should like...first gasping for air in this tumultuous sea, then learning to swim, leaving the water for a while to sit on the beach, then returning with first tentative steps to throw a life raft to a new swimmer...then re-entering grief's sea, willingly to swim alongside another floundering soul. Sometimes even dancing for a while on top of the water...held by the One who covers with grace. Fiercely, rebelliously choosing to be there. **Fully, beautifully, with all the graceful abandon laid on my mother-heart, embracing the beautiful destiny of being the mother of not only my children on earth, but those who walk in heaven.**

That picture may look different for everyone. But this...this has been my journey to embracing life in this new skin. I believe it takes time to walk there a while in a wilderness but know this...there is a way...a time...a season when you will be free to hope again, to laugh without guilt, to feel something that isn't so gray as the world finds color again. When it happens, don't be afraid. Take some time to learn to dance there, to embrace your inner "grace rebel" and just be beautiful, amazing you. If I'm truly honest, I like this me better now than the me I thought I lost.

Borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the



USA, Winter 2019 Volume XXIV, No.1

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 Tammie Barrera, 821 Roberts Road, Winthrop Harbor, IL. 60096**

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always appreciated. Please include the 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 - 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI - 48393 PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246

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 Susan Banks 847-366-9375 lanwesmar@comcast.net - Westley Banks Age 21 – Of suicide

TREASURER/COMMUNITY OUTREACH Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 julyson2@gmail.com

Aaron Barrera Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

SECRETARY Bambi Nichols 262-220-9323 lcbtsec@aol.com Levi Nichols Age 19 - Accidental death

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY

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

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