



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

August 2023 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear friends

As I listened to your stories, I feel very blessed to be in the comfort of others who understand.

It's always so uplifting to listen to the stories of our children and to hear in your voices and see on your faces the pride and love you have for your child. Then, I hear in your voice and see on your face, the heartfelt sorrow of how much you truly miss your child. And I hope that in the stories that we share and as we listen to each other's memories of our children we can find peace and joy. Even if it's for a small period, just a moment of peace is healing.

Our meetings are for all of us; I hope to offer a place for you at our meetings, that is a safe place. We come to our meetings to share, to cry, to laugh, to offer support, to listen and to be in the company of those who understand. In the early months of coming to a meeting it seems most of the time is spent in tears, swallowed by sadness. It's ok to let the grief flow, learning your way as a person who has lost a loved one. I think the "learning your way" as a person who has lost a child will take a lifetime.

After a while, sometimes a long while, you begin to reach out to others and offer them hope listening to their story. For listening to another person sort out their life helps us to sort out our life too. I hope to offer a place for you at our meetings, we first introduce ourselves and tell our story, sometimes you can only listen and maybe try again later. We listen to each other, offer words of comfort and hope, share out pain instead of just feeling our pain. And hope that we may start to heal and find a place with this life that we now are living.

I appreciate our meetings and each of you, for your time, sharing your stories and the comfort and wisdom that you bring to our meetings. Wishing you a safe and pleasant August.

"What moves through us is a silence, a quiet sadness, a longing for one more day, one more word, one more touch, we may not understand why you left this earth so soon, or why you left before we were ready to say good-bye, but little by little we begin to remember not just that you died, but that you lived ~ no matter the length of time we had you with us. And that your life gave us memories too beautiful to forget." B J Karrer

Forever in our hearts and memories, we love you and we miss you forever.

Take care,

Susan

Westley's mom

Lake Villa Meeting Northern Illinois Chapter TCF

The third Thursday of the month meeting will remain as an in-person only meeting. The location is at the:

Millburn Congregational Church
19073 West Old Town Court
Lake Villa, IL 60046.

Park in the parking lot behind the church, enter through the double glass doors.

Holy Family Church

The first Thursday of the month meeting will remain a Zoom meeting only. This will change to in-person the date is to be announced.

Upcoming events for our Chapter.

Thursday September 21, 2023; *The HeART Remembers*. We will create art in memory of our loved ones.

Saturday October 7 Adopt a Highway Clean – up, rain date Saturday October 14.

Sunday December 10, 2023, Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony; The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. *More information will be shared to our members.*

If you have any questions about the mentioned events, please call, email, or text Susan at 847.366.9375 or Lanwesmar@comcast.net

Celebrating a Birthday

I wrote this letter to my son who would have had his 24th birthday on June 24, 2006. Adam died in September 2003 from a drug overdose. I know there are many people out there who share this similar situation. People hesitate to share when the death was a result of depression and drug abuse. I choose to share our story in hopes of reaching out to others who so desperately need to know that drugs can affect anyone. We loved Adam, we were there for him. Why he chose drugs? We don't know. It's not our fault and we are not ashamed. We love him and miss him more than words could begin to convey. Adam was a great kid until drugs turned him into someone we didn't know. We pray for peace each and every day.

Theresa Heitz, Ashburn, VA
theresaheitz@msn.com

June 24, 2006 - It's here. Your 24th birthday, the third birthday we've struggled without you. I tell people at our Compassionate Friends meetings that it is the hardest day of the year for me. It is. It's YOUR day, June 24, 1982, the day I became a mom. Becoming a mom... the greatest joy, and yet, the greatest pain.

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OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

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, if we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS

Lindsay Wilczynski	August 3	Daughter of Christine Pado
Jose Barrera	August 6	Son of Lorena Alcala & Orsy Barrera
Eder Alamilla	August 7	Son of Magda Alamilla
Andrew Perkins	August 12	Son of Richard & Thelma Perkins
Andrew Muno	August 18	Son of Darlene & Bart Muno
Kelsey Heaps	August 22	Son of Dawn Heaps Brother of Steven Heaps
Manuel Isaiah Garza	August 22	Son Of Vanessa & Roberto Grajeda
Lily Grace Kennedy	August 24	Daughter of Emily Kennedy
Ashley Seay	August 25	Daughter of Mike and Shannon Seay Granddaughter of Dennis & Georgene Manley
Nicole Parfitt	August 30	Daughter of Robin Parfitt
Chris Houchin	Sept. 3	Son of Scott Houchin & Heather McDonald
Shannon McCarty	Sept. 5	Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hayes
Mary Margaret (Maggie) Miles	Sept. 5	Daughter of Jim & Mary Lou Miles
Korey Hill	Sept. 6	Son of Deena Hill
Kevin Lopez	Sept. 13	Son of Diahnn Estes Lopez
Anthony Alexander Sosa	Sept. 16	Son of Yvette Sosa
Shane Betar	Sept. 21	Son of Leia Betar
José De Jesús Hernández	Sept. 24	Son of Jesús and Virginia Hernández
Donette Klawonn	Sept. 30	Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
Tony Trejo	Sept. 30	Son of Martina Williamson & Victor Trejo

ANNIVERSARIES

Lindsay Wilczynski	August 1	Daughter of Christine Pado
Adam Rubin	August 1	Son of Linda Rubin
Tony Trejo	August 1	Son of Marina Williamson Brother of Victor Trejo
Brian Keough	August 2	Son of Kathleen Keough
Jammi Shonlei Hui	August 5	Daughter of William & Joyce Hui
Pressley Suzanne McHugh	August 5	Daughter of Shawn & Kari McHugh
Sandra Elena Varela	August 5	Daughter of Sandra Prez
David Spannraft	August 12	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
Danielle Trevithick	August 12	Granddaughter of Tony Trevithick
Barry J Grazier	August 13	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
Nathan Clyde	August 17	Son of Valerie Clyde Sister of Michaela Clyde
Christain Romero	August 17	Son of Veronica Romero Carlos
Dylan Smith	August 19	Son of Melissa Smith
Raphael E Vidal	August 20	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
Ryan James Nichols	August 22	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
James (Jim) Grazier	August 24	Son of Mary Ann & Robert Grazier
Lily Grace Kennedy	August 24	Daughter of Emily Kennedy

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THREE DOORS

Pat Dickerman
Hacienda Heights, California

The first door was the death. It slammed shut, was locked and sealed. It separated me from my loved one. It was a heavy, cold steel door. I can never open it. It leaves me alone outside.

The second door swings open and beckons me to come inside. It leads to all my memories of our life together. At first, the door is wide open as I spend most of my time back inside reliving every precious moment – the sad memories, the bad memories and, thank goodness, the very special good memories.

Gradually I spend less time there but often I return to the second door. Sometimes I find myself spending a lot of time there. Sometimes I chuckle and leave, appreciative and happy for the experiences we shared. The second door will always remain slightly open. It will always be welcoming me back in time. The more I heal, the more I walk away from the second door and toward the third door.

The third door is stiff. It is hard to open. It opens slowly. It is scary inside when I

first open it but each time I try to open this door, it becomes easier to open. Inside, I find rays of hope. Beyond are many paths, many choices. As time passes, I feel more comfortable entering. Gradually, the third door opens

wider and I find myself able to explore all that is within. Soon the paths take me in many directions.

The third door opens to my new life.

To Be or Not to Be? (Miserable, that is)

Borrowed from TCFAtlantaSharing
<TCFAtlantaSharing@tcfatlanta.org>
August 1, 2007 6:17:25 PM CDT

We certainly had no choice about the matter when our child died. But as we live out the rest of our lives, we have a choice to be miserable or not be miserable. Early on in the grief process, it seemed normal and right to be miserable. It would almost seem disrespectful and wrong not to feel miserable in the early stages. It's been almost five years now since my daughter was killed, and I can certainly remember some dark days back then. But what about now? How should I be feeling now?

It seems to me that as a beginning point to answer this question, we should consider how our child would want us to feel. One way to answer this question is to ask ourselves how we would want our children to feel if we were the one who died. I think I could safely say that we would not want our child to be miserable the rest of her/his life. But we would want our child to remember us. And that is what I think our child would want us to

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(To Be or Not to Be? (Miserable, that is continued from page 4)

do-remember her or him the rest of our life. And how should we do that? One way certainly, is to bring forth those mental images of our child in various stages of life. In all honesty, some our memories will be pleasant and some may be unpleasant. We also remember our child by keeping pictures of her/him on display, and by keeping mementoes of her/his life. We can talk about our child to other people (although they may be uncomfortable with this). We can start scholarship funds in our child's name, make a financial gift to a local charity, use a "Random Act of Kindness" card along with a small financial gift to help someone, plant a tree, make a small garden spot in our yard.....the ways to remember our child with positive actions is almost limitless.

If you seem to be suffering unbearable misery, why not try taking a positive action in your child's memory and remember that your child would want you to have peace.

Written by David Haddock Clinton, Mississippi
In memory of Bonnie Catherine Haddock (02-06-1985 to 08-13-2002)

David.Haddock@mid.state.ms.us



Grief is Black; Healing is Color

by Rob Anderson

Coloring Easter eggs was always one of my favorite times. Boiling the eggs, setting out the glasses, adding the vinegar, plopping in the fizzy tablets and then slowly lowering (or sometimes dropping) the eggs into the colors bring back good memories with my kids. Every time we did it, one of them wanted to drop at least one egg (sometimes more) into all the colors. Are some of you flashing back to those fun times? As we

went from yellow to orange to blue to red to green to purple and into whatever else was left, and then back again, the egg took on a dark, ugly brownish, almost black color. If for some reason the egg cracked along the way and we peeled it later, the egg looked rotten. It was entertainment to them, it was disgusting to me.

When our kids were alive, they were our glasses filled with color. They were our fizzy tablets of fun. Their lives were vibrant and beautiful. We didn't pass them from glass to glass and change their color, we left them just as they were. You probably have a favorite color and maybe even associate a color with your child. Friends of mine have a son, Fabian (or "Fabulous Fabian" as we know him) who died as a little boy. Fabian is all about the color blue, so they celebrate his life with that color. On his birth and death days, I've sent them a blue crayon, blue paint samples from the hardware store and a string of blue paper clips. They're very appreciative of my simple gifts. It helps brighten their day and reminds them of their colorful, beautiful Fabulous Fabian.

As we all know, the instant we found out our kids had died, all the color drained from our lives. No more bright reds, pinks or yellows of our daughters. No more blues, greens or oranges of our sons. Instead, our lives filled with black.

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(Grief is Black; Healing in Color continued from page 5)

The black of death; the black of grief. Nothing shined anymore; there was no glitter or sparkle.

In the additive process of color in painting or printing inks, (or Easter egg coloring) black is the combination of all colors. So, when our kids died and their colors went away, they went into the blackness of our grief. They weren't chased away by our grief, they were consumed in it.



The colors of the lives of our kids can live inside our grief, but more importantly, they can live inside our healing. Every red, blue, orange, green, yellow, magenta and purple child who was created, still lives in those colors, but they can be buried in our grief. The question is, how do we break open our grief and release the colors of our children? How do we get to their colorful lives and bring them back to us? That's where grief work comes in. Or, as I call it, healing work. As we grieve, we heal, but if we don't do our work, it makes it much harder to heal. It's through our work that our colorful children can return; not in the way we want them to return, back in our arms, but in the best possible way we can let them return.

What can we do to rediscover the beauty and color of our children? The other day, I was talking with a group of fellow travelers and the discussion was about memories. For many, the memories really, really hurt because they associated those memories with a child who had died. That's suffering we all know when our kids die. Each memory is a painful reminder that our children will not be back to make more. Our child's life force or soul or spirit (whatever you may call it) also came up in the discussion. It's the child we think of when we put our heads on our pillows at

night. It's the feeling we get when we think about their energy, their aura and their wonderfulness.

We also talked about love. The newly bereaved added the "ed" on the end of the word. "I lovED my child so much." That's fine, that's what we all do in the beginning because the death of our child is an ending. They're gone, they're now part of the past. I did the same after my son, Brendon, died. "Brendon "was" my wonderful son. I loved him very much," is what I said, too. At that time I thought I would never again have him in my life in any way, shape or form. I now know differently.

As the discussion about death and grief continued, I threw this out, "It's impossible to have a memory of someone who never lived. We can't have fond remembrances of a child who was never created. Our memories are of the living, the colorful, beautiful living, not of the dead."

"Hmmm," I heard a few people say.

I went on. "It's called a 'life force' for a reason. There can't be a life force without a life, right? Our kids have created that wonderful feeling in us because of the beauty of their colorful lives. I've never heard of someone having a death force, only a life force."

"Hmmm," I heard a few more people say. I finished with, "We can't love what we've never known. We can't love someone who never lived, no matter how long or short

(Continued on page 7)

(Grief is Black; Healing in Color continued from page 6)

them?" And I realized after a time that that was. Our love is because of the lives of our kids. That's why it hurts so much, because we love them so much. We love their colorful lives and want them back.

"Hmmm," I heard the rest of them say.

As much as the deaths of our kids have crushed us and swallowed the color of their lives (and ours too), that color still lives within us through our memories, their life force and most importantly, our love. If we allow grief to keep our colorful children, then grief wins, and that's just not acceptable. We can't let the black of our grief swallow up their color. We must fight for them; fight for the lives of our children. If we do, we can once again live a joyful life of yellows, blues, greens, purples, oranges and all the other beautiful colors of our kids. When the colorful lives of our children re-enter our lives, we will smile a smile as big and broad and beautiful as theirs were.

~reprinted with permission from Grief Digest, Centering Corporation, Omaha, NE 866-218-0101 www.griefdigest.com



THE BROWN STAR STORY

Kim Steffgan from
 "When Hello Means Goodbye: A
 Guide For Parents Whose Child Dies
 Before Birth, At Birth, or Shortly After
 Birth"

Not long ago, astronauts found in the heavens gaseous celestial bodies – clouds

of cosmic dust – which they think have finally answered the mystery of what exists between the small things in the universe, like planets, and the bigger things, like the sun. They call this cosmic dust "brown dwarfs" or "prestars," because, although the brown dwarfs have all the same elements to become a star, for some reason they never did.

All stars go on to live full lives, from their hot, bright white dwarf stage to their ages, cooler and dimmer red giant stage. But "brown stars" only go so far. Instead of being born to live a normal star's life, they remain cool and dim, hiding in the heavens, sprinkled in clusters among the other stars, 150 light years from Earth.

But, like our babies, their role in the universe is very important. In fact, scientists believe they serve as a link between the small things and the big things, holding the universe together; a midpoint between the beginning and the ending of our universal story.

As we grieve our babies who died before reaching the stardom of their earthly lives, perhaps we can find comfort in the possibility that they were designated for this very special, universal role. Energized by our

(Continued on page 8)



*(Our Children Remembered
continued from page 3)*

Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton
Frederick
August 25
Son of Jan Frederick
Grandson of Sharon Frederick

James McClintock
August 28
Son of Charles & Louise Knoll

Brandon Reif Ward
August 30
Son of Marcy Reif

Justin Cody Ortega
August 31
Son of Susie Meggs

Brian Scott Ludlow
September 1
Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik

Donyel Prather
September 1
Son of Donna Prather

Levi Nichols
September 5
Son of Bambi Nichols

Brendan Hall
September 5
Son of Diane Arndt

Anthony Alexander Sosa
September 12
Son of Yvette Sosa

Marleea Gerfen
September 13
Daughter of Marsha & Lee Bell

Heidi Anne Herrmann
September 14
Daughter of Bonnie Brackus

Mike Curtis
September 17
Son of Sonya Curtis

Victoria Pickett
September 17
Daughter of Rose Hernandez

Aaron R Moore
September 19
Son of Rob & Sherry Moore

Kelsey Heaps
September 26
Son of Dawn Heaps

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 - 847-337-4168

(The Brown Star Story continued from page 7)

love, they are guardians of our memories of what was and dreams of what some day may be.

As we look to the heavens, seeking answers, we send messages of love to our "brown star" babies.

Borrowed from A JOURNEY
TOGETHER - NEWSLETTER OF THE
BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA
VOLUME VI NO. 3, Summer 2001 (July,
August, September)

(Celebrating a Birthday continued from page 2)

I'm thankful for the 21 birthdays but selfishly I want you here with me today. I want you back. I want to walk through a thrift shop looking for that perfect shirt. I want to stroll through Melodee Music sampling the guitars and pedals. I want to take you to lunch and have our favorite burrito smothered in red chili sauce (no one likes it like you did). And, I want to buy you an ice cream cake and sing to you.



Instead, we'll go to the cemetery and water your flowers. We would watch balloons fade into the sky, however, your little brother is concerned about harming the animals in the sea. I'm sure you would agree with him so we'll tie balloons onto your iron flagpole instead. We'll gaze at any gifts left by friends and feel thankful they remember. We'll light a candle in your memory and let it burn the rest of the day.

As time goes by I can relate more and more to the Kenny Chesney song "Who you'd be today". What new paintings would you have painted? What new songs would you have written? Would you still be fighting addiction or would you be one of the few who beat the odds? We'll never know.

What we do know is that today is your birthday. The anniversary of the day we were blessed with a precious 7-pound, red-haired, blue-eyed baby boy with dimples that made the nurses comment the minute you were born. You came into our lives and brought us tremendous joy. Today, we remember your life.

Every night, when I pray, I'll be missing you.
I love you forever,

Mom

In Loving Memory of Adam,
6/24/82 - 9/25/03

Ask Dr. Paulson

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone.

Q. It is coming up to my sister's first death anniversary. My family and a few friends would like to do something special in remembrance of her. On the year date, we would like to honor who she was in her life here on earth. We are unsure of what we can do. I'd greatly appreciate any suggestions you might have.

A. The first anniversary is usually very difficult. I think it is terrific that you and your family and friends are wanting to do something special to celebrate your sister. Some families have taken family vacations on the anniversary to step away from the hubbub of daily life to remember their loved one, celebrate their life, and acknowledge their loss. Others have held candle light vigils or a fund-raising event for a local charity. I would encourage you to talk with your family and friends and discuss what would bring you comfort on that day. It could be a quiet evening of looking at photographs and videos, or it could be completing a project that was important to your sister. Whatever you decide, being with a group of her loss, and who celebrate her life will be wonderful way to remember her on that day. (Spring 2005)

*We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.
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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

Steering Committee 2022 – 2023

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Susan Banks 847-366-9375 lanwesmar@comcast.net – son, Westley Banks Age 21 of suicide

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

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HOSPITALITY Kris Frisby 847-366-3170 Kefrisby88@comcast.net son, Camden Frisby Age 15 of suicide.

SECRETARY / LIBRARIAN

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Shannon Seay 224-456-2891 Seayseven1@comcast.net daughter, Ashley Seay Age 17 Auto accident.

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

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FACILITATORS AT HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL. SPANISH AND ENGLISH. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, son Raphael Vidal age 17 of suicide. Mirtha is available by phone call or email.

FACILITADORES EN HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL. Española e inglés. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, hijo Raphael Vidal de 17 años de suicidio. Mirtha está disponible por teléfono o correo electrónico.

Northern Lake County IL Chapter #1511 <http://www.iltcf.org/index.html>

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