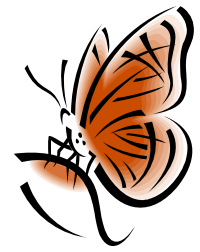




The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

December, 2016 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Toni

Holiday Lists and Remembrances

The holiday season is also the season of LISTS. The social and family obligations are many. We make lists in an effort to organize and manage our lives during the holidays. There are lists for what to buy for whom. There are wish lists we may receive from our kids or nieces and nephews. Shopping lists need to be made for the grocery store. There are more lists of dates for office parties and neighborhood get-togethers. And then there are the lists that you make and lose or forget at home on the kitchen counter.

The holidays can be so overwhelming to a grieving parent or sibling that it causes a shut-down. . . a paralysis that keeps us from moving or carrying-on as usual. This happens as an involuntary response to emotional and psychological stress. It is a way for the body to protect our fragile psyches, emotions and even physical selves.

I have no magic answer – to any of it. But I DO have some brief lists for you to keep in mind as we all try to navigate these difficult weeks and year ahead.

Accept your feelings – whatever they might be. Your emotions will be an accelerated roller coaster over the holidays, sad one moment and happy the next. Don't judge yourself. Just be aware of your feelings.

Do what feels right - Grieving takes time. Few people understand this fact. You are vulnerable now so carefully decide which activities and traditions you can handle.

Talk with family and friends – Let your family and friends know how you are feeling and what you think you can handle. If gift giving is too difficult for you, skip it. Explain your actions or lack of involvement to family and friends. If you attend an event, have a Plan B or an “escape plan” in case it

overwhelming and you realize that you must leave. Talk with a therapist or clergy for support. Talking

about your feelings helps even if it brings up more emotions.

Do something different – Put the familiar traditions on hold for a few years or even permanently if they are painful. Do something or go somewhere different that won't trigger grief episodes for you or your family.

Don't completely isolate yourself – If you choose not to participate or be with family or friends, at least talk to someone, explain your feelings and tell them what you do plan to do. People care about you and want to know that you are OK.

Our culture tends to want us to hurry through our grief and get back to “normal” as soon as possible. We know that is impossible. Grief is layered and comes in waves and lasts a lifetime though it does soften over time.

During this year's holidays, give yourself the gift of time to purposefully remember and celebrate the lives of our children and siblings. Here are just a few suggestions:

Light a candle - A ritual of lighting a candle each day or at an event such as The Compassionate Friends candle lighting ceremony on Dec 11, is a simple but powerful way to remember our loved ones.

Make favorite dishes - Holiday meals can be triggers for emotional upheaval but they can be also be used to remember your loved one by preparing favorite recipes and remembering them at the dinner table.

Collect memories - Create a scrapbook or a photo book using your computer in order to protect your memories and make them easily accessible for you and family to enjoy.

Visit a special place - Visit a place that was special to your child or sibling. It will provide

(Continued on page 5)

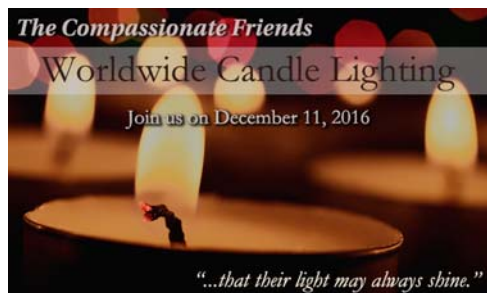


GIFTS OF LOVE

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 Rebecca Wolf
for sponsoring the newsletter
in loving memory of her son
Anthony Clemente

"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.



Worldwide Candle Lighting

December 11, 2016

Please mark your calendars. The 2016 Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held on December 11 at 6:30 p.m. at Millburn Congregational Church. The church is located at the intersection of Rte. 45 and Grass Lake Road, Millburn, Illinois. The Candle Lighting is open to anyone grieving the loss of a child of any age. We welcome all family members and friends to join us. Candles are provided to all. For more information you can go to our website at www.iltcf.org or you can call Toni Nesheim at 847-204-7585

Meetings

**Northern Illinois Chapter TCF
December 22 - 7:30 p.m.**

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

Waukegan meeting

January 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

Photo Presentation At the Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony

The season of holidays is right around the corner. I am reminded by every leaf that falls. The leaves are beautiful but like little pieces of time, floating to the ground, I realize that special occasions will be here soon and I, as we all, have to prepare our hearts and minds for the annual events that mark off the years.

Please consider having your loved ones photo featured in the power point/slide show presentation that we do at the annual candle lighting. We did this presentation for the first time last year and the feedback was that it was touching and heartwarming and wonderful to see the faces of our compassionate friends' children and siblings.

The annual "We Remember Them" candle lighting ceremony is Sunday, December 11, 2016 at the Millburn Congregational Church in Lake Villa at 6:30 p.m.

If you would like to have your child or grandchild or sibling included in the photo presentation, please send a brief email with your loved one's name and significant dates as well as your phone number with 1-2 photos attached. **My email address** tneheim@sbcglobal.net

If you are not able to send the photos electronically, you can mail them to me and I will get them scanned and then mail the originals back to you.

Mail the photos to: Toni Nesheim , 374 Clarewood Circle, Grayslake IL 60030



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN DECEMBER & JANUARY

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

Joey Frase	December 11	Son of Cathy Frase
Anthony Clemente	December 12	Son of Becky Wolf
Ryan James Nichols	December 12	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
Daniel Wang	December 15	Son of Millie Yu
Kerrin Fleming	December 16	Son of Barbara Fleming
Zack A Maslanich	December 18	Son of Karen Zimmerman
Mark Yates	December 20	Son of Linda Hegg
Barry J Grazier	December 22	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
Raphael E Vidal	December 24	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
Mitchell Carlson's	January 1	Son of Tina VanerMeer Grandson of Cheryl Armstrong
Andrew Naydihor	January 1	Son of Kelly Kozel
Anna Smith Miller	January 3	Daughter of Carol Smith
Tim Curtis	January 4	Son of Sonya Curtis
Michael Lee Brandon Frederick Hamilton	January 13	Son of Jan Frederick Grandson of Sharon Frederick
Matthew Tisch	January 17	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
Brain Scott Engle	January 19	Son of Louise Engle
Justin Cody Ortega	January 20	Son of Susie Meggs
Sandra Elena Varela	January 31	Daughter of Sandra Prez

ANNIVERSARIES

Mike Reardon	December 6	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
Alyssa Burnstine	December 6	Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
Mitchell Rodefer	December 6	Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
Andrew Muno	December 15	Son of Darlene Muno
Scott Ewing	December 16	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
Rachel Elizabeth Szech	January 2	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth	January 16	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
Joey Frase	January 20	Son of Cathy Frase
Alyssa Carranza	January 22	Daughter of Luz Barrera Granddaughter of Angel & Raquel Gasco
Reneé Rochelle Powell	January 30	Daughter of Terry & Jeanette Powell
Michael Sean Gaede	January 31	Son of Maureen Gaede

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



HOW TO COPE WITH THE HOLIDAYS

We are all at different places in our grief, especially when it comes to the holidays. Some of us are very newly bereaved and we can't even think of a holiday celebration this year. For others of us this will be our second or third or later holiday season and we know that it is possible to, at least, survive the holidays.

If it is your first year I suggest you do only what you feel must be done for yourself, your spouse, and your surviving children. Inform others around you (your own parents and siblings and in-laws) that Christmas this year will be too painful; that you don't have the interest or the energy to celebrate as you have in the past.

Whether they accept this as reasonable or even okay is their problem. Ask for their understanding, but if you don't get it, don't worry about it. Remember, in the first months that what we do or not do is a matter of survival. We cannot content ourselves with another's understanding or approval. Leave traditions for other years. Why should you expect yourself to carry them out when they are not only painful, but have little meaning now that your child is no longer a part of them.

Recognize that this year will be painful and surrender to that fact. Don't use up energy you don't have to pretend it is the same. Admit and accept that you don't even WANT the holiday to happen this year. Of course, few of us can completely ignore the holidays, but we can do a lot to relieve ourselves of the unnecessary pressure. In the holiday suggestions in this newsletter you will find ideas that will help you cope. Most important of all is the idea that you should do what makes it easier for you this particular year.

I might suggest that you turn yourself to the real meaning of Christmas this year - the birth of a child meant to die. Maybe the spiritual aspect of the holiday might give the comfort that material celebrations cannot. Of course, the thought that your child will be at the Christ Child's birthday party this year will cause tears (after many years that thought still brings tears to my eyes) but that's okay. God knows you are crying because you loved and that's what He is all about.

For those of us who are at the second or third or later holidays, this year may be even harder. One reason is that after a year or more is past we will not have the support we need, and yes, even the permission of those around us, to hurt at the holidays.

Others only give us a year to grieve and surely if you have gone through the first holiday without your child,

they feel you should not have trouble after that.

The second holiday season may be the most difficult because we were numb and hurt so badly at the first holiday that we barely realized that the holidays were there. Maybe in the second year the shock of the death is less and the reality that our child IS dead, and will NEVER be a part of our holiday again, is even more vivid. This is a deeper and more lasting pain than we experienced in the first year. We may experience this pain for many years.

Again, I encourage you to do what is best for yourself, your spouse and your surviving children, and allow those around you to think what they will. They have not experienced what we have and do not have the right to inflict their expectations on us, nor do we have the obligation to conform to their expectations.

A word about approval might be appropriate here. We are a society that lives by approval. Others must approve of our actions, our behavior, and sometimes, even our thoughts.

If we don't meet the approval of society we are cast out.

Even we turn that lack of approval inside and say to ourselves: "If I don't conform I must be different or wrong."

If we are concerned with meeting another's approval we surrender our individuality - our real selves.

If we are to grow from the experience of losing our child; if we are to successfully resolve our grief; we must stop looking to others for approval of what we do.

We must have confidence that how WE handle our grief is good and right. Since WE are experiencing

(Continued on page 5)

(How to Cope With the Holidays continued from page 4)

OUR grief, WE are suffering OUR pain. WE are working towards OUR recovery, we must do it OUR way.

Just as no one can live our lives, no one can live our grief and no one can tell us how to grieve. See yourself as knowing what is best for you. Don't let others take that right from you by succumbing to their disapproval.

Handle the holidays, whether it is your first or your twenty-first, the way that is best for you. You will be the one who will grow from it. –

Margaret H. Gerner, M.S.W.
TCF/St. Louis, MO

Borrowed from The Compassionate Friends of the Greater Kankakee Area, November, 2016



Recipe For Recovery

As many of us go about preparing our Holiday dinners, don't we wish we had a "Recipe for Recovery?" "Just add a cup of boiling water, stir well and drink," and our grieving would be over. Our society seems to crave "instant answers," but bereavement is a long process, and there are no easy solutions. Yet, I couldn't help imagining what I would put in my own "Recipe for Recovery,"

- Start with one cup of the MILK OF HUMAN KINDNESS - all those dear friends who did not turn away from me when they heard of Steve's suicide; but helped in many practical, caring ways to make the first months easier.
- Add several GOOD EGGS - helping professionals like my minister, the counselor who suggested TCF and the young funeral director couple who organized the TCF Chapter I attended in New York.
- Throw in a few heaping tablespoons of READING MATERIALS - Books and pamphlets from the TCF Library that started my thoughts going in a positive direction.
- Add THE SALT OF THE EARTH - wonderful new Friends I met through TCF and other support groups. Maybe we should call them THE CREAM OF THE CROP, because eventually they rise to the top.

Sprinkle liberally with TEARS - because it's okay to cry and generously with LAUGHTER - because we can learn to smile again.

Bake in a warm oven of TENDER LOVING CARE. Be sure to make enough to share with others and freeze some for later.

That's my recipe - what's yours?
~Cynthia Kelley, TCF, Cincinnati, Ohio

(Chapter Leader Notes continued from page 1)

you a time to recall his or her favorite things and happy times at that place.

Write to or about your loved on - It can be very personal and therapeutic to write down memories or create poems. It is also powerful to write down an unfinished conversation that you may have had with your loved one. Write down what they said and how you would've responded. Remember their voice and manner of speech.

Dedicate a donation in memory of your loved one - Choose a favorite cause that your child or sibling believed in or a charity that your loved one would like or a non-profit organization that would benefit by a donation.

Make one final list, just for yourself - Write down all of the ways that you have improved in managing your grief since receiving the profoundly devastating news of your loved one's death. Examples would be "I no longer cry when I tell someone about his death" or "after 5 years I could go through her clothes". Each small step is worth acknowledging.

These lists are not intended to reawaken grief but to help you channel it in a helpful, healthy way.

Only you can decide what will work for you and your family and friends.

Wishing you a gentle and peaceful Christmas

Toni



Rusty Anderson
Kyle Andrik - Amy Jo Baldwin
Aaron Barrera - Joshua Bowman
Alyssa Burnstine - Roman Gabriel Cano
Mitchell Carlson - Alyssa Carranza - Amanda Cecchi
Eduardo Chavez-Nuño -
Anthony Clemente - Robert Corbett
Tim Curtis - Edward G Davis III - Erin Dinklenburg
Brian Scott Engel - Scott Ewing - Kerrin Fleming
Elizabeth Mary Foresta - Joey Frase
Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick
Amy Fry-Pitzen - Michael Gaede - Marleea Gerfen - Kyle Glueck
Jeremy M Govekar - Megan Candice Grace - Sharon Beth Gray
Barry J Grazier - James Grazier
José De Jesús Hernandez
Jammi Shonlei Hui - Christopher Jackson
Brian Keough - Donette Klawonn - Kelly Klawonn
Adam Michael Laufer - Brian Scott Ludlow
Tony Malic - Rasheed Mariano - Zach Maslanich
Shannon McCarty - Pressley Suzanne McHugh
Mary Margaret "Maggie" Miles - Anna Smith Miller - Aaron R. Moore
John "Jake" Mosansky - Andrew Muno - Andrew Naydihor - Ryan James Nichols
Justin Cody Ortega - Blake Logan Palmer - Nicole Parfitt
Andrew C Perkins - Rob Petit - Kevin Pomianek
Reneé Rochelle Powell - Douglas Ramsay - Mike Reardon
Sven Christian Reinhard - Mitchell Rodefer - Lisa Roseman - Adam Rubin
Lila Ruffolo - Mark Sailor - Rachel Salomonson - Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro
Ashley Seay - Roger Alan - David Sloop
David Spanraft - Michael Stice - Josh Summers - Rachel Elizabeth Szech - Zachary Taylor
Anne Thomson - John Thumel - Matthew Tisch - Tony Trejo -
Sandra Varela - Raphael Vidal - Edgar O Villareal - Daniel Wang
Darien Wilson
Lindsay Wilczynski
Liz Wilding
Mark Yates
Stephanie Andrea Zamarron

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

TCF National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 3696 - 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 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 Bambi Nichols 262-220-9323 lcbtsec@aol.com Levi Nichols Age 19 - Accidental death

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

WOODLAND WALK COORDINATOR Christine Pado 847-455-6642 chpado@gmail.com Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 - PULMONARY EMBOLISM

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