

# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter  
December, 2018 Newsletter



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

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## Chapter Leader Notes



### REQUIRED: Remember, Celebrate, Believe

Please join us for the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual candle lighting ceremony for children and others who have gone too soon. It will take place on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Millburn Congregational Church in Lake Villa. There is no charge and it is casual. You can bring a dessert or snack plate to share for the social hour after the ceremony if you would like.

You are "required" to bring three things, however. I'll enumerate for you:

**#1. Memories:** Bring the memories of your loved one. Not just the sad ones but also the fun and silly ones that warms our heart and makes your lips form a little smile even when they don't want to. Bring memories beyond the "event" or the funeral. Bring memories that make you grateful for being your loved one's mother or dad or sister or brother or grandparent. Try to focus on the positive through your tears and balance the sorrow with the celebration for a life that was.

**#2. Celebration:** Bring a sense of celebration for the life of your loved one

who touched so many hearts and therefore, made a difference in this world. Let yourself feel - yes, loss but also the experience of loving that special person - that one and only, unique person in the world. Celebrate your person.

**#3. Believe:** Bring the belief that you can rebuild your life after the most personal devastation can a person can experience. Bring the belief that through remembering your loved one and celebrating their life in a million small and large ways, you are able to heal and that one day you will feel happy and healthy and maybe even whole again. Believe that feeling better and healing is not unfair or lessening of the importance of the life lost but it is knowing that their life mattered to you and others and your life matters to your friends and family and loved ones.

This candle lighting ceremony is to bring together people who want to remember and honor their loved ones at a difficult time of the year. It is a community of griever's who understand the tears without having to ask questions. It is a community of people who understand that you can smile at a memory while crying because of the same memory. It is a place for remembrances and hugs. Tissues provided.

***Say not in grief 'he (or she) is no more' but live in thankfulness that he(she) was. - Hebrew proverb***

## Meetings

**Northern Illinois Chapter TCF  
December 20**  
Millburn Congregational Church  
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL

**Waukegan meeting  
January 3**

**- 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

### WHEN WINTER COMES

By Glenda Fulton Davis

When winter comes into our lives  
With its uncertain sound  
To strip us of our warmth and joy,  
Our petals on the ground,  
We may be tempted to give up;  
To fold beneath life's storm  
We may be tempted to forsake  
The hope which keeps us warm.  
But, we must learn to stand up tall;  
To always face the sun,  
And patiently await the day  
When winter's work is done.  
For winter winds will cease to howl,  
The snows will melt away.  
Then we shall see the beauty of  
Another summer's day.  
And we will have renewed our strength  
When summer's wind first blows,  
For God will whisper once again  
The promise of a rose.

~reprinted from St. Louis Chapter of Be-  
reaved Parents Newsletter Novem-  
ber/December 2006

## 22ND ANNUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

**DECEMBER 9**



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting 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. As candles are lit at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 22nd annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.



## 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.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

<i>Joey Frase</i>	<b>December 11</b>	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Anthony Clemente</i>	<b>December 12</b>	Son of Becky Wolf
<i>Ryan James Nichols</i>	<b>December 12</b>	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
<i>Alina Booras</i>	<b>December 13</b>	Daughter of Amanda Booras
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	<b>December 15</b>	Son of Millie Yu
<i>Kerrin Fleming</i>	<b>December 16</b>	Daughter of Barbara Fleming
<i>Zack A Maslanich</i>	<b>December 18</b>	Son of Karen Zimmerman
<i>Mark Yates</i>	<b>December 20</b>	Son of Linda Hegg
<i>Barry J Grazier</i>	<b>December 22</b>	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<i>Raphael E Vidal</i>	<b>December 24</b>	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
<i>Mitchell Carlson's</i>	<b>January 1</b>	Grandson of Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Anna Smith Miller</i>	<b>January 3</b>	Daughter of Carol Smith
<i>Michael Curtis</i>	<b>January 4</b>	Son of Sonya Curtis
<i>Michael Lee Brandon Frederick</i>	<b>January 13</b>	Son of Jan Frederick
<i>Hamilton</i>		Grandson of Sharon Frederick
<i>Matthew Tisch</i>	<b>January 17</b>	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
<i>Brain Scott Engle</i>	<b>January 19</b>	Son of Louise Engle
<i>Justin Cody Ortega</i>	<b>January 20</b>	Son of Susie Meggs
<i>Keegan Cray</i>	<b>January 21</b>	Son of Kristin & Ken Willis
<i>Sandra Elena Varela</i>	<b>January 31</b>	Daughter of Sandra Prez

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

<i>Shane Betar</i>	<b>December 1</b>	Son of Leia Betar
<i>Mike Reardon</i>	<b>December 6</b>	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Alyssa Burnstine</i>	<b>December 6</b>	Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
<i>Sean Jones</i>	<b>December 6</b>	Son of Octavine Jones
<i>Mitchell Rodefer</i>	<b>December 6</b>	Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
<i>Andrew Muno</i>	<b>December 15</b>	Son of Darlene Muno
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	<b>December 16</b>	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
<i>Nick Battis</i>	<b>December 24</b>	Son of Susan Battis
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	<b>January 2</b>	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
<i>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</i>	<b>January 16</b>	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<i>Joey Frase</i>	<b>January 20</b>	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Alyssa Carranza</i>	<b>January 22</b>	Daughter of Luz Barrera
		Granddaughter of Angel & Raquel Gasco
<i>Reneé Rochelle Powell</i>	<b>January 30</b>	Daughter of Terry & Jeanette Powell
<i>Michael Sean Gaede</i>	<b>January 31</b>	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](mailto:vszech@comcast.net) - 847-573-1055

## Holidays

Is it just me, or are you tired of all the holiday advertising on television too? Frankly, I'm starting to get tired of watching the seemingly happy families seated around a big table enjoying a large holiday meal or the families seated around a Christmas tree opening gifts. No, I haven't turned into the Grinch, it's just that things are different after you lose a child, and it just seems like the ads shove happy, happy holidays in your face.



I was reading an article in the Jackson, Mississippi TFC newsletter called "Don't Be Fooled Again" by Ken Nottingham. Ken makes an excellent point. The advertisements show make believe families played by actors to make you feel good about buying the sponsor's product. There's nothing wrong with that, he says, unless you expect your own holidays to be as magical as the ones on TV. Let's face it; Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas can be tough times for bereaved parents, and especially for the newly bereaved. And I'll add this thought-wouldn't it be interesting to know if the actors portraying the happy families on the advertisements actually have that happiness in real life?

Years ago, I used to do some occasional, taped, radio interviews for a local radio station. I did quite a few interviews with a clinical psychologist and I believe it was him who pointed out that the holidays can be sad for certain people. At that time, about 25 years ago, I didn't fully comprehend what he meant. Now I do. We can't expect advertisers to accommodate us, but it would be nice if at least some of our friends understood and showed us that they did.

Maybe the answer, as Ken says (and I agree with him), is to relax and take things as they come. So, take it easy and treat the holidays as just another day. Things may work out better for you. And while it's on my mind, society makes such a big thing out of the holidays - we're supposed to be happy, spread cheer, buy gifts, say nice things to each other, show an interest in our fellow man, etc. I have just one question - why can't we do those nice things in January, or March, or September or any day of the year??

Written by David Haddock  
Clinton, Mississippi

In loving memory of Bonnie Catherine Haddock  
(02/06/1985-08/13/2002)

[haddockdavid@bellsouth.net](mailto:haddockdavid@bellsouth.net)

## The Gift We Give Ourselves

Six Christmases later, I think I have run the gamut of emotions. Of course, the first two Christmases after my daughter Nina died were pretty much a blur. I do remember the first one; so desperately trying to go through the motions and determined that my family would have as unchanged a Christmas as possible. I would momentarily lapse into my grief stupor, only to pick myself up by the bootstraps and zombie-like, plod onward toward my goal to "normalize" an anything-but-normal Christmas.

Nina adored the holidays. She could scarcely wait for the day after Thanksgiving so we could pull out the holiday music tapes, get out the cookie press so she could make her favorite Spritz cookies, and decorate her daybed frame with tiny Christmas lights. Therefore, I was positive that Nina would want us to go on with Christmas as if the numbing and life-altering tragedy that had befallen our family had never occurred. I had convinced myself that it is what she would have wanted so out came the Christmas tree and all the ornaments. Shopping commenced as usual, plowing my way through crowds of cheerful people, full of the spirit of the season. I wouldn't allow myself to see that I didn't belong amongst them -at least that year. Eventually, the charade took its toll and I paid for it for weeks afterwards. Then again how could any of us know how we should feel that first Christmas, or what we should or shouldn't do during the holidays after our child died? For most of us, we had never experienced the death of a child before. There are no step-by-step rulebooks on how to grieve. And even if there were, each of our children is unique and therefore so is our grief.

That second Christmas I didn't have enough energy to even run on empty. I felt drained and barely made it through necessary day-to-day tasks. The Christmas tree made it out of the box that year, but sat undecorated in the middle of

(Continued on page 5)



(The Gift We Give continued from page 4)



the living room floor. Only when my son asked about five days before Christmas, if we could either put some lights on it and sit it in its customary corner, or just put it away that Christmas did I make an effort to do anything with it at all. That year I didn't attempt to sugarcoat my emotional state of mind I didn't pretend that everything was "normal."

If possible, we would cut out November, December and January 1st out of our calendars--just close our eyes and wish it away. But since we can't, we have to do the next best thing--we need to give ourselves a gift this holiday season. And in doing this, we give our family and friends a gift as well. That gift is taking care of us through this trying holiday season, to do what feels right to us. We can try to spare ourselves any unnecessary stress. That could mean doing away with the old family traditions and making some new ones. It could mean having Christmas dinner at a restaurant. That gift to us might be to go away for the holidays; for others that may be just staying home and doing nothing. Maybe a relative or family friend could help with any preparations or gift buying that we feel we might want to do this year. Possibly they could involve any surviving siblings in their holiday happenings so that they too feel like they are participating in something for the holidays. So often our family and friends feel helpless and desperately want to find some way to assist us and this is one way that they can. ~from the TCF Chapter in Tuscaloosa, Alabama said "No matter how many people or how many presents, the pulsating void that seems too large for your heart to hold keeps on drawing your attention back to the child who is missing. As others laugh and play, your thoughts fly away - to Christmases past or a snowy cemetery. Give me a special gift this year.. . let me weep."

The friendship and understanding of other bereaved parents is one of the most helpful gifts we can give ourselves. Other bereaved parents will let us reminisce of happier Christmases' past; will allow us to speak our child's name without hesitation; and will let us cry and not be uncomfortable with our tears. It is so consoling to be able to

share your feelings with someone who understands that, for us, grief does have a place in our holiday. In turn, by being a listening ear for them we have given them a gift as well.

When I think back, I am not sure if I found comfort in hearing that the holidays would get easier in time. I think I was so preoccupied (and with good reason) with the fact that my Nina was gone and the holidays would never be the same. But I have learned to know what I can and cannot handle. I have learned how to say, "I just can't do that this year". I have learned that, although I couldn't imagine it then, with each passing year the holidays have become a little easier to deal with. And I absolutely believe that Nina does understand my need to alter Christmas since she died. That she would want me to change what I need to in order to get through the holidays. Nina would want me, as all of our children would want us, to be gentle with ourselves and to take care of our tender hearts. That gift we give ourselves is also a gift we give to them what they would want for us: for us to find as much peace in whatever way that we possibly can.

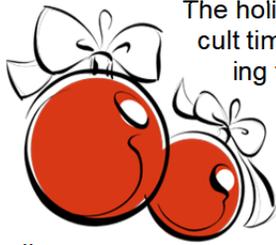
We have many new TCF members this year who will be facing that first Christmas without their child I will, as I know all of us will, keep them all close in our thoughts and hearts these next two months.

With love, peace and gentle thoughts this holiday season,

Cathy L. Seehuetter St. Paul, MN - TCF  
[peachy3536@comcast.net](mailto:peachy3536@comcast.net)

Rusty  
Anderson  
Amy Jo Baldwin  
Westley Banks - Aaron Barrera  
Nick Battis - Shane Betar  
Alina Booras - Joshua Bowman  
Alyssa Burnstine  
Roman Gabriel Cano - Mitchell Carlson  
Alyssa Carranza - Marcia Castillo  
Amanda Cecchi - Eduardo Chavez-Nuño  
Anthony Clemente - Nathan Clyde - Robert Corbett  
Keegan Cray - Michael Curtis - Edward Davis III  
Erin Dinklenburg - Heather Donnelly - Brian Scott Engel  
Scott Ewing - Kerrin Fleming - Elizabeth Mary Foresta  
Joey Frase - Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick - Camden Frisby  
Amy Fry-Pitzen - Michael Gaede - Marleea Gerfen - Kyle Glueck  
Jeremy M Govekar - Megan Candice Grace Sharon Beth Gray - Barry J Grazier  
James Grazier - Colin Henderson - Heidi Hermann  
José De Jesús Hernandez - Jammi Shonlei Hui - Sean Jones - Brian Keough  
Donette Klawonn - Kelly Klawonn - Lea Anne (Heise) Knoth - Adam Michael Laufer  
Brian Scott Ludlow - Shannon McCarty - Pressley Suzanne McHugh  
Zach Maslanich - Mary Margaret "Maggie" Miles - Anna Smith Miller  
Aaron R. Moore - John "Jake" Mosansky - Andrew MunoLevi A Nichols  
Ryan James Nichols - Eduardo Chavez-Nuño - Justin Cody Ortega - Blake Logan Palmer  
Nicole Parfitt - Justin Perez - Andrew C Perkins  
Kevin Pomianek - Reneé Rochelle Powell - Douglas Ramsay  
Mike Reardon - Timothy Reece - Brandon Reif - Sven Christian Reinhard  
Mitchell Rodefer - Lisa Roseman - Adam Rubin - Lila Ruffolo - Mark Sailor  
Rachel Salomonson - Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro - Ashley Seay - David Sloop - Anthony Sosa  
David Spannraft - Michael Stice - Josh Summers - Rachel Elizabeth Szech - Zachary Taylor  
Anne Thomson - John Thumel - Matthew Tisch - Tony Trejo - Sandra Varela - Raphael Vidal  
Ravael Villanveva - Edgar O Villareal - Qua'Shawn Wade - Daniel Wang - Lindsay Wilczynski  
Liz Wilding - Darien Wilson  
Lauren Wood - Mark Yates  
Roderick Young  
Stephanie Zamarron

# Handling the Holidays



The holidays are among the most difficult times for bereaved families grieving the death of a child. Below are some helpful suggestions that may aid you in surviving the holidays.

- 1) Call a family meeting and discuss your plans for the holiday season, understanding that it would be unusual for you not to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically drained. Don't set your expectations too high or you may find yourself disappointed.
- 2) Well intending friends and family may want to include you in their plans, believing it best for you to "get away" from grieving your loss. They do not understand that you cannot escape the grief that you feel. There is no obligation to say "yes." Only participate if you truly want to.
- 3) Try to take care of your health. It's important that you eat and drink properly, exercise, and get plenty of rest.
- 4) Take time to do the things you as a person want to do. You may want time alone to reflect or to write your thoughts.
- 5) Consider eliminating such things as the festive decorations, cooking, and baking that you may normally enjoy. People will understand if you're not in a merry or joyous mood or simply don't have the energy. You may try placing an electric candle in your window in memory of your child. Don't feel obligated to send out holiday cards.
- 6) If it is necessary for you to buy gifts, consider ordering them over the Internet or by phone. Most who are bereaved find it draining to go out and fight through crowded stores bustling with holiday cheer.
- 7) Many families that are in mourning may use the money they would have spent on gifts for their child to buy gifts for a child who would not be able to celebrate the holidays otherwise.
- 8) It is not unusual for you to want to include your child during the season. You may want to do something like: Ask friends and relatives who knew your child to send you a story about your child that you may not have known; Ask friends and relatives to create an ornament or remembrance of some type that reminds them of your child so that you can place it around the house or on a holiday tree. If it was your tradition, include placing a stocking with those of other children in your

house, even if you do not fill it like the others—this is a symbolic gesture in memory of your child.

- 9) If you have other children who normally celebrate the holidays, you may consider continuing to do so to create some sense of normalcy in the house and so they will not feel forgotten.
- 10) Consider attending a **Compassionate Friends meeting** or a memorial event such as The Compassionate Friends **Worldwide Candle Lighting**. Most families find some comfort by being with others who have experienced a similar loss.
- 11) Remember that the anticipation of a holiday is often worse than the holiday itself.
- 12) Be kind to yourself.
- 13) It is okay to cry.

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. is a national self-help bereavement organization that supports families emotionally during the difficult grieving process following the death of a child. Call 877-969-0010 for more information or visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). ©2008 The Compassionate Friends/USA

Borrowed from the Greater Kankakee IL Area TCF Newsletter © 2008

## Remember

When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you: that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are.

It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that when we meet again, you will know me.

It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.

by Frederick Buechner,  
Whistling in the Dark

**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** [Julyson2@gmail.com](mailto:Julyson2@gmail.com)

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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:tnesheim@sbcglobal.net) *Rachel Salomonson* Age 19 – Auto accident

**TREASURER/COMMUNITY OUTREACH** Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 [Julyson2@gmail.com](mailto:Julyson2@gmail.com) *Aaron Barrera* Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

**SECRETARY** Bambi Nichols 262-220-9323 [lcbtsec@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:vszech@comcast.net) *Rachel Szech* Age 16 – Horseback-riding Accident

**NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING** Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 [tnesheim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tnesheim@sbcglobal.net) & Denny Salomonson, 847-223-7353 [drdeno@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drdeno@sbcglobal.net) - daughter, Rachel Salomonson, 19, auto accident

**WOODLAND WALK COORDINATOR** Christine Pado 847-455-6642 [chpado@gmail.com](mailto:chpado@gmail.com) Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 - PULMONARY EMBOLISM

**STEERING COMMITTEE** Marilyn Grace 847-395-8597 [grace.marilyn@gmail.com](mailto:grace.marilyn@gmail.com) *Megan Grace* Age 15 – Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Charon Sloop 847-623-2264 [charronsloop@AOL.com](mailto:charronsloop@AOL.com) *David Sloop* Age 33 – Motor Cycles accident

Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 [mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com](mailto:mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com) & Raphael Vidal [rvidal1027@yahoo.com](mailto:rvidal1027@yahoo.com), Raphael, age 17, suicide