



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

December 2019 Newsletter



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

Chapter Leader Notes



JUST BE

In 1987, we moved from Mankato, Minnesota to West Chester, PA for just 2 years. We were then transferred to the Chicago area in 1989. We met many wonderful people in Pennsylvania, some of whom weren't sure where Minnesota was and some who thought I had a Michigan accent as well as most of whom had never been beyond the Appalachian Mountains. So we learned from each other about our regional differences.

There was one young woman with whom I worked at a part time job for about a year. Her name was Carolina (pron. Carol-eena) and she was from the Netherlands. She was in her mid-20s and had been widowed for about 18 months. Her story was about a tragic skiing accident. Yet, she was open about it and for the first time ever, I was able to talk to someone about their loss and their feelings of grief and loss. I learned a lot from her. Most importantly, I learned that grieving people are not mute and are willing to talk about their experience.

Perhaps because of her personality or maybe her youth or both, Carolina was rather pragmatic and even optimistic about how she planned to work and buy a little house and get more education while in the United States. We often talked about the difference between Europe and the Netherlands and the United States.

When asked what is the biggest difference between the Dutch and the Americans, she answered with little hesitation. She said, "Americans can't **JUST BE**. They have to be doing something all the time. They can't seem to just sit on the stoop and BE. Enjoy the day, enjoy talking to friends, doing nothing in particular."

All of these years, I have remembered what she said and certainly saw truth in it. So that is what I am passing on to you. **JUST BE**.

Winter is closing in and the days are despairingly short. Night arrives all too early. Electric lights masquerade as daylight. I, as well as many others, don't do well with little sunlight.

Winter also forces us to stay in the house which can be positive by forcing us to slow down, to take time doing tasks, hunkering down and being a couch potato, practicing patience with ourselves and others, and keeping a routine or changing it, whatever makes you feel better. You can make a point of experiencing something new as that usually rejuvenates the mind!

The point is, nurture yourself. Give yourself time to rest, heal, reflect, and work toward enjoying life again - celebrating the life that you have - be it an altered life.

We all deserve peace and healing. This winter may be your time to BE - just be.

Wishing you a gentle, loving holiday season,

Toni



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 Barbara Fleming
For her donation
in memory of her daughter
Kerrin Lee Fleming

"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.

Meetings

Lake Villa Meeting
Northern Illinois Chapter TCF
December 19 - 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
Millburn Congregational Church
19073 W Old Grass Lake Rd
(Corner of Old Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45
Lake Villa, IL 60046

Holy Family Church
January 2
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL 60085
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

Open Discussion

(OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND
SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN
NOVEMBER & DECEMBER CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 3)

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

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Holidays 2007

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

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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>Tracie Musich</i>	December 4	Daughter of Trisha Musich
<i>Rafael Villanveva</i>	December 9	Son of Victoria Villanveva
<i>Joey Frase</i>	December 11	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Anthony Clemente</i>	December 12	Son of Becky Wolf
<i>Ryan James Nichols</i>	December 12	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
<i>Alina Booras</i>	December 13	Daughter of Amanda Booras
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	December 15	Son of Millie Yu
<i>Kerrin Fleming</i>	December 16	Daughter of Barbara Fleming
<i>Zack A Maslanich</i>	December 18	Son of Karen Zimmerman
<i>Mark Yates</i>	December 20	Son of Linda Hegg
<i>Barry J Grazier</i>	December 22	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<i>Raphael E Vidal</i>	December 24	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
<i>Mitchell Carlsons</i>	January 1	Grandson of Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Andrew Naydihor</i>	Januray 1	Son of Kelly Kozel
<i>Anna Smith Miller</i>	January 3	Daughter of Carol Smith
<i>Michael Curtis</i>	January 4	Son of Sonya Curtis
<i>Eric Wiatr</i>	January 5	Son of Debbie Eposito
<i>Nathan Enright</i>	January 7	Son of Martin Boyle
<i>Michael Lee Brandon Frederick Hamilton</i>	January 13	Son of Jan Frederick Grandson of Sharon Frederick
<i>Matthew Tisch</i>	January 17	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
<i>Brain Scott Engle</i>	January 19	Son of Louise Engle
<i>Justin Cody Ortega</i>	January 20	Son of Susie Meggs
<i>Keegan Cray</i>	January 21	Son of Kristin & Ken Willis
<i>Sandra Elena Varela</i>	January 31	Daughter of Sandra Prez

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Shane Betar</i>	December 1	Son of Leia Betar
<i>Nathan Enright</i>	December 5	Son of Martin Boyle
<i>Mike Reardon</i>	December 6	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Alyssa Burnstine</i>	December 6	Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
<i>Sean Jones</i>	December 6	Son of Octavine Jones
<i>Mitchell Rodefer</i>	December 6	Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
<i>Andrew Muno</i>	December 15	Son of Darlene Muno
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	December 16	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
<i>Nick Battis</i>	December 24	Son of Susan Battis
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	January 2	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
<i>Chris Houchin</i>	January 5	Son of Scott Houchin & Heather McDonald
<i>Lea Ann Knuth</i>	January 16	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<i>Joey Frase</i>	January 20	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Jacob Randall</i>	January 21	Son of Lauri Randall
<i>Eric Wiatr</i>	January 21	Son of Debbie Esposito

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23RD ANNUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING DECEMBER 8



WE REMEMBER THEM

**Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony
Sunday, December 8, 2019**

6:30 p.m.

**Millburn Congregational United Church of Christ
19073 W. Old Grass Lake Rd, Lake Villa, 60046
Candles are provided.**

**You are invited to stay for refreshments after
the ceremony.**

**You are welcome to bring a dessert or snack to
share, if you like.**

Please be aware of new road configuration.

(Holidays 2007 continued from page 2)

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

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-

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(The Gift We Give Ourselves from page 4)

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 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



Susan
Allbee
Rusty Anderson
Amy Jo Baldwin
Westley Banks - Aaron Barrera
Nick Battis - Shane Betar
Joshua Bowman - Alyssa Burnstine
Mitchell Carlson
Ana Sophia Comacho - Carlos Cantu
Alyssa Carranza - Marcia Castillo
Amanda Cecchi - Eduardo Chavez-Nuño
Anthony Clemente - Nathan Clyde - Robert Corbett
Keegan Cray - Sage Cue - Michael Curtis - Edward Davis III
Jennifer Dennis - Erin Dinklenburg
Heather Donnelly - Brian Scott Engel - Nathaniel Enright
Scott Ewing - Kerrin Fleming
Joey Frase - Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick - Camden Frisby
Amy Fry-Pitzen - Michael Gaede - Marleea Gerfen - Kyle Glueck - Adrien Gonzales
Jeremy M Govekar - Megan Candice Grace - Sharon Beth Gray
Barry J Grazier - Jim Grazier - Marc Hawkinson - Kelsey Heaps
Colin Henderson - Heidi Hermann - Casperin Hernandez - José De Jesús Hernandez
Noel Wendell Hernandez - Chris Houchin - Jammi Shonlei Hui - Sean Jones - Brian Keough
Donette Klawonn - Kelly Klawonn - Lea Anne Knuth - Ruthie Johnson - Brian Langevin
Adam Michael Laufer - Kevin Lopez - Brian Scott Ludlow - Rasheed Mariano
Selene Martinez - Zack Maslanich - Shannon McCarty - James McClintock
Pressley Suzanne McHugh - Marlon Meana - Alina Mejdouli - Danny Middaugh - Maggie Miles
Anna Smith Miller - Aaron R. Moore - Jake Mosansky - Andrew Muno - Gabriel Murphy, Jr.
Micah Gerald Musich - Tracie Musich - Andrew Naydihor - David Nesheim - Levi A Nichols
Ryan James Nichols - Eduardo Chavez-Nuño - Justin Cody Ortega
Blake Logan Palmer - Nicole Parfitt - Justin Perez - Andrew C Perkins
Kevin Pomianek - René Rochelle Powell - Donyel Prather - Douglas Ramsay
Jacob Randall - Mike Reardon - Timothy Reece - Brandon Reif - Sven Christian Reinhard
Mitchell Rodefer - Luis F Reyes - Lisa Roseman - Adam Rubin - Lila Ruffolo - Taylor Rydahl -
- Rachel Salomonson - Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro -
Griffin Schumow - Ashley Seay - David Sloop - Jaime Smith - Dylan Smith - Anthony Sosa
David Spannraft - Josephine Stewart - Michael Stice - Josh Summers - Rachel Elizabeth Szech
Zachary Taylor - Anne Thomson - John Thumel - Matthew Tisch - Tony Trejo
Danielle Trevithick - Tony Trevithick Jr - Sandra Varela - Raphael Vidal - Raphael Villanveva
Edgar O Villareal - Qua'Shawn Wade - Jeff Wagner - Brandon Ward - Daniel Wang - Nick Weber
Pauline Welch - Eric Wiatr
Lindsay Wilczynski - Liz Willding
Darien Wilson - Lauren Wood
Mark Yates - Roderick Young
Andrea Zamarron - Stephanie Zamarron



DEALING WITH HOLIDAY HEART- ACHE IN A SEA- SON OF JOY

~ Alice J. Wisler

Christmas decorations in September and holiday music in October were not what my friend Alexandra needed. Alexandra's 6-year-old died four months ago, and her heart is still raw. She's been wondering how she'll cope without her daughter over the holidays -- just last year a time of joy and celebration.

Years ago, I anticipated the holidays would be tough. I'd wake on those cold mornings after Daniel died in February 1997 and be grateful it was still months until his August birthday and even more months until Christmas. I dreaded living both days without my son. As those who had lost loved ones let me know, you have to live through it.

Christmas came. I did live through it. It continues to happen, as do the other significant days of the year. Here are 11 tips I've used and continue to use to survive the holidays. Some are my own suggestions and some are borrowed from the many who walk the path of grief.

1. Know you will survive. It will not be easy, but others have done it and you will, too.
2. Find someone you can talk to or meet with during the holiday season. Perhaps this person can give you helpful ideas that have worked for her.
3. Don't think you have to do the "traditional" activities of years past. Your energy level is low. If no one in your household minds, skip putting up the tree or spending hours making holiday cookies.
4. Spend the holidays with those who will let you talk about your loved one. You will need to recall memories, if you choose to do so. Your stories about your loved one are wonderful legacies. Tell them boldly again and again.
5. If going into the mall or stores brings too much pain, shop for gifts online or through mail-order catalogs. Thinking everyone is happily shopping at the malls while your heart is crushed is terribly tough.

6. Getting away from the house worked for my family. The first Christmas without Daniel we went to a nearby town and lived in the Embassy Suites. The kids enjoyed the indoor pool and breakfast buffets.

7. Create something to give to those who have helped you throughout the year. I made some very simple tree ornaments with "In Memory of Daniel" stamped on them and gave them to friends that first Christmas.

8. Decorate the grave. Sometimes being busy with decorating the grave gives a feeling of doing something for a child we can no longer hold.

9. Do something in memory of your loved one. Donate to a charity. Volunteer. My oldest daughter Rachel and I volunteered at the Hospice Tree of Remembrance and shared memories of Daniel as we spent this time together.

10. If your bereavement support group has a special candle-lighting service, attend it. Doing something in memory of your loved one with others who understand the pain can be therapeutic.

11. Spend time reflecting on what the season is about. Everyone around you may be frantic with attending parties, services, shopping and visiting relatives. Give yourself permission to excuse yourself from them. Light a candle in your favorite scent. Record some thoughts in a journal. One day you will wake up and it will be January 2. The holidays will have ended. You will have made it.

If you are like me, you will find that surviving the tinsel has made you stronger, and although you may cry, somewhere within you, you will feel that core of new steel.

(Alice J. Wisler is the author of the new novel, "Rain Song." Visit her Web site for more articles:

<http://www.alicewisler.com>)

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Alice J. Wisler

wisler@mindspring.com

Rain Song, the new novel, with a past
How Sweet It Is, arriving May 2009

You are invited: <http://www.alicewisler.com>

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

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/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 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 Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net & Denny Salomonson, 847-223-7353 drdeno@sbcglobal.net - daughter, Rachel Salomonson, 19, auto accident

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

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