



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

December 2020 Newsletter

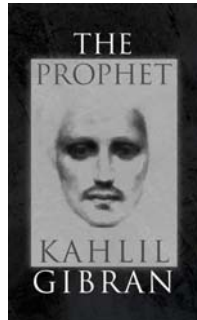


A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents

THE WELL OF SORROW AND JOY

When Matt died, I cried more than I thought possible. I didn't know I could shed so many tears. Sometimes the tears would rush to my eyes, unbidden and without warning. Sometimes I could feel the tears standing, waiting for a signal, for permission to be released...like when I visited my son's grave.

The Profit says that sorrow carves into your being. That seems exactly right. Grief hollowed me out. I've been emptied, gutted. My stomach muscles would ache from the heaving of my wails and screams. As I grieve, I want to believe that something good, beyond the annihilation of my being, is taking place.



Now I understand I have two choices. Neither of them will give my son back to me the way I want him - alive, laughing, warm, filling up my arms.

I can choose to stop living - not so much the suicide option, although I considered that, but the living - dead option: turning from life and love, hunkering down in my grief and waiting out the days of years left to me, holding tight to grief in all its anguished intensity, feeling that's the closest I can get to Matt while I still draw breath.

Or I can choose transformation, reaching, stumbling around trying to find my way back to living fully again. Making myself do things, be with people, be outside, take in nature's beauty, pay attention to good moments.

So far, I have chosen the path pointed toward living, mostly because I don't want my surviving sons to be burdened with more loss and pain. But I also feel the need to find out who I will be, having raised three wonderful sons and then buried one of them. I want to see who will be looking back at me from the mirror at the bottom of the well, someone who knows there can be light and life beyond the blackness...to see if my laughter will rise up from the deepest place that my tears have come from. As a bereaved mother I doubted that I could ever feel joy again, much less a joy that could match the depth of my sorrow.

There's a place of knowing inside each of us (the soul?) where we can realize that the words written in *The Profit* are true... and that it takes a lifetime of living to learn this wisdom. I hope it is true, because if it is, then the joy that is still possible in my life will be staggering, spectacular, indescribable and enduring.

Nancy Ronquillo

Borrowed from the national Newsletter of BP/USA. A JOURNEY TOGETHER, Winter 2011: [www. Bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.Bereavedparentsusa.org).

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



Eric Wiatr

January 21

Son of Debbie Esposito

Alyssa Carranza

January 22

Daughter of Luz Barrer and daughter 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

*You Are Cordially Invited to the
Worldwide Children's Candle Lighting Ceremony
We Remember Them
To Honor Your Child or Sibling Who Has Gone Too Soon*

Sunday December 13, 2020 6:30 p.m.

**A Virtual, Stay-Safe-At-Home Candle Lighting Ceremony
All You Need is A Candle, Computer or Cell Phone
Welcoming Music starts at 6:15 pm to begin joining**



Susan Banks is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Compassionate Friends Candle Lighting Ceremony

Time: Dec 13, 2020 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting (Click on the link to join the Ceremony)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87551193863?pwd=emhZUEEzVVpScDdiSnltVzhyYzhCdz09>

Meeting ID: 875 5119 3863

Passcode: 180378

Dial by your location

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/ksDt0yaMU>

We Remember them...

*"We come together in memory of a precious child whose light burnt so brightly,
yet so briefly. These children, who died from so many causes and at all
ages, are forever a part of our lives."*



The Compassionate Friends
Northern Lake County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**Questions? Call or text Susan at 847-366-9375
Email her at: lanwesmar@comcast.net**



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

Tracie Musich	December 4	Daughter of Trisha Musich
Rafael Villanveva	December 9	Son of Victoria Villanveva
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
Alina Booras	December 13	Daughter of Amanda Booras
Daniel Wang	December 15	Son of Millie Yu
Kerrin Fleming	December 16	Daughter 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 Carlsons	January 1	Son of Tina Carlson
		Grandson of Cheryl Armstrong
Andrew Naydihor	Januray 1	Son of Kelly Kozel
Anna Smith Miller	January 3	Daughter of Carol Smith
Michael Curtis	January 4	Son of Sonya Curtis
Eric Wiatr	January 5	Son of Debbie Eposito
Nathan Enright	January 7	Re: Christmas Tree Son of Martin Boyle
Casperin Hernandez	January 10	Son of Colleen Ramos
Michael Lee Brandon Frederick Hamilton	January 13	Son of Jan Frederick
		Grandson of Sharon Frederick
Gabriel Murphy, Jr.	January 16	Son of Arvine Murphy
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
Keegan Cray	January 21	Son of Kristin & Ken Willis
Sandra Elena Varela	January 31	Daughter of Sandra Prez

ANNIVERSARIES

Shane Betar	December 1	Son of Leia Betar
Nathan Enright	December 5	Son of Martin Boyle
Mike Reardon	December 6	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
Alyssa Burnstine	December 6	Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
Sean Jones	December 6	Son of Octavine Jones
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
Nick Battis	December 24	Son of Susan Battis
Casperin Hernandez	January 1	Son of Colleen Ramos
Noel Wendell Hernandez	January 1	Son of Colleen Ramos
Rachel Elizabeth Szech	January 2	Daughter Vicki Szech
Chris Houchin	January 5	Son of Scott Houchin & Heather McDonald
Lea Ann Knuth	January 16	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
Joey Frase	January 20	Son of Cathy Frase
Jacob Randall	January 21	Son of Lauri Randall

(Continued on page

Another Year Without My Child

By Annette Mennen Baldwin

In memory of her son, Todd Mennen

TCF, Katy, Texas

January 2007



It's a new year and I am marking it, for the fifth time, without my child. Last month was the fourth anniversary of his death. This is one more milestone in the journey of a bereaved parent. The New Year brings the promise of new

adventures, happiness and prosperity to others. To bereaved parents it adds another dimension to our loss. It also brings the opportunity to look at where we are and how far we have come.

I remember the first New Year's Day without my son. What an empty, hollow feeling I had on January 1, 2003. My world had ended, the shock was still systemic in my mind and body, and I counted the days since he last walked, talked and laughed on this earthly plane, dwelling on the passing of days, hours and minutes since the moment of his death. I was frozen.

Looking back at that time, I recall just how the pain felt; unlike other pain, the pain of losing a child is never forgotten. I feel the familiar jolt that rocked my mind and body each time I awoke to remember that my son had died. I remember the misery of slogging through endless, meaningless days. I remember the tears, the second-guessing, the anger, and the guilt.... I remember it all. I still bounce in and out of those emotions; this will never end. It has moderated greatly, but it never ends.

Now I am more focused on my son's life. Details about his life spring into my mind.... happy times, maturing times, good times and funny times. I remember it all with the clarity that only a mother can possess. And so, that is how I will begin this new year.... remembering the life of my child but never forgetting the loss.

I am a different person than I was before my son died. I feel as though a lightning bolt struck me on the day of his death, and now I perceive the world from a different vantage point. I have simplified my life from what it once was.

I have many new friends who share the experience of losing a child; I have permanently removed old friends from my life who simply couldn't accept my grief and were fearful of talking about my child. I have a new understanding of the problems that other parents face... problems that a mother of one never has to address. I have become more solidly spiritual. I have gone

through Dante's unique person I should have been all along. People change. Bereaved parents change a great deal.

I no longer dread each new day. I no longer weep silently every night. I no longer ache from head to foot with the pain of losing my child. I read, I write, I stay active in the community. I work in my small business, doing what I want to do and what I must do. I go to museums, to movies, to stage plays. I listen to music, watch television and work in my home and yard.

Amazingly, my word recall and memory are returning. Forgetting names, events, people, destinations and other critical factors of daily life was something I dealt with for over three and half years. I thought I had lost my mind until I started talking to other parents. I have begun doing memorization exercises...something I probably should have done three years ago. I am learning that the journey through grief lasts for a lifetime. Each stage is different, each sudden, poignant memory is paralyzing and each new day brings an opportunity to evaluate progress.

Much has changed during the past four years. Much will change throughout my life. Each of us experiences the loss of our child at the deepest level of our psyches. Yet each of us comes to this place with a different set of experiences and a unique genetic composition. I cannot compare myself to others. I can only mark my tiny steps forward with a sense of wonder at the resiliency of the human mind and spirit while simultaneously accepting that I am not in control...at any moment a flash of the past might bring me to my knees. I have learned to go with it.

I have found hope for the future. It certainly isn't the future I had envisioned. There will be no late-night talks with my son, no holidays or birthdays shared, no participation in my son's children's lives, no cards, no handmade gifts. That door was closed by lawsuit happy former in-laws who have no standing in my life today. I have crawled through the minefields and dodged the bullets of some pretty mentally unbalanced people and survived. I have faced the abyss of losing my only child while enduring the cruelest of sniping, the worst of intentionally inflicted pain. I did none of this with grace and finesse.....I merely got through it. I survived. I became stronger by letting



(Continued on page 5)

(Another Year Without my Child continued from page 4)

go of my anger. I found hope by remembering the goodness that is my son and by leaning on friends who had lost their children. These friends were there for me when I so desperately needed the comfort of kindred souls: Compassionate Friends who reached out to me gave me the glimmer of hope when all seemed forever lost and living was almost intolerable.

Now the healing process has completed its circle. I am here for those parents who need me. Strangely this helps me to heal as well. I reach out to others who are new to the process of grief, and I tell them that there is hope.



One day the sunrise will again be beautiful and you will find peace within yourself. You will remember your child's life, you will honor your child's life and you will forever be changed by your child's death. But always, always, your child will remain in your heart. This is my truth to all who wish to know. Lean on us, for we have been where you are today. We will walk with you on your journey toward hope, peace and resolution. It is in this place that the healing will begin.

Christmas Thoughts



Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels and the stars and beloved carol, beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking, beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas...beyond all of these...there is HOPE.

HOPE...for the bereaved parents, even at Christmas, one of the most, if not the most painful times of the year, there is a small essence of hope. Hope... it is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness.

The hope is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased. The hope is that someday our smiles will be real. The hope is that once again we will laugh and love and cry com-

pletely without the fear and hollowness. It is the hope that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelming with it.

So it is that for each of you, I would hope...Peace, Compassion, Love, Sympathy, Understanding, Sharing and Listening. In the sharing of our grief with one another, and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and understand all these gifts.

TCF/Terre Haute, IN

TEN

by Sandy Goodman



ten christmas dinners
 ten lighted trees
 ten nights of candles burning by your grave.
 ten years,
 a decade . . .
 of missing you
 and still my breath catches
 when i close my eyes and call you to me
 and see your smile
 and hear your laugh
 and feel your love.
 you are not gone from our season of joy.
 you live on and touch us to remind us that trees and candles and family dinners
 are the memories
 we fill with the light of love to sustain us for eternity.



Susan
Allbee
Rusty Anderson
Westley Banks - Aaron Barrera
Jose Barrera - Nick Battis - Shane Betar
Montana (Monti) Brown
Mitchell Carlson
Ana Sophia Comacho - Carlos Cantu
Alyssa Carranza - Marcia Castillo
Amanda Cecchi - Anthony Clemente
Nathan Clyde - Robert Corbett
Keegan Cray - Sage Cue - Michael Curtis
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 - Justin Cody Ortega
Blake Logan Palmer - Nicole Parfitt - Justin Perez - Andrew C Perkins
Kevin Pomianek - Donyel Prather - Rayj RAjuniec Jr. - Jacob Randall
Mike Reardon - Timothy Reece - Brandon Reif - Sven Christian Reinhard - Luis F Reyes
Rachel Elaine Robertson - Mitchell Rodefer - Lisa Roseman - Adam Rubin - Lila Ruffolo -
Zachary Taylor - Rachel Salomonson - Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro - Griffin Schumow -
Ashley Seay - Kal-El O. Sexton - Jaime Smith - Dylan Smith -
Anthony Sosa - David Spannraft - Josephine Stewart - Jeff Stirnichuk - 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 Villan-
veva
Edgar O Villareal - Qua'Shawn Wade - Jeff Wagner - Brandon Ward - Daniel Wang - Nick Weber
Paulina Welch - Eric Wiatr
Lindsay Wilczynski - Liz Willding
Darien Wilson - Jacilynn Wright
Lauren Wood - Mark Yates - Roderick Young
Andrea Zamarron - 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. ©2008 The Compassionate Friends/USA

Borrowed from the Greater Kankakee IL Area TCF Newsletter © 2008



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, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 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 CO-LEADERSHIP Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net Rachel Salomonson Age 19 – Auto accident, Susan Banks 847-336-8375 lanwesmar@comcast.net
. Westly Banks Age 21 – Of suicide

TREASURER/COMMUNITY OUTREACH Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 julyson2@gmail.com
Aaron Barrera Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

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

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY

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

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 COORDINATORS 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