



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

December 2021 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

If Christmas is hard. If you've lost someone dear.
 Just look in your heart,
 And you'll know they're still here.
 The star in the sky, the light falling snow.
 The cardinal outside, It seems like they know.
 If this is a time,
 When you're struggling through.
 Just do what you can, for what matters, is you.
 There's no need to be merry, there's no need to be bright.
 Just do what you can, it will be alright.



By Lorna Gibson

Dear Friends,
 I wish each of you a kind and peaceful holiday. Focus on what you can control ~ do what is right for you during the holidays. Allow yourself a range of emotions ~ it's ok to be sad and it's ok to feel joy.

Your friend, Susan
 Westley's mom

The Children's Christmas

By Rasemary J Gwaltney

The children's Christmas is simple and bright
 They sing the music, they laugh in the light,
 Sparkling colors are a magical spell,
 Their instant joy flows bubbling and well.

But round that tree I see a space,
 Beside the table an empty place,
 A voice is missing, a form of grace,
 The sweetness of a little lost face.

A vacuum was left by the child who's gone;
 Though all seems right, yet it's terribly wrong.
 I'd give up my Christmas, and gaiety fine,
 To clasp that small hand again in mine.



A DEATH HAS OCCURRED

by Paul Irion

A death has occurred and everything is changed.
 We are painfully aware that life
 Can never be the same again,
 That yesterday is over,
 That relationships once rich have ended.

But there is another way to look upon this truth.
 If life now went on the same,
 Without the presence of the one who died,
 We could only conclude that the life we remember Made
 no contribution, filled no space, meant nothing.

The fact that this person left behind a place
 That cannot be filled
 Is a high tribute to this individual.
 Life can be the same after a trinket has been lost, But never
 after the loss of a treasure.



GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the passionate 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 Charles & Louise Knoll
For their gift of love
In memory of their son
James McClintock

"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

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

Millburn Congregational Church
19073 West Grass Lake Road
Lake Villa, IL 60046.

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

Holy Family Church

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

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

Joey Frase

January 20

Son of Cathy Frase

Eric Wiatr

January 21

Son of Debbie Esposito

Alyssa Carranza

January 22

Granddaughter of Angel & Raquel Gasco

Michael Sean Gaede

January 31

Son of Maureen Gaede

A NOTE TO THE NEWLY BEREAVED (and a reminder to the rest of us) By Sascha

The first months and years after bereavement can be terrifying. It seems as if the pain stays at a monotonous peak; it seems as if one's mind will be lost at any moment. And although most of us "get better" after the first terror, we usually do not realize that until we look back, years later.

When we think about it, this state-of-affairs is almost "reasonable". After such an overwhelmingly traumatic experience, we can fall – as it were – to the end of the world. Coming back from there is bound to be slow beyond our imagination and fraught with reversals. So far, no one has found a method to avoid this painful journey back. But perhaps it will help to know you have already begun to travel. You will find it is a long journey and desperately hard and you may almost want to stay where you are. But you will realize later that the wind of tomorrow is already stretching your sails, and life awaits for you across the sea. If you only knew...



**OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED
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.

Tracie Musich
Rafael Villanveva
Joey Frase
Anthony Clemente
Ryan James Nichols
Alina Booras
Daniel Wang
Kerrin Fleming
Zack A Maslanich
Mark Yates
Delilah Vivian Butler
Barry J Grazier
Raphael E Vidal
Mitchell Carlson

Andrew Naydihor
Anna Smith Miller
Michael Curtis
Eric Wiatr
Nathan Enright
Casperin Hernandez
Michael Frederick Hamilton

Gabriel Murphy, Jr.
Matthew Tisch
Brain Scott Engle
Justin Cody Ortega
Keegan Cray
Sandra Elena Varela

December 4
December 9
December 11
December 12
December 12
December 13
December 15
December 16
December 18
December 20
December 21
December 22
December 24
January 1

Januray 1
January 3
January 4
January 5
January 7
January 10
January 13

January 16
January 17
January 19
January 20
January 21
January 31

BIRTHDAYS

Daughter of Trisha Musich
Son of Victoria Villanveva
Son of Cathy Frase
Son of Becky Wolf
Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
Daughter of Amanda Booras
Son of Millie Yu
Daughter of Barbara Fleming
Son of Karen Zimmerman
Son of Linda Hegg
Daughter of Aileen & Chris Butler
Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
Son of Tina Carlson
Grandson of Cheryl Armstrong
Son of Kelly Kozel
Daughter of Carol Smith
Son of Sonya Curtis
Son of Debbie Eposito
Son of Martin Boyle
Son of Colleen Ramos
Son of Jan Frederick
Grandson of Sharon Frederick
Son of Arvine Murphy
Son of William & Barbara Tisch
Son of Louise Engle
Son of Susie Meggs
Son of Kristin & Ken Willis
Daughter of Sandra Prez

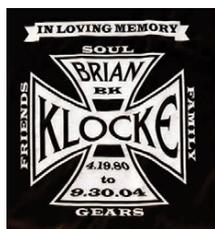
ANNIVERSARIES

Shane Betar
Nathan Enright
Mike Reardon
Alyssa Burnstine
Sean Jones
Mitchell Rodefer
Felicity Patrick
Andrew Muno
Scott Ewing
Nick Battis
Casperin Hernandez
Noel Wendell Hernandez
Rachel Elizabeth Szech
Chris Houchin
Lea Ann Knuth

December 1
December 5
December 6
December 6
December 6
December 6
December 6
December 6
December 15
December 16
December 24
January 1
January 1
January 2
January 5
January 16

Son of Leia Betar
Son of Martin Boyle
Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
Son of Octavine Jones
Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
Daughter of Nicole Patrick
Son of Darlene Muno
Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
Son of Susan Battis
Son of Colleen Ramos
Son of Colleen Ramos
Daughter Vicki Szech
Son of Scott Houchin & Heather McDonald
Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise

(Continued on page 2)



MENDED SHIRT—MENDED HEART

My life changed forever. I lost my oldest son, Brian, in a motorcycle accident. Our family struggled through the fog of grief. Many friends and family worked tirelessly to help us along our rough road. None more so than Brian's car club pals.

As I was sitting and reflecting on the past ten years and how I ever made it from there to here, I looked at a T-shirt Brian's friends had printed up right after they heard the news. I saw many similarities between those T-shirts and my grief. Looking at the photos of the new shirts made me think how the image of the design was so sharp, just like my grief, on a fabric black as night with a sharp white edge that hurt to look at it. My grief was like that. I didn't want to look at it because if I did I had to come to grips with the fact that it really did happen...my son was gone.

I have worn that shirt many times over the last ten years and noticed, not unlike my grief, the shirt has been softened by time. The black is not so black. It has slowly, without notice, shifted colors to a dark gray. Almost like the gray of the sky before the sun rises. The edges of the image have blurred. You can still see the ghost of an image but it's not quite white. I might compare them to the wrinkles that formed on my face from the early days of my grief. They are still there, etched in my face but fade when I find occasions to smile. The shirt has holes worn in many places, but are carefully patched with thread... much like my heart over the years. A thoughtless comment, people forgetting to mention my son's name, all the special occasions spent without him. Somehow, with the help of loved ones and dear friends I've been able to mend the holes in my heart just like the holes in my T-shirt. There are days when the patch doesn't quite hold and the tears flow and the heart aches once more, but like the shirt a good friend or family member will come along and help me mend the fraying thread.

My black T-shirt, like my grief has become a part of me. We have changed over time but if you look closely you can see that image still there, showing it's never gone, just faded. Now I can close my eyes

and, like the printing on my T-shirt when it was new, I can see the good memories of my time with my son as sharp, clear and beautiful as a crisp fall sky and thank God for my time with him.

Greg Klocke, St. Charles, Missouri

(Borrowed from a Journey Together, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA, Volume XX No. 1, Winter 2015, www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

ANOTHER CHRISTMAS



What can I possibly say to help someone through the holidays? I cannot recall how many times I have wished for magic words to ease someone else's pain. But, of course, there are no magic words. There aren't even any answers. But there are suggestions of ideas tried in the past. As bereaved parents and siblings, it is important to share our experiences with newly bereaved families who look to us for help.

Our first Christmas without our son Jesse, we changed almost all of our normal activities. We traditionally had had dinner in my husband's parents' home. That first year, instead, we had dinner at my daughter's home. We invited friends who did not have family in the area. We shopped very little. The stores and crowds were too much to handle. We hung no decorations or stockings, had no tree — nothing. I stayed busy making candy and baking breads.

We tried to help others less fortunate than our-

(continued on page 5)

(Another Christmas continued from page 4)

selves. We donated toys and food to various Charities. We participated in a Breakfast with Santa with Project Kind, the wonderful school Jesse had attended. Basically, we did what we had to do to survive. Friends and family seemed to understand or at least accepted our changes. Maybe they just didn't want to discuss it. Whatever! We survived those first holidays, much to our amazement.

The second Christmas season we had a new one-month old granddaughter. She helped a lot. We all know that our children can never be replaced. But if there is someone or something else to focus on, even for awhile, it helps. We had dinner at our home that year. We put up decorations, including Jesse's stocking. We decided that anyone who wished could write Jesse a note and place it in his stocking. Between preparing dinner and loving the new baby, again we survived.

Now this year we intend to return to Jim's parents. I don't dread Christmas nearly as much as before. I'm not really looking forward to it, but I don't panic at the thought. What I would like to suggest to others is to do what you need to do. Other peoples' expectations don't automatically have to be met. Discuss your feelings with family members. Remember, they hurt too. They will try to understand and respect your feelings. It takes a lot of time and energy to grieve. Allow yourself all the time you need.

I hope that something I mentioned is of help to newly bereaved families. The holidays can be painful, but we shall survive them. Maybe next year will be easier, and the next even easier still. Maybe before too long, we can enjoy all the memories of Christmases past without so much pain.

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas.

Brenda Hobbs Denton, Texas

(Borrowed from a Journey Together, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA, Volume XX No. 1, Winter 2015, www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

So This is Normal

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile when you realize someone important is missing from all the important events in your family's life.

Normal is trying to decide what to take to the cemetery for Birthdays, Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years, Valentine's Day, July 4th.

Normal is feeling like you can't sit another minute without getting up and screaming, because you just don't like to sit through anything anymore.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand what if's and why didn't I's go through your head constantly.

Normal is reliving that day continuously through your eyes and mind, holding your head to make it go away.

Normal is having the TV on the minute you walk into the house to have noise, because the silence is deafening.

Normal is every happy event in my life always being backed up with sadness lurking close behind, because of the hole in my heart.

Normal is staring at every boy who looks like he is my son's age. And then thinking of the age he would be now. Then wondering why it is even important to imagine it, because it will never happen.

Normal is telling the story of my child's death as if it were an everyday, common place activity, and then seeing the horror in someone's eyes at how awful it sounds. And yet realizing it has become a part of my "normal."

Normal is having some people afraid to mention my child. Normal is making sure that others remember her.

Continued on page 7)



Susan
Allbee

Rusty Anderson

Westley Banks - Aaron Barrera

Jose Barrera - Nick Battis

Ayva Begier - Shane Betar

Montana (Monti) Brown - Delilah Butler

Carlos Cantu - Roman Cantu - Mitchell Carlson

Alyssa Carranza - Marcia Castillo

Amanda Cecchi - Anthony Clemente - Nathan Clyde

Ana Sophia Comacho - Robert Corbett - Keegan Cray

Sage Cue - Michael Curtis - Jennifer Dennis

Erin Dinklenburg - Heather Donnelly - Brian Engel - Nathan Enright

Brian 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 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 - Scott Levin - Kevin Lopez

Brian Scott Ludlow - Rasheed Mariano - Selene Martinez

Zack Maslanich - Shannon McCarty - James McClintock

Pressley Suzanne McHugh - Marion Meana - Alina Mejdouli - Danny Middaugh

Raegan Migacz - Maggie Miles - Anna Smith Miller - Elora Montgomery

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

Pauline Parsons - Felicity Patrick - Justin Perez - Andrew C Perkins

Timothy Pitzen* - Kevin Pomianek - Donyel Prather - Ray Rajuniec Jr. - Javier Ramirez

Jacob Randall - Mike Reardon - Timothy Reece - Brandon Reif - Sven Christian Reinhardt

Luis F Reyes - Rachel Elaine Robertson - Mitchell Rodefer - Lisa Roseman - Adam Rubin -

Lila Ruffolo - Taylor Rydahl - Mark Sailors - Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro - Griffin Schumow - Ashley Seay

Kal-El O. Sexton - Dylan Smith - Jaime Smith - Anthony Sosa - David Spannraft -

Josephine Stewart - Rachel Salomonson - 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

Edgar O Villareal - Raphael Villanveva - Qua'Shawn Wade - Jeff Wagner

Brandon Ward - Daniel Wang - Nick Weber - Paulina Welch - Eric Wiatr - Lindsay Wilczynski

Liz Willding - Lauren Wood

Darien Wilson - Jacilynn Wright

- Mark Yates - Roderick Young

Stephanie Andrea Zamorro

(So This is Normal from page 5)



Take care of yourself physically. If you are in a Normal is weeks, months, and years after the initial shock, the grieving gets worse sometimes, not better.

Normal is not listening to people compare anything in their life to this loss, unless they too have lost a child. Nothing — even if your child is in the remotest part of the earth away from you — it doesn't compare. Losing a parent is horrible, but having to bury your own child is unnatural.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with chat buddies who have also lost a child.

Normal is feeling a common bond with friends on the computer in the UK or US but yet never having met any of them face to face.

Normal is a new friendship with another grieving mother, talking and crying together over our children and our new lives.

Normal is not listening to people make excuses for God. "God may have done this because..." I know that my child is in heaven, but hearing people trying to think up excuses as to why my child was taken from this earth is not appreciated and makes absolutely no sense to this grieving mother.

Normal is wondering this time whether you are going to say you have two children, because you will never see this person again and it is not worth explaining that my eldest child is in heaven. And yet when you say you have only two children to avoid that problem, you feel horrible as if you have betrayed your child.

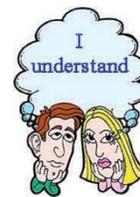
Normal is asking God why he took your child's life and asking if there even is a God.

Normal is knowing I will never get over this loss, in a day or a million years.

And last of all, Normal is hiding all the things that have become "normal" for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are "normal."

(Borrowed from a Journey Together, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA, Volume XX No. 1, Winter 2015,

www.bereavedparentsusa.org



We Speak the Same Language

For bereaved parents, it is often after the funeral in the weeks and months that follow when the full weight of grief bears down. Some people try to stay busy by throwing themselves into activities. But at some point, you have to address your grief. It is during this time that bereaved parents need to find at least one person with whom to share that pain. Sometimes, that person is a counselor or other parent(s) who has lost a child.

There is solidarity among people who have experienced this kind of loss. It is, thank God, a very small percentage of the universe. If you are part of that small percentage, though, you don't know if you are going to survive. Being around other bereaved parents is like talking to people who speak the same language.

Jacquie G. Bluethmann

(Borrowed from a Journey Together, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA, Volume XX No. 1, Winter 2015,

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

LOVE GIFTS

Enclosed in a check in the amount of _____ to be used as follows (check all that apply):

In loving memory of _____

In honor of _____

Sponsor the newsletter for _____ month) (\$25 pays ½ monthly cost)

Pay for a book for the chapter's Lending Library _____

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter _____

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be included in the "special days" list each month in the newsletter, you must fill out this form that gives us permission to list this information. If you are making a donation, please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends**.

Return to Tammie Barrera, 821 Roberts Road, Winthrop Harbor, IL. 60096

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always appreciated. Please include the author of any written works. Send your items for the newsletter to Vicki Szech at vszech@comcast.net or 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Libertyville, IL 60048.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive

TCF National Office - 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI - 48393 PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246. The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

Steering Committee 2021 – 2022

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

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

COMMUNITY OUTREACH Sue Battis 847-445-7004 suebattis@yahoo.com son, Nick Battis Age 24 of suicide.

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

SECRETARY / LIBRARIAN

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

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

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 - daughter Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 Pulmonary Embolism

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

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

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

NORTHERN LAKE COUNTY COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS FACEBOOK page <https://www.facebook.com/cfoncil>

Facebook Pages for Siblings - The Sounds of the Siblings: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/>

TCF SIBS: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcfsibs/>