



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

December 2022 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear Friends,

I wish each of you a kind and peaceful holiday. We are all in different places with our grief and our missing our loved one who has gone to soon. There are no rules for surviving this holiday grief we all feel. It will ebb and flow the whole season and then for some time after when all is done, and the next month has arrived. Do what you need to do to survive. Honor your loved one how you need to, and do what feels best for your fragile, yearning heart. You are missing a huge piece of you, so do whatever you need to do to find a sliver of peace. Focus on what you can control ~ do what is right for you and your family during the holidays. Allow yourself a range of emotions ~ it's ok to be sad and it's ok to feel joy.

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.



Lorna Gibson

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 Old Town Court
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.



Upcoming events for our Chapter.

First Thursday of the month meeting on December 1, 2022, is our Zoom meeting. At this meeting you will be invited to light a candle for your loved one and share a picture with those joining the meeting. This will not be a formal Candle Lighting Ceremony, but we will honor the memories of our loved one with readings, lighting a candle and showing a picture. I will send an email and the Zoom link for the meeting the week of November 28, 2022.

Sunday December 11, 2022, Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony; The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December 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. The ceremony will be held at the Millburn Congregational United Church of Christ, 19073 W. Old Grass Lake Rd, Lake Villa, 60046. The parking lot is behind the church off Old Town Court. Enter through the double glass doors. There will be a greeter to guide you to the chapel.

The third Thursday of December 12/15/2022. We will have our in-person meeting at the Milburn Church. We will begin our meeting at 7:00pm - 8:30pm.

If you have any questions about the mentioned events, please call, email, or text Susan at 847.366.9375 or Lanwesmar@comcast.net

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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 enjoy- ing 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.

(Holiday 2007 continued from page 4)



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.

BIRTHDAYS

Montana (Monti) Brown	December 1	Son of Donna Brown
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
Rasheed Mariano	December 15	Joan Mariano
Daniel Wang	December 15	Son of Millie Yu
Kerrin Fleming	December 16	Daughter of Barbara Fleming
Jacilynn Wright	December 16	Daughter of Michell Wright
		Niece of Susan Banks
Zack A Maslanich	December 18	Son of Karen Zimmerman
Delilah Vivian Butler	December 21	Daughter of Aileen & Chris Butler
Barry J Grazier	December 22	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
Raphael E Vidal	December 24	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
Mitchell Carlson	January 1	Son of Tina Carlson
		Grandson of Cheryl Armstrong
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	Son of Martin Boyle
Casperin Hernandez	January 10	Son of Colleen Ramos
Michael 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
Angel Reyes Soto	January 18	Son of Ricardo Reyes & Alma Sotoi
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
Felicity Patrick	December 6	Daughter of Nicole Patrick

(Continued on page 7)

We Remember Them

*The Compassionate Friends of
Northern Lake County
invites you and your family and friends
to the **Worldwide Children's
Candle Lighting Ceremony***

*"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. "*

Sunday, December 11, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

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

** Note that road construction has created a new
Grass Lake Rd & changed the access to the
building which is now on Old Grass Road.
Candles are provided for everyone at no cost.
You are invited to stay for refreshments after the
ceremony.*

*You are welcome to bring a dessert or snack to
share if you like. Coffee and water will be provid-
ed. A table & display board will be provided for
families who would like to post photos
and/or share mementos of their children and sib-
lings and grandchildren.*

(Holidays continued from page 2)

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



REMEMBER YOUR CHILD DURING THE HOLIDAYS

We generally associate the December holidays with festive decorations, gift giving, and the laughter of little children. For a parent who has lost a child, just the word holiday can cause great emotional pain. It is difficult to walk into a store and be bombarded with all of the reminders of children. The toys, holiday clothes, colorful children's gift wrap, and the holiday music being sung by young children all bring on waves of grief that are difficult to bear.

Often parents who have lost a child find themselves falling into a depression around holiday season time. It would be far easier to avoid the holidays than to face the season without the joy of your precious child. With some planning prior to the holiday season, the pain of loss can be softened somewhat.

At some point, though, it becomes necessary to face the reality of the holiday season as being very different. Parents need ways to remember their child during this time of the year. By doing something special, parents will find it a bit easier and far more healing to face the otherwise empty holiday season.

It is quite healing to remember your child by lighting a candle in memory of your little one. The candle can be placed on a decorated table in a special place in your home where you will feel your child is still very close to you. There are many types of memory candles one can buy, and you can place small mementos of your child on the table with the candle. This might be painful to see at first, but it will also create an atmosphere for healing.

Remember your child by placing a special ornament on the tree. There are many stores that will do creative engraving, which you

(Continued on page 5)

(Remembering Your child During the Holidays from page4)



treasured all the days of your life.

might find to be a desirable option for you. Have a special phrase or saying engraved along with the date of your child,s birth and death. The keepsake ornament will become

Remember your child by creating a memory box that can be shared with others during the holidays. Use your imagination as to what you want to place

in the memory box. You can even decorate the memory box together as a special time of gathering the family together to remember.

Many parents find it very healing to hang a stocking with their child's name on it by the fireplace mantle. Fill the stocking with some small gifts that were memorable of your child. Also, it might be very healing to write a letter or poem to your child and place it in the stocking. During a family meal, have someone read the letter, then place it in the memory box you,ve created. Each year a letter can be added. This will one day become a family treasure.

If you have some sewing ability, a wonderful way of remembering your child is to create a small quilt from some of your child,s clothes. This quilt will be cherished for years to come, as it will remain a priceless remembrance of your special child.

As you think of ways to remember your child during the holidays, do things that will be healing to your heart. Remember-there is no right or wrong way to remember. Do those things that are healing specifically to you! By remembering and including your child in the holiday, you will promote an atmosphere of healing and hope.

- Written by Clara Hinton
 ~~shared by Cathy Seehuetter, Newsletter Editor,
 Atlanta online newsletter, 12/16/07
 ~reprinted from St. Paul, MN Chapter, November/December 2007/January 2008 Newsletter



The Other Stocking

By Dana Gensler
 TCF of South Central
 Kentucky

We struggled and debated about our Christmas traditions after Lindsay died. Should we keep them the same? Should we add a few? Delete a few? Create some new ones? One question we particularly struggled with was the idea of hanging stockings. In the beginning, we didn't hang any. Our other children were too young to know anything of stockings and the treats and goodies they are supposed to hold, so it was easy to ignore the stocking-question a few years.

Everything changed when Melissa asked why her friends found stockings on Christmas morning, but she and Katie Rose did not. I bought a couple of kits, made them each one and hung them by the chimney. But on the days leading up to Christmas that year, it was more than I could manage to see two stockings and none for Lindsay.

So the Christmas of 1993, I made another personalized stocking. It brought me great comfort to sew on the beads and sequins, while dreaming of hanging it in its proper place between the other two. I was finally coming to some sort of peace about Lindsay's death (as well as we can), and while we struggled a few years about what we should and shouldn't do, one thing I was sure of: As long as we didn't do anything that hurt ourselves or anyone else, then it was okay.

On Christmas Eve we hung the special ornaments we had collected for the kids, set

(Continued on page 6)



Susan
Allbee

Rusty Anderson

Westley Banks - Aaron Barrera

Jose Barrera - Nick Battis - Ayva Begier

Martin H. Bernal - Shane Betar - Montana Brown

Delilah Butler - Carlos Cantu - Alyssa Carranza

Marcia Castillo - Amanda Cecchi - Nathan Clyde

Robert Corbett - Keegan Cray - Sage Cue - Michael Curtis

Jennifer Dennis - Erin Dinklenburg

Heather Donnelly - 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 - Megan Candice Grace - Sharon Beth Gray - Brendan Hall

Barry J Grazier - Jim Grazier - Marc Hawkinson - Kelsey Heaps

Colin Henderson - Heidi Hermann - Casperin Hernandez - José De Jesús Hernandez

Noel Wendell Hernandez - Korey Hill - Chris Houchin - Jammi Shonlei Hui - Sean Jones

Brian Keough - Lily Grace Kennedy - Donette Klawonn - Kelly Klawonn

Lea Anne Knuth - Brian Langevin - Adam Michael Laufer - Kevin Lopez

Scott Levin - Brian Scott Ludlow - Selene Martinez

Zack Maslanich - Shannon McCarty - James McClintock

Pressley Suzanne McHugh - Jake Mosansky

Alina Mejdouli - Daniel Middaugh - Raegan Lee Migacz - Maggie Miles

Anna Smith Miller - Aaron R. Moore - Elora Montgomery - Andrew Muno - Gabriel Murphy, Jr.

Micah Gerald Musich - Tracie Musich - David Nesheim

Levi A Nichols - Ryan James Nichols - Justin Cody Ortega - Nicole Parfitt

Felicity Patrick - Andrew C Perkins - Victoria Pickett

Daniel Powalish - Donyel Prather - Rayj Rajuniec Jr. - Javier Ramirez

Timothy Reece - Sven Christian Reinhard - Luis F Reyes - Taylor Rydahl

Rachel Elaine Robertson - Mitchell Rodefer - Lisa Roseman - Adam Rubin - Lila Ruffolo

Rachel Salomonson - Alexandria Scarbro - Charlie Schmit

Griffin Schumow - Ashley Seay - Kal-El O. Sexton - Dylan Smith - Jamie Smith - Anthony Sosa

Angel Reyes Soto - David Spannraft - Josephine Stewart - Jeff Stirnichuk - Josh Summers

Rachel Elizabeth Szech - Zachary Taylor - Anne Thomson - John Thumel - Matthew Tisch

Tony Trejo - Danielle Trevithick - Sandra Varela - Raphael Vidal - Raphael Villanveva

Edgar O Villareal - Qua'Shawn Wade - Jeff Wagner - Brandon Ward - Daniel Wang - Autumn

Ward

Nick Weber - Paulina Welch - William Werchek - Eric Wiatr

Lindsay Wilczynski - Liz Willding

Darien Wilson - Jacilynn Wright

Lauren Wood - Roderick Young



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

Jose Barrera

December 14

Son of Lorena Alcala & Orsy Barrera

Adrien Gonzales

December 15

Son of Lauren Gonzales

Andrew Munro

December 15

Son of Darlene Munro

Scott Ewing

December 16

Son of Alan & Renee Ewing

Kal-El O. Sexton

December 21

Derry Sexton

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

Ayva Guthrie Begier

January 20

Granddaughter of Tom Begier

Joey Frase

January 20

Son of Cathy Frase

Carlie Schmit

January 20

Son of Jean-Schmit-Gill

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

after he died
my life's purpose
became
making my little piece
of this world
a more beautiful place
in his honor;
so,
anyone who knows me,
knows him

Grand to Grand, Publishing ©



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 Alana Anderson
For sponsoring the newsletter
In memory of her daughter,
Amy Fry Pitzen,
And in honor of grandson
Timothy James Pitzen,
Missing since 5/13/11**

**Thanks to Barbara Fleming
For sponsoring the newsletter
In memory of her daughter,
Kerrin 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.

(The Other Stocking continued from page 2) the nativity up in its usual place of honor, and hung the three stockings across the mantle. The house was filled with the smells of Christmas, lit only by candlelight and the twinkling lights of the Kentucky cedar. Phil and I stayed up late, frantically assembling the bicycles and dollhouses, filling the stockings, wrapping the last-minute gifts, and then fell into a deep slumber.

Early the next morning I was awakened by Melissa's urgent whisper, "Mom! Wake up! I have something to show you!"

Assuming she was going to exclaim over the red bike parked in the living room, I woke Phil to join the celebration. But when we walked into the living room, my eyes were immediately drawn, not to the bike, but to the three stockings hanging on the mantle.

"Don't you see, Mom?" Melissa's voice was quivering. "Santa forgot to put anything in Lindsay's stocking!" And sure enough- between the two stockings which were bulging with prizes and treats and favors, hung another one, forlorn and aching empty. I could hear its screaming accusations.

"Do you think Santa sneaked in our rooms to see who lives here?" she asked.

I was weeping now. The fact that Lindsay's stocking looked so starkly different from the others was MY fault, not Santa's. I was the one who bought the treats to fill them, but I just didn't realize . . . I suppose I thought simply having it there was enough.

As I sat down, hugging a new Winnie-the Pooh, Phil handed the stockings to the girls. I was lost in thought and grief, blaming myself for this incredible blunder, when Melissa very matter-of-factly dumped the contents of her stocking into my lap and said, "Here, Mom, Lindsay can have some of mine." And Katie Rose very quietly dropped an orange and two root beer barrels in the



(Continued on page 9)

(The Other Stocking continued from page 8)

other stocking. "These are for you, Lindsay," she said.

It just so happens sometimes that we think we are going to be okay with certain things, only to discover this is not so. And we eventually learn that it is okay to try new and different rituals every year until we know what feels right for us. We learn to live with our grief in different ways and we learn what we need to do in order to find a little comfort and peace.

If this is your first (or second or fifth) Christmas since your child died, you may be struggling with the stocking question and other holiday issues. There is no "Griever's Book of Christmas Etiquette," because this is something we must discover on our own, in our own time and in our own way. Be good to yourself. Only YOU know what gives you that "feel-good" feeling. Give yourself permission to do what you need to do.

May your Christmas be gentle and touched by an angel's love.

~reprinted with permission from We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.
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Grief is not a mere word, but a journey through the pathways of our heart. To where our journey leads us is never certain but is painful just the same. Grief should not be measured by pain, but also by love. To love is to hurt, to hurt is to heal, to heal is to accept. No grief is ever the same. Please, be kind to yourself.

By Susie Cross
In Memory of her son Jasper Burns, 3/16/83 –
2/11/99

Black Ice



We cannot live in Wisconsin unless we learn how to drive in the snow. Six, twelve, twenty inches life goes on, work continues, churches meet, schools gather. Daily life just isn't affected much. But just below the snow a thin coat of black ice can make life treacherous.

The funny thing is that every year, every single year, the first snow brings with it a rush of fender benders. People forget how to drive in the snow and four inches which won't even slow us down in January devastates individual lives.

You and I are a lot like Wisconsinites learning to drive in the snow. In order to get through life we have to deal with our grief. We cannot hide from grief. Life continues whether we grieve or not. It is that treacherous black ice which surprises us leading to a series of breakdowns on the path to healing. Maybe it is a song or a hallmark ad. We think we're ok. We've driven through birthdays and holidays. We're confident that we can handle all this snow.

Then we're spinning out of control. Shocked we desperately grab for security. In Wisconsin we all pack blankets, food, water and a shovel. Bereaved parents need emergency supplies too. Friends, meetings, whatever it takes to get through this winter season. We need to slow down, adjust to the conditions, think ahead. We'll make it; and people who live in the sunshine will wonder how we can. It just takes a little practice.

Keith Swett,
Seymour, WI
Borrowed from the Newsletter of BP/USA. A JOURNEY TOGETHER, Volume XVIII No. 1, Winter 2013
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

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

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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>

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

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