



# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

February 2020 Newsletter

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

## Chapter Leader Notes from Toni



### WE'RE GIVING BACK!



### Adopt - A- Highway

I am very proud to announce that on October 24, 2019, our chapter was designated as a member of the Adopt-A-Highway program by the Lake County Transportation Division/Lake County Board of Commissioners.

This designation was sought as the result of chapter members who thought that it was appropriate to actively give back to the community. Collectively, as grieving parents, grandparents and siblings, we wanted to recognize the communities that supported us in our darkest hours.

Our chapter is now responsible for picking up litter two times a year, in the spring and fall, along both sides **Deep Lake Road from IL Rt. 173** and of the county line road with

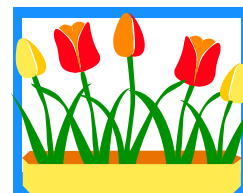
**Wisconsin.** This is a distance of 2 miles. We hoped to get a stretch of road near the Raven Glen Forest Preserve, where our Woodland Walk is, but that was already designated for another group.

We will need volunteers to fulfill our new responsibility! The Lake County Transportation Department will provide us with the guidelines as well as safety signs and safety vests and trash bags. Participants will need to bring gloves and a device for picking up litter, if desired. Wearing long pants and a long sleeved shirt with old or waterproof shoes would be appropriate.

We will publicize the date for the cleanup and further details as soon as we receive it from Lake County Transportation. Susan Banks (847-366-9375) is the contact person for this program.

I would like to thank Susan Banks, Leia Betar, Kris Frisby, Shannon Seay and Tammie Barrera for initiating this effort on behalf of our chapter. Tammie and her family currently are responsible for a roadway in memory of her son, Aaron Barrera.

Take care. Spring IS coming!



## Meetings

**Lake Villa Meeting**  
**Northern Illinois Chapter TCF**  
**February 20 - 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**  
**March 5 - 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***



## We Can Always Treasure Our Memories

No matter how hard we grieve, or how long we grieve, in the end there will still be our memories. Nothing can ever take them away from us. Some memories will be sad, of course. Some may be in the nature of "I wish I had..." But after a long while, when we have had time to heal a little, most of our memories will be the good ones, the ones that bring warm feelings, maybe even laughter.

I have recently been hearing a commercial on TV -- in it a girl is laughing just like Teresa used to laugh when she really was having fun. It brings a smile to me every time I see or hear it. I have to wonder if anyone except her Dad and I have ever noticed the resemblance. A few years ago I doubt that I'd have found much enjoyment from a TV commercial with a girl laughing, but it just goes to show that we do change so much through the journey of grief. Sometimes just smelling the cologne or perfume that their loved one wore triggers a memory. Some, seeing another person who resembles their child or loved one, may recall how their child wore her hair, or how he stood or smiled. We have talked at our Compassionate Friends

meetings about how we often see people who look like our child from a distance. For a fleeting moment it can give our hearts a real thump. Perhaps when we decide (accept, maybe) that our child is really gone and give up the thoughts of the death, that is when the good memories set in. That was true in my own circumstance. There are times when hurtful thoughts come to mind, but it's getting easier to push the bad ones out and dwell on the good ones--and there are so many of them!

By Jackie Wesley  
 Chapter leader, The Compassionate Friends  
 East Central Indiana and Miami-Whitewater  
 Chapters - Teresa's mom

## Losing An Adult Child

Parents who lose adult children can suffer discrimination that is different from that suffered by other bereaved parents. With the loss of an adult child the focus of attention usually centers around that child's spouse and children. Because the deceased is an adult, concern is directed towards her/his own immediate family.

Frequently, there is little appreciation that this individual, possibly a parent themselves, is still a child to his or her own parents. Consequently, bereaved parents of adult children are left with a lack of validation and sometimes excluded.

This exclusion many times leaves them missing the crucial support they need. It may leave them omitted from important activities after the death that could help them cope with their grief. The focus is simply not on them, as it would be if the child were younger.

The relationship between the adult child and parent has a number of characteristics that can make the child's death much more difficult. It frequently complicates the bereavement process. Family, friends and caregivers must recognize these issues in order to effectively and lovingly comfort this overlooked population of bereaved parents.

Therese A Rando/Parental Loss of A Child



## ***OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN FEBRUARY & MARCH***

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**

<b>Ana Sofia Camacho</b>	<b>February 2</b>	Daughter of Lucero & Carlos Camacho
<b>Kevin Pomianek</b>	<b>February 4</b>	Son of Brenda & Eugene Pomianek
<b>Aaron Barrera</b>	<b>February 6</b>	Son of Tammie & Ernie Barrera
<b>Roderick Young</b>	<b>February 13</b>	Son of Scarlet Austin Grandson of "Charlie" Johnson
<b>Heather Donnelly</b>	<b>February 26</b>	Daughter of Daniel Donnelly
<b>Megan Candice Grace</b>	<b>February 24</b>	Daughter of Tim & Marilyn Grace
<b>Anne Thomson</b>	<b>February 25</b>	Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson
<b>Camden Frisby</b>	<b>March 1</b>	Son of Kris Frisby
<b>Griffin Schumow</b>	<b>March 2</b>	Son of Jeff & Krista Schumow
<b>Kyle Glueck</b>	<b>March 4</b>	Son of Dolores Krason
<b>Justin Perez</b>	<b>March 9</b>	Son of Traci & Carlos Perez Brother of Samantha (Perez) Przybylski
<b>David Sloop</b>	<b>March 9</b>	Son of Charron Sloop
<b>Rusty Anderson</b>	<b>March 11</b>	Son of Forest & Christine Anderson
<b>David Spannraft</b>	<b>March 18</b>	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
<b>Adam Rubin</b>	<b>March 28</b>	Son of Linda Rubin Brother of Nicole Rubin

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

<b>Jeff Wagner</b>	<b>February 4</b>	Son of Mary Wagner
<b>Susan Nesheim Allbee</b>	<b>February 5</b>	Sister of Toni Nesheim
<b>Micah Gerald Musich</b>	<b>February 10</b>	Son of Heather Musich
<b>Darien Wilson</b>	<b>February 11</b>	Son of Tammy & Tim Olvera
<b>Douglas Ramsay</b>	<b>February 12</b>	Son of Carlene Ramsay
<b>Rafael Villanveva</b>	<b>February 12</b>	Son of Victoria Villanveva
<b>Michael Stice</b>	<b>February 13</b>	Son of Dora & Gary Stice
<b>Kelly Klawonn</b>	<b>February 14</b>	Son of Ray & Dorothy Klawonn
<b>Ashley Seay</b>	<b>February 18</b>	Daughter of Mike and Shannon Seay Granddaughter of Dennis & Georgene Manley
<b>Mitchell Carlson</b>	<b>February 19</b>	Son of Tina VanderMeer Grandson of Cheryl Armstrong
<b>Mary Margaret "Maggie" Miles</b>	<b>February 19</b>	Daughter of Jim & Mary Lou Miles
<b>Zachary Taylor</b>	<b>February 24</b>	Son of Mike Taylor & Karen Adams-Taylor
<b>Edgar Villareal</b>	<b>March 1</b>	Oziel & Guadalupe Villareal
<b>Jeremy Govekar</b>	<b>March 2</b>	Son of Maggie McGaughey
<b>Rasheed Mariano</b>	<b>March 5</b>	Son of Joan Mariano
<b>John "Jake" Mosansky</b>	<b>March 12</b>	Son of Darlene & John Mosansky Sister of Veronica Steif
<b>Blake Logan Palmer</b>	<b>March 13</b>	Son of Amber & Brian Palmer Grandson of Lois Cooper Grandson of Gina Palmer
<b>Taylor Rydahl</b>	<b>March 14</b>	Son of Carol & Keith Rydahl
<b>Roderick Young</b>	<b>March 27</b>	Son of Scarlet Austin Grandson of "Charlie" Johnson
<b>Marc Hawkinson</b>	<b>March 28</b>	Son of Mary Kay Clark

## A Marital Lesson In Grief



When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for 20 years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode, I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate.

This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I bitterly realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings and I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of other who had lost a child permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulty after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart.

My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other soothed over many rough moments. Time spent alone together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we still couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

Much later the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends if I had only asked for it ad

dened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help. I will be forever grateful to The Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms.

As I look back, ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But, in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, you will both be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Understanding these simple facts would have helped immeasurably.

Pat Retzloff/TCF/Oshkosh, WI

### Today

Today I tried to help someone  
because you would have done so.

Today I tried my best  
because you were so competitive.

Today I held my tongue  
because you were kind.

Today I kept trying in the face of failure be-  
cause you never gave up.

Today I spoke up  
because you disliked injustice.

Today I did not turn away  
because you would have done the right thing.

Today I tried to think beyond myself  
because you always thought of others.

I know that I won't see you again  
until we are both in heaven

But I tell myself that I see you  
a little each day,

Every time I try to be less like me  
and more like you.

By Karen Adam-Taylor

TCF - North Lake County Illinois Chapter



## Nibbling . . .

### Nibbling At Life's Pleasures

By Patricia Butler Dyson

Most mothers I know are pretty selfless creatures. When there's not enough meat to go around, Mom takes a second helping of beans. There's probably nothing she'd rather do than iron Missy's cheerleader uniform at midnight. And why would she want a new Easter dress when the old polka dot polyester still fits? Altruism aside, every mom needs a smidgen of pleasure in her life to help maintain her sweet disposition.

To reward myself for being a hardworking wife and mother of three active boys, I allowed myself an occasional indulgence—a long, hot bath in a tub filled to the brim, a good book (preferably one that would make me laugh), and my favorite guilty pleasure, a Skor bar. I liked to eat it a piece at a time, sucking off the chocolate before I crunched down on the tooth-jarring English toffee. If I managed to finish a Skor with fillings intact, it was a triumph. And if I could read a good book while soaking in a hot tub and munching on a Skor bar, well, life just didn't get any better.



Then one day I found out how life couldn't get any worse, when my three-year-old son, Blake, died suddenly from meningitis. Guilt and self-hatred overwhelmed me. What kind of mother wouldn't recognize how sick her child was and rush him to the hospital? How could I have been so blind, so stupid? As his mother, he trusted me to care for him, and I let him down.

My once-carefree existence became a series of gray days followed by black, sleepless nights. I ate, but only to stay alive. I took short, cool showers, but only to get clean. I never picked up a book unless it dealt with grief. Driven by guilt, I convinced myself that I no longer deserved any of life's pleasures. Besides, how could I ever enjoy anything again with Blake gone?

One night, some months after Blake died, my husband, Jeff, left to take our boys to basketball practice. The dishes were done, the house was spotless, and the long, empty evening loomed ahead of me. I went into the bedroom, flopped on the bed and curled up

with the cat. On the nightstand I spotted a book a friend had given me. "Funny," she had said. "A great read." Well, it wasn't a grief book so I wasn't interested. Idly, I picked it up anyway and read the first page. Before I knew it, I was hooked. Suddenly, I heard a strange sound, somewhere between a hack and a hoot. The cat jumped and looked at me in alarm. I had laughed! It was a creepy, creaky laugh, rusty from months of disuse, but a laugh nonetheless. Did I just have fun? Yipes! I couldn't do that! I snapped the book shut and shoved it under the bed.

The next morning I took a shower as usual, only this time I lingered for three minutes instead of two and I turned the temperature up a notch so it was almost warm. I dressed and headed for the grocery store, where I careened down the aisles grabbing stuff from the shelves and trying not to look at the treats I used to buy for Blake. While reaching for a package of sugarless gum at the checkout, I caught sight of a display of Skor bars. I quickly looked away, but to my amazement, a Skor bar leaped onto the conveyor belt with my other groceries. Before I could put it back, the sacker had bagged it and it was mine.

I broke the speed limit getting home, dashed inside, and guiltily pitched the Skor bar on the highest shelf of the pantry. Later, when I opened the pantry to get a can of tuna for my lunch, a small voice from above called out, "Pat, oh Pat, I'm here. Come and get me." I slammed the door and started furiously chopping pickles for tuna salad. But the voice in the pantry became more insistent. "Pat, I'm here and I'm delicious! A Skor-deprived woman can only stand so much. I flung open the pantry, stood on tiptoe, snatched the talking Skor bar, and ripped the wrapper open with my teeth. In a frenzy, I broke off a piece and popped it in my mouth. Hungrily, I sucked the chocolate off and crunched down on the rock-hard toffee. Lord, it was good! To my amazement, the heavens didn't open and swallow me. Lightning didn't strike me dead. For the first time in

(Continued on page 6)

(Nibbling . . . Nibbling At Life's Pleasures  
Continued from page 5)

months, I REALLY enjoyed myself! I chucked the tuna back on the shelf and piece by piece, I relished the rest of the Skor bar. Then, with chocolaty fingers, I grabbed a handful of Cheetos and a couple of Oreos, and washed them down with a Yoohoo. It was the best lunch I'd had in months.

Later, as I was putting clean towels in the linen closet, I heard a familiar voice echoing from the bathtub, "Pat, I missed you. Wouldn't a hot bath feel good? Why don't you fill me up?" Trying not to be alarmed that voices were orchestrating my behavior, I obediently ran hot water in the tub, but only half-full. I didn't want to go overboard. Peeling off my clothes, I hopped in. And as I sank into the heavenly, steamy water, I closed my eyes and thought of Blake. He knew how to live! He packed more living into three years than some people do into thirty. He ran faster, climbed higher, laughed louder than any little kid I ever knew. He savored life, every aspect of it. No nibbling at life for him! He broke it off in chunks and devoured it.



Right now, because of my grief, I could only nibble at life's pleasures. But I knew Blake wouldn't want me to live a guilt-ridden, joyless, life. He would want me to buy a SIX-PACK of Skor bars, fill the tub to the brim with the hottest water, grab a good book, and soak and eat and read until the water turned cool and I was all pruny.

And, by golly, some day I'd do just that. For Blake. For Blake's mommy.

Pat Dyson became a regular contributor to Guideposts after winning the New Writers, contest in 1996. She also writes business reviews for the Beaumont Enterprise. Pat has 5 children including Blake, who died in 1987. She and her husband, Jeff, restarted the Beaumont, Texas chapter of TCF in 1991 where they were chapter leaders and newsletter editors for two years.

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[http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Other\\_Pages/Nibbling...aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Other_Pages/Nibbling...aspx)

## ***THE FIRST IS THE WORST***

**By Michelle Ramsey  
BP/USA, Tampa Bay, FL**

**They say the first is the worst.**

**I know the pain of not having my child.**

**I know the pain of not being able to hold her.**

**I know the pain I went through to have her.**

**I know the pain of burying my child.**

**I know the pain every time I go to the grave.**

**But no one said how the pain would increase when the**

**First Valentines Day came  
First Easter came  
First Mother's Day came  
First Father's Day came  
First Birthday came.**

**All the holidays that come during the first year are really very hard after your child dies. I know the pain of those "first's."**

**You will get through them.  
Believe me – I know.  
I'm halfway there –**

**Then I'll have to face the "Two's"**





## LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

By Darcie D. Sims

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouchies" can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have. So we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable, some day.

TIME, the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child – the first word, first tooth, first date, first car. Now we don't have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments. But don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief. It only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child. HE [SHE] DIED. We don't lose the love that flowed between us. It still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved. Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes,  
LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

This is a new year.

### Mark your calendar:



43<sup>rd</sup> TCF National Conference  
July 24-26, 2020 • Atlanta, GA

#### ON MEMORY

*When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that, if we meet again, you will know me, and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart. For as long as you remember me, I am never entirely lost.*

*Frederick Buechner - From the BP/USA Tampa Bay Chapter Newsletter*

**LOVE GIFTS**

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

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

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

Pay for a book for the chapter's Lending Library \_\_\_\_\_

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be included in the "special days" list each month in the newsletter, you must fill out this form that gives us permission to list this information. If you are making a donation please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends. Return to Tammie Barrera, 821 Roberts Road, Winthrop Harbor, IL. 60096** [Julyson2@gmail.com](mailto:Julyson2@gmail.com)

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

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive  
TCF National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 3696 - PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246

The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

There are seven TCF Internet chat sessions weekly. To participate, visit the TCF home page and select the "Chat" button.

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

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