



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

January, 2014 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Toni

MILES OF COMPASSION THROUGH THE WINDS OF HOPE

We have a unique opportunity this summer to have the national Compassionate Friends conference in Chicago. This is the 37th annual conference and it won't be held in Chicago again for another 14 years. So look at your calendars and see if there is any way you can spend 2-3 days at this conference. It is being held on July 11-13, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont.

I've attended 3 national conferences: Oklahoma City in 2007, Nashville in 2008 and Minneapolis/St. Paul in 2011. I look forward to attending this year's conference and just requested the time off from work.

Rick and Jenny Selle were the chapter leaders in 2007 and had attended a national conference. They highly recommended attending, if possible and I was so glad that I was able to take their advice.

I didn't know what to expect at the first conference. I went by myself and ended up not speaking to many people but I absorbed so much around me. Initially, I was shocked and relieved to see about a thousand people – all standing – literally and figuratively. But it showed me that they had survived and were working through their grief by attending the conference and so was I. I realized, these were my people, my cohorts, my fellow participants in one of the worst experiences a human being can live through. What kept going through my mind was, "They are survivors . . . they are survivors". It warmed my heart.

The conference has excellent keynote speakers, all of whom have lost children or siblings, and many of whom have written books about it. The conference workshops are also facilitated by bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

The workshops vary widely and try to address the many circumstances under which loved ones have died such as motor vehicle accidents, terminal illness, sudden illness, suicide, infant death, murder and fatal accidents. The workshops and facilitators may not an-

swer every question you have but they will make you feel less alone. And we know that grief is lonely.

I met an older couple at the Oklahoma City conference. They said that they hadn't been to a conference in 15 years but felt the need to attend one. Yes, they were still grieving but thought that it would be helpful and constructive to attend the conference. I also met a woman who owned a beauty school in Iowa. She never aspired to being an author but after the death of her child, she wrote a couple of books on her experience and the grieving process.

The conference doesn't promote anything or sell anything. It does have a little "Butterfly Boutique" where you can buy mementos that are not related to the conference. There is also a "book store" where an excellent selection of books and CDs and DVDs are assembled for purchase.

For more information on the conference or if you are interested in volunteering, please go to the national TCF website or call 877-969-0010. You will receive a mailing in a few months.

The Compassionate Friends and the conference promotes understanding and hope for bereaved families. This is accomplished through sharing information and experiences and developing friendships.

Remember, we need not walk alone.



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37th National Conference
Chicago, Illinois
July 11-13, 2014



GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but donations can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of your chapters. Love gifts are acknowledged each month in the newsletter.

**Thanks to Terry & Jeanette Powell
for sponsoring the January newsletter
in loving memory of their daughter
Renee' Powell**

**Thanks to Patricia & Craig Rosemann
for their donation in
loving memory of their daughter,
Lisa Marie Rosemann**

**Thanks to Karen Zaylik
for her donation
in loving memory of her son
Brian Scott Ludlow**

"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

January 16, 2014 – 7:30 p.m.
Millburn Congregational Church
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL
Open discussion

**Waukegan meeting
February 6, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.**
Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL
Open discussion

Practical Advice FIND YOUR BOLT HOLE



For many of us we dread social gatherings, going back to work, even going to the grocery store.

Friends, colleagues, and, sadly, relatives can be unthinking, cold or unintentionally cruel. Sometimes people, because they are inexperienced in dealing with grief and are ignorant of our feelings, say things that bring back the tears. One bereaved mother's sister-in-law pulled her aside to say she was "ruining the party." We often feel this way and can't without a thoughtless bore offering her opinion.

The least little thing can have us tearing up, sobbing, going crazy, or feeling out of control. We may worry that people at work think we are weak and non-productive, or that we are negatively impacting others in the workplace, at a family gathering or social function. HP may even have a conversation with us about getting over it, about not bothering others at work, about not having our child's picture on display, about not wearing a button with our child's picture because it makes others feel uneasy, and about constantly talking about our child, our child's death and our unrelenting grief.

Our advice to newly bereaved parents is to find a *bolt hole*. That's an old British term which refers to an escape or refuge. When you go to a social gathering, to a family function, or to work, figure out in advance how you could *bolt* if you need to and where you can find a *bolt hole*. For example, at work, if you are lucky enough to have a private office, when you feel an "attack" coming on, go into the office and shut the door. Other bolt holes could be a trip to the restroom or a quick walk around the building even if it is raining or snowing. If at a social gathering, find a place you can go and be by yourself, e.g., a bedroom upstairs, a public restroom, an outside patio or unused area. Have a plan for how you can leave the function altogether if you find it too stressful to remain – even if you've just arrived.

A key to making the bolt hole work for you is to communicate what you are going through, what you need, and how you are coping, to those

(Continued on page 4)

OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY



Each month we remember the children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments, place them in your thoughts, and remember them on their day together with their parents. None of us ever forget our special days and messages that say "I care" help us to get through them. Our children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Mitchell Carlson</i>	January 1	Son of Tina Carlson
		Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Anna Smith Miller</i>	January 3	Daughter of Carol Semple
<i>Michael Lee Brandon Frederick</i>	January 13	Son of Jan Frederick
<i>Hamilton</i>		Grandson of Sharon Frederick
<i>Brain Scott Engle</i>	January 19	Son of Louise Engle
<i>Justin Ortega</i>	January 20	Son of Susie Meggs
<i>Marissa Pederson</i>	January 30	Daughter of Debbie & John Pederson
<i>Sandra Elena Varela</i>	January 31	Daughter of Sandra Prez
<i>Kevin Pomianek</i>	February 4	Son of Brenda & Eugene Pomianek
<i>Aaron Barrera</i>	February 6	Son of Tammie & Ernie Barrera
<i>Daniel Garza</i>	February 16	Son of Gloria Garza
<i>David Quade</i>	February 20	Son of Pat & Dave Quade
<i>Megan Candice Grace</i>	February 24	Daughter of Tim & Marilyn Grace
<i>Anne Thomson</i>	February 25	Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	January 2	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
<i>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</i>	January 16	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<i>Joey Frase</i>	January 20	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Miguel Gonzalez</i>	January 22	Son of Julia Llanos
<i>Hugh Andrew Mathis</i>	January 26	Son of Richard & Helen Mathis
<i>Renee Rochelle Powell</i>	January 30	Daughter of Terry & Jeanette Powell
<i>Rob Petit</i>	February 2	Son of Nancy Ervin
<i>Douglas Ramsay</i>	February 12	Son of Carlene Ramsay
<i>Michael Stice</i>	February 13	Son of Dora & Gary Stice
<i>Kelly Klawonn</i>	February 14	Son of Ray & Dorothy Klawonn
<i>Ashley Seay</i>	February 18	Daughter of Mike and Shannon Seay
		Granddaughter of Dennis & Georgene Manley
<i>Mary Margaret "Maggie" Miles</i>	February 19	Daughter of Jim & Mary Lou Miles
<i>Mitchell Carlson</i>	February 19	Son of Tina Carlson
		Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Zachary Taylor</i>	February 24	Son of Mike Taylor & Karen Adams-Taylor

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 - 847-573-1055

But shall the angels call for him much sooner than we're planned.
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand.

~Edgar Guest

(Practical Advice: FIND YOUR BOLT HOLE continued from page 2)

around you. At work, tell your boss and your colleagues-one by one or in groups-that you are very emotional at the time. Your emotions, even on the best of days, are right below the surface, and can easily erupt. Little things can trigger those feelings. The way you deal with those emotions is to cry, to shake a fist at the sky, or whatever it is that you do to help yourself through those moments. And when that happens you are ok and just need to be alone to work it out on your own. They are not to worry or think they have to do something. The way they can support you the most is let you have those moments without comment or complaint.

Similarly, when you arrive at a social function, if not before (e.g., by phone), tell the host or hostess the same kind of thing. How emotional you are, what you do when an episode occurs and that you may need to leave, go to the bedroom or go outside. The way he or she can help is give you the space, not worry about you and understand that you are taking care of yourself.

One of the beauties of the bolt hole is that, knowing you have one, can give you the strength to get through these episodes; even to the point where you don't need to go to your place of safety-just knowing you have it in your pocket may be enough to get you through that moment. Having a bolt hole can help you rejoin the world even though your heart isn't quite ready.

R & D, Maryland BP/USA

Borrowed from Bereaved Parents of the USA, AJOURNEY TOGETHER, Volume XIX No. 1 Winter 2014, <http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/>

Challenge and Change

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun-loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the old us too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when a child dies. We won-

der, our families wonder-when will we come out of it? Will we make it through the long sleep? What hues will we show when we emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of the cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy-but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the new us. When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from the cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn to change into a challenge, then we can say proudly: "I have survived against overwhelming odds." Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give me hope that I can be happy.

I can feel fulfilled again, I can love again.

Sherry Mutchter TCF/Appleton, WI

Borrowed from TCF Atlanta Online Newsletter, January-February, 2000

FOR THE NEW YEAR



Where there is pain,
let there be softening
Where there is bitterness
let there be acceptance
Where there is silence
let there be communication
Where there is loneliness
let there be friendships
Where there is despair
let there be hope

Ruth Eiseman, TCF, Louisville, KY
TCF, INC., SOUTH LAKE TAHOE
CHAPTER January & February 1999



Tortoise Lessons

My neighbor Alexander Roosevelt, and her family kept a huge African Spur Thigh tortoise in their back yard for the last twenty years. It disappeared this past August while they were on vacation. The story made the local news and the entire community helped search. They looked everywhere, but were unable to find Tortley.

In late October he was found in a corner of a locked supply closet alive and well. When asked how he could survive for so long without food or water, Alexandra said, "Tortley's survival instincts kicked in and his body put life on hold."

I think that describes how we managed to survive those first weeks, months and years after our son, Brad, died. We put life on hold. We didn't engage in living, rather, we simply existed while our bodies and minds went into autopilot while we tried to make sense of the enormous injury that we had suffered. Our survival instincts kicked in and we did only the least amount possible to keep from drowning in a sea of grief.

Eventually life found us hibernating in our locked closet. Often there was a knock at the door, but we were not ready to come out. We somehow knew when it was time to re-emerge, slowly at first, into a world waiting to welcome us back. This re-emergence can take months or years. There is no timetable and only you will know when you're ready. If your life is still on hold, take heart; the world is waiting just outside your door. You'll know when it's time to answer its knock.

Richard A. Berman, Editor
BP/USA Newsletter
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Baltimore, MD 21215
Newsletters@bereavedparentsusa.org

**SUGGESTIONS
FOR NEW**



YEAR'S RESOLUTION

1. I will try not to expect so much understanding from others who have not walked the same path.
2. I will be kind to myself - health, appearance and time to be alone.
3. I will remember that I owe it to myself to try to enjoy life.
4. I will try to be more considerate of my spouse children and parents. They, too, are coping and deserve my help.
5. I resolve in memory of my child to do something to help someone else. For I know, that in doing this, my child will live on through me.

Northwest Suburban Chapter THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, 800 W. Central Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, Jan, 1991

From My Heart...To Yours



Eleven years after he died, Danny Rusher helped save my daughter's life. How do we know how the death of our child might affect someone else?

Because a 16-year-old driver told his passengers they could not ride in his car unless they put on seatbelts, four young people were not injured when he lost control and the car rolled and landed upside down.

The driver's mom insisted on the seatbelt rule because she was the driver of the vehicle that could not avoid hitting the car Danny was riding in eleven years earlier when it pulled out in front of her. Danny did not survive, even with a seatbelt, and I can't help but think his death contributed to the saving of my daughter when she was 14 years old.

We have to learn from tragedy. A death has no meaning if we do not learn from it, even if others simply learn to hug their children more and to never take each day for granted.

(Continued on page 6)

ONE BEREAVED WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

SHIRLEY OTTMAN
VICE-PRESIDENT, BP/USA

Immediately upon learning of my daughter's death, I experienced stabbing physical pain with each inhalation, as if my lungs were encased in solid steel. Forced to breathe very shallowly in an effort to lessen the pain, I endured this unrelenting pain for six more weeks.

I remember little else of that day except hearing her laughter in the hospital chaplain's office. Did the chaplain and my husband think I had lost my mind? But my daughter's distinctive laugh floated in the air before she said, "Hey, Mom, I'm fine." I heard her. I will never forget that experience.

Thereafter it required tremendous energy to get out of bed each day. Once up, I sat or reclined, lacking the strength to remain upright for more than a few minutes at a time. Reportedly, many people came to our home but I remember only a few. I remember the church, the sound of the glass harmonica, walking down the aisle supported on either side by my sons, hugging people after the service and crying, crying, crying. I remember the agony of driving to the cemetery and seeing the small hole to receive the urn bearing her ashes. I remember bending to kiss the urn before it was lowered; and I remember crying, crying, crying.

I remember our table laden with food and my inability to eat anything at all while I watched others fill their plates, heard their talk, their laughter, and wondered why and how the world continued to revolve—and wondered, too, how I could ever rejoin this living world when I felt so dead. I longed to die myself, fearful that my daughter needed me yet recognizing at the same time the egoism inherent in such thoughts. I remember praying for the pain to stop, watching how slowly clock hands moved, and crying, crying, crying.

When the physical pain ended and the intense emotional pain subsided, as other bereaved parents have found, I discovered occasions for laughter and joy, for thanksgiving and renewal, for service and peace.

All my experiences since my daughter's death on 2 May 1986 have brought me new understanding about this thing we call life. Nothing profound, really—and it's only what most other bereaved parents have learned too, and what, if you are newly bereaved, you already know in your own heart: love never dies.

Neither may our relationships die. Although we no longer enjoy daily physical and verbal interactions with

our children who have died, the love we continue to share strengthens us. We may come to new understandings of our spiritual connectedness, experience deeper appreciation of all our relationships, including those with our deceased children, and open ourselves more fully to the challenges of all life's gifts...

If you are newly bereaved, embrace your grief passionately and learn from it; for in conquering grief, the fruits of love are all the sweeter.

(From My Heart...To Yours continued from page 5)

Sometimes we are told that our child's death made a profound difference in someone's life. But mostly we will never know how the death touched other people, and many times it is because it happens many years after the loss.

Recently, a 2-year-old darling girl died, and because I want her death to have meaning, I encouraged my children and their spouses to take a CPR class. We don't know how that might ever make a difference, but at least we will do something in her honor.

Because my dear friend's son received a donor heart recently, I tell my children we all need to realize the difference organ donation can make in someone's life. I have witnessed it firsthand, and wonder why I never thought much about it before. A young woman died but my friend's son would live now. What a gift.

Our children stay alive in our hearts, and continue to make a difference in others lives, even when we don't know it. How meaningful!

Cathy Heider—TCF North Central Iowa Chapter—In Memory of my son, Evan





FROM THE EDITOR BEREAVEMENT MAGAZINE

January/February 1996

Andrea Gambill

It's a brand new year - a brand new beginning. We are not only turning a new page on our calendars, we are turning a new page in our lives. But will *this* new page be different than the one we turned yesterday or the day before? Hardly. For the grieving, it's just another day; and, except for our friends in a different hemisphere, it's another gray winter day.

The dark clouds of sorrow still gather in our personal skies, clouding our memories and hiding our hope. The chill of our loneliness still keeps joy from being able to warm our hearts. Some of our municipal roads are closed, and many of our emotional roads are closed as well.

Winter has made our nights longer and our days briefer - and our souls long for sunlight and blue skies of happier days. We search for a springtime that seems to have disappeared forever. Despair, discouragement, disillusion and depression block our way as much as drifting snow impairs our travel.

Somehow we survived the inevitable "holiday season," but we can't imagine how. We lived through the gift giving, the joy making and the reunions (minus the one we wanted the most). The "wrong" gifts have pretty much been returned and the bills we ran up on the ubiquitous charge accounts are starting to appear in our mailboxes. In December, we thought we could "buy" some joy and peace, but, in January, reality strikes like a blizzard!

But, just when it seems there is no hope, just when joy seems to have evaporated from our lives completely and forever, we look into the wintry nighttime sky and see the stars like sparkling diamonds against black velvet. Seldom are they prettier than in the crisp, clear of winter night.

One morning, the sun is brilliant in a cloudless, pale blue sky, sparkling through the ice-frost tracings on the window pane. The dark, barren branches of the trees are replaced with an ermine coating of pure white snow and glistening icicles. Even

in the harshness of winter, the emptiness has been replaced with beauty.

The seeds sleep within the depths of the earth, waiting for their time. It is a reminder to us that hope is never really gone. Now, we must let our hearts get quiet. Now, we must learn the patience of waiting., Now we must huddle together and draw inward, seeking the warmth of the love that remains., Now, we must seek the subtleness of beauty and not miss the message that nature is providing all around us.

Even in the cruelest and most difficult of circumstances, there is peace and gentleness if we will only seek it. Seldom are we handed joy without any effort on our part to uncover it. Gold is retrieved from the earth only after much sweat and danger. Diamonds are produced only under extreme pressure and time. The most beautiful gardens require the most attention. Nature teaches us that, usually, beauty is form out of struggle.

But Nature also teaches us that there is a time to rest, to wait. Winter can be the professor of that lesson. There is energy in quietness. We can use the solitude of winter to renew our souls, recall our memories, re-think our priorities, regain our balance, restore our dignity, reestablish our faith, remember our promises and re-gather hope.

Truly, we are never alone. Love lives on in universal ways, even when physical presences seem to be absent. Like the sun, joy can be temporarily hidden by clouds, but it is never really gone - just missing from our view. Life is both persistent and triumphant, and, though it can be changed, it cannot be destroyed. Though winter will deliver cold and darkness, it will also provide stunning beauty and opportunities for challenging growth. We must not miss the subtle joy!

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

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

TCF National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 3696 - PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246

Regional Coordinator, Mary Seibert PH: 815-468-6443 nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

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

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Toni Nesheim 847-223-7353 tonin@sbcglobal.net Rachel Salomonson Age 18 – Auto accident

TREASURER Forest Anderson 847-838-0567 forest.anderson@att.net Rusty Anderson Age 15 – Osteosarcoma

SECRETARY Jenny & Rick Selle 847-249-4776 jennyselle@yahoo.com Lila Ruffolo Age 24 – Auto Accident

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Thelma Perkins 262-279-6178 Andrew C Perkins Age 17 – Auto Accident

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

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

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Mary Ann Grazier 847-336-0539 Barry Grazier Age 27 – Auto Accident

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Charon Sloop 847-623-2264 charronsloop@AOL.com David Sloop Age 33 – Motor Cycles accident

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 Vicki Szech, 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Green Oaks, IL 60048 or call 847-573-1055 or send an email to vszech@comcast.net.