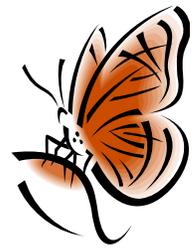


# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

July, 2014 Newsletter



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



*Chapter Leader  
Notes from Toni*

## REMINDERS OF YOUR LOSS

Monarch butterflies, innocently flitting over the flower tops, can bring a stab to my heart and momentarily put me in a trance, filled with memories. Co-workers talking about their daughters' prom dresses or college preparations bring tears to my eyes. Celebrations for family and friends sometimes cause me to leave early or emotionally retreat from the festivities. Songs on the radio . . .

As grieving parents, we all know those moments that sometimes land like grenades on our hearts and our psyches, catching us unaware. Those little reminders, that occur without warning, can ruin our day or our week(s).

These reminders are called "anniversary reactions" in the bereavement world. There are the obvious reminders of birthdays, holidays and other days that follow your child's death. We can anticipate these and do our best to manage them. Then there are the unexpected reminders that make us feel ambushed and trigger painful grief episodes which may include:

- \*pain
- \*fatigue
- \*anxiety
- \*loneliness
- \*anger
- \*difficulty sleeping

There are some strategies to help with the "re-awakened grief":

**Be Prepared.** Anticipate an "anniversary reaction" as much as possible. Try to plan for how you will manage your feelings. Eventually these become moments for healing.

**Plan A Distraction.** Gather friends or plan to attend an event where you won't feel alone and reminded of your child's death.

**Reminisce About Your Child.** Choose to speak to family or friends about your child and reminisce about the happy, positive times that you shared. Spend time writing a letter to your child about what joy they brought you.

**Start A New Tradition:** Plan to go somewhere on an "anniversary" day such as a museum, butterfly garden or restaurant that has a connection to your child. Planting a tree or a garden or making a charitable donation in your child's name is a positive tradition to begin with your family.

**Connect With Others:** Consider joining a bereavement support groups. Keep talking to family and friends about your child and the loss. Talking can help healing.

**Allow A Range of Emotions.** Grief causes intense and wide-ranging emotions. Allow yourself to experience the sadness and loss but also allow yourself to laugh and smile. It will help you to begin the process of reclaiming your life.

**Grief has no time line or expiration period.** It is not something that you "get over". Your grief is a reflection of how important your child's life was to you. Time does seem to lessen the

(Continued on page 2)



## 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 Alan & Renee Ewing for their donation in loving memory of  
**Scott Ewing**

"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

**Northern Illinois Chapter - TCF**  
**July 17 – 7:30 p.m.**  
Millburn Congregational Church  
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL  
Open discussion

**Waukegan meeting**  
**September 4** 6pm to 9pm  
Holy Family Church  
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL  
Open discussion

(Chapter Leader Notes continued from page 1)

intensity of the grief. It does not mean the loss has become less meaningful or your child's life less important. It means that you have learned, through your pain, to move forward on a path toward healing.

"The human heart has a way of making itself large again even after it's been broken into a million pieces." - Robert James Waller, author

**"It's not forgetting that heals. It's remembering."** - Amy Green, author

## Nature's Rainbows



We held them in our parent arms  
for days or weeks or years.  
Now we hold them in our hearts  
and cry the darkest tears.

The cord attached to children,  
eternally fine and strong.  
We never leave the missing;  
it holds us all life long.

Our children now inside us -  
our souls' tattooed with gold.  
Their love, their words, caresses,  
are hugs that we still hold.

If we open to the knowledge,  
that they aren't completely gone,  
we will sometimes feel their touching,  
sometimes soft and sometimes strong.

When they show us nature's rainbows,  
we can feel their proud delight,  
sending signs to show they're living,  
only far beyond our sight.

"Stars in the Deepest Night - After the Death of a Child"  
is a beautiful book of poetry written by  
Genesse Bourdeaux Gentry.

Her 21 yr. Old daughter Lori died in a car accident on June 28, 1991. This book is dedicated to her and to all bereaved parents and the families and friends who love them. Genesse Gentry is also a member of Compassionate Friends.

"Nature's Rainbows" is a poem from this book.

## **OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN JULY & AUGUST**

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>Bryan Casaca Martinez</b>	<b>July 2</b>	Son of Alesley Martinez
<b>Michael Stice</b>	<b>July 4</b>	Son of Dora & Gary Stice
<b>Renee' Rochelle Powell</b>	<b>July 7</b>	Daughter of Terry & Jeanette Powell
<b>Liam Budill</b>	<b>July 7</b>	Son of Joe and Amanda Budill
<b>Brian Scott Ludlow</b>	<b>July 19</b>	Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik
<b>Elizabeth (Liz) Willding</b>	<b>July 27</b>	Daughter of Gigi Willding
<b>Steven Anthony Sostre</b>	<b>July 31</b>	Son of Jorge Sostre
<b>Kylie Rayne Albeck</b>	<b>August 10</b>	Child of Shaun & Katie Albeck
<b>Andrew Perkins</b>	<b>August 12</b>	Son of Richard & Thelma Perkins
<b>Karli Brooke Weidenhagen</b>	<b>August 17</b>	Daughter of Jim & Adrienne Weidenhagen
<b>Andrew Muno</b>	<b>August 18</b>	Son of Darlene & Bart Muno
<b>Roger Alan Segebarth</b>	<b>August 19</b>	Son of Joanne Segebarth
<b>Blake Logan Palmer</b>	<b>August 21</b>	Daughter of Amber & Brian Palmer Granddaughter of Lois Cooper Granddaughter of Gina Palmer
<b>Ashley Seay</b>	<b>August 25</b>	Daughter of Mike and Shannon Seay Granddaughter of Dennis & Georgene Manley
<b>Josh Summers</b>	<b>August 27</b>	Son of Tina Carlson Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong
<b>Roman Gabriel Cano</b>	<b>August 28</b>	Son of Simona & Daniel Rhodes
<b>Nicole Parfill</b>	<b>August 30</b>	Daughter of Robin Parfill

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

<b>Anna Smith Miller</b>	<b>July 6</b>	Daughter of Carol Semple
<b>Elizabeth (Liz) Willding</b>	<b>July 14</b>	Daughter of Gigi Willding
<b>Amy Jo Baldwin</b>	<b>July 17</b>	Daughter of Mike & Sheila Baldwin
<b>Rogelio Lopez Jr</b>	<b>July 17</b>	Son of Angelina & Rogelio Lopez
<b>Johnny Garcia</b>	<b>July 22</b>	Son of Tomas & Minerva Garcia
<b>Brian Keough</b>	<b>August 2</b>	Son of Kathleen Keough
<b>Jammi Shonlei Hui</b>	<b>August 5</b>	Daughter of William & Joyce Hui
<b>Pressley Suzanne McHugh</b>	<b>August 5</b>	Daughter of Shawn & Kari McHugh
<b>Sandra Elena Varela</b>	<b>August 5</b>	Daughter of Sandra Meggs
<b>Kylie Rayne Albeck</b>	<b>August 10</b>	Child of Shaun & Katie Albeck
<b>David Spannraft</b>	<b>August 12</b>	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
<b>Barry J Grazier</b>	<b>August 13</b>	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<b>Raphael E Vidal</b>	<b>August 20</b>	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal
<b>Kevin Pomianek</b>	<b>August 21</b>	Son of Brenda & Eugene Pomianek
<b>David Sloop</b>	<b>August 21</b>	Son of Charron Sloop
<b>Ryan James Nichols</b>	<b>August 22</b>	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
<b>Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick</b>	<b>August 25</b>	Son of Jan Frederick Grandson of Sharon Frederick
<b>Justin Cody Ortega</b>	<b>August 31</b>	Son of Susie Meggs

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](mailto:vszech@comcast.net) - 847-573-1055

## WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR



Every time I am in a group of bereaved parents, I hear people say things like, "I wish my child hadn't died" or "I wish I had him back." Those wishes, unfortunately, can never come true. Another wish I hear is "I wish my friends (or church, or neighbors, or relatives) understood what I am going through and were more supportive." This is a wish that has some possibility of coming true if we are able to be honest and assertive with the people around us. What do we wish others understood about the loss of our child?

Here is a partial list of such wishes:

1. I wish you would not be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was important and I need to hear his name.
2. If I cry or get emotional if we talk about my child, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me; the fact that my child died has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry and thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.
3. I wish you wouldn't "kill" my child again by removing from your home his pictures, artwork, or other remembrances.
4. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn't think that if I have a good day my grief is all over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.
5. I wish you knew that the death of a child is different from other losses and must be viewed separately. It is the ultimate tragedy and I wish you wouldn't compare it to your loss of a parent, a spouse, or a pet.
6. Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me.
7. I wish you knew all of the "crazy" grief reactions that I am having are in fact very normal. Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and the questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected following the death of a child.
8. I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for us. As with alcoholics, I will never be "cured" or a "former bereaved parent", but will forevermore be a "recovering bereaved parent".
9. I wish you understood the physical reactions to grief. I may gain weight or lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all, develop a host of illnesses and be accident-prone all of which may be related to my grief.
10. Our child's birthday, the anniversary of his death, and holidays are terrible times for us. I wish you would tell us that you are thinking about our child on these days, and if we get quiet and withdrawn, just know that we are thinking about our child and don't try to coerce us into being cheerful.
11. It is normal and good that most of us re-examine our faith, values, and beliefs after losing a child. We will question things we have been taught all our lives and hopefully come to some new understanding with our God. I wish you would let me tangle with my religion without making me feel guilty.
12. I wish you wouldn't offer me drinks or drugs. These are just temporary crutches, and the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have to hurt before I can heal.
13. I wish you understood that grief changes people. I am not the same person I was before my child died and I never will be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to "get back to my old self", you will stay frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. Please try to get to know the new me - - maybe you'll still like me..

Instead of sitting around and waiting for our wishes to come true, we have a obligation to teach people some of the things we have learned about our grief. We can teach these lessons with great kindness, believing that people have good intentions and want to do what is right, but just don't know what to do with us, or we can sit and wait. I believe our children would want us to help the world understand.

~ Elaine Grier, TCF, Atlanta, Ga  
Borrowed from the newsletter of Atlanta Chapter of TCF July-August 1999



## Fireworks Are Like the Love In Our Hearts

July brings Central Oregonians lingering blue skies, lazy afternoons and the Fourth of July celebration, complete with the grand fire-

works finale bolting from the top of Pilot Butte. This was one of my son's favorite holidays. When he was six I asked him why fireworks were so special to him. He said, "The lights explode in the dark and make the whole sky light up!" That was obvious. I said "Hum?" He gave me one of his "Oh mom" looks, then went on to say "The fireworks are like the love in our hearts, we should always try to spread our love out to others". I knew then and I still am aware today that profound wisdom comes from the lips of our children. From the summer on, in my mind, fireworks have been a triumphant testament of love's enduring power and wonder. I miss my son, Joshua terribly. I comfort myself knowing that his wisdom and kindness were precious gifts in my life.

Wherever you are on the Fourth of July, I hope that the splendor of sparkling fireworks might comfort as you acknowledge that the love you hold dear for your child is the light that is able to shine through you. We all have known grief well, yet as compassionate friends we need not walk alone in the darkness. We can lighten the path for others.

Grief can cripple and destroy us, but as we gather to share each other's burden, we are able to gain strength. Love for our children is our common flame, sharing and caring keep the flames afire. I look forward to our next meeting and the opportunity to hug and listen to my comrades.

~lovingly lifted from TCF Salem, OR Newsletter  
~written by Jane Oja, TCF, Central Oregon Chapter

## Do You Ever Feel Like Me?

~from TCF Atlanta Online Sharing

Do you ever feel like me? Right now I am utterly tired of grief. I am sick of it. I can't get away from the always aching pit in my heart and soul. I search for understanding. I do all I can in the memory of my child who is gone and the others who are like her. I try to move into life again. I smile. I laugh but inside I ache, my soul literally burns inside my body.

Some say it gets better WHEN???? That is what I want to know, when in this life am I going to feel better. Oh what I would give for the bliss of ignorance once more.

~Jean Stewart

**Response**....My only child died four years ago. A friend of mine lost her daughter two years before that. Although she lives in IL and I live in GA, we've kept in touch these past four years. . .

Two years ago, I met with Mary. We asked each other, "How are you doing?"

I described for her (even though she knew it) the pain I was feeling. The same pain and despair that you describe, now.

Mary said: "I woke up one day and said to myself: 'I am tired of feeling this way. I do not want to feel this way any longer. I won't.'"

I did not understand, then, how she could possible let go of the everyday pain. That pain was a comfort, to me. I felt that, if I was in extreme pain, every day, then I was paying tribute to my son and to my love for him.

I am beginning to understand, just now, a desire to NOT spend every day with the pain. It's been four years since my son died, and two years since I heard Mary's words.

There IS hope for "better days", for you. And, when those days come, you will not be giving up love for your child, but beginning to love yourself, once more.

Teal Snapp, Conyers, GA  
Billy's mom, always June 23, 1981 - February 25, 1996



## Summer Thoughts

Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and in summer we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out living, loving, enjoying care-free activities with their children, and we want to scream, "It's not fair!".

I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children outside playing and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be.

In my reverie I was reminded of a recent comment I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter." I also remembered a good friend telling me to "count my blessings" and naming over all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing that I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I determined that this summer would not be an eternity, that I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like working in my garden and flowers. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course, I still have times of sadness. I know I always will, but I have decided that in the process of grieving, we close so many doors that the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child, but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel this way, and I know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this summer as he would have done.

~Libby Gonzales, Huntsville, AL TCF - Borrowed from Atlanta TCF online sharing

## Sobbing Out Loud

After my second child died, I have wept many times, crying quietly - often feeling like the grief would choke me, unless I screamed... But I have never been able even to sob aloud again, at least for more than a moment. And since then many grievers have told me they had much the same experience after death took their child.

I wonder if we should encourage each other to sob out loud or scream. One author suggested closing the windows of one's car and screaming. I am not sure that sobbing alone is quite as "good" as sharing it, but even sobbing alone is probably better than not sobbing at all. Some cultures deliberately provide grievers with rituals for sobbing and screaming. Like the women in African villages, or the bereaved mothers of Islam - I always envy them and their traditions of giving sound to their grief. And what about grieving men? Have we been so "civilized" that we can only weep quietly? Perhaps we should all learn not to sob in silence. Who knows, we might sleep a little better, have fewer headaches, feel less alone, if we could sob out loud?

~by Sascha from her book *Wintersun*

In Asian Countries, one can still find delicate tear vases used by mourners. The tears shed into the little vases are considered sacred. The tear bottles are kept and often buried with the person mourned. Even if our tears are for ourselves, for our ache of loneliness, for our pain of loss, they are still sacred, for they are tears of love.  
~Rabbi Jack Stern, Jr.



There will be a balloon release at the Millburn church on **Thursday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:15 pm** (to beat the setting sun).

## Yes Grandparents Do Grieve!

Thank God, some one stepped up and said. "Hey" This child was and is my grandchild!!! And I hurt too! Not looking for sympathy, but wanting the world to know that Yes, the mother and father are hurting from the loss of their little angels, but Granny and Grandpa loved these children with their hearts and souls. Totally unconditionally!!

I read these letters that are sent to me, everyday. My heart hurts for these parents for the loss of their children. But please, let us not forget any of the Grandparents, who's loss is twofold. One for their child who is hurting so bad and for the loss of their Grandchildren.

I always thought my Grandchildren would out live me. At least that's the way it's suppose to be. It doesn't always work out that way. So yes, my heart also hurts for the Grandparents too.

~Wanda Bryant, Vidalia, GA

Grammy to Victoria King  
April 17, 1998 - April 11, 1999

## Memories Are Elusive; Capture Them While You Can

If I were to recall my many memories of James, they surely would begin on the very first day of his life. And what an unusual day it was – so hot and rainy, with flashing bolts of lightening and loud claps of thunder. Late that afternoon, I was holding him in my arms, and the feeling of joy and happiness is something I can still hold in my heart. After that, the visits were so much fun to see the progress James was making from month to month.

But then the day came when he came to say good-bye for a while because he was moving from Connecticut to Georgia, which seemed to be very far away. Then it was time for phone calls and letters with photos enclosed.

I had summer visits to look forward to and of course, always at Christmas. I remember the fun I had with James in the joy that he loved about the holiday.

When it became possible for me to live here my happiness was complete because then it meant I could see him more often.

The soccer games – always proud days because James played so hard to win for his team – the times he stayed at our house where we played games – none of which I could ever win – the help he loved to give me doing crossword puzzles – and the delight in his eyes when he found the piece of the jigsaw puzzle that I just knew had been lost. The vacations we took together – he so enjoyed seeing new places, sharing "The Little Mermaid", "The Velveteen Rabbit" his very favorite movie and book.

All these and so many more will be cherished in my mind and heart and James will remain there for all time. I am his grandmother, will love my precious grandson, my James, for all eternity. May God hold him in the palm of his hand for us all.

~Written by Georgianna Stempien, Austell, Georgia  
Submitted by her daughter & James' Mom, Meg Avery  
Lawrenceville TCF

[In Memory of James Avery, III](#)

July 15, 1983 to September 22, 1997 Borrowed  
from Atlanta TCF newsletter

## A Circle of Friends

by Darcie Sims

Together, we shall join hearts and hands across the earth and decorate the world with hope and healing and remembered laughter. We shall remain forever linked through the love of our absent children, parents, husbands and wives, siblings, grandparents, friends-all of our loved ones who dance across the rainbows ahead of us.

We are a family circle-broken by death, mended by love. May this day, and every day, be days for us to laugh and sing, to dance and dream. May this day, and every day, be days of celebration and the chance to give one more hug, to say one more, "I love you." May love be what you remember most!