



# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

July 2019 Newsletter



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

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## Chapter Leader Notes



### GIVING BACK: ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

I am happy to announce that our chapter is initiating a community project. It is a way to give back as well as to come together with a common purpose – picking up trash. It is not a glamorous task but one that is needed.

Four of our members presented the idea of having our chapter participate in the county Adopt-A-Highway program as Tammie Barrera, our chapter treasure/community outreach coordinator, does with her family, in honor of her beloved son, Aaron.

There are only 17% of Lake County roads that are currently not “adopted”. Three different stretches of those roads were chosen as possibilities for our chapter to assume. The application is being prepared (due Aug 31) and we will find out in the fall as to which segment of road will be ours to clean up.

The program requires that we clean our designated roadway twice a year, spring and fall. The county provides the plastic bags, orange safety vests, and highway caution signs. Our responsibility would be to dress appropriately for the job which includes gloves, bring our own water as well as “grabber” tools and some wagons, which makes it easier to carry the bags as they fill with trash.

You will be hearing more about this project in the coming months.

I would like to thank Leia Betar, Shane's mom, Kris Frisby, Camden's mom, Shannon Seay, Ashley's mom, and Susan Banks, Westley's mom. Susan has generously volunteered to coordinate this project. Thanks Susan!

*Toni*

## SURVIVING YOUR CHILD'S SUICIDE

The suicide of a child of any age presents unique circumstances that can intensify and prolong the mourning process for parents, family members and friends. Suicide is believed to be a reaction to overwhelming feelings of loneliness, worthlessness, helplessness, hopelessness and depression. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in the United States among 10-14-year-olds and 15-24-year-olds, and the second leading cause among 25-34-year-olds.

While mental illness often plays a role in suicide, not everyone who dies by suicide is mentally ill. Some families have experienced years of treatments, hospitalizations and medications with their child, while some experience none at all.

Sometimes there are warning signs of the person's intentions. However, clues may be so disguised that even a trained professional or counselor may not recognize them. Occasionally there are no discernible signs and the child's suicide becomes a catastrophic decision that may never be understood.

There is a change taking place in the terminology when talking about suicide. The term “died by suicide” is being adopted. This new language is reflective of the changes in our understanding and compassion as we move away from the harsh statement and stigma of the words “committed suicide”, which can be offensive to families whose children have taken their own lives.

### After Suicide

Feelings of shock, denial, guilt, anger, and depression are a normal part of grief. These feelings can be especially heightened when a child has died by suicide.

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## Meetings

### Lake Villa Meeting Northern Illinois Chapter TCF July 18 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

Millburn Congregational Church  
19073 W Grass Lake Rd  
(Corner of Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45  
Lake Villa, IL 60046

We will have another "The HeART Remembers: Ex-pressions of Love Through Our Hands" session

### Holy Family Church August 1

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**

(OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND  
SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN  
JULY & AUGUST CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

### **Danielle Trevithick**

August 12

Granddaughter of Tony Trevithick

### **Barry J Grazier**

August 13

Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier

### **Nathan Clyde**

August 17

Son of Valerie Clyde  
Brother of Michaela Clyde

### **Raphael E Vidal**

August 20

Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal

### **Kevin Pomianek**

August 21

Son of Brenda & Eugene Pomianek

### **David Sloop**

August 21

Son of Charron Sloop

### **Ryan James Nichols**

August 22

Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols

### **James (Jim) Grazier**

August 24

Son of Mary Ann & Robert Grazier

### **Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick**

August 25

Son of Jan Frederick  
Grandson of Sharon Frederick

### **Brandon Reif**

August 30

Son of Marcy Reif

### **Justin Cody Ortega**

August 31

Son of Susie Meggs

Please let me know if I have omitted a child,  
misspelled a name or have published an in-  
correct date.

I know how important it is to bereaved fami-  
lies to have their children remembered.

[vszech@comcast.net](mailto:vszech@comcast.net)

### **May I Grieve?**

In the daytime I walk and work, and all;  
But at home in the evening, I stumble and fall.  
The office says, "Function, smile, get control,"  
But at home I can grieve to cleanse my soul.  
Must I be two people for the rest of my life?  
Can I make it through pain and struggle and  
strife?

If I could be just one person for more than one  
day,

My freedom to grieve would help light the way.

But society tells me not to be sad.

They tell me, "She's at peace now, and you  
should be glad."

When grieving the loss of a child is perceived,  
How much easier it is for we the bereaved.

Susanne DeMars

TCF Miami, FL



## 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>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>Joshua William Bowman</b>	<b>July 18</b>	Son of Robin Bray Nephew of Kimberlee Christensen
<b>Brian Scott Ludlow</b>	<b>July 19</b>	Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik
<b>Robert William Corbett</b>	<b>July 20</b>	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
<b>Elizabeth (Liz) Willding</b>	<b>July 27</b>	Daughter of Gigi Willding
<b>Darien Wilson</b>	<b>July 27</b>	Son of Tammy and Tim Olvera
<b>Lindsay Wilczynski</b>	<b>August 3</b>	Daughter of Christine Prado
<b>Andrew Perkins</b>	<b>August 12</b>	Son of Richard & Thelma Perkins
<b>Andrew Muno</b>	<b>August 18</b>	Son of Darlene & Bart Muno
<b>Blake Logan Palmer</b>	<b>August 21</b>	Son of Amber & Brian Palmer Grandson of Lois Cooper Grandson of Gina Palmer
<b>Kelsey Heaps</b>	<b>August 22</b>	Son of Dawn Heaps <i>Brother of Steven Heaps</i>
<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 Parfitt</b>	<b>August 30</b>	Daughter of Robin Parfitt

### ANNIVERSARIES

<b>Justin Perez</b>	<b>July 4</b>	Son of Traci & Carlos Perez Brother of Samantha (Perez) Przybylski
<b>Anna Smith Miller</b>	<b>July 6</b>	Daughter of Carol Smith
<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>Eduardo Chavez-Nuño</b>	<b>July 23</b>	Son of Maria Del Carmen Nuño
<b>Qua'Shawn Wade</b>	<b>July 24</b>	Son of June Andrejewski
<b>John Thumel</b>	<b>July 26</b>	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel
<b>Lindsay Wilczynski</b>	<b>August 1</b>	Daughter of Christine Prado
<b>Adam Rubin</b>	<b>August 1</b>	Son of Linda Rubin Brother of Nicole Rubin
<b>Tony Trejo</b>	<b>August 1</b>	Son of Marina Williamson Brother of Victor Trejo
<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 Prez
<b>David Spannraft</b>	<b>August 12</b>	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft

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## Rekindling the Spark

Don't let the chain of love end with you. Clay Walker.

Carl believed in the Big Bang Theory the bigger the bang, the better the 4th of July celebration. He would orchestrate the whole event from how to get the biggest bang for the buck, to how to arrange them on the street for the most fantastic show on the block. He had this intuitive knowledge of how to run the whole event. Even his sister Carrie would agree that Carl knew what to buy to make the day special, although she always added her special order to the event! So, as the day approached, the family would hit all the fireworks stands in Visalia. You name them - we bought them! When it came to putting the sparks in a 4th of July celebration, Carl was in his element. For the finale, Carl would grab our ladder and have fireworks on each wrung for one spectacular wrap up. At the end, when all the fireworks were lit and the cleanup was done, the family carried this glow inside our hearts. Oh, how I wish those good times would return.

When Carl died, my spark for life was gone also. He gave sparkle to my life. He put fireworks in the fun activities we did as father and son. After his passing, I had no desire to reinvest in life. It was so easy, so painless, at least I thought, to plop myself down in front of the television and vegetate. Zone out!! Way out where pain couldn't reach me. I could numb myself and not think. But like all solutions of this kind, the hurt would not be denied in such a simple fashion. The hurt was not properly dealt with, only pushed down. When it came back, it always came back with a vengeance.

My wounded spirit needed something to make it come back to life again. Or, if not quite that yet, at least to feel the stirring of life in me. As my wife, daughter, and I shared the early deep struggles of living without Carl, ideas began to form. Our conversations took us to a very unforgettable aspect of Carl's life, that being how he made an indelible impact on our lives. Carl gave us new dimensions in love as he shared his triumphs and trials after his brain injury. He fleshed out the meaning of charity when he so often gave his own belongings to others, yet he was so needy. His examples sparked some ideas, which will be shared later.

In our TCF meetings we say, grief won't be denied. Well, grief also needs a place to go. It needs to be dealt with appropriately. Building on Carl's legacy allows me to deal with my wounded spirit constructively. Part of the healing of my wounds has come in finding meaning in his short life and tragic, unexpected death.

If I can find a way to extract the meaning of his life and share it properly, then I can deal more effectively with my wounded spirit. Maybe start kindling a tiny spark. Getting back into the rigors and routines of life has been slow. Achingly slow at times. I am now seeing my recovery from Carl's passing as a lifelong recovery. Someone once said, "The journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step." Yep, that's my journey-one step at a time. I wish I could be "all better" again and back to my jolly old self. It is not to be of course. A new me is here. Little acts of kindness have created tiny sparks of life. After Carl's initial accident, I learned to take "someday" out of the family vocabulary. Special family trips, vacations, and celebrations were planned and done. Carl's last spoken words are etched in my memory forever. They are simple words. "I love you too, Dad." So conversations with my forever friend Debby and my lovely daughter, Carrie, end with those words.

I would like to now share some ideas for kindling a spark in life. Reinvest in life on your timetable. In the first year after a son or daughter's passing, much time is needed for dealing with the loss and the overwhelming feelings that come with it. I said the first year. It could be longer than that. At least it was for me. I used to marvel at others who, when their children passed away, accomplished great deeds like starting foundations for missing and murdered children, or MADD groups. My timetable was different. I started with little projects.

Learn to listen to that still small voice. Call it the gut feeling. Grieving family members move on at different times. On the third anniversary of Carl's death, I heard that still, small voice whisper, "Now." I vowed to God, and to Carl, that I would start a TCF chapter in Visalia. That still, small voice let me know I was ready to take on the task of forming a TCF chapter.

IN TCF circles, the term stuck is used. It refers to grieving parents who remain stuck at a certain point in grief recovery. They are no longer growing through the grief recovery process, but have stagnated.

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(Rekindling the Spark from page 4)

Here are suggestions to get unstuck and feel a bit of spark for life again. Find a simple project that is significant of your child. Plant a tree. Give a donation to a charity or church. Work in a soup kitchen or rescue mission.

Find a way to tell your son or daughter's story. This is so important. This is a very cathartic experience. My healing occurs for me when I write my columns. Debby echoes this sentiment as editor of our newsletters. Don't leave out the siblings of your child. They enjoy writing memories of their brother/sister. Write that story and submit it. It could even be a poem or a song. Recently, an older member of our chapter wrote about his son, who died at 57. This father worked a fulltime job and then came home to the fulltime job of caring for his disabled son. That story touched several readers. They said, "Wow! That's our story. That's how we felt. Tell the writer he has helped us so much!"

Dedicate a newsletter to your child. Our newsletter reaches a wide audience of readers across the country. The feedback is wonderful. People read of our beloved daughters and sons and they are helped in their own recovery. Each time hurting people reach out, they get helped within. Finding that spark in life will not be easy, trust me. It will even be necessary to re-ignite that spark. That's pretty normal. Each time the spark of life gets re-ignited, recovery is a little easier. Be good to yourselves. ~Aaron.

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta July/August 2002 Newsletter

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/JulyAug2002.htm>



(Surviving Your Child's Suicide continued from page 1)

at 1-800-273-8255  
andsuicidepreventionlifeline.org  
provides free and confidential

emotional support from a trained counselor and is available 24-hours a day/7-days a week. However, if the thoughts turn into plans to end your life, please seek professional support immediately.

### Stigma Associated with Suicide

The stigma associated with suicide in our society as a result of cultural and religious interpretations causes some families to be reluctant to talk openly about the cause of their child's death. Keeping the cause of death a secret can deprive you of the joy of speaking about your child with family and friends and may cause isolation between you and those whose support you will need. Finding support from others who allow you to openly share your feelings about your child's, sibling's

or grandchild's suicide can help you to focus on your own healing and survival.

### Anger

Anger is a common emotion experienced by parents whose child has died by suicide. Anger may be directed at your child, those you believe failed to help your child, God or just the world in general. You may be angry with yourself because you feel you were unable to save your child. Anger can be destructive but it can also be constructive. Finding constructive ways of expressing your anger can help in the healing process.

The suicide of a child can raise painful questions, doubts and fears. You may question why your love was not enough to save your child and may fear that others will judge you to be an unfit parent. Both questions may raise strong feelings of failure. Many bereaved parents wrestle with these feelings, but in time come to a place where they understand their child made the choice to end their life.

It is not uncommon for newly bereaved parents to express thoughts of suicide, regardless of how their child has died. Suicide is not inherited. If you are having thoughts of suicide, be gentle with yourself. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

### Guilt and Regret

Parents, family, friends, classmates, and even coworkers often have feelings of guilt and regret following a child's suicide. "If only" is a phrase many find themselves repeating over and over. Intellectually, you may come to understand that your child's decision to end their life was their own. Emotionally, however, it may take much longer for you to accept that you are not responsible. Be patient with yourself. Letting yourself fully feel an emotion is often an important part of processing and working through it.

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## LOST IN SPACE

By Deb Kosmer  
Shawn's Mom  
Oshkosh, WI

Back in the 1960s there was a popular television show called "Lost in Space." It was the story of an astronaut family that found themselves shipwrecked on an alien world, unable to get back home and the adjustments and adaptations they had to make in order to survive.

When someone we love has died, we too can feel like we are lost in space as we struggle to find our way back home. The death of our loved one draws an inerasable line between what was and what is, our BD and our AD: before death and after death. The line that is drawn seems to leave us on one side struggling to hold onto the past while the rest of the world remains and continues to move forward on the other side of the line.

Our grief can feel very much like an alien world. All of the things that we once believed are suddenly called into question. The future we thought we had mapped out is shattered, leaving nothing behind but a question mark. Many of the people in our lives, whom we had always depended upon, are absent just like our loved one as we begin to realize that what was the normalcy of our lives, both the good and the bad, has vanished in that instant.

Grief places us on a journey we never signed up to take. It is a journey we must make even though most of our resources have been depleted. Grief robs us of our energy and our capacity to make decisions. It leaves us feeling immobilized, unsure of the route to take and afraid of our destination. It throws out

the rules and leaves us to make new ones. As we struggle to find our way, misguided family and friends are often quick to point out that we are going and doing it the wrong way.

After a while, when we become more tired than afraid, we begin to slowly and cautiously move forward. The road that we take will not be a straight one. Grief has many curves, rest stops, and changes of direction. That does not mean we are doing it wrong. It is just the nature of grief and learning to adapt to the world without our loved one in it. As time passes, we will discover new places and friends. We will begin to reconnect with some of the people we thought had left us behind. Our world will no longer look or feel exactly the same as it was but will not feel as foreign as it has. Eventually we will come to understand that our loved one has made the journey with us through our memories and the unshakable love that we shared. Home, though not the same, is once again a welcoming place, a safe haven, the place where we belong.

### I KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

By Debbie Trepanier  
Springfield IL BP/USA Chapter

3 years ago you left this earth  
but I know where you are.

You are in my heart, in my breath.  
You are in every part of my day.

You are in my dreams and my thoughts.

I know one day I will see you again  
and, oh! what a day that will be.

We can laugh with each other again,  
and cry with each other again.

I may have to suffer many years  
before that glorious day.

But, for now, it gives me hope.

For now

I know where you are.

(Surviving Your Child's Suicide continued from page 5)

### Questioning

Often parents ask "why?" Rarely are there clear answers, which may be highly frustrating. At some point, you may begin to realize that there are some questions about the death of your child that will never be answered.

### Depression

Lack of energy, sleep problems, inability to concentrate, not wanting to talk with others, and the feeling there is nothing to live for are all normal reactions in bereavement. Situational depression, as opposed to clinical depression, should eventually subside. This type of depression can be helped by integrating moderate physical activity, plenty of rest and water, and a nutritious diet into a daily routine. Try to allow family and friends to take care of you. You don't have to be strong. Try to stay connected with people you value and trust. Talking with others who have been through a similar situation may also help you to cope. If the depression does not appear to lessen over time, you may want to talk with a qualified professional who can determine how best to help you.

### Disillusionment

Often parents find themselves in a spiritual crisis and question their beliefs or feel betrayed by God. Religious concerns about the hereafter may also surface. "Why did God let this happen?" is a question we may never know the answer to. Talking about spiritual and philosophical questions with other parents who have experienced a suicide may be helpful. For those with concerns of a spiritual nature, it could be helpful to find a gentle, caring and nonjudgmental member of the same faith and open yourself to that person.

Ideas to Help You Cope

- Talk about your child's death with family members and discuss your feelings of loss and pain. Talk about the good times you had as well as the times that were not so good. It can be helpful and therapeutic to express feelings rather than to internalize them. Giving the gift of tolerance for all family members to grieve in their own way allows each person to feel validated in their own unique grief experience. Keep in mind that everyone's grief journey is as unique as the relationship they had with the child that died. You may find it helpful to write your feelings or to write a letter to your child; this can be a safe place for you to express some of the things you were not able to say before the death.
- Ask for help. Don't be afraid to let your friends know what you need when they ask; they want to help.
- 

- Consider becoming involved with a self-help bereavement group such as The Compassionate Friends. Through sharing with others who have walked a similar path, you may gain some understanding of your reactions and learn additional ways to cope. Seek professional support and family counseling if necessary.
- Give yourself time, time and more time. It takes months, even years, to open your heart and mind to healing. Choose to survive and then be patient with yourself. In time, your grief will soften as you begin to heal and you will feel like investing in life again.

*This brochure sponsored by The Katrina Tagget Memorial Foundation*

*in loving memory of Katrina "Kara" Tagget,  
daughter of Sara & David and sister of Blake*

## THE CLUB

I am a lucky member of one special club.  
We were selected at random, not knowing it will come.  
Each one of us as members  
Have this unique rare bond  
We all have special angels, there in the sky above.  
This bond is...Oh, so special  
That every day we know  
What each one of the members is suffering alone.  
No words are necessary, no cry we need to hear,  
We feel each other's pain, whether we are far or near.  
We all know that our angels are happy and at peace,  
We just would like to see them,  
And at night...sing a lullaby until they go to sleep.  
We all wish we could tell them how much they mean to us  
And while they are listening, give them all a huge big hug.  
Oh, God! Please let me have one day a big reward.  
I know that you can hear me, you know the pain I have.  
Let me one day, if you can, have my angel in my arms.  
Let me kiss him, long and hard!!!  
Let me see his face at last!!!  
Let me have him in my arms, let us never be apart.

By Ileana Villahermosa in memory of her son  
Felipe, Orlando, FL

**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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