



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

July 2023 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear Friends,

I hope the month of July offers sunshine and an opportunity to explore the outside world. I guess it will all depend on the weather, always a question mark these days. However, the rainy days mid-June were a blessing and hopefully helpful to our yards, parks, and forest preserves. I find myself checking the weather to plan a walk or bike ride. I am happy to report that I got my gardens in order and now I can maintain and enjoy the blooming cycles this season. On to summer and the many events.

I know all of you have transitions; some are personal, and others are more public. Some are celebrations, and vacations. With all of these, we all carry the loss of our loved one with us in our hearts and in our memories as we do our very best to stay present in our daily lives. If you have a celebration, a marriage, a new birth, a graduation, or a planned trip; I offer my sincere congratulations and wish you and your family safe and happy travels. I hope you can enjoy your celebrations and I hope your vacations bring you enjoyment, relaxation, and comfort. It might be a short trip in town to visit family or a

friend, or a longer trip to a further destination. Take care of you, be gentle with yourself, take on only what you can and it's ok to take a break. It's also ok to celebrate the joy and smiles with your family and friends. Our loved one is always near and with us in our memories, our daily comings and goings and our new adventures. May each of you be blessed with good health, family and friends and moments of peace.

"If you are going on vacation the rule of thumb is: Do what helps you. If taking a cruise, or flying to a distant sunny haven, or visiting a mountain or seaside retreat, or just relaxing at a nearby resort helps you gain a moment of peace, do it. Vacations can be a time of "renewal" for us. We all know that we need a vacation "from grief." We just have to figure out what kind of vacation our own heart needs. Good luck! "

*What about Vacations, by Elaine Stillwell.
Northern Illinois Compassionate Friends
Newsletter 7/2016.*

Take care, your friend,

Susan

Westley's mom



Lake Villa Meeting Northern Illinois Chapter TCF

The third Thursday of the month meeting will remain as an in-person only meeting. The location is at the:

Millburn Congregational Church
19073 West Old Town Court
Lake Villa, IL 60046.

Park in the parking lot behind the church, enter through the double glass doors.

Holy Family Church

The first Thursday of the month meeting will remain a Zoom meeting only. This will change to in-person the date is to be announced.

Upcoming events for our Chapter.

For our meetings in the month of July, I would like to invite you to bring a memory of your most cherished gift or gesture from your child, who has gone too soon. You can show a picture, share the gift, or tell us the story behind this memory. It's also ok to sit and listen and when you feel comfortable sharing, please share with us.

July 6 is our zoom meeting and July 20 is our in-person meeting. I invite you to bring a picture, an item, or a story to share with us.

Thursday September 21, 2023; *The HeART Remembers*. We will create art in memory of our loved ones.

Saturday October 7 Adopt a Highway Clean – up, rain date Saturday October 14.

Sunday December 10, 2023, Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony; The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the

sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. *More information will be shared to our members.*

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



The Garden of Grief

Sandy Goodman

About a year after Jason died, I decided to approach our local city council and ask their permission to develop a piece of city land along our recreational path. Plan in hand, I explained to our town leaders why I wanted to create "Jason's Park" and begged their approval. I expected a lot of questions and at best a "MAYBE" at that first meeting. But as the now popular song goes, I know what I was feeling, but what WAS I THINKING???

Here I was, a bereaved mother, asking permission to develop and take over the upkeep of a 200-foot strip of land that was nothing but weeds and rocks. Grass was afraid to grow there. Water had never touched it. And not only was I wanting to do the work, I was willing to PAY FOR IT. They said "Yes. Yes, you may do that Mrs. Goodman . . ." and Jason's Park was born.

It is now six years later, and the park looks better than it ever has. In the beginning, nothing good grew there. Strewn with rocks

(Continued on page 9)



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND RE-MEMBERED 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

Noel Endell Hernandez	July 13	Son of Colleen Ramos
Brian Scott Ludlow	July 19	Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik
Robert William Corbett	July 20	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
Taylor Albert Rydahl	July 22	Son of Carol Ann & Keith Rydahl
Elizabeth (Liz) Willding	July 27	Daughter of Gigi Wilding
Darien Wilson	July 27	Son of Tammy and Tim Olvera
Lindsay Wilczynski	August 3	Daughter of Christine Pado
Eder Alamilla	August 7	Son of Magda Alamilla
Andrew Perkins	August 12	Son of Richard & Thelma Perkins
Andrew Muno	August 18	Son of Darlene & Bart Muno
Kelsey Heaps	August 22	Son of Dawn Heaps
		Brother of Steven Heaps
Lily Grace Kennedy	August 24	Daughter of Emily Kennedy
Ashley Seay	August 25	Daughter of Mike and Shannon Seay
		Granddaughter of Dennis & Georgene Manley
Nicole Parfitt	August 30	Daughter of Robin Parfitt

ANNIVERSARIES

Daniel Powalish	July 5	Son of Mary Ellyn Carroll
Anna Smith Miller	July 6	Daughter of Carol Smith
Gabriel Murphy Jr	July 7	Son of Arvine Murphy
Elizabeth (Liz) Willding	July 14	Daughter of Gigi Wilding
Jaime Smith	July 19	Daughter of Melissa Smith
Qua'Shawn Wade	July 24	Son of June Andrejewski
Sage Cue	July 26	Daughter of Ben & Jennifer Peterson-Cue
John Thumel	July 26	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel
Tony Trevithick Jr	July 26	Son of Tony Trevithick
Nick Weber	July 29	Son of Glenda Weber & Brother of Karen Lumusga
Javier Ramirez	July 30	Son of Julie Ojeda
Lindsay Wilczynski	August 1	Daughter of Christine Pado
Adam Rubin	August 1	Son of Linda Rubin
Tony Trejo	August 1	Son of Marina Williamson
		Brother of Victor Trejo
Brian Keough	August 2	Son of Kathleen Keough
Jammi Shonlei Hui	August 5	Daughter of William & Joyce Hui
Pressley Suzanne McHugh	August 5	Daughter of Shawn & Kari McHugh
Sandra Elena Varela	August 5	Daughter of Sandra Prez
David Spannraft	August 12	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
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
		Sister of Michaela Clyde

(Continued on page 8)

THOSE OF US WHO ARE CHILDLESS

Many of us attend support group meetings for one reason – a child of ours has died. For some of us, however, the child that died was the only child we had, and though our pain is certainly no worse than those who have surviving children, there are differences. “We” will never hear the work “Mom” or “Dad” again. “We” have no hope of grand- children. “We” only have ourselves to go on for. During the past seven years there have been many times when I have cringed in meetings as a fellow bereaved parent inadvertently hurt me. How can you as a compassionate friend help?

I have listed some ways to make it easier for a parent with no surviving child, to be comfortable at support group meetings.

When a parent with no surviving children is in your group, please don't bring out the pictures of your grandchildren. Save them for someone who at least has the hope of grandchildren. We do not. Though you may have special problems with your surviving child (children) don't expound on them. We would love to have any problem at all.

Please don't say, “I don't know how you bear it.” That is equivalent to someone who has not had a child die saying the same words to you. We “bear it” because we have no choice, just as you do not.

If you are fortunate enough to have another child, I am happy for you. But please do not tell me the details of your pregnancy. For some of us, that is not an option.

I understand that grief is not a contest. I know my pain is not worse than yours,

but it is different, and there are different bridges to cross.

Thank you for being compassionate to all of us. Vicki,

In memory of my son, Sandy
ALIVE ALONE SPRING, 1998

(The Garden of Grief continued from page 2)



But as years passed, things began to change. An empty heart began accepting new thoughts, new relationships, new priorities. Love became stronger, days brighter, and life came back to visit.

The need to be only "Jason's Mom" began to wane, and others regained their importance in my life. Gifts appeared, not as replacements, but as reminders that love never dies.

I began the journey of grief, just like Jason's Park, with nothing. Time alone would not have produced the change I needed to make. I must work hard, plant new things, get rid of the old stuff, nurture what I plant, and pour out enough love to grow a garden. I must accept that the task at hand, be it grief work or building a park, will never be over. I must find joy in the "now" of it. And most importantly, I must ask for help. No one should walk the journey of grief alone, and well . . . while they are walking, they might as well be pulling weeds.

Lovingly borrowed from

**Love Never Dies, A Newsletter about the
Journey from Loss to Love**

August, 2003

Issue #8

Sandy Goodman, Editor

THE GIFT OF LOSS

Most of you know that I lost my 8-year-old daughter Scout to cancer on July 7, 07. The past nine months have been by far the most painful of my entire life. I don't know that there is anything worse than losing a child. At first, I didn't want to live-and this is typical for parents who lose a child. In fact, many plan their suicides. For months I woke up every day wishing that the world would disappear. I tell you this not to elicit your sympathy, but so you will know that it was from the depths of this kind of pain that came the unexpected gifts I will talk about today.

I had thought that if Scout died, I would not be able to go on. And yet here I am. And not only am I here, but I have learned more in these past nine months than I ever thought possible. I feel like I have undergone the most astonishingly rapid spiritual growth spurt of my life-sort of spiritual boot camp, if you will. It's tough going, but it makes for fast changes.

What have I learned?

1. I have learned that our culture deals very badly with death.

We ignore it, deny it, and avoid it as much as possible. This is manifested in so many ways: the positive value our culture puts on youth and looking young and feeling young (instead of valuing the wisdom that comes with age); the measures we go to, to keep people alive at the very end of their lives; the way we consign dying and death to hospitals and funeral parlors, instead of allowing these very natural and inevitable things to happen at home.

Why does this matter, our culture's denial of death? Because when death comes-and it always does-we are shocked, frightened, unprepared, at a loss. We don't know how to sit with someone as they die, comforting them and supporting them as they make the sacred

journey to the other side. A dead body seems creepy to us because we have never touched one before. We push aside grief and try to "move on" because our sadness is uncomfortable to those around us, and to ourselves. We don't know what to say when a friend or family member loses someone close to them, and so we stay away and say nothing.

Compare our culture with this example:



Sobanfu - Some is an African healer and lecturer. She speaks about the way grief is regarded in her culture. In her village, at any given time there is a grief ritual-taking place.

Anyone who is grieving is welcome to come, to cry, and to feel together in a community of others as a simple matter of course. The notion of avoiding this process and these feelings is as illogical to them as avoiding a meal when feeling hungry. Holding onto grief is likened to holding onto a toxic substance. It is only through the acknowledgment and expression of the grief that the health of the organism is restored.

And our fear of death is really an aspect of a larger concern: our fear of loss. Think about this: "All relationships end." All relationships end. I read those words recently and was struck by the paradox that while this is so obviously true, we almost never pay attention to it. It's too frightening; I think to live daily with this realization.

(Continued on page 6)

(THE GIFT OF LOSS continued from page 5)

In a strange way, embracing the inevitability of loss has given me comfort: what happened to Scout and to me is not out of the order of things, it is PART of the order of things. As my husband said, "Eventually, if she grew up she'd have to say goodbye to us when we died. She just happened to go first."

I've been reading a lot of Buddhist philosophy these past months, and a central precept of Buddhism is that the source of human suffering is an unwillingness to accept loss.



But as Mary Oliver reminds us, loss is a part of life, because change is a part of life.

So, if I face my mortality head on, the next question becomes, "What am I going to do with this life that I do have?"

The moment we fully acknowledge the inevitability of death is the moment we fully feel the preciousness of life, because it doesn't last. So life and death are parts of a whole - one can't exist without the other. Which brings me to the next lesson I've learned:

2. Happiness is overrated.

I don't think the point of life is to be happy. I think the point of being here on earth is to grow as human beings-to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for all that is. And guess what: we don't grow when we are comfortable. It is when we are challenged, when we suffer, when we are uncomfortable, that we grow the most.

Now, you might argue that as we grow as human beings, we in fact become happier-yes, happy in the truest sense of the word-not fun, ha-ha, laughing at jokes happiness, but a

kind of hard-earned happiness that comes from experiencing both pain and joy, both life and death. From realizing that they are parts of a whole. The happiest person I ever met was a Holocaust survivor. My senior year in college I took a course on Literature of the Holocaust, and toward the end of the semester the professor invited this woman to speak to the class. She had the most serene, genuine, warm presence I have ever seen in a person.

3. I have learned to let go of what I cannot control (and to cherish what I have).

This lesson was a gift that first came when Scout was diagnosed with cancer in January 07. During those first days, as I sat crying in her hospital room, I realized, "I cannot control the outcome of this. But what I can do is love her with every ounce of my being for as long as she is here." And I did that. I was also determined not to allow the terror of losing her to distract me from enormous gift of having her there right then. But the possibility that I could lose her gave me the gift of a deep, attentive love with her. I remember her asking me last spring, "Mom, why are you kissing me so much?"

Letting go of what we cannot control means also letting go of the fantasy that somehow if we are good, if we are kind, if we believe in God, if we make the right choices, then nothing bad will happen to us. When Scout died, I wondered, "Why her? Why not some kid who was a bully, who didn't have a happy life, who was dumb, whose parents didn't care about

(Continued on page 7)

(The Gift of Grief continued from page 6)

them?" And I realized after a time that the answer to, "Why me?" is "Why not me?"

Nothing makes me or my family immune from death or illness or injury. (And of course, the life of a kid who is a bully or not so smart or whose parents don't care about him are just as precious as my daughter's life.) But I suffered a loss of innocence: I realized I am not immune from tragedy.

No, we can't control what happens to... but we can make do with what we've been given. What really matters in life is not what happens to you, it's what you do with it.



4. I have learned that when your heart breaks, it breaks open.

I think of it this way: each of us builds a hard shell around our heart to protect ourselves from deep pain. (But in my vision, the shell doesn't keep pain from coming into your heart-because the pain is already there, it's an unavoidable part of life, because loss is an unavoidable part of life. Rather, the shell keeps the pain in, confines it, so we don't have to think about it or feel it.) But this same shell also keeps in feelings of deep joy and deep love and of peace, of oneness with the universe. So, since my heart was broken from losing Scout, I have experienced not only the greatest pain of my life, but also the greatest love and gratitude I have ever known.

I find I am less interested in judging people, less willing to get in the middle of conflicts, I spend less time speculating about people's motives, more aware of and appreciative of the good qualities in people. I spend more time amazed at and grateful for what life has brought me-especially Scout. What a miracle that she was here, for eight perfect years, that I got to be her mom.

In my extended family, there has been an astonishing change since Scoutie went up. I have four sisters, and my mom and dad are still around, and we have always been close, but with conflict. But since July, each and every one of my sisters and both my parents have shown an enormous generosity of spirit, not only toward me, but toward each other. Scout's death changed my parents' relationship, my relationship with my husband, and more.

5. I have learned that love is the strongest force in the universe.

I told this story at the celebration of Scout's life in September, so some of you have heard it. In late August, my friend Marcie said to me, "You are going through such an extraordinary time. What are you learning?" I told her that I didn't know; I was too deep in grief to see that yet.

Later that night I was lying in bed and suddenly the answer to her question came to me-and it was so simple that I had almost missed. The big lesson in all this, in Scout's illness and our struggle to get her cured and our deep sadness upon losing her-the overarching theme in all this is not loss, or cancer, or how unfair the world is, but LOVE. As I lay there, I found myself grinning. My love for Scout, and Neil's love and Leo's love and my sisters' love for Scout, Scout's love for us, the outpouring of love that my family received from friends and colleagues and

(Continued on page 7)



(Our Children Remembered continued from page 3)

Christain Romero
August 17
Son of Veronica Romero Carlos

Dylan Smith
August 19
Son of Melissa Smith

Raphael E Vidal
August 20
Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal

Ryan James Nichols
August 22
Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols

James (Jim) Grazier
August 24
Son of Mary Ann & Robert Grazier
Lily Grace Kennedy
August 24
Daughter of Emily Kennedy

Michael Lee Brandon Hamilton Frederick
August 25
Son of Jan Frederick
Grandson of Sharon Frederick

James McClintock
August 28
Son of Charles & Louise Knoll

Brandon Reif Ward
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 incorrect date. I know how important it is to bereaved families to have their children remembered.
vszech@comcast.net - 847-337-4168

LESSON

Sandy Goodman

*In times of confusion
 I look for you
 Seeking your knowledge
 Wanting the solace of your words
 Somehow our roles have switched
 It is now I who reach to you for wisdom
 Like a child approaching a parent
 Rather than you the son
 depending on your mom
 But perhaps your lessons
 Were always there
 and I was unaware
 of what you had taught me
 until my need for your teachings
 became greater than my desire to teach.*

LOVE NEVER DIES EZINE
A Newsletter about the Journey from
Loss to Love
August, 2002
Issue #4

(The Gift of Loss continued on page 5)

neighbors: everything else pales in comparison to that love.

Most importantly, I realized when I lost Scout that nothing, but NOTHING, could take away my love for her, and so I would always relate to her in that way. Cancer could take away her body, but it could not touch my love. Love can outlast time, distance, and even death. It is, indeed, the strongest force in the universe.

As anyone who has suffered a terrible loss will tell you, I would return all these gifts in a second if it meant I could have Scout back. But I can't have her back. A few months ago, while I was swimming laps, I thought to myself, "My life is over." And the universe spoke to me-or maybe it was God, depending on your beliefs-and said gently but firmly, "No, it's not over; it's just different." I can't have Scout back--and so the important question is, "What do I do now with what I have?" Here, now, in this life that is so very different from the one I had, and from the one I wanted--and this is where I find myself. Where do I go from here? I have these unexpected gifts to help me along the way, and I feel they are gifts from Scout.

*Delivered at the Wednesday chapel service at Manchester College, April 2, 08.

Abigail A. Fuller
Associate Professor of Sociology and Social Work
Director, Peace Studies Program
Manchester College
aafuller@manchester.edu

~reprinted from Love Never Dies
<http://www.loveneverdies.net>

(The Garden of Grief continued from page 2)



and litter, only weeds thrived in the dry cracked ground. There was nothing visible that suggested a positive outcome. The first two or three years, improvement was slow. As soon as one weed patch was taken care of, another one would overwhelm me. When one flower grew and flourished, three shriveled and died. The sudden appearance of wind and torrential rains often destroyed all progress.

Years passed; things began to change. Barren ground began accepting new growth, new attachments. Trees became stronger, flowers brighter, and life came back to visit. The need to be sole owner of Jason's Park began to wane. Soon, there were other lives being remembered there. A wall was built, not as a barrier, but as a celebration of lives that mattered.

As I stood in the middle of the wildflowers this morning, I realized that the transformation of this piece of land has mirrored my own grief. In the beginning nothing good grew in my heart. Filled with despair, the only thing that flourished in my soul was pain. There was no semblance of hope, or signs of improvement on the horizon. I would just make it over one hurdle in time to see three more pop up in front of me. The sudden appearance of reality destroyed any progress I had pretended to make.

But as years passed, things began to change. An empty heart began accepting new thoughts, new relationships, new priorities. Love became stronger, days brighter, and life came back to visit. The need to be only "Jason's Mom" began to wane, and others regained their importance in my life. Gifts appeared, not as replacements, but as reminders that love never dies.

I began the journey of grief, just like Jason's Park, with nothing. Time alone would not have produced the change I needed to make. I have to work hard, plant new things, get rid of the old stuff, nurture what I plant, and pour out enough love to grow a garden. I have to accept that the task at hand, be it grief work or building a park, will never be over. I must find joy in the "now" of it. And most importantly, I must ask for help. No one should walk the journey of grief alone, and well . . . while they are walking, they might as well be pulling weeds.

Lovingly borrowed from **Love Never Dies, A Newsletter about the Journey from Loss to Love**

August, 2003
Issue #8
Sandy Goodman, Editor

LOVE GIFTS

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

In loving memory of _____

In honor of _____

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

Pay for a book for the chapter's Lending Library _____

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter _____

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be included in the "special days" list each month in the newsletter, you must fill out this form that gives us permission to list this information. If you are making a donation, please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends**.

Return to Tammie Barrera, 821 Roberts Road, Winthrop Harbor, IL. 60096

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

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

TCF National Office - 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI - 48393 PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246. The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

Steering Committee 2022 – 2023

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Susan Banks 847-366-9375 lanwesmar@comcast.net – son, Westley Banks Age 21 of suicide

TREASURER Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 julyson2@gmail.com son, Aaron Barrera Age 29 Auto accident due to Diabetes

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HOSPITALITY Kris Frisby 847-366-3170 Kefrisby88@comcast.net son, Camden Frisby Age 15 of suicide.

SECRETARY / LIBRARIAN

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Shannon Seay 224-456-2891 Seayseven1@comcast.net daughter, Ashley Seay Age 17 Auto accident.

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WOODLAND WALK COORDINATORS Christine Pado 847-455-6642 chpado@gmail.com - daughter Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 Pulmonary Embolism

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FACILITADORES EN HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL. Española e inglés. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, hijo Raphael Vidal de 17 años de suicidio. Mirtha está disponible por teléfono o correo electrónico.

Northern Lake County IL Chapter #1511 <http://www.iltcf.org/index.html>

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

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