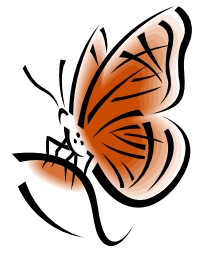


# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

June, 2017 Newsletter



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



## 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.

(Continued on page 7)



## 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 and Jeanette Powell  
Sponsoring their donation  
in memory of their daughter  
Reneé Powell

"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.

## WHEN FATHERS WEEP AT GRAVES

I see them weep  
the fathers at the stones.

Taking off the brave armor  
forced to wear in the work place.

Clearing away the debris  
with gentle fingers.

Inhaling the sorrow  
diminished by anguish.

Their hearts desiring  
what they cannot have....

To walk hand in hand  
with children no longer held...

To all the fathers who leave a part

of their hearts at the stones.

May breezes underneath trees of time  
ease their pain.

As they receive healing tears  
...the gift the children give.



Annual

## Gathering Conference

**Join us in Washington DC August 4th-6th for the 2017 Bereaved Parents of the USA National Gathering.**

Announcing our speakers for the 2017 National BPUSA Gathering: **Kelly Buckley, Dr. Doug and BJ Jensen, Ron Kelly, Sarah Kravits, Anna Whiston-Donaldson, Gareth Williams, Tom Zuba.**

### 2017 Schedule

August 4-6th: Gathering

### Location Info.

Hilton Washington Dulles Airport  
13869 Park Center Road, Herndon, VA 20171  
(703) 478-2900 |

## Meetings

**Northern Illinois Chapter TCF  
June 15 - 7:30 p.m.**

Millburn Congregational Church  
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL  
Open discussion

**Waukegan meeting  
July 6 – 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Holy Family Church  
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL  
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



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

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. 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

### BIRTHDAYS

<i>Edgar O Villareal</i>	<b>June 2</b>	Son of Guadalupe Villareal
<i>Edward G Davis III</i>	<b>June 8</b>	Son of Edward G Davis Jr.
<i>James (Jim) Grazier</i>	<b>June 9</b>	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<i>Lila Ruffolo</i>	<b>June 12</b>	Daughter of Jenny & Rick Selle
<i>Pressley Suzanne McHugh</i>	<b>June 20</b>	Daughter of Kari McHugh
<i>Michael Stice</i>	<b>July 4</b>	Son of Dora & Gary Stice
<i>Renee' Rochelle Powell</i>	<b>July 7</b>	Daughter of Terry & Jeanette Powell
<i>Joshua William Bowman</i>	<b>July 18</b>	Son of Robin Bray Nephew of Kimberlee Christensen
<i>Brian Scott Ludlow</i>	<b>July 19</b>	Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik
<i>Robert William Corbett</i>	<b>July 20</b>	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
<i>Elizabeth (Liz) Willding</i>	<b>July 27</b>	Daughter of Gigi Wilding
<i>Darien Wilson</i>	<b>July 27</b>	Son of Tammy and Tim Olvera

### ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Anna Smith Miller</i>	<b>July 6</b>	Daughter of Carol Smith
<i>Elizabeth (Liz) Willding</i>	<b>July 14</b>	Daughter of Gigi Wilding
<i>Amy Jo Baldwin</i>	<b>July 17</b>	Daughter of Mike & Sheila Baldwin
<i>Eduardo Chavez-Nuño</i>	<b>July 23</b>	Son of Maria Del Carmen Nuño
<i>Qua'Shawn Wade</i>	<b>July 24</b>	Son of June Andrejewski
<i>John Thumel</i>	<b>July 26</b>	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel

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

## Lending Library



We have a large lending library at our meetings. We also welcome book donations. If you have grief books you would like to donate, we will include inside the front cover of the book a "Donated in Memory of \_\_\_\_\_" Please include your name and your child or sibling's name.

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a book which you felt was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles, poems, pictures and remembrances to Vicki Szech for submission in our monthly newsletter. E-mail [vszech@comcast.net](mailto:vszech@comcast.net) or mail to The Compassionate Friends, 31023 Prairie, Ridge Road, Libertyville, IL 60048

## 40<sup>th</sup> TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE



July 28 - July 30

**HILTON ORLANDO BONNET CREEK, 14100 BONNET CREEK RESORT LANE, ORLANDO, FL 32821**

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Orlando, Florida, will be the site of the 40th TCF National Conference on July 28-30, 2017. "Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last... **TO FIND OUT MORE**

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/event/40th-tcf-national-conference/>

### WALK TO REMEMBER

July 30

*Orlando, Florida*

## A FATHER'S PAIN

Written by Plutarch – a Greek Writer, 46-125 A. D., on the death of his son who completed suicide.

**Should the sweet remembrances of those things which so delighted us when he was alive only afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure when we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory and make that memory a glad rather than a sorrowful one. Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like the miser who never enjoys what he has, but only be- wails what he loses.**

**(It should not surprise us that a Father's pain is the same in 2017 as it was all those years ago)**

Loving lifted from  
<http://www.journeythroughsuicidegrief.com/>:

Being a victim is a state of mind-dictated by others.  
A survivor dictates his or her own state of mind.

A victim fears the moments of grief.  
A survivor welcomes those moments!

A victim knows about feeling down and tries to stay up.  
A survivor knows feeling down is okay.

A victim tries hard to hide the tears.  
A survivor never leaves home without Kleenex.

A victim struggles to maintain a state of normalcy.  
A survivor knows normal no longer exists.

A victim gets caught in isolation.  
A survivor reaches out when they need to.

A victim is afraid they in time will forget.  
A survivor knows they never will!!

A victim sometimes feels guilty laughing.  
A survivor laughs through their tears.

A victim tries at times to block out the memories.  
A survivor embraces memories of all kinds.

A victim wants someone to cure his or her grief.  
A survivor just wants someone to share his or her journey.

A victim struggles to get over their grief.  
A survivor fights to get through it.

A victim tries to get on with their life.  
A survivor lives their life knowing nothing will ever be the same.

A victim says oh I'm okay-then secretly cries.  
A survivor openly cries-and says I'm okay.



## Father's Grief

By Rebekah Mitchell

"I'm so sorry!" "I'm so sorry!" I sobbed to Byron after Jonathan's death was confirmed. Between his own tears he asked me why I was apologizing to him. I felt as if I had failed him as a wife and as a mother to his children.

After Byron and I spent time alone with Jonathan, we wanted to share him without family and friends who were waiting in an empty labor room down the hall. I was wheeled down there as Byron followed holding our tiny, lifeless bundle. One of my sisters says it is a sight she will never forget. I was very groggy during this sharing time, but I remember seeing Byron crying uncontrollably most of the night. In a drug-induced and shocked state, I tried to comfort Byron and tell him it was going to be okay.

Two days later my shock and painkillers wore off a little and I found that the role of comforting was reversed. Byron rarely left my side for the next several days but seldom did we grieve together. It seemed as if when one of us was having a hard time, the other would be the emotionally strong one.

Before long, we were home and attempting to get our lives back together. It seemed to me that Byron was having an easier time adjusting to the loss of Jonathan than I was. At times, I found myself enraged that he could get back to normal so quickly and continue his day-to-day activities when I was at home grieving over our precious baby.

What I didn't know was that he was burying his grief. Although his heart was torn in two when we lost our little boy, he was afraid that we were also going to lose the blissful family we once were. He wondered if we would ever truly be happy again and if our marriage would ever be the same. Because of these anxieties he subconsciously convinced himself that he had to get our family back on track before he would mourn the death of his son. It wasn't until two years after Jonathan's death that we realized this.

I am so thankful for my wonderful husband who has been my lifeline since the stillbirth of our baby. Except by the grace of God, I know I wouldn't have survived without Byron's love, compassion, and sensitivity. If you feel your husband is not grieving "right" or "enough," I hope you will find this article helpful. Encourage your spouse to read this also, and hopefully, he will realize that it's okay to have fears, express his emotions, and outwardly grieve the loss of his child.

## A New Normal

I wanted my life to return to normal. Then I realized what I wanted was for my life to return to what it once was.

A year ago I found hope one night when I heard my wife and my youngest son laughing in our bedroom. I thought my life was returning to normal. I played cards with our youngest son after supper, with much fun and laughter. After a few cartoons, he and my wife were off to bed.

It was then that I realized my life was not returning to the normal that it was when *Greg* was alive, but changing to a new normal. I cannot return to what I once was, because all of the parts are no longer there.

I have the choice, consciously, and subconsciously to carry on with my life, thus creating a new normal.

Hope lies in accepting what you now have, looking with joy, not sorrow, looking ahead with optimism not pessimism.

© 2006 Daryl Hutso

~reprinted from Bereaved Parents USA website

[http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/AP\\_Fathers.htm](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/AP_Fathers.htm)

## HURTING ON FATHER'S DAY

**As the day approaches, I wander how  
I will react.**

**Am I still a father?**

**I will sit quietly, never allowing friends and family  
to see how I feel.**

**I miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break."  
I must remain strong, and always be the "rock."**

**I wish I could just let someone**

**Know how much I miss my little angel,  
how much I cry and how much I miss hearing  
"Dad, I love you."**

**Remember me, for I hurt , too,  
on this "special day."**

## A Message to Bereaved Grandparents

# We Must Allow our Children to Grieve in Their Own Way

By Margaret H. Gerner  
TCF, St. Louis, Mo.

I sat with a young bereaved mother who was pouring out her pain and utter desolation to me. She was angry and hurt that those around her couldn't understand what was wrong with her. After all, it had been eight months since her two-year-old son had died.

She should be better by now. To her, they implied she was wallowing in her grief and not trying to "get over it." Between sobs she said, "Even my mother and father now seem to avoid me. They don't even mention his name, and they change the subject when I talk about Tommy. That hurts so much."

As I listened, I remembered how much I had wanted my parents' help when my son died, but they lived 600 miles from me. I also thought, "How would I be able to help my own grieving daughter today if I hadn't experienced my own child's death almost 13 years ago, and didn't KNOW what she was going through?" I could see how desperately this young mother needed her parents. I could also see how frustrated and helpless they must feel, how painful it must be for them. If only they knew how important they could be in helping their daughter, how they, of all people, were needed by her, and how they had the opportunity to add a lasting element to their relationship with their child.

I wanted to tell them how very much she simply needed them to listen to her talk about her child and her pain. I wanted them to listen to her pour out her agony, without one word from them of how she should or should not feel.

The subject of death and grief is uncomfortable for all of us. We will accept anyone's discussion of happy things, but we shy away from talk of grief and death.

One of the reasons for this is that, in some way, it makes us aware of our own death and mortality. For those of us who are older, it is even more true. We need to recognize how this unconscious fear might be one of the reasons we avoid discussing our own grandchild's death.

Grandparents who have not lost a child cannot know the depth of the grief their child is experiencing. We may have lost parents or spouses, but the intensity of

parental grief is so much greater. We talk of how we felt when our parents or spouses died and say we know how it feels. We do NOT know how it feels if we ourselves have not lost a child. We are most helpful if we admit this to our child.

To be a helpful parent to a grieving parent, we should learn about what our child is experiencing. We can learn of that by reading the books on grief, especially *The Bereaved Parent* by Harriet Schiff. When the children were growing up we read *Baby and Child Care* by Benjamin Spock or Haim Ginott's *Between Parent and Child*. Why not now read Harriet Schiff's book or Earl Grollman's *Living When A Loved One Has Died?* We need to know what the symptoms of parental grief are so that we, ourselves, are reassured that our child is not emotionally disturbed.

We need to know there is no timetable for grief. We should be careful of our expectations of how our child "should be doing" at this time. In the early months of grief, our bereaved children may appear to be doing well. Then, at four to six months they seem to "fall apart." It is reassuring to know that this is normal. In the early months our children do fairly well because they have not yet accepted the full reality of their child's death. It isn't until one faces that reality that real grief begins. This is the most painful and the longest part of the grief process. This is the time we are expecting them to "get better," and when they get worse we can't understand it, and we fear for their sanity. At this time others turn away from them because they can't understand. This is the time our children need us the most. How desolate they must feel if the two people they could always rely on now turn away from them.

Grandfathers are needed at this time more than ever. Fathers have always been the ones who could solve every problem for their children. They are the strength in the family, and the bereaved child needs to tap that strength now. Fathers used to provide the biggest, warmest lap for comforting. Now their arms can provide the safe harbor that most grieving children crave at times.

Grieving is not done on a consistently upward path. We may talk to our children on a good day and rejoice that they were finally improving, only to find they have taken several steps backward

(Continued on page 7)

(We Must Allow our Children to Grieve in Their Own Way  
continued from page 6)

when we next see them. We need to realize that the normal process of grief is a constant ebb and flow of terrible and not so terrible days. Even though our bereaved children seem to revert to more painful grief at times, they are not going back to where they started. They do, however, need extra support and understanding on the bad days.

We must allow our children to grieve in their own way, according to their own personality. Some of our children are more verbal in expressing their emotions. Others may keep it all inside of themselves until something causes it to come out in a torrent. We accepted their personality differences from the time they were little children. We must accept them now.

Some of us, for whatever reason, are not able to be of help to our children. Maybe we simply cannot face our children in their misery. It may be more pain than we, ourselves, can take. Some of us cannot accept the fact that to grieve openly and with others is the "right" way to do it. For some of us, our own personalities will not allow us to express our emotions or tolerate such expression in others. As hard as it may be to admit, we can at least be helpful to our children by being open and honest and telling them that we cannot help. As cruel as this may seem, letting them know of our inability to help saves them from the repeated disappointment of our backing away from them when they come to us.

Our grieving children need us. When our children hurt, we hurt. It has been said that a grief shared is a grief halved. No! We cannot take half of our child's suffering, as much as we would like to do so. But I can say from personal needs that were not met when my own child died, it can sure make it a lot easier. Over the years of rearing our children, we suffered many times for them or because of them. Now we are being asked to do it again. It was not easy then, and it will not be easy now. But because we love our children, we can do it.

*Margaret Gerner is a bereaved parent whose son Arthur died at the age of 6. She became a bereaved grandparent when her 3-year-old granddaughter Emily died in 1982.*

*Reprinted from the Denver Front Range Chapter's July 2006 Newsletter*

(WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR continued  
from page 1)

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 wait-

ing 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

**S**trength In the early days of my grief,

a tear would well up in my eyes,  
a lump would form in my throat,  
but you would not know – I would hide it,  
for the strong do not cry –

*And I am strong.*

In the middle days of my grief,  
I would look ahead and see that wall  
that I had attempted to go around,  
as an ever-present reminder of a wall yet un-  
scaled.

Yet I did not attempt to scale it  
for the strong will survive –

*And I am strong.*

In the later days of my grief,  
I learned to climb over that wall –  
step by step –

remembering, crying, grieving.

And the tears flowed steadily  
as I painstakingly went over.

The way was long, but I did make it,  
*For I am strong.*

Near the resolution of my grief,  
a tear will well up in my eyes,  
a lump will form in my throat,  
but I will let that tear fall –  
and you will see it.

*Terry Jago (Lovingly lifted from the June newsletter of the Camden County, N.J., chapter of TCF)*

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

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.

**CHAPTER LEADERSHIP** Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 [tnesheim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tnesheim@sbcglobal.net) Rachel Salomonson Age 19 – Auto accident

**TREASURER** Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 [Julyson2@gmail.com](mailto:Julyson2@gmail.com) Aaron Barrera Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

**SECRETARY** Bambi Nichols 262-220-9323 [lcbtsec@aol.com](mailto:lcbtsec@aol.com) Levi Nichols Age 19 - Accidental death

**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

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