



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

June 2021 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear Friends,

This month of June brings us Father's Day. Honoring all the dads this Father's Day. We will be thinking of the fathers of our babies and children who have gone too soon. Wishing each father peace and may your memories fill you with joy.

"A bereaved father is a unique individual. His uniqueness and problems are not often understood by others, or even sometimes by himself. His child's death puts extra ordinary demands on him. All the roles he fills change, and life is truly never the same again."

~ Bob Steiner, Compassionate Friends.

Some Days

They tell me life's a journey
That will take me many years
Some days are filled with laughter
And some days are filled with tears
Some days I think my heart will break
That I can't persevere
Some days I have to don a mask
And hide beneath its' veneer
Some days I turn and look for you
With thoughts I'd like to share
Some days I can't understand
The reason you're not here
Some days the sadness leaves me
And my smile will reappear
Some days I close my eyes because

Your memory is so clear
Some days I struggle to go on
Just wishing you were near
Most days I spend in gratitude
That you were ever here

~

A father holds his children's hands for just a little while. But he holds them in his heart forever.

~ Your attention please ~

Thursday June 17, 2021 In-Person Compassionate Friends Meeting 7:00pm – 8:30pm at Millburn Congregational Church, Lake Villa.

Our first return to In-Person Compassionate Friends Meeting will be Thursday June 17, 2021. The meeting is at the Millburn Congregational Church 19073 W. Grass Lake Road Lake Villa, IL 60046. We will provide a ZOOM link to this meeting for those who wish to join remotely. This is the third Thursday of the month meeting. The meeting starting time has changed from 7:30 pm to our new meeting start time at 7:00 pm. Our meetings will begin at 7:00 pm and end at 8:30pm. We will have time before the meeting to set up and casually visit with each other. The doors will be open at 6:30pm. At 8:30 we will end our meeting and say our goodbyes.

Thursday July 1, 2021 In-Person Compassionate Friends Meeting 7:00pm – 8:30pm at Holy Family Catholic Church, Waukegan. Room #6.

Our first return to In-Person Compassionate Friends Meeting at Holy Family Church in Waukegan is Thursday July 1, 2021. The meeting is at the Holy Family Catholic Church 450 Keller Ave. Waukegan, IL 60085, Room #6. We will provide a ZOOM link to this meeting for those who wish to join remotely. This is the first Thursday of the month meeting. Our meetings will begin at 7:00 pm and end at 8:30pm. We will have time before the meeting to set up and casually visit with each other. The doors will be open at 6:30pm. At 8:30 we will end our meeting and say our goodbyes.



GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the passionate 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.

"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.

NATIONAL GATHERING 2021

healing on the horizon

Bereaved Parents USA
August 6-8 ♥ St. Louis, Missouri

Announcing Our Keynote Speakers

Jena Kirkpatrick ♥ Bobby Morton ♥ Susan Casey ♥ Cindy Magee

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE BPUSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*"Connection is why we're here.
We are hardwired to connect with others,
it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives,
and without it there is suffering."*

— Brene Brown

Dear Friends of BPUSA,

We are excited and thrilled to announce that we will be holding an **in-person Gathering** on the weekend of **August 6-8 in St. Louis, MO!**

Of course, we will still be wearing our masks, socially distancing and following all the necessary protocols. The hotel has reassured us that they will be carrying out every precaution to keep us safe.

We have missed our BPUSA family and look forward to gathering once again for a weekend of hope and healing.

The Gathering Registration Packet (everything you need to know about the conference.) and the online registration form will be up on our website very soon. Also on the website will be the link to the hotel for the special BPUSA room rate.

We look forward to hearing from you!



WWW.BEREAVEDPARENTSUSA.ORG

By Keith Swett

Spring in Wisconsin mirrors the life of a bereaved parent perfectly. One day is bright and sunny and beautiful. We cannot wait to get outside to enjoy the promise of summer and the hope of rebirth offered by green buds everywhere. Then we move from 50 degrees to 12 inches of snow. We are trapped in a bleak almost hopeless isolation as the roads freeze tight and communication dwindles to a bare trickle.

Isolated and lost in pain, the bereaved cannot believe that this too shall pass. The pain is intimidating as the snow. Many from Wisconsin avoid the snow, obsessing endlessly about when the snow will strike, how much snow we will get, which cities will become frozen wastelands. Many bereaved are the same. Worrying about where and when and how much pain we will face limits life and joy and happiness.

I wish I could say there will be no more pain but pain and love are linked. I am neither willing nor able to stop loving. Therefore I will deal with pain. I offer a simple consolation.

They closed school on Friday but Monday is predicted to bring us 50 degree temperatures. Yes you will have pain. Yes it may also be overwhelming, but I promise summer is coming and in time all the joy and love and happiness your child generated returns. When the storm hits, slow down, be cautious, stay in the moment. When the storm passes, embrace the opportunities life offers.

As Matt said so often, "Come on! Come on! There is more to see."



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED 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.

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Edgar O Villareal</i>	<i>June 2</i>	Son of Guadalupe Villareal
<i>Sage Cue</i>	<i>June 3</i>	Daughter of Ben Cue & Jennifer Peterson-Cue
<i>Brian Langevin</i>	<i>June 4</i>	Son of Claudia Smith
<i>Westley Banks</i>	<i>June 6</i>	Son of Susan Banks
<i>Robert William Corbett</i>	<i>June 6</i>	Son of Mary Ann & Robert Corbett
<i>Edward G Davis III</i>	<i>June 8</i>	Son of Edward G Davis Jr.
<i>James (Jim) Grazier</i>	<i>June 9</i>	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<i>Brandon Reif</i>	<i>June 10</i>	Son of Marcy Reif
<i>Lila Ruffolo</i>	<i>June 12</i>	Daughter of Jenny & Rick Selle
<i>Pressley Suzanne McHugh</i>	<i>June 20</i>	Daughter of Kari McHugh
<i>David Nesheim</i>	<i>June 22</i>	Brother of Toni Nesheim
<i>Heather Donnelly</i>	<i>June 26</i>	Daughter of Daniel Donnelly
<i>Michael Stice</i>	<i>July 4</i>	Son of Dora & Gary Stice
<i>Noel Endell Hernandez</i>	<i>July 13</i>	Son of Colleen Ramos
<i>Joshua William Bowman</i>	<i>July 18</i>	Son of Robin Bray Nephew of Kimberlee Christensen
<i>Brian Scott Ludlow</i>	<i>July 19</i>	Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik
<i>Robert William Corbett</i>	<i>July 20</i>	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
<i>Taylor Albert Rydahl</i>	<i>July 22</i>	Son of Carol Ann & Keith Rydahl
<i>Elizabeth (Liz) Willding</i>	<i>July 27</i>	Daughter of Gigi Wilding
<i>Darien Wilson</i>	<i>July 27</i>	Son of Tammy and Tim Olvera

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Brian Langevin</i>	<i>June 3</i>	Son of Claudia Smith
<i>Marcia Castillo</i>	<i>June 8</i>	Daughter of Sissy & Arthur Castillo
<i>Robert Corbett</i>	<i>June 30</i>	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
<i>Justin Perez</i>	<i>July 4</i>	Son of Traci & Carlos Perez Brother of Samantha (Perez) Przybylski
<i>Anna Smith Miller</i>	<i>July 6</i>	Daughter of Carol Smith
<i>Gabriel Murphy Jr</i>	<i>July 7</i>	Son of Arvine Murphy
<i>Elizabeth (Liz) Willding</i>	<i>July 14</i>	Daughter of Gigi Wilding
<i>Qua'Shawn Wade</i>	<i>July 24</i>	Son of June Andrejewski
<i>Sage Cue</i>	<i>July 26</i>	Daughter of Ben & Jennifer Peterson-Cue
<i>John Thumel</i>	<i>July 26</i>	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel
<i>Tony Trevithick Jr</i>	<i>July 26</i>	Son of Tony Trevithick

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 or 847-573-1055

WE KEEP HIM CLOSE, ALWAYS: HOW I SURVIVED THE LOSS OF MY TEENAGE SON

Written by **Bereaved Dad**, Thomas Harding. His book, *Kadian Journal*, is published by Penguin Random House. Twitter @thomasharding

Seven years ago, my 14-year-old son, Kadian, was killed in a road accident. This is the advice I'd give myself back then.

When I was asked recently to speak about my "grief journey" to a group of bereaved parents, my first reaction was that it wasn't such a good idea. I was very worried that it would trigger something in me. Because seven years ago, I watched my 14-year-old son Kadian ride down a hill on a bicycle, and into a road where he was struck by a truck. He died in front of me.

I was also anxious about making generalisations – after all, everyone's experience is different. There is no blueprint or boilerplate for how to cope with such a calamity. I didn't want to cause anyone additional pain.

I decided to take a pass.

Later, I took my dog out for a walk in the hills behind our house. And there, up in the yew tree forest, I thought some more. What if I had heard someone speak on this subject seven years ago? What would I have liked them to say? What would have made a difference to me back then?

So, here is what I came up with.

The first thing I would say to my seven-year-younger-self is this: I am so sorry for your loss. I am so, so sorry for your loss.

That awful question came up in conversation when I met strangers: how many children do you have?

There are some people who will struggle to say this. Who will be awkward and embarrassed and overwhelmed. But not me. Plain and simple, this



Thomas Harding with his wife, Debora, and children Kadian & Sam in 2011.

is a catastrophe. It is horrible. Terrible. Disgusting. Awful. Life-changing and unfair.

I am truly sorry.

The second thing I want to say is that I am still here. Seven years later. Still breathing. Still standing. Still talking. There is a future ahead. I didn't always see it that way.

One of the worst moments for me happened after I had just seen the ambulance take Kadian's body away. I found myself in a car on my way back to my parents' house, where my daughter Sam was waiting. She was 13, and I had to tell her about her brother. That he was dead. It was an impossible task.

When I told her, Sam collapsed to the floor. I held her. We cried together for a long while. And then she said something that had an immediate impact and has stuck with me ever since. "We must live every moment to the full," she said, "because Kadian can't." And so, I made the commitment, then and there, to live every moment to the full. It's been a guiding light for me.

Then there was Graham, our neighbour, who had lost his teenage son in India four years earlier. I asked him how he was doing, and he said that he was "accommodating" to it. I thought about this a lot. Accommodating. Not getting over, or moving

(Continued on page 5)

(We Keep Him Close, Always: continued from page 4)

beyond, or turning the page – all of which sounded wrong to me, almost disloyal. But accommodating. It sounded strange to say, but it felt right.

A few days later, I saw a tree growing in a hedge-row near our house. I looked closer at its large roots, extending down around an enormous boulder and into the ground. And this is what I realised Graham meant by accommodating. The large boulder lies there forever, cold, inert; but somehow the tree had found a way to build a life around it.

And so, we began to rebuild our lives around this awful event. And one of the first things I learned was that our son's death had changed the key relationships around us. This was both unexpected and unnerving. The profound trauma and shock amplified our existing relationships, so those that were good were now great, and those that were not so good were now appalling.

Fortunately, my sister Amanda had said something just after we lost Kadian: "You have permission to do anything that makes your life better." This get-out-of-jail-free card was incredibly helpful. Whereas in the past I might have worried about hurting someone's feelings, now when my wife and I made decisions, our only concern was how it would protect us and our daughter. As a result, we avoided those family and friends whom we now found toxic. Seven years later, we have reconnected with some of them, but the relationships are different, more shallow, more managed. Most we have not. And that's OK.

For a while I was mad. I cried a lot. So did my wife. One breakfast, our daughter asked us if we could try to limit the crying hours, perhaps to daylight hours. She said it so nicely that we laughed. Mostly we succeeded.

At first, my wife and I tried to do everything together. It felt safer. I could take care of her; she could take care of me. And then we realised that this was actually making things worse, that we had different needs at different times. This was a big moment for us. To keep our sanity, we had to walk the journey close, but separate.

Such strategies helped, but still I was unable to avoid the triggers that kept on coming: seeing Kadian's body in hospital; receiving his death notice; reading a sensational headline in the newspaper; shutting down his mobile phone account; going out for dinner and then seeing the fourth chair empty; attending a family occasion where all the grandchildren were there, but him. Each time feels like a punch to the stomach, like being told for the first time that our son had died.

My marriage was always strong. We met when I was 18 and she was 23. But the death of our son has brought us even closer.

And then there was that awful question, which came up in conversation when I met strangers: how many children do you have? At first, I said "two". Then I was asked their ages. I would pause and give Sam's age – 13, then 14, then 15, now 20. Then I would say that we also have Kadian. He was aged 14 – when he died. And this almost always exploded the conversation. Typically, people would not know what to say. Most changed the subject, some even turned away. A few would be curious. How did he die, they would ask? Or the real shocker: was he wearing a bicycle helmet? Why did they ask this? Did they want to establish guilt? Of course, he was wearing a helmet.

For a while I told people I had one child, but it felt so unbelievably disloyal that I stopped almost at once. Now I give a limited amount of information, and if the inquiry moves in a direction I wish to avoid, I simply say, "I do not wish to talk about that," and move the conversation gently on.

But there's another question people ask: how are you and your wife doing? I know where it's coming from, because one or two people went further and mentioned a statistic that the stress of losing a child leads to breakups. At first, I responded with anger. How dare they challenge my marriage, which I rely on every day just to get by? Then I found numerous studies that undermined the bogus child-bereavement-leads-to-marriage-breakups claim and quoted these at anyone who

(Continued on page 6)



The Compassionate Friends 2021 Virtual National Conference July 16 – 18, 2021

To register:

<https://web.cvent.com/event/91da854b-af67-46ec-b01d-9bddb215378b/regProcessStep1>

(We Keep Him Close, Always: continued from page 5)

dared bring the subject up. But I quickly realised that the questioners just looked at me as if I were crazy, which I was. Now, when people ask, I keep it simple. My marriage to Debora was always strong. We met when I was 18 and she was 23. But the death of our son has brought us even closer. I loved my wife before Kadian died. I love her even more after.

A few weeks after we lost Kadian, my instinct was to go back to work, to keep busy, to distract myself, and so that's what I did. I helped a friend with his book-keeping and ran a real estate brokerage. At the same time, I had just sold my first book to a publisher and was about to start a round of edits. I hoped that by

trying to return to some semblance of normality, it might give me comfort in a world that had become, overnight, abnormal, uncontrollable and unreliable. But I found there were some things I could do and others I could not. I learned that I could not deal with people. I responded badly to tension and conflict. Any problem, however minor, triggered a massive anxiety attack.

So, I gave up everything except my writing, which suited me fine. I was by myself, working in a safe environment that I could control. My wife also found that she could no longer stay in her job. Between us we had lost 80% of our income. Before long, not only were we having

to deal with the traumatic loss of our son, the emotional impact on our daughter, PTSD and social alienation, but also the real prospect of losing our house.

So, what would I tell my seven-year-younger self about this? I certainly would not deny how hard it is. Nor would I say, everything's going to be fine – because it is not. But I would say, you'll find a way to get through it. And when you can't, you will need to find people who will help. Which in my case is a hard sell, for I am not someone who finds it easy to ask for help. But sometimes you have no choice. So, I would tell myself to get over my pride. And that it's OK to borrow money if you need to – you will find a way to pay it back. And that those people who love you will want to help you if they can.

I would also say that it's OK to lie on the couch and watch TV, if that's what makes you feel better. And I would tell myself, it's fine to drink whisky. But I would add, be careful. Try not to drink too much. If it doesn't make you aggressive or depressed, and doesn't give you a headache the next day, fair enough – but still, watch out.

And I'd also say, at some point you may want to speak to a therapist. But give yourself permission to say that this person is not the right fit. Because a therapist is like a girlfriend or boyfriend – the chemistry has to be right. And when it is right, listen to them.

Even then, it's not easy. It wasn't easy when my therapist said I should consider taking medication. "I'm not that kind of person," I said. "What kind of person is that?" my therapist asked, kindly. "Well, someone who is broken, traumatised, grieving, lethargic, unable to perform basic functions, lying on the couch all day watching box sets, drinking too much whisky." And of course, I realised I was that kind of person. So, I took the pills, and this helped me get through. Until it was time to come off, which I did, slowly and carefully, and again with help. And now I'm not on them, though I still like watching box sets. I still give myself permission

(Continued on page 7)

(We Keep Him Close, Always: continued from page 6)

to take time out when I need it, because sometimes the world's just too much.

And then I would say to seven-year-younger-self: enough of all that. Please tell me about Kadian. Because that's one of the ways to keep him close. So, here's a story about Kadian...

Each summer, we go camping with friends and family, melt marshmallows over the fire, fly kites and remember Kadian.

Two months after he died, his art teacher came to our house, holding a bag. She explained that Kadian had been working for weeks in pottery class on a project. He was going to give it to me for my birthday. It was a white ceramic cube with a pedestal inside, which was turned by a stiff crank. Above the top was carved his favourite slogan from Apple: "Think different". There was so much about this that was Kadian: generous, inventive, creative, artful, thoughtful, kind.

He and I had recently painted his bedroom silver in honour of Apple, which had been a wonderful father-son time. We laughed a lot, our faces and arms covered with silver paint. And now here was this object, magically arriving at our door. Impossibly arriving, after he was no longer here. Because though Kadian is gone, he is still very much here, at least in part.

How do we keep him with us? We tell stories about him to our friends and keep pictures of him around the house. Each year we take his birthday off and go for a walk. Each summer, we go camping with friends and family, eat good food and drink good drink and melt marshmallows over the fire and fly kites and remember Kadian as we go. We keep him close. Always.

And though we grow older, and he died at 14, somehow, he is ageing with us. Of course, he is not here, and to tell you otherwise would be a lie. More than anything, I don't want to lie. I say again, his death is, was, will be terrible.

So, my dear younger self, my hurting, confused, troubled, broken me. If you can, try to be grateful for your time together. Be angry, truly angry, for what you have lost. Shout at the sky. Smash some plates.

Scream at the world. Why would you not? But remember the good times. The laughs, the hugs, the moments of joy. The special, private moments that only you know. Write them down if you can. Or talk about them with people who also remember. Or sing or paint them or find another way. For he was magic, and in your life. Not for long enough, that's for sure. But if you can, be grateful.

The moments will pass. They will become hours, then days, then weeks and years. Your dear, darling, beautiful child will still be missing. Not here. But also, somehow, here, too. And in front of you, let's hope, will stretch the next seven years, and perhaps the next. So, try and do what Sam said: live each day to the full. Because you can.

I Am A Father

I am a father. We are parents always and forever.

Greg may have died, but my love for him lives on.

Father's Day along with many other holidays, were very painful in the beginning.

The raw emotion was nearly unbearable. I had a very hard time finding the reason to continue with this journey.

Thinking of Greg and his death was so painful that I thought I would go insane.

The one thing I kept doing during this time was to talk about my feelings and release them. I kept very little inside.

Yes, we all harbor a few secrets, but letting them out is better.

Time has passed and my wounded heart is better, but it didn't do that on its own.

My medicine was BP support and talking with people about being a bereaved father.

Like any major illness, lifelong attention to it is needed.

That therapy is now helping others. Helping them along on their grief journey.

Holding a hand, giving a hug and lending an ear. It is not an easy journey but it has many rewards.

I now dwell on Greg's life, not his death.

I share my passions with others and my love for life has returned.

I wish you a peaceful Father's Day filled with sweet memories of your child.

Daryl Hutson
BP/USA Crawfordsville, IN



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

Steering Committee 2020 – 2021

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 Sue Battis 847-445-7004 suebattis@yahoo.com son, Nick Battis Age 24 of suicide.

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

SECRETARY

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

LIBRARIAN

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

NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net & Denny Salomonson,

847-223-7353 drdeno@sbcglobal.net - daughter, Rachel Salomonson, 19 Auto accident

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

FACILITATORS at our Holy Family Catholic Church Waukegan, IL Mirtha Vidal 847-293-

1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com, & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, son Raphael Vidal age 17 of suicide.

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