



## THROUGH DEATH-----MARKED FOR LIFE

(Borrowed from Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends -  
Atlanta Area Chapters - January - February 2002)



After my four year old died, I was certain my family would never be the same again. It is true and has been proven over and over that we will no longer be the typical family living at the end of the cul-de-sac. We may look the same (only because I have not been daring enough to don all black as our Victorian ancestors) but our hearts have been mangled and our future dimmed. Through death we have been marked---for life.

In the course of any given week I can clearly note how the changes have come and stayed with us. Events that seemed insignificant when Daniel was alive now hold powerful and emotional memories. Seeing the boxes of Cocoa Puffs on the grocery store shelf, hearing the lyrics to Toy Story's theme song 'You've Got A Friend In Me' and driving past the local McDonalds bring jolts of pain to my broken heart.

People may feel uncomfortable as they see my eyes well up with tears during these times of remembering some of the favorite things a lively little boy with an infectious grin enjoyed so much. The neighbors may be bothered by my woeful cries as I stand on my deck and stare into the night sky, wondering where Heaven lies and what my child is doing.

Yes, we have changed. I, as the mother, can no longer promise (as I used to) that nothing bad will ever happen to any of us. Nor can we believe that if you pray hard enough and just hold onto faith your fervent prayers will be answered as you desire. For now, in our grief, all we can see is a little boy with cancer who died one cold winter night though surrounded by the prayers of church leaders and believers.

At first when Daniel left us, I seldom went to the cemetery but now we often take a picnic and ven-

ture to the grassy lawn beside his marker. We named the cemetery Daniel's Place and the kids and I leave messages for my husband to meet us there after

work. We eat, decorate Daniel's grave and the older two run and do cartwheels. The baby picks at blades of grass.

Now, whenever my two year old passes a cemetery with flowers on the markers he says, "I wanna go playground and play."

No, we are not the same. How many two year olds say they want to watch their deceased brother? I am not sure if Benjamin understands exactly who Daniel is but he loves to tell me, "I wanna watch Daniel," and I know this means to pop a video of his older brother into the VCR. Benjamin sits in his highchair, his pudgy face round with a big smile.

How many seven year olds write on their list to Santa that this Christmas, they want things to remind them of their brother who died? How many of them have to tell you that the line "if you wish hard enough it will come true" is not a true statement, and they have proof it is not?

Our innocence has been lost and we will never be able to have that sunshine existence that many like to hold onto (I know I sure did). But I like to believe that in spite of our devastation due to Daniel's death and our yearnings to have him here as a part of our family again, we have, though broken, grown to be strong people of character. More than ever before we are able to mourn woe-fully with those who are in despair and pain. We are able to comfort with truths like "I don't understand" instead of "Well, it will get better."

I know I have been to the bank of life where death meets and begged death to take me, too, for I knew there was no way I could live without my son. I have since learned that living and thriving on this difficult earth takes much more than just being happy. I have extended my view to see that I am not the only one who suffers or feels life is unfair. I'm sure both my neighbor who has a mentally handicapped child and my friend whose husband suddenly left her and their children feel life is no

(Continued on page 2)



## GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but donations can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of your chapters. Love gifts are acknowledged each month in the newsletter.

"Gifts of Love" in remembering our children and siblings help to pay for Newsletters, Postage, Books for our Lending Libraries and Resources, Memorial Services, Candle Lightings, Telephone and Outreach, and Dues to the National TCF Office. Thank you.

## Meetings

### Northern Illinois Chapter TCF MARCH 16

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

### Waukegan meeting APRIL 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

(THROUGH DEATH-----MARKED FOR LIFE continued from page 1)

bowl of fresh peaches.

Through Daniel's death I have learned life is really short, and so I argue less with my husband and children and when I do lose my temper, I am much quicker to apologize. I eat more ice-cream and not just the generic brand for I think after all I've been through, I am worthy of Haagen-Dazs. (This is quite an achievement coming from one of the world's most thrifty people.) I want to send more cards to friends, just because.... I want to spend less time working on trying to get grouchy people to like me and instead focus on those who appreciate my love.

And now at family get-togethers, I hug everyone tighter when I tell them good-bye, not just my 86 year old grandmother. For in this extended family we have,

over the years, seen death take three children and therefore know that death cares not about one's age. Anyone could die before I see them again.

Sometimes I get so excited when I let myself think what I would do if Daniel were to come back to live with us. I think for the first day I would want to spend it in intervals of hugging him and making pancakes with lots of maple syrup for him to eat. But whether I like it or not, and as marked and wounded as I am, life still calls me to live.

So I don't want to just be the "lady whose child died." I want to be the lady who gained wisdom, enlarged her heart, supplied the box of 'Puffs' to those with teary eyes and daily seeks to love like the Bible passage of I Corinthians 13. And when seen talking to the starry night sky, I want others to hear not just the anguished yearnings over a precious four-year-old son, but the great revelations that have been received-- knowledge of how to really be alive, teachings of life that can only be discovered from the death of a part of us--the death of a child. ---Alice J. Wisler

## Prayer for Spring

Like Springtime, let me unfold  
And grow fresh and anew,  
From this cocoon of grief  
That has been spun around me.  
Help me face the harsh reality of  
Sunshine and renewed life,  
As my bones still creak from  
The winter of my grief.  
Life has dared to go on around me,  
And as I recover from the insult  
Of life's continuance,  
I readjust my focus to  
Include recovery and growth  
As a possibility in my future.  
Give me strength to break out of  
The cocoon of my grief.  
But may I never forget it is  
The place where I grew my wings,  
Becoming a new person  
Because of my loss.

Janice Heil, Coquitlam, BC, Canada





## OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN MARCH & APRIL

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>Kyle Glueck</i>	<b>March 4</b>	Son of Dolores Krason
<i>Elizabeth Mary Foresta</i>	<b>March 8</b>	Daughter of Al & Mary Foresta
<i>David Sloop</i>	<b>March 9</b>	Son of Charron Sloop
<i>Rusty Anderson</i>	<b>March 11</b>	Son of Forest & Christine Anderson
<i>David Spannraft</i>	<b>March 18</b>	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
<i>Adam Rubin</i>	<b>March 28</b>	Son of Linda Rubin Brother of Nicole Rubin
<i>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</i>	<b>April 2</b>	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<i>Michael Sean Gaede</i>	<b>April 8</b>	Son of Maureen Gaede
<i>Mike Reardon</i>	<b>April 10</b>	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	<b>April 11</b>	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
<i>Qua'Shawn Wade</i>	<b>April 12</b>	Son of June Andrejewski
<i>Alyssa Carranza</i>	<b>April 15</b>	Daughter of Luz Barrera Granddaughter of Angel & Raquel Gasco
<i>Jammi Hui</i>	<b>April 25</b>	Daughter of William & Joyce Hui

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

<i>Edgar O Villareal</i>	<b>March 1</b>	Son of Guadalupe Villareal
<i>Jeremy Govekar</i>	<b>March 2</b>	Son of Maggie McGaughey
<i>John "Jake" Mosansky</i>	<b>March 12</b>	Son of Darlene & John Mosansky Sister of Veronica Steif
<i>Blake Logan Palmer</i>	<b>March 13</b>	Son of Amber & Brian Palmer Grandson of Lois Cooper Grandson of Gina Palmer
<i>José De Jesús Hernández</i>	<b>April 1</b>	Son of Jesús & Virginia Hernández
<i>Mathew Tisch</i>	<b>April 10</b>	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
<i>Stephanie Andrea Zamarron</i>	<b>April 11</b>	Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungula Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriguez & Cédar Rojas
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	<b>April 13</b>	Son of Millie Yu
<i>Shannon McCarty</i>	<b>April 18</b>	Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hays
<i>David Nesheim</i>	<b>April 24</b>	Brother of Toni Nesheim
<i>Lisa Rosemann</i>	<b>April 25</b>	Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann
<i>Edward G Davis III</i>	<b>April 28</b>	Son of Edward G Davis Jr.
<i>Andrew Naydihor</i>	<b>April 29</b>	Son of Kelly Kozel
<i>Anne Thomson</i>	<b>April 30</b>	Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson

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

## LETTING GO OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS



It must be a truism that we all feel a little misunderstood in our grief. Ever since May 25, 1989, when our little girl died after only 44 hours of life, we have faced a variety of attitudes regarding her death and our mourning process - from downright rudeness, to tremendous compassion and understanding. Yet, all we ask is the

chance to allow her to "BE." We loved her from the beginning, and when she died, our love didn't simply stop. Quite the opposite, in fact, and more complex in ways because she is dead. Even so, we want to give her life significance. We want her to be proud of her Mommy and Daddy. We want her to exist not only in our hearts, but in everyone else's as well.

A bit much to ask, do you think? If the truth be told, we probably all feel very much the same way. We have each been faced with attitudes that are hard to understand, whether our child was miscarried at eight weeks or lived to be 40 years old. We, as parents, simply cannot allow any indifference concerning our children. Some part of us pleads for new understanding from our family and friends.

We were very concerned that folks would think since Lindsay was "just a baby" when she died, then we only had a little amount of grief, or that we really have no reason to mourn her passing. I held on to this misunderstanding, even (because of a few bad experiences) with some dear friends of compassion.

There are a few who consider us lucky, and I concede their point. In contrast to some of the other stories we hear in The Compassionate Friends circle, our child's life and death seem relatively simple. Sometimes I want to get down on my knees and beg your forgiveness for asking you to understand my grief when yours seems the ultimate tragedy. My heart aches for each and every child who has died.

Who am I to compare our circumstances with the one who lost all her children, or their only child, or their firstborn son, or the one whose son was in and out of the hospital his whole life, or even

the one whose child died from miscarriage? At least we had nine months together!

Who am I to determine which cause of death is worse? Would it be an automobile accident, or

suicide, or murder, or sudden infant death, or a long-term illness, or a stillbirth? Who could possibly say? Who would "prefer" one over the other? Surely not I. I would prefer no death at all. And what is the "perfect" age for a child to die? In the early weeks of pregnancy, before the mother even felt life? At birth, before hearing a cry? Or a few days or weeks later? Would it be better if we got to spend more time with them - five, ten, twenty years? How long is long enough? It's always "too soon."

Is it harder to mourn the memories we do have, or the memories we do not have? Is it harder to mourn for what was, or what was supposed to be? Is it harder to bury the baby child, or the one who lived 50 years or more?

Enough of this! There is no need to compare. If we have any hope at all of anyone understanding our agony, then we only have each other, my dear Compassionate Friends. Our baby's life and death may seem effortless and uncomplicated. She was born. She died. The end. But it's not the end.

However simple Lindsay's little life may seem, the process of mourning her death has never been simple. It is the most intense pain I have ever suffered, just as yours is. It is a shock to the system with life-altering effects. The death of any child at any age, under any circumstances, is the most horrifying, devastating, humbling event in our lives.

Before joining The Compassionate Friends, I got the distinct impression that any mention of our baby was a sign of mental instability. Thank you for showing me differently. The truth of the matter is, there will always be those who think I'm a little "crazy" where Lindsay is concerned, and there will always be those who cannot understand. But I can't let it stand in the way of my recovery any longer. I am determined to let it go, and cross this stepping stone towards reorganizing my life in a positive way.

Who could have known the  
exquisite difference your brief life  
would make upon mine?  
Who could have known a tiny baby  
would show me the beauty of a sunrise,

(Continued on page 5)



## Separated by Suicide

When we are separated by suicide  
From someone very dear,  
The grief that consumes our life  
Is a mixture of sorrow, anger and fear.

The sadness from so great a loss  
Equals nothing else we've known.  
We strive ourselves to learn to cope  
But, in the end, we must be shown.  
Shown just how common the anger is  
And shown that we must not hide  
From the feelings--no matter how they hurt  
When we are separated by suicide.  
We must also learn to deal with the fear  
Of losing others that we love  
And we must confront what angers us  
Even if it's directed "above."  
It's not uncommon to feel anger with God.  
"Why didn't he just intervene?"  
And stop this terrible loss we've had.  
"Where could our God have been?"  
When we are separated by suicide  
We need support from people who care  
But, most of all, we need to be  
With others who have also "been there".  
To talk and hear from their own lips  
How they might have learned to cope  
Will help to validate our feelings  
And give us a glimmer of hope.  
Hope that one day we will return  
To a life without sorrow and pain.  
Because, when we are separated by suicide  
We have to learn to live again

By Jill Wagner

In memory of son, Daniel Yorksie,  
10-4-68 - 12-23-94

(LETING GO OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS continued  
from page 4)

of the wonder of a rainbow, or the pain  
of a tear? Who could have known an innocent  
child would take away my  
fear of death, and point me in the  
direction of heave? Who could have known that  
you would succeed  
where so many others have failed?

Dana Gensler

TCF, South Central, KY

©1995 and reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone,  
the national publication of The Compassionate Friends  
-reprinted from TCF Front Range Chapters March  
2008

## THE BEDROOM DILEMMA

by Cathy Seehuetter  
St. Paul, MN



There are many dilemmas affecting the life of a bereaved parent, but one that seems to cause one of the greatest amounts of stress and hand wringing is what we do with our children's (or siblings or grandchild's) bedroom. My daughter Nina's room was her sanctuary--a very messy one at that. Much to my chagrin, the more clutter surrounding her the better! However, as a teenager, that is where she could be found most often; lying on her daybed chatting on the phone with her friends, homework and soda cans scattered around her, clothes and shoes thrown every which way. Laughter emanated from her bedroom, my daughter's intermingled with her friends, shrieks of delight. Many evenings I sat on her bed as she told me of her adventures as a freshman at Park High, her latest crush, and regaled me with her tales of a day in the life of a typical 15-year-old girl. Much of my memories are to be found in that room, and the realization I would never have those experiences again with Nina were almost unbearable. Therefore, what I would do with her bedroom now that she was no longer here was of utmost importance to me.

Over the 12 plus years since Nina left this plane, and I have been a part of TCF sharing groups, I have heard various ways others have dealt with this issue. Interestingly, what seems to come into play again and again is what friends and family thought should be done with the child's room. More often than not, their school of thought is that we should empty it completely, give away their possessions, and change it into an office or guest bedroom just as quickly as possible. They believe keeping things as is are only constant reminders of our children's absence. In reality, we are thinking of them 24/7 anyway. Truly, they mean well and are only trying to find ways to help us. However, in the early stages of our grief most

(Continued on page 7)

## You Can Do It, Now WILL You?

by Rob Anderson, Sugar Grove, Illinois

Early in my journey following the death of my son, Brendon, I heard statements like, "This journey is survivable," and, "There can be meaning in your life again." If you haven't yet, soon you'll hear a healing parent say that their smile has returned. If your pain is still overwhelming, all those statements will probably run your heart like water off a duck's back. "Smile you say, "that's never going to happen. How can I feel good again, my child is dead." I felt that same way, as I suspect all bereaved parents felt at one point in their journey. After all, much of our happiness died when our kids died. To find it again seemed improbable-more like impossible.



When I speak to groups of bereaved parents about my journey and how my smile and meaning have returned, I always say that theirs can return too. They can laugh again; they can have more good days than bad days. And then I say what sounds completely unbelievable to them, especially the newly bereaved. I say, "Good can come from such a horrible experience as the death of your child."

I get a lot of blank stares when I say that one. A lot of looks that say, "You've certainly lost your mind if you want me to believe that out of the death of my child I can ever find any good." Some parents even seem offended or hurt that I could imply such a thing. In spite of it I push on because I know it can happen. It happened because of the love for my son.

What I never say to bereaved parents is that their smile, happiness or meaning will return; that it's a fact. That can be kind of hard to hear. I say that because we are each on our own individual journey where we make our own individual choices as to how we will grieve and heal. I don't know if theirs will return or not, but I do know that all those things can return. I say that because they've returned for me, as well as for hundreds and hundreds of other bereaved parents.

All you need to do is attend a few local, regional or national meetings of the many wonderful organizations that put together such healing events. At those gatherings you'll see smiles (genuine and true), hear laughter from a healing heart and feel the life that's returned to those same parents who thought that after their child died, they would die as well. There's a glow, enthusiasm and calm

that a healing parent gives away without even knowing it. It's inspirational; it draws people in; it helps others heal. And it continues to help them heal as well. Just as we will never stop grieving the deaths of our kids, we will also never stop our healing.

We can feel better, but it takes work for that to happen. Feeling better won't happen just because we want it to happen; we have to make it happen. It's just like anything we want to change in our lives, first we must decide to do it and then we must go ahead and do it. It's in the positive choices we make as to how we do our grief work (I also call it healing work) where we can find our next breath, or a path to our next hour and then our next day. Our choices are what can move us forward or hold us back.

You may have heard someone say, "There's no wrong way to grieve." For the most part I believe that. But I would also add to that statement, "...unless you're abusing yourself or others, or are stuck in chronic grief." Physical or verbal abuse will stop your healing. Sure, you'll most likely have arguments with others; we've all done that, but if those arguments become hurtful or abusive, it can be almost impossible to heal. If drugs or alcohol become involved in your life, you're chasing away opportunities to heal. If, after many years, you think about your child and sadness fills your life instead of joy; you may be stuck in chronic grief that can also hold back your healing.

In the beginning of your journey, many of your decisions about grieving will be made subconsciously. You'll make them and not even know you did. Over time, your good decisions and your bad decisions can become habits. So, you will create good healing habits and bad healing habits. As you get further down the road, you'll begin to make conscious decisions about the ways you grieve and express your suffering. When you make positive choices based on good healing habits, positive things will happen. Make negative choices and I think you know what will happen there as well.

Life does not have to be horrible. Yes, a horrible thing happened to you and your child, the most horrible thing you will probably ever experience. The deaths of our children are truly life-changing events. What I've come to know is that death did not take all when it took my son's body.

(Continued on page 7)

(You Can Do It, Now WILL You? continued from page 6)

His physical death was huge; an event like no other I'd ever lived. The deaths of comrades in Vietnam close friends and their children and members of my family have all been but a whisper compared to the scream of losing Brendon. But what I've learned is that even though death took my son's body, death can never, and I mean never, take his life force (his spirit if you will), my memories, or my love. His life has given me those three things, his death took one. So, Brendon wins three to one. A victory for my healing and for Bren's life.

It's in our children's lives where we can find our smiles and happiness. It's in the joy of their living, and our love for them, where our meaning can return. Remember, for our children to have died, they first had to have lived. When we focus on their living, no matter how long that was, and let go of their dying, good things can happen. What's so frustrating about this journey is that it takes time to start healing—a lot more time than we want it to take. The road is long, with many ups and downs and twists and turns, which is why it's imperative that we're good to ourselves and do good things for ourselves. Healing is only seen in hindsight, so it's critical that we constantly search for ways to heal. If we do, and bring them in, there can be days when we say, "Hey, this has been a pretty good day. I let the life of my child into mine and that's a good, a very good, thing."

As we heard our parents say, "It's all about your attitude. Attitude is everything. Life is only as good as you want to make it." I know those are clichés, but statements like that become clichés for a reason; it's because they're true. The altitude we achieve in our new lives, our new normal, will only be limited by our attitude. Decide to work on your grief through its positive expression and you will find ways to heal. Healing then becomes your choice and a habit. You can do it, now will you?

~reprinted with permission from Grief Digest, Centering Corporation, Omaha NE 402-553-1200 - [www.griefdigest.com](http://www.griefdigest.com)

(THE BEDROOM DILEMMA continued from page 5)

of us are not capable of making such an important decision, which is one that should be made only by us. With our loved ones gone, once we change something, there is no going back. To clear away her things and depersonalize her room felt to me as if I was somehow removing her from my life. What I learned from seasoned bereaved parents was that what are perceived, as painful memories of their absence, while in early grief, will, in time, become cherished memories we will want to hold onto. When the numbing brain fog lifts we

will more clearly begin to realize that, and only then make more rational decisions that are right for our situation.

I decided to leave Nina's room as it was, mostly from advice I received at a TCF meeting. I told myself that I would know when I was ready to tackle that decision. This is not always possible for everyone—maybe they had previously crowded conditions and needed that room for someone else or a variety of other reasons. What we need to remember again is that handling something like this is so personal; what feels right for one person may be entirely wrong for another. I think the key thing to remember is that if we are able to take our time that we try not to make a snap decision. We had no control over the fact that our child died; this might be something that we can make a choice about when we are ready and able to do so.

In my case, I waited for seven years before redoing Nina's room. I tried to do it at one and a half years and then again at five years, and found that I just could not. When I finally did at seven years, I took my time and spent many weeks sifting through her life. I cried a ton of tears, but at that stage I spent the majority of time smiling and laughing. I found things she wrote, what I call "buried treasures", that in the early stages would have set me back weeks because of its emotional impact, but years later brought me peace, and a deep personal understanding of Nina's thoughts that rekindled our close relationship. I acknowledge that most people do not wait seven years to undertake the bedroom project; however, that is what worked for me. I made her room into a guest room that still included her daybed and many of her personal belongings. At that later stage, it became my private place where I would wrap myself in her handmade afghan, lie on her bed, look at the glow-in-the-dark stars on her ceiling (that are still there today), and I felt close to my daughter. The point here is that seven months or seven years, we must try not to let someone else force the issue, as well meaning as they may be, with something as important as what to do with our child's room. Everyone has different timetables. Only we will know what and when it is right for us.

With gentle thoughts,  
Cathy L. Seehuetter - TCF/St. Paul Chapter

**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

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** Vicki Szech 847-573-1055 [vszech@comcast.net](mailto:vszech@comcast.net) Rachel Szech Age 16 – Horseback-riding Accident

**NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING** Mike Thumel 224-715-8420 [mthumel@hotmail.com](mailto:mthumel@hotmail.com) & Laura Thumel 224-715-2354 [lthumel@hotmail.com](mailto:lthumel@hotmail.com) John Thumel Age 22 – Auto Accident

**WOODLAND WALK COORDINATOR** Christine Pado 847-455-6642 [chpado@gmail.com](mailto:chpado@gmail.com) Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 - PULMONARY EMBOLISM

**OUTREACH/INFORMATION** Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 [julyson2@gmail.com](mailto:julyson2@gmail.com) Aaron Barrera, age 29 - insulin reaction subsequent auto accident

**STEERING COMMITTEE** Marilyn Grace 847-395-8597 [grace.marilyn@gmail.com](mailto:grace.marilyn@gmail.com) Megan Grace Age 15 – Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Charon Sloop 847-623-2264 [charronsloop@AOL.com](mailto:charronsloop@AOL.com) David Sloop Age 33 – Motor Cycles accident

Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 [mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com](mailto:mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com) & Raphael Vidal [rvidal1027@yahoo.com](mailto:rvidal1027@yahoo.com),

Raphael, age 17, suicide