



# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

March 2021 Newsletter



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



## Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear Friends,

I hope that as the weather warms and the sun shines on you, that you are doing well and have an opportunity to get outside for a walk or just sit on your porch. I always cherish when I get to say my son's name, Westley and talk about him with others. The first time I found this verse, it touched my heart and I have kept it close and each time I read the words, it brings a pause to my thoughts and whatever I am doing at the moment and I think of Westley. I think of each of you when you share your stories at our meetings, and as you share your loved one's name. I hope you know we all are listening and thank you for sharing your loved one with us.

I talk about him because I'm proud.  
I talk about him, because he deserves to be remembered.  
I talk about him, because even though he's not physically with me, he's never far from my mind.  
I talk about him, because he's a part of me, a part that I could never ignore or disown.  
I talk about him because I love him still, and I always will. Forever. Nothing will ever change that.

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*From, Still Standing Magazine – We talk about them because. Because we love them.*  
Susan



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

Dear Compassionate Friends,

The Compassionate Friends' 2021 National Conference was scheduled to be held in Detroit, Michigan this July. We have been actively watching national developments and considering the many issues that are involved for determining how to proceed. As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to have strict restrictions for large gatherings, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the in-person conference in Detroit. We recognize how disappointing this may be to many people in our TCF family as it is to all of us on our staff and board of directors. A lot of thought and consideration was given to this decision, and a number of factors were evaluated before making a final determination.

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## 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.

Thanks Victoria Elbrecht  
for her donation  
in loving memory of  
**Ashley Seay**

Thanks to Alana Anderson  
for her donation  
in memory of her daughter  
**Amy Fry-Pitzen**

And in honor of her missing grandson  
**Timothy James Pitzen**

"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.

**(Our Children, Grandchildren, and Siblings Loved, Missed and Remembered in April and May)**

**Westley Banks**  
**April 19**  
**Son of Susan Banks**

**David Nesheim**  
**April 24**  
**Brother of Toni Nesheim**

**Lisa Rosemann**  
**April 25**  
**Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann**

**Griffin Schumow**  
**April 26**  
**Son of Jeff & Krista Schumow**

**Edward G Davis III**  
**April 28**  
**Son of Edward G Davis Jr.**

**Andrew Naydihor**  
**April 29**  
**Son of Kelly Kozel**

**Timothy Reece**  
**April 29**  
**Son of JoAnn Prihoda-Reece**

**Anne Thomson**  
**April 30**  
**Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson**



## REFLECTIONS: BRIGHT TEETH AND LIGHTER GRIEF

By Dennis Klass, Adviser to BP/USA Board and St. Louis Chapter of BP/USA Borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER, NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA, VOLUME IX NO. 1, WINTER 2004 (January, February and March)

If we can only find the right brand of stuff, we can solve our problems in just one washing, brushing, scrubbing, spoonful or easy application, according to the television commercials. Life is full of trouble the television tells us. We have ring around our collars; our whites are not white and our colors are not bright. Prince Charming won't kiss Sleeping Beauty because she has bad breath; we have headaches; our nasal passages are clogged and, after a hard day branding cattle all we get is light beer. But that's okay because when we think our trouble is going to get us down, we learn that it's possible to get a

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

### **BIRTHDAYS**

<b>Camden Frisby</b>	<b>March 1</b>	Son of Kris Frisby
<b>Griffin Schumow</b>	<b>March 2</b>	Son of Jeff & Krista Schumow
<b>Kyle Glueck</b>	<b>March 4</b>	Son of Dolores Krason
<b>Justin Perez</b>	<b>March 9</b>	Son of Traci & Carlos Perez
		Brother of Samantha (Perez) Przybylski
<b>David Sloop</b>	<b>March 9</b>	Son of Charron Sloop
<b>Rusty Anderson</b>	<b>March 11</b>	Son of Forest & Christine Anderson
<b>David Spannraft</b>	<b>March 18</b>	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
<b>Adam Rubin</b>	<b>March 28</b>	Son of Linda Rubin
		Brother of Nicole Rubin
<b>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</b>	<b>April 2</b>	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
<b>Michael Sean Gaede</b>	<b>April 8</b>	Son of Maureen Gaede
<b>Mike Reardon</b>	<b>April 10</b>	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<b>Scott Ewing</b>	<b>April 11</b>	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
<b>Qua'Shawn Wade</b>	<b>April 12</b>	Son of June Andrejewski
<b>Alyssa Carranza</b>	<b>April 15</b>	Daughter of Luz Barrera
		Granddaughter of Angel & Raquel Gasco
<b>Adrien Gonzales</b>	<b>April 21</b>	Son of Lauren Gonzales
<b>Jammi Hui</b>	<b>April 25</b>	Daughter of William & Joyce Hui
<b>Sean Jones</b>	<b>April 26</b>	Son of Octavine Jones
<b>Timothy Reece</b>	<b>April 27</b>	Son of Joanne Prihoda-Reece

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

<b>Edgar Villareal</b>	<b>March 1</b>	Oziel & Guadalupe Villareal
<b>Jeremy Govekar</b>	<b>March 2</b>	Son of Maggie McGaughey
<b>Rasheed Mariano</b>	<b>March 5</b>	Son of Joan Mariano
<b>John "Jake" Mosansky</b>	<b>March 12</b>	Son of Darlene & John Mosansky
		Sister of Veronica Steif
<b>Blake Logan Palmer</b>	<b>March 13</b>	Son of Amber & Brian Palmer
		Grandson of Lois Cooper
		Grandson of Gina Palmer
<b>Taylor Rydahl</b>	<b>March 14</b>	Son of Carol & Keith Rydahl
<b>Roderick Young</b>	<b>March 27</b>	Son of Scarlet Austin
		Grandson of "Charlie" Johnson
<b>Marc Hawkinson</b>	<b>March 28</b>	Son of Mary Kay Clark
<b>José De Jesús Hernández</b>	<b>April 1</b>	Son of Jesús & Virginia Hernández
<b>Selene Martínez</b>	<b>April 8</b>	Daughter of Manuel & Lidia Martinez
<b>Mathew Tisch</b>	<b>April 10</b>	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
<b>Stephanie Andrea Zamarron</b>	<b>April 11</b>	Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungula
		Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriguez & Cédar Rojas
<b>Daniel Wang</b>	<b>April 13</b>	Son of Millie Yu
<b>Montana (Monti) Brown</b>	<b>April 16</b>	Son of Donna Brown
<b>Shannon McCarty</b>	<b>April 18</b>	Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hays

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## Grandma Wanna-Be

By JoAnne Rademacher  
TCF, Minot, North Dakota

(Published Fall 2002 Issue *We Need Not Walk Alone*)

Last fall, my son Darick and his wife, Jenny, announced that we would be grandparents this summer. At 47, I no longer had a desire to raise another child of my own and was already a self-confessed "grandma wanna-be." Their news made my heart dance. My joy however, was turned to anger when the pregnancy ended in miscarriage.

As a grandma wanna-be with that first grandchild on the way, I was picturing myself baby-sitting and cooing my way to old age with this child and those to follow cuddled around me. I bought patterns for sewing baby clothes and books filled with baby projects. Would the new parents want the crib my children had slept in? If not, where would I set it up for those visits to Grandma's house? My thoughts were overflowing with being a grandma.

After a one o'clock a.m. call from Darick, I knew that Jenny was probably miscarrying. My knees hit the floor and I sobbed my prayers. "Please, God, don't let this child die, too!" I implored. When it was confirmed that this child would never be born, all of my happy imaginings were replaced by anger. The raging thoughts of a protective mother quickly replaced those of the grandma-to-be.

In September of 1994 our only daughter, 13-year-old Melissa, died in a car accident. Our sons, Darick and Wade, were also in the car. At 15 and 11, respectively, they were devastated emotionally though they had only minor physical injuries. We have all worked hard at living without Melissa, but some days it seems that there is a dark cloud hanging over us determined to block the sunshine from our lives.

Darick blamed himself for the accident. He put himself in a world of self-induced guilt, a place from which we sometimes wondered if he would ever return. Retrieving his soul has been a long and arduous journey, Jenny beside him every step of the way. I knew immediately upon hearing the baby was lost that he would somehow go back there, which he did. In his mind, Melissa's and his baby's deaths were connected by his feelings of helplessness in the face of tragedy. The fact that this could happen, placing him back in that hell, made my blood boil. Those beautiful children had been through enough! Why couldn't Darick and Jenny have just this one blessing free of heart-ache?

Many people reminded me of all the medical reasons for miscarriage, making it sound like some grand act of mercy. They said that the baby was very likely genetically damaged and, if brought to term and live birth, it may have been afflicted with any number of maladies. I know they were trying to make me feel better, and it is likely they were right, but their words only made me angrier. There didn't have to be anything wrong with this baby! My mind screamed. Babies are carried to term and born every day. Why did this one have to be damaged? Darick and Jenny needed this joy. And we were already grieving the loss of the grandchildren Melissa would never deliver. Wasn't that enough?

I did not feel guilty or sorry for my anger. I have learned through grieving for Melissa that anger is a natural part of grief. Until now, I simply felt that it was unfinished business. I needed time to come to a place of peace in the face of another child lost to us.

When Melissa died, as deep as my grief was, I rejoiced in the lives of my sons. The fact that they survived that accident was declared a miracle, and it spun a web of protection around my broken heart. Then, in the summer of 2001, Wade was in another accident. The fact that he walked away from it only sore and bruised was declared another miracle. I remember the gratitude and grace I felt when I wrapped my arms around him and sobbed for the words I could not speak.

That memory began to emerge as my initial anger over being denied our first grandchild lost some of its steam. My gratitude for lives saved began to spin around in my head, seeking domination over the anger for lives lost. As much as I wanted to let go of the anger and embrace gratitude, I just couldn't find the resolution I sought.

Until now. It is summer again, 2002. Wade was in a third accident, this time escaping the rolled vehicle only seconds before it burst into flame within sight of where Melissa had died. When I arrived at the scene I walked past the

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(Grandma Wanna-Be continued from page 4)

Incinerated mass of metal. Again, I could not speak, but only held Wade until I could peel my arms from his healthy, whole self. I was calm and in control until later that night when I was alone.

The mash of emotions in my head and heart were too great to hold inside. I was in my car so I opened the roof, cranked up the music, and sobbed for twenty miles. The mother of Melissa grieved yet again. The grandmother of an unborn child also grieved as the mother of Darick fought for rights to her anger. The mother of Wade wailed prayers of thanks.

From this tangle of emotions, one truth emerged: As long as I choose to embrace the miracles around me, my heart will dance. Whether in the slow dance of grief or skipping to the beat as I cuddle and coo with grandbabies yet to come, hope and joy will emerge in the rhythms of the dance.



## SPRING MAGIC AND YOU!

Mary Cleckley, Georgia BP/USA Member at Large

As I sit and admire the beautiful and lush growth of the trees this spring, I feel renewed. The long and arduous winter we had all over the country had made me wonder if, indeed, the trees would be able to perform their magic this year. A late Spring freeze, after many trees had budded out, had hurt. Some trees were also showing the results of a storm late last fall. In the woods back of my home, the tops of several oaks were broken by the intense winds. The damage is obvious. The still hanging dead limbs and leaves stand out by comparison to the chartreuse color of the new leaves.

We have learned from past experiences that the pines, so plentiful in the South, are particularly vulnerable to the forces of nature. We are accustomed to the wind and ice storms taking the tops out of many of them. But it was

a surprise when the storm didn't affect the pines; instead, it took the tops out of many oaks. The oaks are sturdy and, as a rule, can stand much of what nature has to offer. They are dependable and deep rooted.

Does what happened to the trees not remind you of what happens to a bereaved family after the death of a child? It takes even the oaks among us and tears the heart out of us, leaving us damaged. For a long time, the damage done is obvious. Our links are not necessarily broken but our hearts surely are. The most dependable and sturdy among us are brought to our knees and it is hard to imagine that new growth will ever take place again.

As I look at the oaks back in my woods, I know that one day those dangling dead limbs and leaves will no longer be obvious. They will eventually fall to the ground and nature will set out to repair as much as she is able. As with broken tree limbs and broken hearts, nature will not be able to repair everything perfectly; scars will remain and the shape of the trees and our lives will never be the same. Our recoveries will differ, however, for the trees will continue doing what only they know how to do: grow acorns and replace limbs. We, on the other hand, not only have the opportunity to grow, but also to change in many ways. One does not suffer through such pain without learning valuable lessons about what is important and about priorities. As the spring revived the trees, let some of the magic spill over on you. Learn to grow in important ways. The pines among us will not learn, but the oaks surely will. When you say your prayers, pray to be an oak.

*You will not be cured, But...one day - an idea that will horrify you now - this intolerable misfortune will become a blessed memory of a being who will never again leave you. But you are in a stage of unhappiness where it is impossible for you to have faith in these reassurances.* Marcel

*Proust 1871-1922*

## A STIFF UPPER LIP CAUSES WRINKLES

By Mary Cleckley BP/USA Member at Large

The next time someone tells you to “keep a stiff upper lip” tell them I said it causes a wrinkle.

Bereaved parents will say that losing their child has “aged” them. I used to have a baby face. Into my late twenties, I still couldn’t buy alcohol without showing my driver’s license. When I married, I inherited two children from my husband’s first marriage. I used to get a kick out of telling people I had teen-age children and waiting for the flabbergasted protestations to follow.

I was 33 when Nicholas died; I’m 36 as I write this. Lately, when I tell people I have a 20-year-old daughter, no one bats an eyelash! Certainly, no protestations – not even a “My you must have started young!” More like an “Oh, that’s nice.”

How old do I look anyway? What happened to me in those three years. I have a theory: we don’t get lines in our faces and gray in our hair and stress-related illnesses from the time we spend thinking about our child, crying and freely expressing our hurt, anger and guilt. We get them from the time we spend trying NOT to. Because we feel we cannot or should not break down before co-workers, acquaintances and many times, even family, we keep that upper lip as stiff as possible and all of our emotions reined in as tightly as possible. Kept up long enough, without any release, our faces take on that pinched look and the gut finally protests with a message of its own.

Borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA VOLUME IX NO. 1, WINTER 2004 (January, February and March)

### (REFLECTIONS: BRIGHT TEETH AND LIGHTER GRIEF continued from page 2)

good night’s sleep, Kill Johnson grass with no carry over, fight germs while still having bright teeth and spell relief. And all of our troubles go away before the next program.

Wouldn’t it be nice if there were a bereaved person spray? Just spray it on and everyone will know what to say to make us feel good. We will

pass places and days that used to hurt as if nothing were ever wrong. We will remember the cheery times and blot out the ugly rings around the collars of our minds. Some people think that going through grief should be an easy, one-step miracle process. Send back the label and proof of purchase if not completely satisfied. If I can buy a pill that absorbs 47 times more stomach acid, I should be able to find a way to grieve that will absorb 50% more of the acid in my heart.

I sincerely wish that losing a dear one were in the league with getting light beer after a hard day on the range. But it is not something we can get over or make go away. Losing a loved one is a change in our lives that we must go through. We cannot cure our grief, go around it or wish it away. New life, hope and a profound and deeply satisfying way of living is on the other side of grief. But, first, we must go through grief. We must walk that lonesome valley.

### (The Compassionate Friends Virtual National Conference continued from page 1)

For those who look to our national conference each year for the important community and connection it provides, a gathering in person this year could not resemble what we have known and hold dear. Though we cannot gather in person for the conference this year, please mark your calendars for July 16 – 18, 2021, for The Compassionate Friends Virtual National Conference. More details will be announced soon about plans for the virtual conference. We will continue to walk this path together, so that We Need Not Walk Alone.

Warm regards, Roy Davies - **Board President on behalf of the Board of Directors** Roy and Taylor’s Dad

Shari O’Loughlin, MBA, CPC. **CEO - The Compassionate Friends** Connor’s Mom and Patti’s Sister

## By Susan Means, BP/USA Louisville, KY Chapter

This morning my ten-year old son said to me, "I wish I weren't the only boy in the family." He is the youngest and has two sisters. He should have a 13 year old brother too, whom we all miss terribly. I didn't know what to tell him. The "life isn't fair" speech is worn, the "that's just the way it is" speech is too harsh for my young son. He senses all that he's missing out on because his older brother died too soon. Not a day goes by that I don't feel that way too.

I hugged my little boy, told him I loved him and missed his brother too. After he left me, comforted for the moment, I wept for him and for all of us whose lives have been forever changed because our children died too soon.



## Give Teens a Chance – Understanding Teen Grief

By Ben Sieff, HSSA

I had just turned 16 when my older brother, Tim, was murdered. I was already struggling with the pressures of being a teen. I certainly did not need my life to be any more complicated. It was the most difficult thing I had ever experienced. Eventually, I emerged from my loss with a better understanding of grief. Since then, I have always felt the need to advocate for grieving teens.

Being a parent to a grieving teen can be tough. When I've listened to parents talk about their teen, I've heard them say things like: "My teen

doesn't want to talk to me about their loss. They seem so distant. I want to help, but I don't know how. I just want to share a good cry with them."

Being a grieving teen can be tough. Some of the things I've heard teens say are "I don't talk to my parents about my loss because I don't want to upset them. I am really going through a difficult time right now. I feel a tremendous weight upon my shoulders. I don't think my parents understand."

Allow a teen to be a teen. Not only has their loss been difficult for them to get through, but they are also getting bombarded with all kinds of other stress. Never allow yourself to compare your surviving teen with the one who died. In my house, we had a bookshelf dedicated to the "greatness" of my brother. One of the things that really angered me was that his memory was being distorted. He was a great brother, but he was no angel. I wanted to remember him for exactly who he was – good and bad included.

One of the most important things that a grieving teen can have is a friend they can talk to. As a parent, this may be you, but more often it is not. There are several reasons for this. The teen may feel that bringing up the subject will only make the parent feel worse. I call this "parenting the parent."

Another reason is that as grievors, we all tend to be very selfish. Often the parent feels that they are entitled to the most grief. Grief should not be competitive. Everyone handles his or her grief differently.

No one said this was going to be easy. Give yourself some room to grieve as well as your teen. I have found that when you give a teen a chance to express his or her grief, then they will do the same for you.

*Ben lost his older brother to homicide when he was 16. He has a bachelor's degree in Human Social Service Administration and is a co-director of Center Corporation, a nonprofit grief resource center. He was the sibling chair for The Compassionate Friends National Conference in Atlanta in 2003.*

**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](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,

The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) There are seven TCF Internet chat sessions weekly. To participate, visit the TCF home page and select the "Chat" button.

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Aaron Barrera Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

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**REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY**

**LIBRARIAN** Kathleen Rettinger 847-922-7456 *Alexander Rettinger* Age 18 – Of suicide

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