



# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

March 2023 Newsletter



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

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## Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear friends,

Today is a sunny day in February and I am grateful for the sunshine, the wind, and the melting snow. A new season is on the way, soon spring will be sharing its warmth, sprouting new growth, and inviting us to the outdoors. I find myself sorting and planning the passing of time by the events to come. Not great big events, just day to day and sometimes by the week, so I can move along to the next. It's kind of how I keep going and moving forward each day, with the forever heaviness of missing my son, Westley. Not every day is weighted, some are more than others, and some are remarkably light, and the day moves along just fine. Grief changes from day to day, but never goes away. It becomes a part of you, that you carry every single day. On the days when I feel more sorrow and my tears flow, I let the sorrow run its course and I try to settle myself, and move to a calm place, not necessarily a happy place, but I just seek a place of peace so I can think of Westley and let myself remember and feel the memories of joy; his smile, his laugh, his kindness, how it felt when I would see him walk through the door when he came home for a visit. *"Missing you has settled into my bones. What once was fierce has softened. Like a constant melody, your name, pouring through my mind- on repeat. Your memory, the undercurrent of my days."* Lexi Behrndt.

I know each of you have a system, method, approach to keeping yourself available and present for each day, each week, each month. You are all so brave and so loved by your families and friends. I hope the changing of the season and the expectation of spring will bring comfort and may you find those moments of remembering and feeling the joy your child brings to your heart and mind. I think of each of you and your journey when you share your stories at our meetings, and as you share your loved one's names, hopes, dreams and memories. I hope you know we all are listening and thank you for sharing your loved one with us.

Your friend, Susan Westley's mom



If wishes could come true...

There Isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of you.

Your laugh, your smile, your smell, your touch. I'll never know why you had to leave me, but as long as I live, you will live on through me. (angel memories tm)

## Lake Villa Meeting Northern Illinois Chapter TCF

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

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

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

## Holy Family Church

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



## Dates to Remember

***Adopt a Highway Clean up Saturday,  
May 6, 2023.***

***More information on page 4.***



## SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

By: Susan Presler  
Bereaved Mother Oak Park, IL

Dear Fellow Travelers,

There is an illness called Seasonal Affective Disorder. It's most prominent in the winter,

due to the fact that people are inside most of the day, and are not getting certain vitamins our bodies' need, which sunlight provides.

Those who suffer from SAD experience depression and a lackadaisical attitude. They seem to be "down" not knowing why. Bereaved parents know why we are down, but SAD can worsen the symptoms of our dependency. When spring arrives, SAD seems to disappear for most people - - they are outdoors more often. (This is all a layman's understanding of this disorder.)

We read many articles that talk about bereaved parents and the "seasons" of grief - - "we are in the winter of our grief." (Supposedly the worst part), with the promise that spring will be a "rebirth." That "nature and creatures abound with the glories of the season, coming alive again."

I believe this outlook is misleading and can put an additional burden on the bereaved. "Why am I not feeling better? I am supposed to be emerging from my grief, just like the nature emerges from its winter." "Spring is THE time to get better."

While it is great to believe that some day we will be able to carry our burden of anguish more easily, there is NO timetable. You know where you are in your grief process, and it's okay to be just where you are - don't listen to those "chirping birds" who say it's time to be better.

(Borrowed from *A JOURNEY TOGETHER*, [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org).)



## 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

Camden Frisby	March 1	Son of Kris Frisby
Griffin Schumow	March 2	Son of Jeff & Krista Schumow
Kyle Glueck	March 4	Son of Dolores Krason
Charlie Schmit	March 9	Son of Jean Schmit-Gill
Rusty Anderson	March 11	Son of Forest & Christine Anderson
David Spannraft	March 18	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
Adam Rubin	March 28	Son of Linda Rubin
		Brother of Nicole Rubin
		Daughter of Elizabeth Wood
Alyssa Wood	March 30	Daughter of Grace & Merrell Parsons
Paulina Welch	March 26	Son of Linda and Nicole Rubin
Adam Rubin	March 28	Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise
Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth	April 2	Son of Maureen Gaede
Michael Sean Gaede	April 8	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
Scott Ewing	April 11	Son of June Andrejewski
Qua'Shawn Wade	April 12	Daughter of Angel & Raquel Gaso
Alyssa Carranza	April 15	Son of Lauren Gonzales
Adrien Gonzales	April 21	Daughter of William & Joyce Hui
Jammi Hui	April 25	Son of Octavine Jones
Sean Jones	April 26	Son of Joanne Prihoda-Reece
Timothy Reece	April 27	

### ANNIVERSARIES

Edgar Villareal	March 1	Son of Oziel & Guadalupe Villareal
Korey Hill	March 5	Son of Deena Hill
Taylor Rydahl	March 14	Son of Carol & Keith Rydahl
William (Bill) Wercheck	March 14	Son of Kathy Wercheck
Luis F Reyes	March 24	Son of Felipe & Margarita Reyes
Roderick Young	March 27	Son of Scarlet Austin
		Grandson of "Charlie" Johnson
Marc Hawkinson	March 28	Son of Mary Kay Clark
José De Jesús Hernández	April 1	Son of Jesús & Virginia Hernández
Selene Martinez	April 8	Daughter of Manuel & Lidia Martinez
Mathew Tisch	April 10	Son of William & Barbara Tisch
Stephanie Andrea Zamarron	April 11	Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungu
		Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriguez & Cédar Rojas
		Daughter of Joan K Corbett
Jennifer Corbett Dennis	April 12	Son of Millie Yu
Daniel Wang	April 13	Son of Donna Brown
Montana (Monti) Brown	April 16	Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hays
Shannon McCarty	April 18	Son of Susan Banks
Westley Banks	April 19	Brother of Toni Nesheim
David Nesheim	April 24	Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann
Lisa Rosemann	April 25	Son of Jeff & Krista Schumow
Griffin Schumow	April 26	Son of Kelly Kozel
Andrew Naydihor	April 29	Son of JoAnn Prihoda-Reece
Timothy Reece	April 29	Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson
Anne Thomson	April 30	



***Dear Friends, we will have our spring Adopt a Highway Clean up Saturday, May 6, 2023. Please check Friday evening for a weather update.***

Our Adopt a Highway event for our Northern Lake County IL chapter of The Compassionate Friends is **SATURDAY May 6, 2023**. Meet at **8:45 am** to review rules and safety

guidelines. (Walmart parking lot on the garden side, 475 West IL Rte. 173 Antioch, IL 60002). According to the rules we will need to begin on one side of the road, cleaning as we walk, cross the road at the end and walk back, cleaning as we walk to where we started. We can organize with more detail at the site on May 6th. The section of road we have adopted begins at the corner of Deep Lake Road and IL Route 173 going north on Deep Lake Road to the County Line. It is approximately 2.02 miles. There is a sign with our group name identifying the location.

A few things to know for the cleanup: No children under 10 are allowed. Wear

long sleeves, long pants, a hat, and gloves that are water- proof. Bring water, bug spray and sunscreen. Bring a "grabber" if you have one or we have grabbers to share. I will have a wagon to pull along for storage of anything we might need.

Rain-date on Saturday May 20, 2023.

Please call, text, or email me with any questions.

Please review the video for your information before joining us at our event. <https://lakecountyil.new.swagit.com/videos/16309>

## Everyone Needs a Secret Place!

By: Beverley Hurley BP/USA, Tampa Bay Chapter

Do you have a secret place? I only recently realized how often I go to my secret place and how important it is to have my own secret place to remember my daughter.

When my daughter Debbie first died, I did not have a secret place. My grief was 24/7 and exposed for the whole world to see. There was no secret to my grief!

Now further along my grief path I know I can decide to go to my secret place where and when I choose. Sometimes on purpose; sometimes when I least expect it!

Perhaps it is at an Airport people watching and remembering our times traveling back and forth during her illness.

Possibly it is at a shopping mall looking at clothes that Debbie would have loved to wear.

Perhaps it is watching my Grandchildren playing and remembering when Debbie was that age and had so much fun.

Maybe it is at a Cocktail party where no one even knows I had a daughter that died.

I love my secret place where I can go to remember my daughter and others have no idea just how far away I am!

Shhh! It is my secret!!

(Borrowed from Bereaved Parents USA Writings)



# A FA- THER'S GRIEF BY DAVID PELLEGRIN

At my second meeting of The Compassionate Friends about three years ago, one of the mothers said how nice it was to see a man attending, since "men grieve differently from women."

Her remark was no doubt meant to help put me at ease. I hadn't said a thing so far, and might have been intimidating in my silence. But it caught me off guard. What I was feeling after George's death was so absolute, so awful, how could it possibly come with any "differences" ? Would one grieve differently for an infant than for an adolescent? For a son than for a daughter? Surely, grief was absolute for both mothers and fathers.

Over time, I came to acknowledge the differences the well-meaning mother had in mind: Neither I nor the other men who occasionally attended talked much; the women talked freely. I sensed I was better at compartmentalizing my grief than the mothers, better at keeping a lid on it socially and at work.

My male friends seemed less comfortable talking about George, bringing up his name or even looking at his pictures than female friends. I came to see how intensely I felt I had let my son down as his protector, the father's primary role.

Shortly after becoming editor of my chapter newsletter, I sent a copy to my friend, Jack Knebel, in California. Jack and his wife, Linda, had been involved with a chapter of The Compassionate Friends after the death of their daughter, Hollis.

He replied, "It's good to see that a man is taking an active role in the group." Then he went on to write movingly about those male-female grieving differences. The rest of his letter, which touched me deeply, follows:

" . . . Several years after Hollis died, Linda and I were being trained by Compassionate Friends to be "buddies" for newly bereaved parents. One of the exercises was to list all the unhelpful things that others had said in trying to comfort us, so that we wouldn't make the same mistakes. The other trainees, all women, made long lists, and did it with enthusiasm. When the lists were read aloud, they nodded knowingly at every entry and eventually hooted and howled with derision at the worst (some of which were pretty bad). When it came my turn, I held up an empty page and said:

People may have said such things to me. I just don't recall.

What I do remember is that people tried to tell me how sad they were for us. I remember being told how much they loved Hollis and how much they cared about us. I remember one of my partners hugging me in the halls of my very stiff and proper law firm. I remember men who had never told me anything more personal than their reactions to a Giants' loss crying at our loss and their fears.

You women are used to talking to each other about your emotions and about personal things. I wasn't and my friends weren't either. So the fact that we could do so was a great gift, and it wasn't marred in the slightest by someone's choice of words.

(Continued on page 6)

(A Father's Grief **continued from page 5**)

Now, the shell has been broken and I find it easier to talk about my emotions, my hopes and fears, about those things that really are important. And that, for me, was one of Hollis' greatest gifts.

I know that even after George's death, he is a major part of your life. My guess is that you're becoming more open to the gifts that he and those who care about you are able to give."

Yours, with compassion and friendship,

Jack

Borrowed from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.  
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David Pellegrin

## 46TH THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild.

This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Denver, Colorado, during the weekend of July 7-9, 2023.

## **Comforters From the Past**

The word comforter makes me first think of a large quilt carefully and skillfully sewn by a little old lady who sits in a rocker and lives somewhere outside of Chattanooga.

The image of something warm to spread over me on a cold night is secure. The comforter envelops me as I sleep, gently resting over me to keep me comfortable.

People make great comforters, too. They may not be sewn like a quilt, but they are just as secure and warm, gentle and comfortable.

When a child dies, we need comforters. There are plenty who recite the platitudes. You know of those lines-- "He's in a better place" and "God needed another angel." While our anger may boil at those who don't know what to say and so choose from that swamp of ill-cited sayings, there are others. These are the ones who know how to offer a shoulder to cry on, bring flowers, and have pain in their eyes-- those who let themselves ache with you.

Sometimes a comforter knows how to respond because she has had a child die. Ah, yes, these are the ones who can help out so wonderfully.

I was blessed to have many good comforters. Some I am still friends with. Others were solace personified and then I lost contact with them.

So you can imagine the joy I felt when I was reunited with two of my past comforters the other week.

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(Comforters from the Past continued from page 6)

While at work at the portrait studio, there stood Lisa, a woman who had taken our broken family under her wing and had literally fed us, listened to us and although she did not know Daniel, understood. She, years before us, had a child die.

Then an email arrived from another Lisa. She had also had a child die, just months before my Daniel died. She was the one I talked to on the phone and from her I received a helpful grief book in the mail. New to the bereavement journey, we shared much heartache at the same time.

One week--two comforters from the past again entering my life. This time, after eight years since the death of my son, I was not as needy. My heart was not beating faintly nor were my eyes puffy from nights of crying. Yet, what an impressive reminder of those who helped me get through the months of agony after Daniel died from cancer treatments.

It caused me to think of others who were significant in helping our family as we moved through the horrors of new grief. I was grateful and hoped that I'd never forget how time with a newly-grieving person is time well spent.

Are you new to this journey of bereavement? I pray you will find someone to hold you and care. Has it been just months or many years since the death of your child or sibling? Others need your listening and understanding heart.

Open up to the needy around you. You can be that blanket, that quilt, that comforts. As you reach out, you will assist in your own healing. Never will you be forgotten as you touch others in memory of your child.

~ Alice J. Wisler  
Editor of Tributes Monthly E-Zine

## THE DOVE AND THE MOUSE (A TRUE STORY)

I raise doves. Several years ago, I found a dead, almost mummified baby bird skeleton in one of their nests. I took it out and tossed it aside.

The next day, it was back in the nest. I again removed it and tossed it onto the ground...yes, feeling guilty about it. On the third day, it was again back in the nest, at which time I removed it completely from the dove pen and buried it. On the fourth day...and you will not believe this although I swear to you it's true...there was the mummified body of a baby mouse in her nest!!!!

I think I FEEL like that mother dove must have been feeling...she wanted her baby back in whatever form she could get it! A Mother's (nor a Father's) Love never dies, does it? This was the first experience I had ever had with a grieving mother animal.

Perhaps you all may think me absolutely nuts when I tell you this but I brought that baby mouse's remains into my home and sealed it in a little box with tissue surrounding it and I still have it to this day! This happened LONG before my Son died. I was soooooo touched by this sad, little scenario I had witnessed. I hope this hasn't grossed you out. Guess you just had to witness it to understand completely.



~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Online Sharing



## 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 to Rosita Hernandez  
For her donation  
In memory of her daughter,  
Victoria Pickett**

*"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.*



**(Love Stays in Our Hearts  
Forever continued from page  
6)**

this world and how we can ease each other's pain.

I still look up into the night sky sometimes and think about those two little boys that were with me for such a short while. And sometimes I find myself wondering what they would be like today if they could have grown up with their brother and sister. Then I remember that although they are with the angels once more, in some wonderful way they are still with me. I believe that children are the most precious gifts we can ever know—yet they are only loaned to us for a while and never really belong to us.

The purest wonder in life is found in sharing love with a child. So while they are with you, nurture your children completely, love them uncritically and with all of your heart. And if you should ever lose them, know that they have never really left you for they remain inside your heart wherever you are. Believe that love like this never dies, and that it is not always the understanding of life that is really important, but the believing in the wonder of it.

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### A Moving Experience

We are sorting through and packing up for a move. It's worse than your usual move from one home of 10 years to another; the house we live in now is the last one we shared with our son, Aaron. We are sorting through and packing up memories, along with the tools, dishes, and books.



I have heard other bereaved parents talk about moving after their child died. For some, it was too painful to stay in a house that held so many images. They spoke of not being able to get away from the sorrow, of running into the pain every time they walked through the door. We never felt that way about our home. This was a place Aaron loved, and we have been very happy here—the last earthly house that Aaron knew.

I know that we will be happy in our new home as well—but that house won't hold a breath of him, as this one does. Now, I can

(Continued on page9)





## 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

## SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY . . . . WHY AM I CRYING?

This is a question that comes up every spring, particularly from the more newly bereaved. It is something we have always looked forward to, before tragedy hit. The cold, drab, bleak winter is finally over. Somehow, we thought that magical time would be the magic that would free us from our pain. Unfortunately, not so! Perhaps it is because we see this beauty unfolding, and our children are not here to share it. The devastating knowledge is that "magic" of spring didn't change our feelings. The fact the world seems to go on, just as if nothing has happened, when our world seems to have stopped; seems impossible to comprehend. False expectations. What we tend to forget is that seasons change; where we are in our grief cycle is what controls our feelings.

Just hold on to the fact that spring is a rebirth of what seems dead, as dead as you feel now. It is true, you will never stop missing your son or daughter; however, hold on to the hope and belief that your spring will come again, too. When it does, it will be different. Just as the trees and flowers are not the same, yours won't be either. But their beauty is still there, and as you start to come back to life again, you will enjoy different joys in life. We all run on a different calendar, so no time frame can be put on your spring. Just know that your feelings are perfectly normal. It may seem that you are back at square one, but look back, remember what it was like in the beginning, and I think you will realize there has been progress, and there will be more.

-Mary Ehmann TCF/Valley Forge, PA  
 Greater Kankakee IL Area 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 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

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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**Steering Committee 2022 – 2023**

**CHAPTER LEADERSHIP** Susan Banks 847-366-9375 [lanwesmar@comcast.net](mailto:lanwesmar@comcast.net) – son, Westley Banks Age 21 of suicide

**TREASURER** Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 [julyson2@gmail.com](mailto:julyson2@gmail.com) son, Aaron Barrera Age 29 Auto accident due to Diabetes

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**HOSPITALITY** Kris Frisby 847-366-3170 [Kefrisby88@comcast.net](mailto:Kefrisby88@comcast.net) son, Camden Frisby Age 15 of suicide.

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**REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY** Shannon Seay 224-456-2891 [Seayseven1@comcast.net](mailto:Seayseven1@comcast.net) daughter, Ashley Seay Age 17 Auto accident.

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**WOODLAND WALK COORDINATORS** Christine Pado 847-455-6642 [chpado@gmail.com](mailto:chpado@gmail.com) - daughter Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 Pulmonary Embolism

**FACILITATORS AT HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL.** SPANISH AND ENGLISH. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 [mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com](mailto:mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com) & Raphael Vidal [rvidal1027@yahoo.com](mailto:rvidal1027@yahoo.com), son Raphael Vidal age 17 of suicide. Mirtha is available by phone call or email.

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

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

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