



# The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

March 2024 Newsletter



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

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## *Chapter Leader Notes from Susan*

Dear Friends,

If wishes could come true... I know what I would wish for, I Wish that our son and brother Westley was here with us and living his life in wonder, grace, and fulfillment. And I also know it cannot come true. So, I hope that our children who have gone too soon are in a place of rest and peace. It's ok, *"You are rooted deep within my soul. A part of me forever. In the deepest parts of my heart, there you are."*

As I write my note today, I am grateful for the sunshine and mild temperature. I have a few days off from school and it's been nice to be home, rest and get a few chores completed on my to do list. I'm thinking ahead and find myself trying to distract myself from the approaching month of April and Westley's remembrance date, April 19. And my heart and mind know that each of you share the same turbulent emotional anticipation of that date for your own child.

My wish for each of you; May you all have a gentle entry to the new season; it is on the way, soon spring will be sharing its warmth, sprouting new growth, and inviting us to the outdoors. I look forward to being outdoors, going for long walks and bike rides. I do enjoy gardening, always have. I keep looking at my gardens and I see evidence of new

growth. I must be patient a wait a little while longer before I can start the spring cleanup and preparing the gardens for summer. There are creatures still hibernating, but once we have a steady number of warm days, they will surface and attend to their duties of pollenating, turning the soil and reentry to the warm weather months.

Grief changes from day to day, but never goes away. It becomes a part of you, that you carry every single day. As I think of my son, Westley I 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.

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

### 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.



*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. (a.m.tm)*



### THE GREATEST GRIEF

By Peggy Gibson TCF, Nashville, TN

A sudden accident killed your child. That terrible phone call changed your life with no warning—you didn't get to say goodbye—this has to be the most terrible loss of all.

Your child died by suicide—you feel you should have been able to prevent it. Your guilt is devastating. How can you live with such an incomprehensible tragedy?

You only had one child—now you have none and your focus in life is gone. What's the point of living? What could be more devastating?

You've experienced the deaths of more than one of your children—will it happen again? How does one survive this pain again?

When your baby died, your dreams died—you have few memories and you're too young to be suffering like this—this loss is the most unfair.

Someone murdered your child—an unbelievable violation—you're angry and

(Continued on page 9)



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

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, if 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
David Spannraft	March 18	Son of Elizabeth & Dan Spannraft
Paulina Welch	March 26	Daughter of Grace & Merrell Parsons
Adam Rubin	March 28	Son of Linda and Nicole Rubin

### ANNIVERSARIES

Edgar Villareal	March 1	Son of Oziel & Guadalupe Villareal
Korey Hill	March 5	Son of Deena Hill
Eder Alamilla	March 12	Son of Magda Alamilla
Taylor Rydahl	March 14	Son of Carol & Keith Rydahl
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

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) - 847-337-4168

*The grief within me has its own heartbeat. It has its own life, its own song. Part of me wants to resist the rhythms of my grief, yet as I surrender to the song, I learn to listen deep within myself. —*

*Alan D. Wolfelt*



## LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

*Posted on February 10th, 2023 Compassionate Friends Website*

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/blog/love-never-goes-away/>

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing.” Sound familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouches” can compare with the hurt we now feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet, most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have. So...we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can’t live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few commonly recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guide-lines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable... some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first

date, first car...now we don’t have that measure anymore. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, and to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember.

Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.

Don’t push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and their moments... but don’t expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don’t get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable.

Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost – try thinking the good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn’t lose our child... HE/SHE DIED. We didn’t lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn’t love so very much it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I’m very, very glad I loved.

Don’t let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!



### DARCIE SIMS

Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D.,  
CHT, CT, GMS

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**(Love Never Goes Away continued from page 4)**

was a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She was an author of many books on grief and bereavement including *Why Are the Casseroles Always Tuna?*, *Footsteps Through the Valley* and *If I Could Just See Hope*. She was an internationally recognized and popular speaker having keynoted at numerous bereavement conferences nationally and around the world. She served on The Compassionate Friends (TCF) national board of directors and the Association of Death Education and Counseling. Darcie received the TCF Professional Award in 1999. She was president and co-founder of Grief, Inc. and Director of American Grief Academy. She also was Director of Training and Certification for Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). Sadly, Darcie died suddenly and unexpectedly in February of 2014.



## Spring is for the Birds

I sat at my kitchen table, looking out at the dazzling spring day. It was the kind of breathtakingly beautiful day that brings a lump to your throat and a song to your lips. Spring was my favorite time of year, but I couldn't be more miserable. Only five months before, the joy had fled from my life when my precious son had died. It seemed like the whole world had sprung into bloom around me, but grief stricken as I was, the glory of the awakening earth only brought me pain. I considered each new bud, each tiny sprout, a personal affront. Where was my renewal, my hope?

How could I celebrate spring while winter still raged in my heart? Suddenly a saucy fat robin hopped into view. "Just what I need", I thought bitterly. "Another sign of spring." The bird was back the next day. "Shoo!" I growled through the glass. Ignoring me, he hopped cheerfully across the garden, stopping to peck the earth in search of an especially delectable bug. He was so perky it made me sick. The next morning he was there, chipper as ever. He came back the next day and the next. The following day, however, he did not return. I was torn between feeling sad that he had gone and embarrassed that I had been looking for him. The next day he reappeared, and at that moment I experienced an unfamiliar contorting of my face. It was a smile.

As a little heaviness lifted from my heart, I realized that although I couldn't delight in the season as I usually did, there would be other springs. Beauty and joy would someday return to my life as surely as the first timid shoots emerge from the frozen earth. As for the pesky robin, there was just one thing left for me to do. I went to the pantry to get some food to feed my friend.

—Patricia Dys, TCF Beaumont, South Africa

Borrowed from The Compassionate Friends of the Greater Kankakee Are Newsletter March 2015



## Do You Have Your Child's Pet?

When my daughter was growing up we would foster sick, injured and dying cats for a local non-profit animal league. So it came as no surprise that when she got her first apartment, one of the first things she did was to adopt a big, loveable male tabby cat from the local animal control facility. I was not very happy about it at the time. After all, she needed to concentrate on school and other things, but she loved "Zeke" with all her heart, so I melted and let her have her way.

One day a couple of years later she came rushing through the door with two of the dirtiest, scrawniest little kittens that I had ever seen in my life. Even the edges of their little ears were sun-burned. She cried, "Mom, somebody dumped them on the side of the road in a box and I just couldn't leave them!" I said O.K., but tomorrow they go to the animal league to find homes. Well, the next day came and the shelter was full. The only other option was the pound and she refused to take them there to possibly meet an even worse fate than they had already endured. My daughter now had three cats.

When she died, I didn't know what to do with her beloved kitties. All I knew was that I had to make sure they went to wonderful homes with people who would love them as much as she did. I took the least adoptable one home with me much to the displeasure of my resident shorthaired black cat who loved people but detested other animals. "Meadow" whose name was derived from being found by an open field, was a cute short-haired tabby and white kitty with an orangey pink nose, and a tummy that looked like a kangaroo pouch due to an improper spaying that required a subsequent second surgery. My son called the shelter where we had volunteered for so many years and it was there where we received our first miracle. An older couple had just come in looking for an older male cat. They gave us their number and we called them right away. The couple rushed over to meet Zeke, fell in love with him and happily took him home.

Now there was only one kitty left to find a home for. "Boon" received her unusual name because my daughter said she was a blessing. She was a very beautiful longhaired smokey colored tabby that had big green eyes with unusual blue rings around the outside edges. A dear friend of mine who also fostered cats heard about our tragedy and told me that she would take the kitty sight unseen. It was another miracle! These wonderful little miracles happened within just a couple of days after my daughter's car accident.

When the police released her belongings to us, I took her purse home placed it on the bed and left it to tend to other things. When I came back a little while later Meadow was curled up in the middle of the purse where she slept soundly the rest of the day. She missed Angela.

It's been over four years now and I still get Christmas cards with pictures of her kitties from these wonderful angels here on earth who took them in and gave them wonderful homes with lots of love. As I am writing this, Miss Meadow is curled up on the desk chair behind me where I'm sitting, cuddled up snugly against the small of my back, sleeping and purring softly like she always does when I'm working in my office, and I wouldn't have it any other way. It gives me great comfort to care for and love this precious little cat that my daughter rescued and loved so much.



Janet G. Reyes TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX In Memory of my daughter Angela

Borrowed from The Compassionate Friends of the Greater Kankakee Area Newsletter March 2015



## Brothers

Never ever did we think that 25 years would pass since our youngest son Thomas was killed on April 24, 1987 at the age of 19. In the beginning time stood still and we went second by second, minute by minute and hour by hour and then day by day. Looking back some of the pain has lessened and the giant hole in our hearts has grown somewhat smaller, but we still miss him so much. We miss his smile, and his love of life. He was taken way too young.

Little did we know that our hearts would be heavy with pain a second time. On September 10<sup>th</sup> of last year our son Michael died suddenly at the age of 48, leaving behind his wife and best friend of almost 25 years, a son 17 and a daughter 15. Michael was an outstanding father and a super great husband. Our hearts are broken for our daughter-in-law and our grandchildren. Grief is so hard to deal with, and we again face the long path to some healing. Life sure has something in mind we are just not sure what that would be.

To lose two sons suddenly sure does not seem fair, and again we are back at square one. Each day grief takes over and we wonder why, but we go on. We are in our seventy's now and the days drag on forever again just like the past. We have learned to love the beauty of the butterflies and birds as they are so free spirited and each day while we watch they seem to take away a small part of our pain. Now that we are in spring of 2012 we know that we will help us mend our broken hearts.

When Thomas was killed we went to our first TCF meeting about six months into our grieving process. For many years we went each month and after each meeting we felt as if a little bit of the pain was taken away. Many years have gone by and we still stay in contact with our TCF friends by receiving the monthly newsletter.

We know we have a long road to travel but we will take baby steps for now. We loved our sons and sure miss their smiles and the love they generated to everyone. They will live in our hearts forever and we will look back on all the great things they did in life.

Bill and Terry Bruggemann TCF Morris Area Chapter, NJ In Memory of our sons, Thomas and Michael

Borrowed from The Compassionate Friends of the Greater Kankakee Are Newsletter March 2015

## 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



## Special Opening Registration Discount Through March 20th!

We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 47th Annual National Conference in New Orleans! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

[Register Now](#)

### A Sampling of Workshop Topics Include

- Parent's Grief
- Sibling Loss
- Grandparent's Grief
- Loss of Only/All Children
- Workshops specific to the type of loss such as suicide, homicide, miscarriage, substance related causes, and more
- Creativity in grief
- Early grief experiences as well as long-term grievers
- Grief with or without spiritual or religious beliefs
- and more



**(The Greatest Grief continued from page 2)**

your frustration with the legal system feeds your anger. This must be the very worst.

You're a single parent—your child has died and you have no one to lean on, no one to share your grief—surely your suffering is the most painful.

The unbelievable has happened—your adult child died—you had invested so much in that child—now who's going to care for you in your old age?

You had to watch your child suffer bravely through a long illness—you were helpless to ease his pain and to prevent his death—how do you erase those horrible images?—Yours must be the greatest grief.

The truth is that the death of any child is the greatest loss, regardless of the cause, regardless of the age. Our own experience is far more painful that we had ever previously envisioned, so how could we possibly comprehend what others have undergone? To make comparisons between our own suffering and the pain of others is an exercise in futility. It accomplishes nothing and sometimes can be hurtful to others. To say that one type of death produces a greater or deeper grief than another tends to place different values on the children who have died. Each child is worthy of 100% of our grief, each person's sorrow is 100%, and each loss is 100%, because we love each child, those still living and those who have died, with 100% of our being. I can't imagine wanting to walk in the shoes of any other bereaved parent, can you?

Borrowed from The Compassionate Friends of the Greater Kankakee Are Newsletter March 2015



## A HUG

No movable parts  
 No batteries required  
 No periodic checkups  
 Theft proof  
 Non-taxable  
 Non-polluting  
 Quiet

No monthly payments  
 No insurance requirements  
 Low energy consumption  
 High energy yield  
 Inflation proof

Healthy  
 Relieves tension  
 Combats depression  
 Reduces stress  
 Improves blood circulation  
 Improves self-esteem  
 Generates good will  
 And best of all,  
 it is free and fully returnable.

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

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