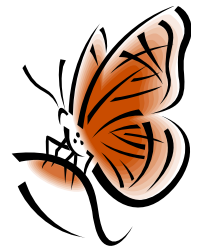


The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

May, 2014 Newsletter

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



HAPPILY EVER AFTER

By Erma Bombeck

If you're looking for an answer this Mother's Day on why God reclaimed your child, I don't know. I only know that thousands of mothers out there today desperately need an answer as to why they were permitted to go through the elation of carrying a child and then lose it to miscarriage, accident, violence, disease or drugs.

Motherhood isn't just a series of contractions; it's a state of mind, from the moment we know life is inside us, we feel a responsibility to protect and defend that human being. It's a promise we can't keep. We beat ourselves to death over that pledge. "If I hadn't worked through the eighth month." "If I had taken him to the doctor when he had a fever." "If I hadn't let him use the car that night." "If I hadn't been so naïve, I'd have noticed he was on drugs."

The longer I live the more convinced I become that surviving changes us. After the bitterness, the anger, the guilt and the despair are tempered by time, we look at life differently. While I was writing my book, I WANT TO GROW HAIR. I WANT TO GROW UP. I WANT TO GO TO BOISE, I talked with mothers who had lost a child to cancer. Every single one said that death gave their lives new meaning and purpose. And who do you think prepared them for the rough, lonely road they had to travel? Their dying child. They pointed their mothers to-

ward the future and told them to keep going. The children had already accepted what their mothers were fighting to reject.

The children in the bombed out nursery in Oklahoma City have touched more lives than they will ever know. Workers who had probably given their kids a mechanical pat on the head without thinking that morning were making calls home during the day to their children to say, "I love you."

This may seem like a strange Mother's Day column on a day when joy and life abound for the millions of mothers throughout the country but it's also a day of appreciation and respect. I can think of no mothers who deserve it more than those who had to give a child back. In the face of adversity, we are not permitted to ask, "Why me?" You can ask, but you won't get an answer. Maybe you are the instrument that is left behind to perpetuate the life that was lost and appreciate the time you had with it.

The late Gilda Radner summed it up pretty well. "I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned the hard way that some poems don't rhyme and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what is going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity."



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.

**Thanks to Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
for their donation in
loving memory of their children,
Donette & Kelly Klawonn**

**Thanks to Charles & Diana Laufer
for their donation in
loving memory of their son,
Adam Laufer**

"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
May 15 – 7:30 p.m.**
Millburn Congregational Church
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL
Open discussion

**Waukegan meeting
June 5, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.**
Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL
Open discussion

Unwelcome Grief

I miss my life, before grief walked in, and made itself at home.

Grief is something I wish would go away and forget how he found his way here.

Who does he think he is, just showing up unexpected, taking control.

I want him to go away, never to return.

Grief is so powerful, it causes so many emotions. Grief can silence you, but can make you want to scream.

Grief will bring you to your knees, but also make you want to run as far away as you can.

Reading a good devotional can bring you comfort, but going into the woods and yelling at trees can be as soothing.

Grief is so powerful.

I want it to go away, but I also need it to stay.

It makes me numb, but also makes me feel.

Grief is so confusing, but makes so much sense. Grief can stay in my house.

Grief can be overpowering but can be contained.

Mature grief can be told when to go away and when it is needed.

Mature grief can be entwined in my life and lived with.

Grief. My life. Forever my enemy and my companion.

*Lee Ann Hutson, Greg's Mom
President BP/USA*

Borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER – NATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA, Volume XIX NO. 2, Spring 2014

The Second Year

Why is my grief different in the second year?

Why do I feel so much more empty in the second year?

Why do I cry more, again, in the second year?

Is it because I am more alone and the world has moved on?

Has the world forgotten that you ever lived?

Is it because I realize "with my heart" that you are not coming back?

That forever is a long time?

Is it because all of the "firsts" are over and I must move on?

Why is my grief different in the second year?

Because, my child, you are still gone.

Eleanor Oberle/TCF

In memory of her son Dan Oberle

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OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN MAY & JUNE



Each month we remember the children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments, place them in your thoughts, and remember them on their day together with their parents. None of us ever forget our special days and messages that say "I care" help us to get through them. Our children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Rachel Salomonson</i>	May 2	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
<i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i>	May 3	Daughter of Alana Anderson
<i>Carlos Cantu</i>	May 18	Son of Mateo & Lucy Cantu
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	May 9	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
<i>Rob Petit</i>	May 15	Son of Nancy Ervin
<i>Sven Christian Reinhard</i>	May 28	Son of Astrid Reinhard
<i>Adam Michael Laufer</i>	May 30	Son of Charles & Diana Laufer
<i>Edgar O Villareal</i>	June 2	Son of Guadalupe Villareal
<i>Edward G Davis III</i>	June 8	Son of Edward G Davis Jr.
<i>Lila Ruffolo</i>	June 12	Daughter of Jenny & Rick Selle
<i>Pressley Suzanne McHugh</i>	June 20	Daughter of Kari McHugh

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Donette Klawonn</i>	May 1	Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
<i>Carlos Cantu</i>	May 3	Son of Mateo & Lucy Cantu
<i>Josh Summers</i>	May 3	Son of Tina Carlson Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Roger Alan Segebarth</i>	May 6	Son of Joanne Segebarth
<i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i>	May 15	Daughter of Alana Anderson
<i>Anthony (Tony) Clemente</i>	May 16	Son of Becky Wolf
<i>Adam Michael Laufer</i>	May 19	Son of Charles & Diana Laufer
<i>Steven Anthony Sostre</i>	May 19	Son of Jorge Sostre
<i>Roman Gabriel Cano</i>	May 21	Son of Simona & Daniel Rhodes
<i>Rusty Anderson</i>	May 30	Son of Forest & Christine Anderson
<i>Eric Friedle</i>	June 2	Son of Dennis & Diane Friedle
<i>Bryan Cantafio</i>	June 26	Son of Jerry Cantafio

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 - 847-573-1055

A FATHER'S PAIN

Written by Plutarch – a Greek

Writer, 46-125 A. D., on the death of his son who completed suicide.

Should the sweet remembrances of those things which so delighted us when he was alive only afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure when we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory and make that memory a glad rather than a sorrowful one. Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like the miser who never enjoys what he has, but only be- wails what he loses.

(It should not surprise us that a Father's pain is the same in 2007 as it was all those years ago)

2014 TCF National Conference



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Chicago, Illinois, will be the site of the 37th TCF National Conference on July 11-13, 2014. "Miles of Compassion through The Winds of Hope" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national conference experience. The 2014 conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, just minutes from the airport. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Early registration for the conference will be \$90.00 for Adults, \$40.00 for Children (9-17), and \$40.00 for Full-Time College Students.

The Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 9300 Bryn Mawr Ave., Rosemont, IL 60018, is now accepting reservations for TCF's National Conference. To make your reservation, please access the following link, which will take you directly to TCF's reservation portal on the Hyatt's website. Conference attendees are receiving a discounted room rate. We anticipate a large attendance for the conference, so we encourage you to make your reservation as soon as it is convenient for you.

Reservations can also be made by calling the hotel directly at 888.421.1442 and please mention The Compassionate Friends when reserving your room.

THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Here it comes, the dreaded anniversary. You may be wondering, "How will I deal with it? If the stress today is this bad, how horrible will I feel on the actual date?"

As the first anniversary looms closer on the calendar, you may find yourself visiting the past, reliving the days of your loss, the deep sadness, and maybe remembering the shock of your child's passing. We know the day is getting nearer, and it is the anticipation of special days that cause our mind to go back. Fortunately, many feel the anticipation of the date is worse than the actual date itself.

The first year after a loss is so difficult because it is a year of firsts. The first Christmas, New Year, Birthday (yours and theirs), Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day...each of these special dates brings the pain and the anguish of living without your child. It is not unusual to relive the intense emotions that you experienced when your loss was new. Getting through the first year is hard.

Unfortunately, grieving does not "turnoff" after one year. Time does not erase the past but it does provide an opportunity to think about our loved one, process our loss, and find meaning. Anniversaries and reminders, although painful at first, do become easier. These important dates give us a perfect chance to remember the happy things, the things that made our beloved child special, and bring opportunities to build memorial traditions.

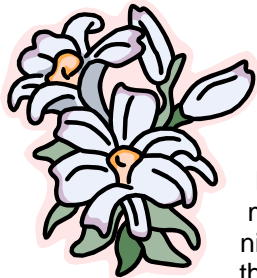
Corrine O'Flynn

Borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER – NATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA, Volume XIX NO. 2, Spring 2014

**The most painful death in all the world
is the death of a child.
When a child dies,
when one child dies...
not the 11 per 1,000
we talk about statistically...
But the one that a mother held
Briefly in her arms...
He leaves an empty pace
In a parent's heart that will never heal.**

**Thomas H. Kean
Governor of New Jersey**

I Must Not Be Doing it Right



R&D, Maryland, BP/USA

A few months after our son died I started attending the monthly Bereaved Parents of the USA meetings in our community. One night they had a presentation on all the things one could do in memory of his or her child.

I was overwhelmed. The presenter talked about making memory boxes, creating a quilt, planting trees, creating a special garden. After the presentation, one woman talked about how she had worked with the state legislature in memory of her daughter to change the law dealing with drink drivers. Another had created a scholarship at her son's high school and held an annual fundraiser that raised thousands of dollars to fund the scholarship. Another was working on raising funds to purchase an Angel of Hope statue and create a special garden in which the statue would be displayed and to which bereaved parents could go to remember their children.

I was overwhelmed. Where were these people getting all this energy to do all these things in memory of their children and to memorialize them? It was all I could do just to get through my days and to get to these meetings. What was wrong with me? I must not be doing it right. How was I ever going to get through this grief? I had to find some way to honor my son; to find a way to make some sense from his life; to find a way to be sure he was always remembered in our community. Surely his death had to have meaning – and it seemed to be my job to find or create that meaning.

But I was overwhelmed and could do no more than get through the days. I did try to think of things we could do, but just could not do them. Even the smallest efforts were too much.

It's been several years now since our son died. I have achieved that "inner peace" we instinctively seek after our child dies. The pain is still there, but I have grown stronger and can now bear it without being totally debilitated. Yes I will always be sad that our son died and is no longer with us in this world. But I move through my days with joy and happiness, and real appreciation for the few years we had with our son – though they were not enough.

And I look back on those early months, and even early years, after he died and realize that I did do it right. Attending meetings, talking with other bereaved

parents in sharing groups and one-on-one, the readings I did, that's what I needed to do.

I never created a scholarship. I never changed a law. I did not do any fundraisers. While I think that many people find those types of projects helpful, I came to realize that was not the way I needed to grieve. I suspect that is true for many of us grieving the death of a child.

In the end, I muddled through, and reached a point where I honor and remember my son in my heart and through the way I live and treat others. I hope when I see my son again and he asks me how I have used the years since he died that he will be proud of me.

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On Butterfly Wings

From earth's caterpillars to heaven's butterflies -
They soar with the angels from the earth to the sky.
Their wings seem so fragile, translucent and light -
But they transfuse our world giving us strength in our night.

In silence they appear like messengers of love,
Bringing hope and comfort from heaven above.
These beautiful butterflies so graceful in flight,
Transport us from darkness to color and light.

So when choosing a symbol to help grieving parents cope,
What more than a butterfly could best symbolize hope.
Our hearts stand in awe and hope from within us springs.
As our hearts take flight - On Butterfly Wings.

By Faye McCord, (TCF Chapter Leader / Jackson, MS)
In loving memory of my son, Lane McCord
(1/26/65 - 9/13/98)

Darcie Sims

May 20, 1947 – February 27, 2014

When my daughter died in 1992 I attended many Compassionate Friends' meetings and scoured their library for any books or materials that might help me through this darkest of times. One of the items I found in the library was an audio tape of a presentation given by Darcie Sims on the death of a child. Her son had died and she had some first hand experience with what I was feeling. I made a copy of that tape and played it several times a day for many years. I shared it with newly bereaved parents whom I met. It was one of the most uplifting things that I could do during this period. It's been many years since I listened to that tape but I have reprinted articles by Darcie in the newsletter and always found them comforting and helpful. It was with great sadness that I learned of her recent death. I feel that I have lost a friend even though I never met her in person.

She authored many books on grief including *Why Are the Casseroles Always Tuna?*, *Footsteps Through the Valley*, *Touchstones*, and *If I Could Just See Hope*. She co-authored *A Place For Me: A healing Journey for Grieving Kids*, *Footsteps Through Grief*, *The Other Side of Grief*, and *Finding Your Way Through Grief*, with her daughter, Alicia Sims Franklin. She co-authored *The Crying Handbook*, *In the Midst of Caregiving*, and *Exploring the Heart, Soul, and Challenges of Caregiving for Professionals*, with Dr. Robert Baugher. She also wrote and produced the videos *Handling the Holidays* and *What Color is Dead: Death From A Child's View*, as well as authored numerous chapters in professional books and textbooks.

Her obituary:

Darcie D. SIMS, PhD., CHT, CT, GMS

Died at home on 2/27/14. She is preceded in death by her parents, and her infant son, Austin "Big A."

Darcie wore many hats in her short time on this earth. She was a mother, wife, grandmother, educator, leader, rose colored glasses wearer, smile on a stick carrier and friend. She was an internationally recognized public speaker on the topic of Grief and Bereavement. Darcie taught thousands of people all over the world how to cope with their grief. She was awarded a lifetime achievement award, "The Voice of The Compassionate Friends" for her tireless efforts supporting families who cope with the death of a child.

Her work for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, TAPS, since 1999 was described as, "She will forever live in the hearts of thousands of grieving military families." Darcie and her husband have lived in the Seattle area since 2005.

She is survived by her husband of 44 years, Robert "Tony" Sims, daughter, Alicia "Allie" Franklin, granddaughter, Darci Franklin, son-in-law, Greg Franklin and sister, Deborah Switzer of Enid, OK.

The family has asked that in lieu of flowers, a donation be made to The Compassionate Friends National Office in support of the Darcie Sims Memorial Training Fund, www.compassionatefriends.org.



PRACTICAL ADVICE

Excerpted from A Life Care Guide to Grief and Bereavement

THE GRIEF PROCESS

To help explain the grief process, psychologist William Worden outlined four "tasks" of grieving. This framework offers a way to identify all that is involved in grieving, but keep in mind that the tasks are not separate aspects of grief. You may work through the different aspects again and again in different ways as you move through the tasks.

The Tasks of Grief

Accept the reality of the loss. From the moment you are told that a love one has died, or may die, you know it mentally. However, it may take a much longer time to accept it emotionally. For weeks or months after the death, you may reach for the telephone, or even dial the number to call your loved one, only to realize he or she is gone. It is then that you have to remind yourself of your loss---- and accept that your loved one is gone. However, even after adjusting to life without your loved one, you may have a new surge of disbelief. You may feel torn between wanting to accept reality and feeling disloyal to your loved one for doing so. Remember, accepting the loss does not mean letting go.

Experience the pain of grief. How long does normal grief last? The answer is different for everyone and every situation. It can take several years to establish a new sense of normalcy. But life goes on, the process of grieving can help you restore harmony and balance to your life.

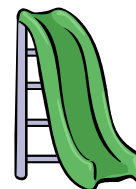
Adjust to life without your loved ones. Each day you may be confronted in small or large ways with the absence of your loved ones. He or she is not there to go to lunch with, to call in the evening, to celebrate the holidays, to go on vacation or do the taxes. The process of adjusting may go on over the course of a lifetime. You may have to adjust to the loss of your child, for example, when his or her friends graduate from high school, get married or have children. Holidays and other traditions you would have shared may also be constant reminders--- as are daily rituals--- and each one requires adjustment. The empty chair at the dining room table, the personal belongings in the closet are

all still reminders of your loss... some things you may choose to keep as a comforting reminder of your loved one. And some things you may change and adapt as your life moves on.

Find ways to remember. At first, you may struggle to adjust your life without your loved ones, but as time goes on, your life will continue to evolve, just as you do. It is not so much a matter of "letting go," rather, it means shifting from being with that person to just have thoughts of that person. This simply means that as time goes on, you will be choosing memories, rituals and other ways of remembering and relating to your loved one. As you grow and change your memories of your loved one will grow and change as well.

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Slipping Up the Slide



Did you ever try to climb up a slide when you were a child? Skip the stairs – once you've mastered the slide that way, it seems impossible to pass up the challenge of climbing up the slide itself. Up and inch or two, then back, and on it goes until you finally reach the top.

The more bereaved parents I talk to, the more I know that life after a child's death is like that venture up the slide. Daily decisions and trials push us back ward on that slide. Faith and courage shove us up toward the top. Set a goal to live and work with spirit even though you lose your footing and slide backwards now and then...We will reach the top – TOGETHER.

Mary Pauley, LaGrange, GA. TCF

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always welcome. Please include author of any written works. Send your items for the newsletter to Vicki Szech at vszech@comcast.net or 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Libertyville, IL 60048.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive

TCF National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 3696 - PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246

Regional Coordinator, Mary Seibert PH: 815-468-6443 nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

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

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Toni Nesheim 847-223-7353 tonin@sbcglobal.net Rachel Salomonson Age 18 – Auto accident

TREASURER Forest Anderson 847-838-0567 forest.anderson@att.net Rusty Anderson Age 15 – Osteosarcoma

SECRETARY Jenny & Rick Selle 847-249-4776 jennyselle@yahoo.com Lila Ruffolo Age 24 – Auto Accident

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 Rachel Szech Age 16 – Horseback-riding Accident

NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING Mary Foresta 847-986-4133 Elizabeth Foresta Age 11 – Septic Shock, Heart/Lung failure

PUBLICITY Kari McHugh 262-862-6880 ksmchugh@hotmail.com Pressley McHugh Age 46 days Hypoplastic left heart syndrome

STEERING COMMITTEE Marilyn Grace 847-395-8597 grace.marilyn@gmail.com Megan Grace Age 15 – Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

Mary Ann Grazier 847-336-0539 Barry Grazier Age 27 – Auto Accident

Maggie McGaughey 224-406-6644 maggieg00@hotmail.com Jeremy Govekar Age 22 – Hit by train

Charon Sloop 847-623-2264 charronsloop@AOL.com David Sloop Age 33 – Motor Cycles accident

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.