



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

May 2019 Newsletter



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

Chapter Leader Notes



The HEARTREMEMBERS

(ALTERNATIVE to BALLOONS)

The internet has made so many things possible – good and bad. The good thing is that the internet can inform and teach, bringing us information that we may not otherwise be aware of. What has been appearing on the internet and other media for a while is the harm that balloon releases can cause to wildlife. Birds and ducks get the deflated balloons & pieces of strings caught around their necks, legs and down their throats as well as turtles eating the balloons and dying, etc. I am sure that you have seen these ads and info items on the internet and TV.

I like to think that if we know better, we will do better. So in that spirit, we have decided to no longer do the balloon releases to honor our children and siblings. We have researched and looked for alternatives to releasing the balloons and decided on a ‘take-away memorial’ gift that you create yourself. The final itinerary has not been established but it may possibly include things such as painting pots and planting seeds, making wildflower & milkweed seed bombs to spread flowers for pollinators, paint rocks with positive words on them for distribution to family, friends, cemeteries, gardens or public places for strangers to find. There are many things that we can do that hopefully will cheer us as well as others.

The inaugural “HEARTREMEMBERS” meeting will be on Thursday, June 6, in Waukegan at the Holy Cross Catholic Church, 450 Keller Ave,

Waukegan. It will start at 7pm. There will be a shortened meeting along with the ‘take-away memorial’ project.

We hope that you will attend. We will have water and feel free to bring snacks to share for a pleasant time of creating a memento in honor of your child or sibling.

My thanks goes out to Susan Banks & Tammie Barrera and others who have volunteered to help with this project.

Toni

GONE TOO SOON

Posted on May 2nd, 2019

As I think about Mother’s Day this year I become very nostalgic. Every spring during my elementary school days, I looked forward to the day the order form for our plants for Mother’s Day came from our local florist. I always ordered pansies for my mom, the ones with purple and yellow or yellow and brown. I could hardly wait for the delivery day to come, so that I could present them to my mother. She always received them with much surprise and appreciation, as if it were a gift she had never received before or even expected.

As a child, Mother’s Day was an important occasion to my family. My dad always insisted we wear the traditional carnations: white if one’s mother was deceased, red if still living. He would make a special trip to the florist to purchase them. We would attend church, and then drive to a nearby city for lunch. I remember clearly my first Mother’s Day

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Meetings

Lake Villa Meeting Northern Illinois Chapter TCF May 16

7:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
Millburn Congregational Church
19073 W Grass Lake Rd
(Corner of Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45
Lake Villa, IL 60046
Open Discussion

Waukegan meeting June 6

7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street
Waukegan, IL 60085
Meeting in Room 4
Open discussion
Enter by church office then down the hall to
Room 4 on right.
"Tenemos un cuarto nuevo para las reuniones-
Salon 4. Entre por la oficina de la iglesia y sigue
en el pasillo al Salon
Open Discussion



42ND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019. "Hope Rings in Philadelphia" is the theme of next year's event, which promises more of this year's great National Conference experience. 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.

WHAT IS LEFT?

Betty Stevens
Baltimore Metropolitan Chapter
BP/USA, Baltimore, MD

When a child dies, you ask, among other questions, what is left? A beautiful, sensitive, intelligent child has died. What can be left after such crushing blow? Others will point out that you have a spouse, other children or grandchildren, perhaps relatives or friends; they are left. You read books on bereavement, scarcely remembering what you have read; you attend meetings, talk with others who have suffered a loss like yours. If you are fortunate, you have one or two friends who, while they cannot fully understand, are there to love and listen. Perhaps there is a therapist who guides you in your search for an answer. But, for a long while everything you read or hear has little meaning and certainly cannot provide the answer to your question. Or can it? Does all that you have read and heard and experienced finally come together and answered the question of what is left?

For me it does. The answer was thirteen months in coming, but how clear it comes now. *I am left.* That's it! *I am left* and I have been left with the love of my child. It is a new love; it is different, more intense; it is understanding; it need not be reciprocated; there are no strings attached.

I love this love of my child. It warms and comforts me. It is a wonderful love, but I cannot keep it. It is too precious to keep to myself. I am left with the love to spare and love to share. It will never run out. My child will always be with me to replenish it. I have found my answer. *I am left to share my child's love with you.*

Not A Matter of Choice

Our son Keith was 29 years old when he decided to end his life. Keith's death was a suicide. Suicide is a frightening word and it is not only ignorance but fear and stigma that keep people from understanding why someone would take their life. In a way it is easier to think that a person made a "choice", freeing us from knowing the truth.

The word, "choice", continues to perpetuate the stigma of suicide. The definition of "choice" is

(Continued on page 6)



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>Erin Dinklenburg</i>	May 1	Daughter of Kelli Brooks
<i>Rachel Salomonson</i>	May 2	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
<i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i>	May 3	Daughter of Alana Anderson
<i>John Francis Thumel</i>	May 6	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	May 9	Daughter of Chester & Vicki Szech
<i>Rachel Elaine Robertson</i>	May 21	Daughter of Regan Robertson
<i>Sven Christian Reinhard</i>	May 28	Son of Astrid Reinhard
<i>Tony Trevithick</i>	May 28	Son of Tony Trevithick Jr.
<i>Adam Michael Laufer</i>	May 30	Son of Charles & Diana Laufer
<i>Edgar O Villareal</i>	June 2	Son of Guadalupe Villareal
<i>Westley Banks</i>	June 6	Son of Susan Banks
<i>Robert William Corbett</i>	June 6	Son of Mary Ann & Robert Corbett
<i>Edward G Davis III</i>	June 8	Son of Edward G Davis Jr.
<i>James (Jim) Grazier</i>	June 9	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<i>Brandon Reif</i>	June 10	Son of Marcy Reif
<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>Josh Summers</i>	May 3	Son of Tina Carlson Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong
<i>Amanda Lauren Cecchi</i>	May 10	Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi
<i>Alina Mejdouli</i>	May 12	Daughter of Amada Booras
<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>Roman Gabriel Cano</i>	May 21	Son of Simona & Daniel Rhodes
<i>Rusty Anderson</i>	May 30	Son of Forest & Christine Anderson
<i>Marcia Castillo</i>	June 8	Daughter of Sissy & Arthur Castillo
<i>Robert Corbett</i>	June 30	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett

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

The Courage to Let Life Go On

"Courage is not the absence of fear and pain but the affirmation of life despite fear and pain."

-Earl Grollman

"Life goes on." I have often heard this sentence, said perhaps to console me, or perhaps as a way to put an end to conversation about loss and death. Of course, life goes on, no matter how shattered our lives are by the loss of someone we love so dearly. Life doesn't ask whether we want to go along. We want the world to stop turning because of our loss. Days turn into nights, again and again, and this is how we arrived at this day. Suddenly another month, another year has gone by, although we all probably asked ourselves how we would be able to go on living. It just happens. We do not die because of the pain. We keep on living and I still wonder how this can be.

I do not want life to go on, but to stop it right here, or better yet, to turn back to the day when I lost my sister and baby niece. I do not want the changes life brings. Each change seems to increase the distance between the life I knew with them and the life I live today. I cannot ask my sister's opinion about the new things that happen. I cannot share then with her, tell her about them, laugh or cry with her about them, Changes make me aware that in fact life does go on, without her. My birthdays make me sad because they change the difference in age...my sister was always four years older than I was, and now we are down to three years.

Sometimes I feel guilty that I live on. I smell, breathe, touch, feel, see and experience life, while my sister and her daughter were ripped away from it.

My sister and I never talked about death or losing each other, but if we had, I am sure that we both would have said that we could not imagine life without one another.

If it had been me, my sister would have been forced to do exactly the same; go on living despite the agony, just because there is no choice.

Before I lost them, I trusted life to be good. I believed in fairness; if we are good, life will spare us tragedies and besides, these tragedies only happen to other people, those I do not know, those I read about in the papers, distant, easy to forget about. I lost this sense of security and trust in life. I now find that living takes courage. Life becomes meaningful through love and friendship, but loving someone is what makes us vulnerable. Daring to invite love into our lives means to increase our vulnerability to the threats that seem to be around every corner. Instead of asking "why us?" I often find myself asking "why not us?" Tragedy hits good and bad people for no reason. It seems the world is just random

and unpredictable. Just because I am a good person and I already lost so much does not mean that I will be spared from more pain.

Life goes on and because it does, with all the good and bad things that happen to us, it scares me to live and particularly to love. What if more happens? The fear IS paralyzing. I pray to God, to my sister and my niece to protect us, although I know they don't have the power to prevent other bad things from happening. What then can I ask them for? Courage, I guess.

Courage to let life go on, to give myself a chance that new and good things will happen to me that will add JOY to my life.

Britta Nielsen TCF, Manhattan, NY
~lovingly lifted from No. Oklahoma City TCF Newsletter through my body into my life.

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)



Annual Gathering Conference

Join us August 2-4, 2019 for the Spirit of Love Bereaved Parents of the USA National Gather- ing in St. Louis, MO!

Make plans now to attend the 2019 BPUSA National Gathering August 2-4 at the Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. Our Gathering theme is ***Spirit of Love*** reminding us as we face our own struggles, of the inspiration and hope our nation once found in the ***Spirit of St. Louis***. Please join us and feel the love as we remember our children together.

The Gathering Conference will be a three-day event with keynote speakers, workshops, meals, entertainment and memorial ceremonies all designed to help bereaved parents and their families understand that they are not alone in their grief. Our annual Gatherings have been praised as wonderfully meaningful experiences, life-changing in many ways. Participants come away feeling refreshed and revitalized, better informed about the grieving process, more aware of hope and promise and affirmed by meeting new friends who travel the same path.

The Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel is a modern hotel designed to accommodate gatherings like ours, including clean, comfortable rooms, spacious conference facilities, a modern fitness center (including a pool) and a first-class restaurant. The hotel is offering special room rates to Gathering attendees.

Known for its iconic arch, a must-see attraction, St. Louis is a vacation destination of national prominence, with many sightseeing adventures to enjoy. Plan a family vacation in conjunction with the Gathering. Spend some time remembering your child and then explore life on the Mississippi in this bustling, modern "Gateway to the West." So, start making plans now to attend the BPUSA Gathering Conference and we'll meet you in St. Louis in August!

SPRING IS COMING

If you are newly bereaved and looking toward your "first" spring, you may be surprised by some of the feelings you may experience during the next few weeks. We hear so much about the beauty of spring – the new life and feelings of renewal that are supposed to accompany this lovely time of year. During my "first" year,

I expected that spring would cheer me up, and make me feel a lot better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days, as life seems to burst forth everywhere, I was "in the pits". When a friend said to me, "Doesn't a day like this really life your spirits and make you feel better?" I had to reply honestly that I was having a really bad day-that the sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

Gradually I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed.

This coming spring cannot make everything okay again. What it can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature's process will continue, and that can offer us hope.

I am looking forward to spring this year. I welcome the sun's warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the south, and forsythia, the daffodils and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don't expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

Evelyn Billings
TCT/Springfield, MA



Life is eternal;
Love is immortal;
Death is only a horizon;
And a horizon is nothing
Save the limit of our sight.

I Know You



I know who you are...I see your face
reflected in mine.
Ravaged by tears, distorted by the
pain of a lifetime
You are a parent of a child who now
lives on in your heart, joined in spirit,
though physically torn apart.
To live between two worlds in now

our task

To be recognized by others, we all have a mask
But in the abyss, in the darkness of the in between
We often fall to our knees, tearing away the pre-
tense and silently scream.

I know who you are, your voice sounds as familiar
as mine.
It calls out, vibrating throughout all eternity, search-
ing trying to find.
"Where are you my child? I hear you in my mind,
but I cannot find the way.
Somehow I have gotten lost, where are all of my
yesterdays?"
In the void, a child's voice has fallen silent. Deafen-
ing silence, echoing cries.
We are left to follow each other in the darkness,
always asking why?

Into the unknown, we stumble along.
The sun will rise and another day will begin. But the
only light I can see is in the outstretched hand of a
kindred soul, another grieving friend.
I know who you are...your heart is shattered, your
soul is broken, just like mine...
And though the pieces may fit back together, one
tiny fragment at a time, we will never again be
whole, for there is a gap in our lives where our child
should be.
The child that lives in our hearts, dances deep in
our souls, laughs in our memories.

I know who you are...I can feel your pain.
We will never be the same.
I cry the same tears.
We have the same fears.
Alone in the crowd, we both cried aloud, as our
dreams came to an end.
I know you, my grieving friend.
You are not alone, look in the mirror and you will
see standing next to you...a reflection of me.

Lisa Comstock, Florence, KY – TCF Atlanta Online
(*Not A Matter of Choice* continued from page 2)

"the freedom in choosing, both in the way one
chooses and in the number of possibilities from
which to choose." In a presuicidal state an individu

al is overwhelmed in a given situation. They suffer
extreme mental anguish and a painful sense of
hopelessness. Their sense of judgment is distorted,
and they do not have the ability to make "choices"
or options. They literally want to kill the pain and not
themselves.

Suicidal people may be unable to restrain them-
selves from acting on feelings or impulses. This
strong impulse to end the pain is because of the
depletion of the chemical called serotonin. Seroto-
nin is a chemical within the brain that helps restrain
impulsive behavior.

"There is no suffering greater than that which drives
people to suicide, suicide defines the moment in
which mental pain exceeds the human capacity to
bear it. It represents the abandonment of hope."
John T. Maltzberger, M.D., past president of the
American Association of Suicidology, practicing
psychiatrist, and teacher at Harvard Medical
School.

Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in the
USA and the second leading cause of death for
those ages 25-34. About 30,000 of the 650,000
Americans who attempt suicide each year die. Sui-
cide is almost always the result of an illness of the
brain, depression.

Our son Keith, died by suicide, and we can only
imagine the horrible mental torture he endured. De-
pression is one of the most terrible and pervasive
illnesses of our day. In 1999 the Surgeon General
of the United States listed suicide as a national pub-
lic crisis. Having accurate information about de-
pression is critical. We live in a world where people
hang on to old stereotypes, and in order to stop fu-
ture loss of lives by suicide, we must educate and
not let these stereotypes to persist.

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(Gone Too Soon continued from page 1)

being “the mom.” Our Anna was only about three weeks old, so I had a very limited idea of what it really meant to be “the mom.” But I do remember being treated like a queen and enjoying every minute of it.

Over the next several years as we raised our two daughters, my husband continued to affirm the women of our family. On Mother’s Day he always bought roses for each of his girls. Anna would get a yellow one. Debbie would get a peach-colored one. The red roses were for me. When the girls were young I would receive and treasure their hand-made cards. As they grew into young adults, their choices in purchased cards were just as significant. Every year as Mother’s Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories. That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. Our daughter, Anna, died. How could those special days of love and togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away or stay in bed with the sheets over my head. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by “intact” families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

The feelings that I have shared are not uncommon in the early years of grief with those who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. If you or someone you care about has experienced the death of a child, I offer some suggestions from those who have been there to help you do to make it through this time.

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- Realize this day is full of potential for a multitude of feelings to sneak up on you and catch you by surprise.
- Especially during those early years, do whatever works for you. This may be a time of being in “survival mode.” Trying to please everyone else can cause undo stress.
- If you have surviving children who want to honor you, communicate your feelings to them. Let them know that while you are grieving the death of their brother or sister, you still love them.
- Try to keep things simple and uncomplicated.
- Visit the cemetery.
- You may choose to pretend the day just does not exist and do something completely unrelated to Mother’s Day. Clean the house, take a nap, get out of town. One of my Compassionate Friends spends Mother’s Day at Home Depot. No one bothers her there or mentions Mother’s Day.
- Have a good cry. If you have trouble crying, just stop by a card shop and read a card or two. Maybe even buy the card that you believe your child would give you.
- Go to the recycle bin and break glass into the proper receptacle.
- Know that the days before the holiday may be worse than the actual day.

As with all holidays, be reassured that what you do this year does not have to be what you do next year. As my Compassionate Friends and I have found, with proper grief work over time, the intensity of our feelings has softened. This will happen for you, as well. In the meantime, be gentle with yourself. And remember, “you need not walk alone.”

PAULA FUNK

Borrowed from The
Compassionate Friends
NEWSLETTER | MAY



E-
2019

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** Julyson2@gmail.com

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

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive
TCF National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 3696 - PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246

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

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TREASURER/COMMUNITY OUTREACH Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 Julyson2@gmail.com *Aaron Barrera* Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

SECRETARY Bambi Nichols 262-220-9323 lcbtsec@aol.com Levi Nichols Age 19 - Accidental death

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Thelma Perkins 262-279-6178 *Andrew C Perkins* Age 17 – Auto Accident

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

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Vicki Szech 847-573-1055 vszech@comcast.net *Rachel Szech* Age 16 – Horseback-riding Accident

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Raphael, age 17, suicide