



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

May 2020 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leaders Notes from Toni & Susan

Dear Friends,

As you know, our May meeting is canceled due to the Covid-19 stipulations for social distancing. We have missed talking and seeing each one of you at our monthly group meetings.

We would like to offer an opportunity for us to meet on the first Thursday of the month of June 2020. And the third Thursdays of the month using the video conference call ZOOM. We will continue to meet with this platform until we can meet in person.

The video conference call will allow us to send a link to the meeting in your email with directions to open ZOOM.us and join the meeting using the meeting link and password. You can join with no video and only voice. You can hear us and we can hear you. If you do join with video then you can see us and we can see you.

There will be things to consider in the meeting. We ask that you mute yourself when you are listening, unmute to talk, and state your name when you talk so we can attend to your "box" on the screen. We will all have to be patient as this is a new experience and platform for many of us.

The meetings will begin at 7:30 pm and end at 8:45 pm. The meeting space on ZOOM will open at 7:15 pm and you are welcome to join from 7:15-7:30. At 7:30, we will begin the meeting.

We will open our meetings as we always do, review the meeting format, read our TCF Creed and begin introductions and sharing.

We look forward to seeing and talking with everyone. If you have any questions, please call Susan Banks at 847.366.9375. (I will be hosting the meetings and sending the link to your email address.)

Take care,

Susan Banks and Toni Nesheim,
Co-Leaders

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Toni & Susan

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)

Meetings

Meetings are cancelled until the Governor lifts the stay-at-home order for Illinois.



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 Astrid Reinhard
For her donation
in memory of her son
Sven Christian Reinhard

Thanks to Charles & Diana Laufer
For their donation
in memory of their son
Adam Michael 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.



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

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*



MEMORIAL DAY

*For each grave where a soldier lies at his rest
For each prayer that is said today out of love
For each sign of remembering someone who has died
Let us also give thought to the mothers and fathers
The brothers and sister the friends and lovers
Whom death left behind*

Sasha



**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>	<i>May 1</i>	<i>Daughter of Kelli Brooks</i>
<i>Rachel Salomonson</i>	<i>May 2</i>	<i>Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson</i>
<i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i>	<i>May 3</i>	<i>Daughter of Alana Anderson</i>
<i>John Francis Thumel</i>	<i>May 6</i>	<i>Son of Laura & Mike Thumel</i>
<i>Rachel Elizabeth Szech</i>	<i>May 9</i>	<i>Daughter of Vicki Szech</i>
<i>Rachel Elaine Robertson</i>	<i>May 21</i>	<i>Daughter of Regan Robertson</i>
<i>Sven Christian Reinhard</i>	<i>May 28</i>	<i>Son of Astrid Reinhard</i>
<i>Tony Trevithick</i>	<i>May 28</i>	<i>Son of Tony Trevithick Jr.</i>
<i>Adam Michael Laufer</i>	<i>May 30</i>	<i>Son of Charles & Diana Laufer</i>
<i>Edgar O Villareal</i>	<i>June 2</i>	<i>Son of Guadalupe Villareal</i>
<i>Sage Cue</i>	<i>June 3</i>	<i>Daughter of Ben Cue & Jennifer Peterson-Cue</i>
<i>Brian Langevin</i>	<i>June 4</i>	<i>Son of Claudia Smith</i>
<i>Westley Banks</i>	<i>June 6</i>	<i>Son of Susan Banks</i>
<i>Robert William Corbett</i>	<i>June 6</i>	<i>Son of Mary Ann & Robert Corbett</i>
<i>Edward G Davis III</i>	<i>June 8</i>	<i>Son of Edward G Davis Jr.</i>
<i>James (Jim) Grazier</i>	<i>June 9</i>	<i>Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier</i>
<i>Brandon Reif</i>	<i>June 10</i>	<i>Son of Marcy Reif</i>
<i>Lila Ruffolo</i>	<i>June 12</i>	<i>Daughter of Jenny & Rick Selle</i>
<i>Pressley Suzanne McHugh</i>	<i>June 20</i>	<i>Daughter of Kari McHugh</i>
<i>David Nesheim</i>	<i>June 22</i>	<i>Brother of Toni Nesheim</i>
<i>Heather Donnelly</i>	<i>June 26</i>	<i>Daughter of Daniel Donnelly</i>

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Donette Klawonn</i>	<i>May 1</i>	<i>Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn</i>
<i>Josh Summers</i>	<i>May 3</i>	<i>Son of Tina Carlson</i>
		<i>Grandson of Larry & Cheryl Armstrong</i>
<i>Colin Henderson</i>	<i>May 6</i>	<i>Son of Lisa Henderson</i>
<i>Jeff Wagner</i>	<i>May 9</i>	<i>Son of Mary Wagner</i>
<i>Amanda Lauren Cecchi</i>	<i>May 10</i>	<i>Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi</i>
<i>Alina Mejdouli</i>	<i>May 12</i>	<i>Daughter of Amada Booras</i>
<i>Timothy James Pitzen</i>	<i>May 13</i>	<i>Missing grandson of Alana Anderson</i>
<i>Amy Fry-Pitzen</i>	<i>May 15</i>	<i>Daughter of Alana Anderson</i>
<i>Anthony (Tony) Clemente</i>	<i>May 16</i>	<i>Son of Becky Wolf</i>
<i>Adam Michael Laufer</i>	<i>May 19</i>	<i>Son of Charles & Diana Laufer</i>
<i>Roman Gabriel Cano</i>	<i>May 21</i>	<i>Son of Simona & Daniel Rhodes</i>
<i>Rusty Anderson</i>	<i>May 30</i>	<i>Son of Forest & Christine Anderson</i>
<i>Brian Langevin</i>	<i>June 3</i>	<i>Son of Claudia Smith</i>
<i>Marcia Castillo</i>	<i>June 8</i>	<i>Daughter of Sissy & Arthur Castillo</i>
<i>Robert Corbett</i>	<i>June 30</i>	<i>Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett</i>

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

A SACRED PLACE

By Chaplain George Burn, State College, PA

From the Newsletter of the Western NY BP Chapter



There is a dent in the plaster wall of our family support room in the ER. It's just a little spot, hardly noticeable with the wallpaper over it. Others pass by, oblivious to the small impression in the wall. It seems strangely out of place in an otherwise warm setting of comfortable couches and chairs. I have become friends with that spot, noting its presence each time I enter the room with a family.

It is a sacred place, as sacred as a Chapel. I have spent many hours in this room over the years with families as they await the outcome of a code or the treatment of a loved one following a trauma. The room is familiar to me but alien to the people I meet there. In this place, people begin the journey of altered life. *We did everything we could, but we were unable to save _____. I'm sorry. We watch carefully as people absorb the message. It can't be true...Oh, my God!* We offer support, feeling terribly helpless under the weight of so great a burden. Our tools are hugs and tissues, touches of the hand, prayer and caring, but seemingly inadequate words. We watch as the news becomes real and creeps slowly from head to heart, from denial to awareness. We only get to probe the perimeter of the cavern death creates and the pain it causes. We escort the bereaved to their cars, wondering how people will go on, trusting only that God will, with time, heal the hearts and renew their shattered lives.

One man, several years ago, punched that wall after he was told his baby died from SIDS. It was a spontaneous act of anger and frustration, a true reflection of the moment we all felt. The pain in his hand was of little consequence compared to the agony of his heart. He left an imprint I have come to revere. It became a symbolic intersection of the vertical and the horizontal, the central point at which eternal crossed the temporal, the locus where hope and dreams were crushed by reality and innocence was overwhelmed by experience. It was a place where easy answers compressed under the weight of complex questions disintegrated. It became an icon along the side of life's highway. For a while that was all it meant. But, as time has passed, it has evolved to mean something else—the barren ground into which seeds for hope in the future were sown. People whom I once met in crisis have returned to say, *You were with me in that little room in the ER when _____ died. I never thought I'd make it but I'm doing better now. Thank you for being with me through the worst day of my life.*

In a hospital, devoid of most sacred symbols, I have found a most inclusive symbol; one that should have a plaque beneath it which says *This spot is dedicated to all people who met their tomorrows in this room.*

Missing and Valuing on Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a special day, and special days are hard after the death of a child. It is a normal and natural thing for either parent for the first few years after the death to zero in on who is missing, rather than who is left...and I want no different.

Fortunately, for me, not long after Atlanta Chapter formed, a local psychiatrist, Dr. Victor Gonzales, spoke one evening shortly before Mother's Day. He told of his parents' loss of their first two children. His story of how his life has been influenced and molded by his mother's reaction touched me. He spoke of how he and his siblings who came later were forever denied his mother's happiness and joy. She was unable to value what she had left as much as what she had lost.

Dr. Gonzales said he spent a great deal of his childhood trying to make his mother happy, always failing and always feeling there must be something lacking in him that caused him to fail. The picture in my mind him and his siblings always trying and always failing, though no fault of their own, made a great impact on me. I determined from that day forward that my daughter would not have to lament later in life that she had been denied my happiness and joy because my brother had died.

On Mother's Day now I make room for both missing and valuing, for they are not, I have discovered, mutually exclusive. Now when I go to the cemetery with my rosebud on my day, my daughter has no part in my needs while I am there. When I come home, my son doesn't interfere with my acceptance and appreciation of my daughter's expression of love. She gives me a gift on my day, and I give her one in return. It's probably the best gift I could possibly give her - my happiness and joy for life. She is as important as what I have lost, and I know her worth. If you are fortunate enough to have surviving children, I hope you, too, are able to value as well as miss.

There's room for both, you know.

Mary Cleckley
Member of Bereaved Parents USA
~lovingly lifted from Brooksville/Spring Hill Chapter
May 1997



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 toward 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."



ADOPT-A- HIGHWAY CLEANUP

The date is set for our first Adopt-A-Highway Clean-Up for our Northern Lake County IL chapter The Compassionate Friends:

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2020

Meet at 8:45 am to review rules and safety guidelines. (Probably Walmart parking lot)

Begin cleanup at 9:00 am.

(Rain date is Saturday, July 11.)

More information will be shared at the June 4 and June 18th meetings. A few things to know for the cleanup:

No children under 10 are allowed.

Wear long sleeves, long pants, and gloves that are waterproof.

Bring water, bug spray and sunscreen.

Bring a "grabber" if you have one or make one with a pole & a nail through the end.

Bring a yard wagon or kids wagon.

Due to the Covid-19 virus, we can only have 10 participants, at this time. If there are changes to this state regulation, we will inform you.

If you have any questions, please call Susan Banks at 847.366.9375 or email at sbanks@dist50.net

LIVING LIFE IS STILL AN EFFORT



My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when the time came to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year. I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted, such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic". What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It

has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well-balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

Annette Mennen Baldwin in memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

The National Conference has been cancelled.

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 bewails 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)

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

**[i carry your heart with me
(i carry it in]**



BY E. E. CUMMINGS

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done
by only me is your doing,my darling)

i fear

no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which
grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

In Loving Memory of April Leshay Nesmith...from
Mommy – Carla Adamar (birthday – April 5, 1985)

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 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.

CHAPTER CO-LEADERSHIP Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net *Rachel Salomonson* Age 19 – Auto accident, Susan Banks 847-336-8375 sbanks@dist50.net *Westly Banks* Age 21 – Of suicide
TREASURER/COMMUNITY OUTREACH Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 Julyson2@gmail.com *Aaron Barrera* Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

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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

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Raphael, age 17, suicide