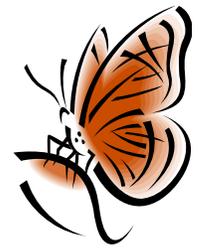


The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

November, 2014 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Toni

GRIEF AND GRATITUDE

It is November - the month of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the holiday of family, food and gratitude. It is difficult to be filled with thankfulness when you have lost a child or a sibling. The loss is so large and encompassing that it is almost impossible to see past the pain.

Over time, however, the gratitude will come to you. You will be grateful for having known your loved one, even for a brief amount of time. You will be grateful for those people who helped you live through the initial weeks of shock as you tried to comprehend that your child was gone. You will be grateful for your remaining children and/or family that share your grief. You will be grateful for the memories and the photographs and small kindnesses done for you as you grieve.

As griever, we focus on what we no longer have. It is impossible to ignore the loss and continue our lives after such a profound experience. Yet, I remember reading somewhere that ***focusing only on what we have lost, we waste what we do have.***

After my 19 year-old daughter died in a car accident in November of 2005, it took years for me to be thankful for much beyond my

remaining child and family and friends. Any kind of gratitude started with the most simple, uncomplicated things in life, like watching butterflies and birds, which seemed wonderfully carefree. Now, I can watch mothers and daughters shopping and laughing and not resent them. Now, I can be happy for my daughter's friends as they mature, reaching the milestones that my daughter should be reaching, but won't be. Previously, those experiences were only painful reminders that made me sad and angry.

A simple but conscious exercise that we can do to help relieve our grief is to write a list or make a mental note of that for which we are grateful. It won't erase our loss or our pain but it just may soften the void and move our minds to a more positive path.

"Gratitude has the power to help those in mourning rise above their loss. It is life affirming. It can provide hope. And, perhaps, most important, it can help us let go of the past and focus on the abundance that surrounds us now. -Allen Klein, Learning to Laugh When You Feel Like Crying

Great love brings great grief. Be thankful for both. - Anonymous

I wish you and your families a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday filled with the love of family and friends and sweet memories.



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 Robert & Mary Ann Grazier for sponsoring the newsletter in loving memory of
Barry J Grazier

"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 November 20 – 7:30 p.m.

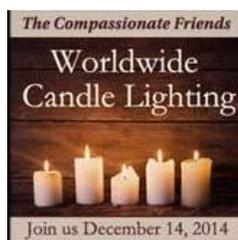
Millburn Congregational Church
Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45, Millburn, IL
Open discussion

Waukegan meeting

December 4th 6pm to 9pm

Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL
Open discussion

National Children's Memorial Day Candle Lighting Ceremony



The 2014 candle lighting will be held at Millburn Congregational Church, on the corner of Grass Lake Road and Route 45 in Millburn, Illinois on December 14th, at 6:30 p.m.

We invite all people who grieve the loss of a child of any age to join in this moving tribute realizing they are not alone and that their child, grandchild, sibling, or friend is remembered during the difficult holiday season.

To contact the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, e-mail or call Chapter Leader: Toni Nesheim, tonin@sbcglobal.net, 847-223-7353 or Vicki Szech at vszech@comcast.net.

HANDLING THE HOLIDAYS

Cathy Seehuetter is the newsletter editor for the St. Paul, MN Chapter. She was so kind to share her newsletter articles with our group. Thank you Cathy

Handling Friends and Relatives

Relatives and friends can be very uncomfortable with your grief, and, therefore, may try to persuade you to do things for which you are not ready. They may tell you that you „should feel better% or that you „shouldn,t talk about it.% Only you know what is good for you; consequently, you should do only what you find comfortable, even if it means not seeing some people for a while.

Other people may have set a timetable on how long your grief should last. Coping with the death of a child takes years, not weeks or months, and, unless you have had a child die, it's impossible to understand. Stick up for yourself; it is difficult when you are not sure of anything. You know how you feel, so don,t let anyone tell you how to act, think, or feel.

Tell your relatives and friends what you want them to do. If you want to be remembered at anniversaries and holidays and they are remiss, let them know how it makes you feel. Also, share with them that you want your child to be mentioned in conversations. You may cry, but let them know it is normal and they are not the cause of your crying. Let them know it is better for you to cry than for them not to mention your child, which would cause you to grieve silently.

ALIVE ALONE
TCF Western Australia

~shared by Cathy Seehuetter, Newsletter Editor
~reprinted from St. Paul, MN Chapter, November/December 2007/January 2008 Newsletter – reprinted from Atlanta TCF Online sharing December 1, 2007



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

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

Selene Martinez	November 1	Daughter of Manuel & Lidia Martinez
Charles E Clark	November 3	Son of Deloris Clark
Christopher Jackson	November 6	Son of Pamela Burt & Jeff Jackson
Jim O'Connor	November 6	Son of Kay O'Connor
Carrie Seger	November 10	Daughter of Sandy Seger
Jeremy M Govekar	November 12	Son of Maggie McGaughey
Lisa Rosemann	November 16	Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann
Douglas Ramsay	November 17	Son of Carlene Ramsay
Eric Friedle	November 19	Son of Dennis & Diane Friedle
Amy Jo Baldwin	November 21	Son of Mike & Sheila Baldwin
Zachary Taylor	November 30	Son of Mike Taylor & Karen Adams-Taylor
Hugh Andrew Mathis	December 7	Son of Richard & Helen Mathis
Alexander Rettinger	December 9	Son of Kathleen Rettinger
Joey Frase	December 11	Son of Cathy Frase
Anthony Clemente	December 12	Son of Becky Wolf
Ryan James Nachols	December 12	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
Rasheed Mariano	December 15	Son of Joan Mariano
Zack A Maslanich	December 18	Son of Karen Zimmerman
Mark Yates	December 20	Son of Linda Hegg
Barry J Grazier	December 22	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
Raphael E Vidal	December 24	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal

ANNIVERSARIES

Lila Ruffolo	November 1	Daughter of Jenny & Rick Selle
Andrew C Perkins	November 3	Son of Richard & Thelma Perkin
Christopher Jackson	November 5	Son of Pamela Burt & Jeff Jackson
Rachel Salomonson	November 15	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
Kyle Glueck	November 17	Dolores Krason
Aaron Barrera	November 18	Son of Tammie & Ernie Barrera
Megan Candice Grace	November 18	Daughter of Tim & Marilyn Grace
Nicole Parfill	November 19	Daughter of Robin Parfitt
Sven Christian Reinhard	November 22	Son of Astrid Reinhard
Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro	November 24	Daughter of David Scarbro
Mark Yates	November 24	Son of Richard & Linda Hegg
Elizabeth Mary Foresta	November 28	Daughter of Al & Mary Foresta
Zack Maslanich	November 30	Son of Karen Zimmerman
Mike Reardon	December 6	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
Andrew Muno	December 15	Son of Darlene Muno
Scott Ewing	December 16	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
David Quade	December 23	Son of Pat & Dave Quade

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

GRIEF AND ISSUES

By Jean Limongello TCF Pasco County, FL

The deepest and most painful thing that unites us and allows us to understand each other is the fact that at least one of our children has died. This shared pain brings us close together, and as we listen to each other, we do understand the shock, the raw pain, the memories that both hurt and comfort, the inability to sleep, or eat, or get enough energy together to do the yard work, or the housework. We understand the anger, the guilt, the loss of hope, and the memory lapses. So many symptoms of the deep grief that assaults our being when a precious child of any age dies are common to all of us. Our hearts are broken; at times, they seize with an actual pain. Our future with our child is gone. We will never know what they would have become. We have become foreigners, or aliens in a strange land. We know we will never be the same as we were before our loss. And it takes each of us a different amount of time to decide to live again, to know we will survive. We share so much that we wish we didn't have in common.

And we have what I'm calling issues attached to our grief, and our lives, that are different. Some of us have other children and have needed to comfort them and worry about them surviving the loss of their sibling.

Some have spouses that either shared our grief or grieved in a completely different manner that left us angry, comfortless, and worried about their recovery, as well as our own. Some have no spouse to share our grief, and deal with loneliness. For some the child we "lost" was our only child, and we have lost what we envisioned as our future, no graduations, or weddings, grandchildren, or a child to care for us in our old age, and grieve our own deaths. There have been sudden deaths, accidents, murders, heart failures, suicides, drug miscalculations that have ripped children from us.

Stolen them senselessly. And there have been babies and young children who have died before they had a chance to live, and grow, and know our love. And some have lost more than one child, and yet survive.

These issues layer on top of the deep grief of our child's death. We all have one or more of them. Do they divide us? I don't think so. Do we understand another's issues completely? No. My child was murdered. I am a widow. I mostly understand others with those issues. I understand the stress and drain of representing a child at the trial of his murderers, and the struggle to forgive, among other things that go along with this type of death. And I only partly understand the issues that are not a part of my child's death, or my life. But I do understand the loss of a child. And I can listen to what I only partially understand, and care, and not measure my issues with another's. And I can know that these things matter. The wondrous thing we all do is give each other unconditional support. We are named

appropriately. We are the compassionate friends.

In Memory of my Son Anthony

LimongelloJ@aol.com

Borrowed from TCFAtlantaSharing <TCFAtlantaSharing@tcfatlanta.org> November 1, 2007 1:00:00 PM CDT



And For This I Give Thanks

I am acutely aware that autumn is here. As I write this, the air coming through my window is crisper and the leaves are taking on the golden and scarlet hues of the season. The shorts and tee shirts, which were the summer mainstay of the neighborhood children, are being replaced by sweats and flannels. Pumpkins are replacing pink flamingos as lawn ornaments. The beauty of nature is at its most spectacular. It is unmistakably here, welcome or not...

This will be my fifth autumn, to be followed by my fifth holiday season without my daughter Nina. I find that I am far enough along in my grief to find memories to smile about now, but still close enough to remember those first few years and the piercing stab of pain in my heart that went along with them. Halloween, with memories of the costume party she threw when she was 10 years old, the major production she made out of what she would wear as a trick-or-treater, and as she got older, her enjoyment in passing out candy to neighborhood goblins. Then came Thanksgiving, one of my favorites. I liked the idea of family and friends gathering together with no other purposes other than eating until you nearly exploded and being thankful for each other and the blessings of the past year. No presents required, just the joy of family togetherness - and the knowledge that my children were here, all of them. On that first Thanksgiving the empty chair and place at the table seemed to scream out at me that someone precious was missing. And the message of this

(Continued on page 5)

(And For This I Give Thanks continued from page 4)

particular holiday was thankfulness? What on earth could I ever find to be thankful for?

Some TCF parents have memories of being unable to choke down any morsel of food because they were continually trying to choke back tears that first Thanksgiving. Just wanting to curl up in a ball, pull the covers over their heads, and wake up some time in January after the last remnants of the holidays were cleared away. In all honesty, I cannot tell you even one detail of that first one: where I spent it, who was present, where I was, if I cried all day I remember nothing.

I do remember three months after Nina had died, though. On a visit to my neurologist I tearfully told him of my depression over her death. His response to me was "Why don't you count your blessings rather than your sorrows? Think happy thoughts and maybe you won't feel so sad." I, of course, asked him if he had ever lost a child. He had not obviously. Only someone uneducated in the school of grief would say something like that. Almost five Thanksgiving's later, have I found reasons to be thankful? I asked myself this question and decided to put pen to paper. I was surprised to say the list was quite lengthy, so I will only share a few of them. I am thankful for: - My loving family, and the welcomed joyful additions in the last few years. - My memory, because now the painful memories are, more often than not, replaced with the beautiful memories of the past, and they were such beautiful memories. - My life, for whom else will keep Nina's memory alive? Of course, my family, but they have lives, as they should. I am the self-appointed keeper of my daughter's memory. - Nina. The joy of loving her, the privilege of being her mother. Though I wish it had been much longer, I wouldn't trade those 15 □ years for anything. - Smiling a genuine smile, laughing a hardy laugh, and finding my sense of humor again. I sincerely believe that Nina likes to hear me laugh and that she would want me to find humor in life again. - My sight, because I commented (for the first time in five autumns) on the magnificent colors of the autumn foliage and the grandness of Minnesota's most sumptuous season. I didn't think I'd ever notice again. But I did. - The Compassionate Friends, who showed me there is life after the death of a child; who allowed me to express my emotions, listened patiently, understood my pain, and welcomed me into their hearts. They helped salvage what remained of my sanity and I will be eternally grateful. - The opportunity to give back, through TCF meetings and this newsletter. To bring hope to the newly bereaved in the knowledge that it won't always hurt this bad, and that you will make it with the love and support of family and your Compassionate Friends. And, that there will come a time that you too will find things to be thankful for again.

I am told, by those who know, that peace and acceptance are that light we are searching for at the end of the tunnel. Though I find myself still looking for it at times, those further down the grief road have reassured me it will come. Maybe not this Thanksgiving or next, but that it will. And I believe them.

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy Seehuetter, St. Paul, MN - TCF
<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/HolidayMemories.htm>
 Borrowed from TCF Atlanta Sharing - TCFAtlantaSharing@tcfatlanta.org - November 10, 2007



MISSING DREAMS

Inside me is a tight, dark empty space, not large. I try to keep it deep and covered well, for looking there, is painful. Layers of busyness bury it. And I can keep it small by telling myself there is no time for it. Then comes the casual mention of something ordinary as a flat tire. And suddenly it swells, and I am engulfed by it, remembering.

My son, usually happy, optimistic, confident, even as a child, my gentle child who never wanted to hurt or be hurt by anyone, complained that nothing is going well. He's broken his glasses, lost some important papers and had a flat tire ... not all that day on the way to the hospital, just within the past three or four days.

And I realize he's really saying that being the father of a baby who may not live is too much to

(Continued on page 7)



FOR THAT I AM THANKFUL

It doesn't seem to get any better...But it doesn't seem to get any worse either.
For that, I am thankful.

There are no more pictures to be taken. But there are memories to be cherished.
For that, I am thankful.

There is a missing chair at the table...But the circle of family gathers close.
For that, I am thankful.

The turkey is smaller. But there is still stuffing.
For that, I am thankful.

The days are shorter. But the nights are softer.
For that, I am thankful.

The pain is still there...But it only lasts moments.
For that I am thankful.

The calendar still turns, the holidays still appear,
And they still cost too much. But I am still here.
For that I am thankful.

The room is still empty, the soul still aches. But the heart remembers,
For that, I am thankful.

The guests still come, the dishes pile up. But the dishwasher still works.
For that, I am thankful.

The name is still missing, the words still unspoken. But the silence is shared.
For that, I am thankful.

The snow still falls, the sled still waits, and the spirit still wants to.
For that, I am thankful.

The stillness remains. But the sadness is smaller.
For that, I am thankful.

The moment is gone. But the love is forever.
For that, I am blessed: for that I am grateful.

Love was once (and still is) a part of my being.
for that, I am living.

I am living. and for that, I am thankful.

May your holidays be filled with reasons to be thankful. Having loved and having been loved is perhaps the most wondrous reason of all.

by Darcie Sims-1992

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/HolidayMemories.htm>

Boerrowed from TCF Atlanta Sharing - TCFAtlantaSharing@tcfatlanta.org - November 10, 2007



GIVING THANKS

By Sascha, from WINTERSUN

**I cannot hold your hands today,
I cannot see your smile.
I cannot hear your voices now,
my children, who are gone.**

**But I recall your faces still,
the songs, the talks, the sighs.
And story times and winter walks
And sharing secret things.**

**I know you helped my mind to live
beyond your time with me.
You gave me clearer eyes to see,
you gave me finer ears to hear
what living means,
what dying means,
my children, who are gone.**

**So here it is Thanksgiving Day,
and you are not with me.
And, while I weep a mother's tears,
I thank you for the gifts you were,
and all the gifts you gave to me,
my children who are gone.**

(Missing Dreams continued from page 5)

bear. I ache for him and want to comfort him with hugs and assurances that all will be well as I did when he was small. But when the doctors have no certainties to proclaim, how can I?

A painful memory. So I push it down in the empty space where I deem that it must stay. And I keep the space dark, until on that day I catch a glimpse of my daughter-in-law absentmindedly stroking the arm of the chair, and I am back again. Watching her stand beside the baby, careful to avoid the tubes connecting him to the machines, but finding places to touch him, stroke him, love him wherever she can.

A small bare leg. His temple. Softly touching him, and I know she aches to pick him up, as I do, and rock him and tell him, „This is not the way it's supposed to be. Life should be good!% But we can only touch, not hold.

The space is tight again and buried. Covering it are more bearable memories which I can allow myself to talk about. Seeing the pear tree along a street reminds me that there is a small grove of trees and a bench in the park dedicated to his memory. And I can think about the beautifully simple letter my son and his wife wrote and sent to friends to meet us there to help create that special place.

Or I can remember my son bravely thanking all those friends for their love, and speaking to them of the joy he knew in having a son, if only for a short time. I add more memories as time passes. Seeing the tenderness between two people who know the need for caring and know how to find caring in a world where most of their contemporaries prize macho individualism. Admiring their courage when they include a visit to an empty baby's room as they show their new home to guests, knowing of their hope for their future.

But still the empty space is there, sometimes, when I dare I ask myself “why?” And each time I realize again that the space is empty and will always remain empty because there is no life there to fill it. No baby who would be waving goodbye, by now. No toddler starting to walk. No small boy learning skills from his grandfather. Or teenager to watch with pride. No life. And so I quickly cover the space and push it down in the dark and keep it as small and tight as I can. Because it hurts to look.

Casey Pound's grandparents,
TCF, St. Louis, Missouri

~reprinted from Denver Metro TCF November 2007
Newsletter

Bereaved Parents of the USA, Fall 2014
<http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/>

FROM ATLANTA ONLINE SHARING

I don't know if you have ever heard "For Always" by Josh Groban, but it is the most beautiful song that I have ever heard. In fact we used it for one of our songs last year for our candle lighting. Here are the lyrics. With love and hope for the holidays, AJ's mom forever, Connie

For Always

I close my eyes and there in the shadows I see your light
You come to me out of my dreams across the night

You take my hand though you may be so many stars away
I know that our spirits and souls are one
We've circled the moon and we've touched the sun
So here we'll stay

For always, forever
Beyond here and on to eternity
For always, forever

For us there's no time and no space
No barrier love won't erase
Wherever you go I still know
In my heart you will be With me

From this day on I'm certain that I'll never be alone
I know what my heart must have always known
That love has a power that's all its own

And for always, forever Now we can fly
And for always and always
We will go on beyond goodbye

For always, forever
Beyond here and on to eternity
For always and ever You'll be a part of me

And for always, forever
A thousand tomorrows may cross the sky
And for always and always
We will go on beyond goodbye

To hear Josh perform the song on YouTube
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exK6P-N8sB4>

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
 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 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net *Rachel Salomonson* Age 19 – 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

OUTREACH/INFORMATION Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 julyson2@gmail.com Aaron Barrera, age 29 - insulin reaction subsequent auto accident

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.