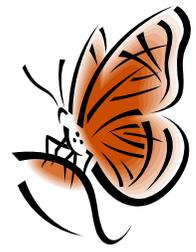


The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter
November, 2017 Newsletter



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



*Chapter Leader
Notes from Toni*

GRATITUDE IN GRIEF

November is a difficult month for a lot of people. The sky is gray and cloudy for days on end. There are fewer hours of daylight while a cold, often damp, wind blows outside. Halloween, the holiday that marks the beginning of the winter holidays, is over. November takes over with its' expectation of happiness and good times until January. November is the month of "thankfulness". It is difficult to feel gratitude when that is the month that your child died.

However, I have learned over the past 12 years of grieving that gratitude can coexist with grief. In fact, gratitude can be healing. I have moved from not caring if I woke up in the morning to being glad that I do. Each day is a gift. I consciously think of something that I am grateful for each day. It may be large such as a friend's kindness or small such as watching my daughter's cat and dog sleep together as trusted buddies. I am grateful each day to live on for my daughter and keep her memory alive. I am grateful that I was her mother for 19 years. Daily grati-

tude ties me to the present. Ties to the present keep me sane.



The following blessing was from a Hallmark card that I sent to my brother and family (who were living in Shanghai, China) on the day that my daughter died. I like it because it is simple and loving and touches on the importance of every chair, especially for those of us who now live with an empty chair. I hope you like it as well.

Blessed be the table
And every chair.
Blessed be the family
Sitting there.

Blessed be the talk
And blessed be the laughter.
Blessed be the memories
Kept thereafter.





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.

"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.



ANNUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING DECEMBER 10

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 21st annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WWCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

The Compassionate Friends and allied organizations are joined by local bereavement groups, churches,

funeral homes, hospitals, hospices, children's gardens, schools, cemeteries, and community centers. Services have ranged in size from just a few people to nearly a thousand.

Every year you are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website.

Meetings

Northern Illinois Chapter TCF

November 16 - 7:30 p.m.

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

Waukegan meeting

December 7 - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Holy Family Church
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL
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

From THE SLENDER THREAD

To a recently bereaved parent

*Just a little while ago, I walked where you
are walking now.*

*Your child was special too, I know, and was
quite different from mine. Yet love is love
and death is death, and pain is pain.*

Your pain is mine; my pain is yours.

*Come, friend, let us search for hope to-
gether.*



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN NOVEMBER & DE- CEMBER

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>Heidi Anne Hermann</i>	November 2	Daughter of Bonnie Brackus
<i>Nick Barris</i>	November 3	Son of Susan Battis
<i>Jeremy M Govekar</i>	November 12	Son of Maggie McGaughey
<i>Lisa Rosemann</i>	November 16	Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann
<i>Stephanie Andrea Zamarron</i>	November 16	Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungula Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriquez & César Rojas
<i>Douglas Ramsay</i>	November 17	Son of Carlene Ramsay
<i>Amy Jo Baldwin</i>	November 21	Daughter of Mike & Sheila Baldwin
<i>Amanda Lauren Cecchi</i>	November 22	Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi
<i>Mitchell Rodefer</i>	November 24	Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
<i>Zachary Taylor</i>	November 30	Son of Mike Taylor & Karen Adams-Taylor
<i>Joey Frase</i>	December 11	Son of Cathy Frase
<i>Anthony Clemente</i>	December 12	Son of Becky Wolf
<i>Ryan James Nichols</i>	December 12	Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	December 15	Son of Millie Yu
<i>Kerrin Fleming</i>	December 16	Son of Barbara Fleming
<i>Zack A Maslanich</i>	December 18	Son of Karen Zimmerman
<i>Mark Yates</i>	December 20	Son of Linda Hegg
<i>Barry J Grazier</i>	December 22	Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
<i>Raphael E Vidal</i>	December 24	Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Lila Ruffolo</i>	November 1	Daughter of Jenny & Rick Selle
<i>Andrew C Perkins</i>	November 3	Son of Richard & Thelma Perkin
<i>Rachel Salomonson</i>	November 15	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
<i>Erin Dinklenburg</i>	November 16	Daughter of Kelli Brooks
<i>Kyle Glueck</i>	November 17	Dolores Krason
<i>Aaron Barrera</i>	November 18	Son of Tammie & Ernie Barrera
<i>Megan Candice Grace</i>	November 18	Daughter of Tim & Marilyn Grace
<i>Nicole Parfitt</i>	November 19	Daughter of Robin Parfitt
<i>Sven Christian Reinhard</i>	November 22	Son of Astrid Reinhard
<i>Keegan Cray</i>	November 22	Son of Kristin & Ken Willis
<i>Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro</i>	November 24	Daughter of David Scarbro
<i>Mark Yates</i>	November 24	Son of Richard & Linda Hegg
<i>Elizabeth Mary Foresta</i>	November 28	Daughter of Al & Mary Foresta
<i>Zack Maslanich</i>	November 30	Son of Karen Zimmerman
<i>Mike Reardon</i>	December 6	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Alyssa Burnstine</i>	December 6	Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
<i>Mitchell Rodefer</i>	December 6	Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
<i>Andrew Muno</i>	December 15	Son of Darlene Muno
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	December 16	Son of Alan & Renee Ewing



SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

By Mary Cleckley,
Former member of the Board of Directors of BP/USA

If this is our first year at surviving the holidays since your child died, it is important that you accept that there are no magic words to get you through November, December and January. I'm sure you already know these months will not be the fun days you have experienced in the past. Rather than fun days, let's try to at least make them no worse. Give yourself permission during these months to fall apart when you need to and you'll probably need to! That person you lost is very important and you have that right. Better still, you have that need.

Let's talk first about tears. When you need to cry, do it! Tears are healthy. They are a sign that you are doing well, for you are allowing your grief, rather than denying it. You can't move ahead through the grief process until you've become well acquainted with the normal signs of grief. The people who care about you may feel uncomfortable when you are obviously grieving. If they haven't experienced this loss themselves, they don't understand your needs now, any more than the old proverbial man on the street. Remember how unprepared you were for the deep pain of grief? It's important that you let those caring people know that you are profoundly changed by this tragedy.

It's the time of year when friends and neighbors plan parties. Some may invite you no matter if it's the last thing on your mind. If you do decide to attend, please leave the back door open in case you need to escape. Some may mistakenly think it's possible to keep you so busy that you'll forget that your child died. You know that's impossible. No matter how well intended these plans are, they are the wrong plans for your family. Don't worry about the impact on your friends.

Thanksgiving can cause problems if you aren't ready to sit around a turkey trying to act thankful! It probably is going to be awhile before you have that ability again. You may consider having pizza that day and just pretend it's just another day. Grief can make you do strange things! You may find you need to change lots of things that have been the ways you have observed the holidays in the past. For instance, you may decide not to have a Christmas tree this year. Some will see this as weird, but those of us who have made that same decision think it makes perfect sense. Maybe you'll ignore the holidays and run away to places where holidays aren't uppermost in most minds—maybe the beaches in Florida or California or the skiing

in Colorado or a cabin in North Georgia. Maybe this is a good time to explore the treasures of New York City, Washington, D.D. or New Orleans.

You will survive the holidays better if you take control of them. Some think they have no control of anything but, if you feel that way, you probably haven't explored the possibilities that are available to you. Your brain is very curious. If someone suggests things that are different, it rushes around madly trying to come up with a few. Here's a plan for you. First, get input from your family members for their suggestions. You already know that small children don't take too kindly to changing anything. Maybe they'll be happy about seeing what Santa brought. Afterwards, go to a nearby skating rink. Have hot dogs for all later. Also, consider some of the things in the previous paragraph.



Maybe your needs keep you at home. If so, plan to do it the easiest way. Can another member of your family have the meal? Can others bring favorite items of food to help with the meal? If not, can you have the meal on Christmas Eve. Some people do that instead of having it on Christmas Day. It leaves Christmas Day itself not so rushed. Any change seems to help. Go to a different place of worship. It's okay to cry. Sit in the back so you can either cry in peace or, if you feel a need to, you can leave. If you feel Christmas cards are needed this year or a very few presents, could a relative or friend help with the addressing and shopping?

If you must shop yourself, select a place where there is less atmosphere such as music and decorations. Take advantage of the discount stores. Things don't have to be perfect. Give up perfections this year. Everyone will understand. Don't over do. You're already tired. Grieving is exhausting. Next year or the one after that or when- ever, you'll be ready to resume some of the old traditions. Maybe not! Some traditions may never be done again. It's up to your family.

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(Surviving the Holidays continued from page 4)

Take care of yourself physically. If you are in a depressed state, don't make it worse by overdrinking or overeating or too much caffeine. Take time for you. Read in a quiet place. Exercise by running, walking or swimming. Rest. Eat nourishing food. Establish priorities and make a list of them. Check them off as you accomplish them. This helps to maintain control. Seek help if you need it. Call one of the telephone friends listed in your newsletter or call one of your friends. Seek professional help if you feel you need it. Whatever you do, don't isolate yourself! Withdrawal is not the answer. It's important to know that you are not alone. Others out here care and understand. I am one of them. We do not have to walk this lonely road alone.

Your attitude is important. You can/will survive. You have greater strength than you know. You have already survived the worse thing that can happen. Stay flexible. If the plans you made don't seem right now, dump them! Do something on the spur of the moment that does seem right. Care not if other people don't agree or that your brain isn't too excited about it. Outsmart them all!

The New Year is ahead. Let's hope for better days. The holidays will come again and one of these days you and your family will have figured out how to survive the holidays now that things have changed for the better. Know that there will be more peaceful days ahead for you and your family. Take it as a promise!

Gifts of Love

by Cathy Seehuetter ~ TCF, St. Paul, MN



As I type this, it is the day after Thanksgiving. People in the retail business say that it is the biggest shopping day of the year. Before Nina died, I was one of those crazy shoppers who on that day sat out in the parking lot of whatever store that opened

at 6 a.m. waiting for them to open their doors so I could shove my way into whatever "blue light special" was being offered. My children's wish list in hand, I was ready to power shop 'til I dropped. But that was then, and this is now. Five Christmas shopping seasons later, my life, as all of our lives, has changed irrevocably as one precious child is no longer on that shopping list.

Not too long ago, I was in a fitting room trying on some clothes when I overheard the conversation between mother and teenage daughter in the room next to me. There was a volatile exchange of words between the two of them as the mother was trying to hustle her

daughter along. She kept saying to her, "You know, I don't have all day to waste because you can't make up your mind." The heated discussion continued and concluded with the girl's mother saying, "That's it! I am never taking you shopping again!" That phrase sent a chill down my spine. It took everything in my power to keep from bursting from my fitting room and admonishing that mother; tell her that I would give anything to have my daughter alive so that she could cause that so-called "inconvenience" that obviously hers was causing her. I then realized that in this woman's agitated state it would only fall on deaf ears. It has been four and a half years since my daughter died and I still go into the shops that we frequented and see some adorable outfit hanging on one of the mannequins and think, "Nina would have loved that." She was my shopping buddy. She could never say no to an invitation to go shopping. And it wasn't just shopping for herself that she loved. From the time she was very young, she loved buying gifts for others. She would scrape whatever money she had saved from birthdays, etc. to buy a small gift for each of us. Interestingly, the gift she gave me our last Christmas together was an angel. At that time I had not even started the angel collection that I have now since she died.

Be prepared to find "gifts" from your children when you unpack your Christmas decorations for the first time. It seemed as if each box I opened there was something left there from her, something that I had long forgotten about: one box contained a picture of her in a Santa hat smiling that brilliant braces-laden grin, another her carefully crafted handmade ornaments, another one a hand-written card in her just-learning-to-print handwriting, and on and on - so many memories. I realized that in a sense, these were Nina's gifts to me now that she wasn't physically here. She was giving me the gifts of memories - beautiful memories that were given in love. Those memories will only increase in value as the years go on. They are invaluable because they are yours and yours alone - no one can ever take those

(Continued on page 6)

(Gifts of Love continued from page 5)

priceless memories away. Though they may hurt now and probably always will but not as intensely, give yourself a gift - the gift of emotion and allow those healing tears to fall. Give yourself time to grieve.

If I could give each of you a gift I would want to give you the gift of peace, as much peace as you can possibly find. And the hope that you can remember some of the joy and love that was yours from Christmases past.

~reprinted from Holiday Memories

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

Grandparent's Corner

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 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

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

By Martha Honn, Chapter Leader, So. IL BP/USA
Chapter Written 11/06 (Martha and her husband Gene and their chapter are co-chairs of the 2008 Gathering in St. Louis.)

As Thanksgiving approaches, I find myself thinking of people, events, feelings and things I am grateful for. However, the first Thanksgiving after my son died I cannot say I possessed an attitude of gratitude. My 16-year-old son, Cameron, died in an automobile accident on June 4, 1999. That first Thanksgiving after he died, all I could think of was the things he didn't get to experience, the places he never got to go, items I never got to buy for him, subjects we never got to discuss, arguments I wished we hadn't had, finding out how his life would have unfolded, what he would have become, who he would have married, how many children he would have had, where he would have lived, etc., etc., etc.

If you are newly bereaved, I know you can relate to those thoughts. My head was so full of the thoughts of what death cheated Cameron out of. I felt singled out and alone. Life wasn't fair and I felt cheated. I was hurt, angry and in pain. But, along the way, I was blessed to find fellow travelers on the journey through grief. I found out that it was normal to have these thoughts. I feared that I would forget some of Cameron's ways and mannerisms that made him so unique. I have gained strength, insight and hope from other bereaved parents. I encourage you to go to support groups for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents and just talk. Tell your story as many times as you need to. Listen as others share their experience, strength and hope. I promise you that, if you do the grief work, and, yes, it's probably the hardest work you'll ever do, you will reach a point in time when you too can have an attitude of gratitude.

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.**

THE FIRST IS THE WORST

By Michelle Ramsey
BP/USA, Tampa Bay, FL

They say the first is the worst.

I know the pain of not having my child.

I know the pain of not being able to hold her.

I know the pain I went through to have her.

I know the pain of burying my child.

I know the pain every time I go to the grave.

But no one said how the pain would increase when the
First Valentines Day came
First Easter came
First Mother's Day came
First Father's Day came
First Birthday came.

All the holidays that come during the first year are really very hard after your child dies. I know the pain of those "first's."

You will get through them.
Believe me – I know.
I'm halfway there –
Then I'll have to face the "Two's."

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.

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.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net Rachel Salomonson Age 19 – Auto accident

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

Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com,

Raphael, age 17, suicide