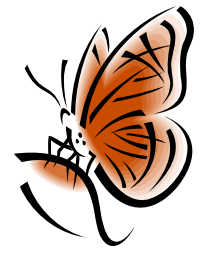


The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter
November, 2018 Newsletter



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

Chapter Leader Notes



REACTIVATED GRIEF

It starts in August for me. The annual deluge of back to school sales and advertisements reminds me of my daughter Rachel and our fun shopping sprees, buying cool school supplies. Back to school means so much more to me now. It is the dreaded prelude to my most difficult time of year. My daughter died in November. August starts my **season of grief**.

Halloween is a benchmark that moves us all closer to the end of the year. Halloween is followed by Thanksgiving, a holiday that we all share, and is meant to embody the essence of family, appreciation and thankfulness. It is a holiday that hurts. There is an empty chair at the table. Finally, Christmas and Hanukkah, inescapable holidays in the U.S., top off the year as mega-holidays, where everyone in the family is accounted for and their presence is expected at one or more homes during the season. It is a season that demands inordinate amounts of emotional and psychological energy when all is well. It is a mega-grief holiday when all is not well. Again, there is an empty chair at the table. Then the new year arrives only to tell us, loud and clear, that our loved is gone and their absence can be counted in years.

All of these holidays serve to **reactivate grief**. We call them triggers and they bring on the

sadness, depression, and loneliness felt by grieving parents and siblings. We each have our **personal seasons of grief** as well. Each grieving person has days and times of the year that are unique to them and their bereavement experience. The season, the time of day, certain people or music or sounds can invoke triggers that may be happy memories or traumatic events such as being told of your loved one's death.

Everyone experiences grief in their own unique way. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. There is no predetermined time to be *over it*. The truth is, we are never *over it* but we do learn to live with it and we learn to manage our grief. Eventually, the pain subsides to the point where we can return to our "new" normal - without our loved one. We can carry on our lives and learn to live with the absence. It takes time and it takes the effort of sharing feelings, being aware of the triggers and being around supportive people.

As we go through our **reactivated seasons of grief**, we can try to alleviate the pain or channel the pain by having a **ritual** on those days such as lighting a candle for the day, walking through a special park, serving yourself a special coffee that your loved one enjoyed or donating to a church or a food shelf in order to bring some comfort to others. This can be a very private ritual, known only to you and your loved one that has passed.

We can also **honor** our loved ones by planting a tree or flowers, writing a poem, buying someone else a coffee or giving out "acts of kindness

(Continued on page 5)

Holiday Rituals

Many families have found healing during the holidays by creating personal ceremonies or rituals that help them to remember their loved one. Children often find comfort through creating personal ceremonies that give them concrete ways to remember their loved one. Some suggestions for the holiday season include:



Create a Memory Book about your loved one. You can include photos, pictures drawn by children, special memorabilia and stories.

Start a New Tradition - for example, a storytelling time to reminisce about your loved one. Children may enjoy hearing stories about the childhood years of a parent or grandparent.

Decorate an Ornament or Candle in memory of your loved one.

Invite family and friends to send you letters and stories about your loved one.

Light candles in honor of your loved one at the holiday table or at a special place in your home.

Write Letters to your loved one and place these in a special basket or perhaps in a holiday stocking. Children may want to write about events that were important to them during the past year. The letters may be burned to protect privacy.

Prepare a Favorite Recipe or Meal in memory of your loved one.

Make or Buy a Gift in memory of your loved one to donate to a charity that is important to your family.

~reprinted from Holiday Hope

Meetings

Northern Illinois Chapter TCF November 15

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

Waukegan meeting December 6

- 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

ONE LITTLE CANDLE

I lit a candle tonight, in honor of you
Remembering your life, and all the times
we'd been through.



Such a small little light the candle made
until I realized how much in darkness it lit the way.

All the tears I've cried in all my grief and pain
what a garden they grew, watered with human rain

I sometimes can't see beyond the moment, in hopeless
despair
But then your memory sustains me, in heartaches re-
pair.

I can wait for the tomorrow when my sorrows ease
Until then I'll light this candle, and let my memories run
free

~written by Sheila Simmons, Dallas, GA
In Memory of Steven Simmons 3-24-70 - 10-19-99



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

<i>Heidi Anne Hermann</i>	November 2	Daughter of Bonnie Brackus
<i>Nick Battis</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>Nathan Clyde</i>	November 17	Son of Valerie Clyde
<i>Douglas Ramsay</i>	November 17	Son of Carlene Ramsay
<i>Marcia Castillo</i>	November 19	Daughter of Sissy & Arthur Castillo
<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>Alina Booras</i>	December 13	Daughter of Amanda Booras
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	December 15	Son of Millie Yu
<i>Kerrin Fleming</i>	December 16	Daughter 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>Camden Frisby</i>	November 23	Son of Kris Frisby
<i>Mike Reardon</i>	December 6	Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
<i>Alyssa Burnstine</i>	December 6	Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
<i>Sean Jones</i>	December 6	Son of Octavine Jones
<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
<i>Shane Betar</i>	December 21	Son of Leia Betar
<i>Nick Battis</i>	December 24	Son of Susan Battis

22ND ANNUAL WORLD- WIDE CANDLE LIGHTING **DECEMBER 9**

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 22nd 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 WCL 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.



Seasons

The change of seasons is difficult. It reminds me that I must change if I am to live again.

We can become stuck in our grief, full of self-pity and overwhelmed with pain. I do not believe our children would want us to live the rest of our lives in pain and misery. It is so easy to fall into the "black pit" and never have the strength to crawl out—because crawl out we must... on our bellies.

We are different now, with different priorities and goals. We must find a new purpose for going on and we must accept the changes in our lives—including ourselves, for we are different now.

We cannot go backward; though there are times we yearn to. We must move forward. If we don't, we stay stuck at the point that our world changed... I used to

say, "ended".

Change is difficult. To accept the loss of our child is the most difficult of all. Our comfort comes from believing that the love we share will go on for all eternity and that we will be reunited again—and each day brings us closer. We must learn to live again, love again, feel joy and peace again—or our survival will be without value to ourselves or others.

Renee Little/TCF-Fort Collins, CO

DAYS OF THANKS

In a year when much was given, much was taken, too.

So we pause and give our thanks for what now is. Think, too, of what once was,

And we are grateful for the threads of lives gone by
Threads that enrich the fabric of this, the life we know.

- Lois Wyse

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Newsletter November December 2001

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/NovDec2001.html>



"You are so strong"

Empty words
That don't touch the reality
That my life has become
Walking through fog
Incredible pain
Searching for the beloved face
I crave to see
The voice that I strain to hear over the noises
Of people who have no idea
Of what the world has lost.

Charissa Smith, TCF/ Tyler, TX

(Chapter Leader Notes continued from page 2)

cards" encouraging others to take action and be kind to a stranger on behalf of your child or sibling. Whether continuing old traditions or creating new ones, some small action generally leads to some relief of the heavy feelings of grief.

We can also **express emotions** by writing down our feelings in a journal or on small pieces of paper and keeping them in a box with dates on them so that we can go back and read them to see how far we have come in our grief journey. Internalizing and accepting the death of our children or siblings happens in very small increments. Sometimes it is helpful to look back and see that yes, **I am managing**.

For example, "*Today I went to Jewel and was able to finish grocery shopping without crying*". That is a **sign of healing**.



This is a little table blessing that I like to share with people that came from a Hallmark card that I sent to my brother a week before my daughter died. I always liked its' simplicity.

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

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



Wishing you warm thoughts, gentle days and a loving Thanksgiving,

Toni

22ND ANNUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING DECEMBER 9



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November Again

I woke up November 1st thinking oh, it's November now, another holiday season begins, our fourth holidays without James, how's it going to be this year, we have to get "through" another holiday, not enjoy another holiday, not plan with a carefree happy heart, but with a heavy one, still.

Now that it's been 3 years since James died, I really get the distinct impression that the family is really tired of hearing me say/write something about what I wished I'd done, what I remembered him saying/doing when I write about something we did recently or something I experienced with our teenage foreign exchange student living with us that brings back the "if onlys" and the "what ifs". In a way, I don't want them to understand, because I don't want any one of them to be walking in my shoes and know this pain, but a smidgen of compassion and understanding is not asking for too much, at least in my book, but my book is an original and can't be found anywhere else, so I can't expect what I would like to expect. To say I'm just going to put that all behind me and not dwell on the in-laws and the way it used to be is one thing, but to really do it and live it is so hard. All of us have lost our most precious child, and then to top it off, the losses keep on coming - the loss of life as it used to/should be, the loss of relatives who can't put up with it, the loss of feeling connected to people who used to care, etc. etc.

I have been looking through my books on ideas and help for the holidays and came across this poem. It really made me think - especially about the little things I can be thankful for and not for all the things I'm missing and for the way of life that I wish I had back once again. When in pain and heartache, it seems natural to focus in on all that and think about the unfairness and cruelty that life has turned out to be for all of us as bereaved parents. I keep a journal but I haven't written in it in such a long time, but after reading this poem, it made me think that in addition to my journal, which are letters to my son James about what I'm thinking, going through, wishing, what the days are like, etc. etc. I should add just one sentence about something I'm thankful for - even if it is really small - like yesterday driving home and watching the colorful leaves fall like rain.

Meg Avery, Lawrenceville TCF James' mom
James' mom (7/15/83 ~ 9/22/97)

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Newsletter November
December 2001

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/NovDec2001.html>

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.

(Continued on page 7)

(SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS continued from page 6)

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. 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.

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!



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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