



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

November 2023 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

The holidays will soon be here, they are approaching and are just around the corner. Already the stores are full of decorations and display all the seasonal items that you might need. But it's not always that easy to be around and view all the displays and suggestions of food, celebration, and decorating ideas. Sometimes it's just too much. I offer this to you, take it all in tiny doses, don't let yourself become overwhelmed with all the visual and auditory stimulus. Pace yourself when you are in the stores, be gentle with yourself and it's ok to take a break. We need to be gentle with ourselves and our family members as we acclimate to the approaching holidays. I wanted to share a few words of wisdom that was shared to me. It's for those of us many years in, a few years and for those who have a very recent loss of a loved one.

Focus on what you can control ~ do what is right for you during the holidays. Plan for family gatherings, have an A plan and a B plan. Communicate, Listen, and pause for understanding ~ it's ok to take a breath and sit for minute. Find a way to honor your memories ~ Embrace your

treasure of memories. Continue with traditions, create a new tradition, or make slight changes. Express your faith. Do something kind for others. Set healthy boundaries. Be with supportive comforting family and friends. Allow yourself a range of emotions ~ It's ok to be sad, it's ok to share tears, it's ok to feel joy and it's ok to celebrate.

Thinking of you and your families during the holidays,

Your Friend, Susan ~ Westley's mom



HOLIDAY COLORS

By Jean Limongello, TCF Pasco County, FL

The colors of the holiday season, for me, used to be green and red with shiny accents of silver and gold. These colors and twinkling lights permeated my street, my home, and every store where I shopped. They also filled me with joyous anticipation and made me smile.

(Continued on page 8)

Lake Villa Meeting Northern Illinois Chapter TCF

The third Thursday of the month meeting will remain as an in-person only meeting. The location is at the:

Millburn Congregational Church
19073 West Old Town Court
Lake Villa, IL 60046.

Park in the parking lot behind the church, enter through the double glass doors.

Holy Family Church

The first Thursday of the month meeting will remain a Zoom meeting only. This will change to in-person the date is to be announced.



DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

We have a very special event coming in December, The Annual Candle lighting Ceremony. This year we will come together; family and friends, in-person at the Millburn Congregational Church to light a candle in memory of our loved ones who have gone too soon. We will remember our loved ones with music, readings, the candle lighting, and a photo montage presentation. We will have refreshments and conversation after the ceremony.

The Candle Lighting Ceremony is Sunday December 10, 2023. The Ceremony begins at 6:30 pm. The candles are provided at the ceremony. We do invite you to purchase a luminary in memory of your loved one. A luminary is an opaque bag with a weighted base that holds a flameless candle. We will place a name label "In loving Memory" with your loved one's name on the outside of the bag. The luminaries will line the hallway to

the sanctuary, the location of the Ceremony. After the Ceremony, please take the luminary in memory of your loved one. You may purchase as many luminaries as you would like. We are asking for a donation of \$5.00 for a luminary, but no one will be refused.

The photo montage is a slideshow presentation of our members' loved ones who have gone too soon. We are inviting our new members to send a picture of your child, sibling or grandchild to Susan Banks and the photo will be included in our Chapter's photo montage, presented at the conclusion of the Candle Lighting ceremony.

The first Thursday of the month meeting on December 1, 2022, is our Zoom meeting. At this meeting you will be invited to light a candle for your loved one and share a picture with those joining the meeting. This will not be a formal Candle Lighting Ceremony, but we will honor the memories of our loved one with readings, lighting a candle and showing a picture. I will send an email and the Zoom link for the meeting the week of November 28, 2022.

If you have any questions about the Candle Lighting Ceremony, the Luminary or the Photo request please call, email, or text Susan at 847.366.9375 or Lanwesmar@comcast.net

**There will be informational flyers included with this newsletter for the ceremony, the luminaries, and the photo for the slide show.*



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

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, if we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Selene Martinez</i>	<i>November 1</i>	<i>Daughter of Manuel & Linda Martinez</i>
<i>Heidi Anne Hermann</i>	<i>November 2</i>	<i>Daughter of Bonnie Brackus</i>
<i>Nick Battis</i>	<i>November 3</i>	<i>Son of Susan Battis</i>
<i>William (Bill) Werchek</i>	<i>November 3</i>	<i>Son of Kathy Werchek</i>
<i>Lisa Rosemann</i>	<i>November 16</i>	<i>Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann</i>
<i>Stephanie Andrea Zamarron</i>	<i>November 16</i>	<i>Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungula</i> <i>Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriquez & César Rojas</i>
<i>Nathan Clyde</i>	<i>November 17</i>	<i>Son of Valerie Clyde</i> <i>Sister of Michaela Clyde</i>
<i>Douglas Ramsay</i>	<i>November 17</i>	<i>Son of Carlene Ramsay</i>
<i>James McClintock</i>	<i>November 18</i>	<i>Son of Charles "Chip" & Louise Knoll</i>
<i>Marcia Castillo</i>	<i>November 19</i>	<i>Daughter of Sissy Castillo</i>
<i>Javier Ramirez</i>	<i>November 21</i>	<i>Son of Julie Ojeda</i>
<i>Mitchell Rodefer</i>	<i>November 24</i>	<i>Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer</i>
<i>Sharon Beth Gray</i>	<i>November 25</i>	<i>Daughter of Pam Gray</i>
<i>Amanda Lauren Cecchi</i>	<i>November 27</i>	<i>Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi</i>
<i>Zachary Taylor</i>	<i>November 30</i>	<i>Son of Mike Taylor & Karen Adams-Taylor</i>
<i>Zachary Maslanich</i>	<i>November 30</i>	<i>Son of Karen Zimmerman</i>

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>Lila Ruffolo</i>	<i>November 1</i>	<i>Daughter of Jenny Selle</i>
<i>Andrew C Perkins</i>	<i>November 3</i>	<i>Son of Richard & Thelma Perkin</i>
<i>Rachel Salomonson</i>	<i>November 15</i>	<i>Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson</i>
<i>Erin Dinklenburg</i>	<i>November 16</i>	<i>Daughter of Kelli Brooks</i>
<i>Kyle Glueck</i>	<i>November 17</i>	<i>Dolores Krason</i>
<i>Aaron Barrera</i>	<i>November 18</i>	<i>Son of Tammie & Ernie Barrera</i>
<i>Megan Candice Grace</i>	<i>November 18</i>	<i>Daughter of Tim & Marilyn Grace</i>
<i>Nicole Parfitt</i>	<i>November 19</i>	<i>Daughter of Robin Parfitt</i>
<i>Paulene Welch</i>	<i>November 20</i>	<i>Daughter of Grace & Merrel Parsons</i>
<i>Keegan Cray</i>	<i>November 22</i>	<i>Son of Kristin & Ken Willis</i>
<i>Sven Christian Reinhard</i>	<i>November 22</i>	<i>Son of Astrid Reinhard</i>
<i>Kevin Lopez</i>	<i>November 22</i>	<i>Son of Diahnn Estes Lopez</i>
<i>Camden Frisby</i>	<i>November 23</i>	<i>Son of Kris Frisby</i>
<i>Rachel Robertson</i>	<i>November 23</i>	<i>Daughter of Regan Robertson</i>
<i>Zachary Maslanich</i>	<i>November 30</i>	<i>Son of Karen Zimmerman</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 - 847-337-4168



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.

(Continued on page 6)

We Remember Them

*The Compassionate Friends of Northern Lake County
invites you and your family and friends
to the Worldwide Children's Candle Lighting Ceremony*

*"We come together in memory of a precious child whose light burnt so brightly,
yet so briefly. These children, who died from so many causes and at all
ages, are forever a part of our lives."*

*Sunday, December 10, 2023 ~ 6:30 p.m.
Millburn Congregational United Church of Christ*

* Note that road construction has created a new Grass Lake Rd & changed
the access to the building which is now on Old Town Court.

Candles are provided for everyone at no cost.

*You are invited to stay for refreshments after the ceremony.
You are welcome to bring a dessert or snack to share if you like.
Coffee and water will be provided.*

*A table & display board will be provided for families who would like to post photos
and/or share mementos of their children and siblings and grandchildren.*



The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Questions? Please call Susan 847.366.9375/email Lanwesmar@comcast.net

(How to survive the Holidays continued from page 4)

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.

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!

IN LOVING MEMORY LUMINARIES – order form



The Northern Lake Co IL Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is offering an additional opportunity for bereaved families to remember their loved ones at the annual Candle Lighting Ceremony on Sunday, **December 10, 2023**. The ceremony will be at the Millburn Congregational Church, 19073 W. Old Rd, Lake Villa, IL 60046 at 6:30 p.m.

The luminary is an opaque bag that has a weight and a flameless, battery-operated candle inside. The label on the outside will read "In Loving Memory" and your child's or sibling's name will be on it. The luminaries will be used to line the hallway of the Millburn church that leads to the where the candle lighting ceremony is held. The soft light will provide a touching and welcome entrance to the ceremony. The luminaries will be placed in alphabetical order by last name so easily find your luminary and take it home with you.

We are asking a donation of \$5. for each luminary but no one will be refused. The donations materials for the luminaries and the remainder will go toward chapter activities and materials.

If you have questions, please call Susan at 847.366.9375. **Please mail in by November**

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I/we would like to order _____ (total no.) luminaries in memory of the following:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Ordered by (your name): _____

Phone number: _____ Email address: _____

Enclosed Amount: \$ _____ Check #: _____

Please make checks to: "NO LAKE CO TCF"
Mail to: No Lake Co TCF - 1427 Clavey Lane Gurnee, IL 60031

(Holiday Colors continued from page 1)

Then my son died, and although those colors were still in my environment, all I could see was the blue of depression, and the purple from the bruising weight of my loss. I had the opposite of anticipation ^ the desire to hide from or skip the holidays completely.

The year before he died, my son gave me a digital camera for Christmas. We went outside at night, to take pictures of my house, and the neighbor,s houses with their lights and many lawn decorations. "You've got to get with the program, Mama Jean," he said pointing out that my home had plenty of lights, but no decorations on the lawn.

So the first holiday season without my son, to honor his memory and his wishes, I did decorate. And I bought a lighted angel and a Christmas tree for my front lawn. I went to my nephew,s holiday gathering; I watched his children joyously open presents. But I had no joy, and I didn't invite any family, or friends, to my decorated home. I did acknowledge my son and my loss by writing out cards to him for each holiday and sending balloons aloft on a very grey day. I did not bake cookies, I did not send out cards, and I flew to my brothers, in Denver, to spend New Year,s Eve. So I survived that year with a combination of tradition and escape. Despite the decorating, and the visiting I forced myself to do, the colors of those holidays were the colors of his absence, deep purple and blue.

Two more holiday seasons have passed - each slightly less painful. The blue of depression was just as deep but not there all the time. The bruising purple was slowly becoming a memory but crushing when it surfaced. I purchased a wreath for my door and another lighted tree for my lawn.

In an article from the summer 2006 edition of "We do not Walk Alone," grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt says, "depression has gotten a bad name in today's society." He considers it a necessary part of the grieving process because, "It slows your body down". Have those painful blue and purple days, when my mind and body slowed, given some of my grief a chance to process and heal?

The last stage before acceptance listed by Kubler-Ross, is depression. However, those stages were intended for anticipatory grief not for the loss of a child. Dr. Wolfelt, speaking to bereaved parents, also said that, "Grief and mourning do not come in predictable stages; they are more like waves and sometimes a tsunami comes times when you see something or smell something and you're right there again." This resembles my experience during the past three holiday seasons.

As I write this I am in a pretty good place. I have many more good hours than bad. Sometimes weeks pass before the pain returns briefly. I am hoping that this year the colors and smells will remind me of the joys of holidays past when my family was whole. I have survived three seasons. I know I will survive the fourth. I have hopes that the holiday colors this year will be less purple and blue. I have hopes there will be no tsunami. And I have plans to bake cookies and purchase another decoration for my lawn. Perhaps a reindeer?



In memory of: Anthony "Duke", my precious son

LimongelloJ@aol.com

**REQUEST FOR PHOTO FOR
POWER POINT/SLIDE PRESENTATION
OF LOVED ONES**

We Remember Them

**ANNUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY
Sunday December 10, 2023, 6:30 pm**

Millburn Congregational Church
19073 W Grass Lake Road, Lake Villa, IL 60046

Please consider including a photograph of your loved one in the candle lighting ceremony through a Power-Point presentation. It is very touching to see the faces of the children and brothers and sisters and grandchildren of our fellow members of The Compassionate Friends.

If you have a photo that you would like to include in the presentation, please include your loved one's name, age at time of death, your relationship (son, daughter, brother, granddaughter etc.) as well as your phone number and email address. Attach 1 photo to the email.

If you are not able to send the photos electronically, you can mail them to me, and I will scan them for the presentation and mail the originals back to you. You can also text the photo and information to me.

If your loved one was included in last year's presentation, we will use the same photographs in the Power-Point presentation.

Due date November 18, 2023

Mail your photo or attach it to an email or a text message and send it to:
Susan Banks 1427 Clavey Lane Gurnee, IL 60031/email; Lanwesmar@comcast.net
Text to 847.366.9375



The Compassionate Friends
Northern Lake County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always appreciated. Please include the 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 - 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI - 48393 PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246. The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

Steering Committee 2022 – 2023

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Susan Banks 847-366-9375 lanwesmar@comcast.net – son, Westley Banks Age 21 of suicide

TREASURER Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 julyson2@gmail.com son, Aaron Barrera Age 29 Auto accident due to Diabetes

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HOSPITALITY Kris Frisby 847-366-3170 Kefrisby88@comcast.net son, Camden Frisby Age 15 of suicide.

SECRETARY / LIBRARIAN

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Shannon Seay 224-456-2891 Seayseven1@comcast.net daughter, Ashley Seay Age 17 Auto accident.

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

NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 tnesheim@sbcglobal.net & Denny Salomonson, 847-223-7353 drdeno@sbcglobal.net - daughter, Rachel Salomonson, 19 Auto accident

WOODLAND WALK COORDINATORS Christine Pado 847-455-6642 chpado@gmail.com - daughter Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 Pulmonary Embolism

FACILITATORS AT HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL. SPANISH AND ENGLISH. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, son Raphael Vidal age 17 of suicide. Mirtha is available by phone call or email.

FACILITADORES EN HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL. Española e inglés. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, hijo Raphael Vidal de 17 años de suicidio. Mirtha está disponible por teléfono o correo electrónico.

Northern Lake County IL Chapter #1511 <http://www.iltcf.org/index.html>

NORTHERN LAKE COUNTY COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS FACEBOOK page <https://www.facebook.com/cfoncil>

Facebook Pages for Siblings - The Sounds of the Siblings: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/>

TCF SIBS: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcfsibs/>