



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

November 2021 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear friends,

The holidays are in front of us, and I wanted to share a few words of wisdom to soften the next few months;

Focus on what you can control ~ do what is right for you during the holidays.

Plan ahead for family gatherings, have an **A** plan and a **B** plan.

Find a way to honor your memories ~

Embrace your treasure of memories.

Create a new tradition.

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 feel joy.

Thinking of you during the holidays,

Your friend,

Susan

Westley's mom

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

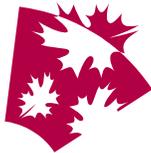
(Continued on page 2)



GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the passionate 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.



Meetings

**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 Grass Lake Road
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.

(Gifts of Love continued from page 1)

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 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>



**OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED
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.

Heidi Anne Hermann
Nick Battis
Jeremy M Govekar
Lisa Rosemann
Stephanie Andrea Zamarron

November 2
November 3
November 12
November 16
November 16

Nathan Clyde

November 17

Douglas Ramsay
James McClintock
Marcia Castillo
Javier Ramirez
Amanda Lauren Cecchi
Mitchell Rodefer
Zachary Taylor
Zachary Maslanich
Tracie Musich
Rafael Villanveva
Joey Frase
Anthony Clemente
Ryan James Nichols
Alina Booras
Daniel Wang
Kerrin Fleming
Zack A Maslanich
Mark Yates
Barry J Grazier
Raphael E Vidal

November 17
November 18
November 19
November 21
November 22
November 24
November 30
November 30
December 4
December 9
December 11
December 12
December 12
December 13
December 15
December 16
December 18
December 20
December 22
December 24

BIRTHDAYS

Daughter of Bonnie Brackus
Son of Susan Battis
Son of Maggie McGaughey
Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann
Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungula
Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriquez & César Rojas
Son of Valerie Clyde
Sister of Michaela Clyde
Son of Carlene Ramsay
Son of Charles "Chip" & Louise Knoll
Daughter of Sissy & Arthur Castillo
Son of Julie Ojeda
Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi
Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
Son of Mike Taylor & Karen Adams-Taylor
Son of Karen Zimmerman
Daughter of Trisha Musich
Son of Victoria Villanveva
Son of Cathy Frase
Son of Becky Wolf
Son of Jackie & Jim Nichols
Daughter of Amanda Booras
Son of Millie Yu
Daughter of Barbara Fleming
Son of Karen Zimmerman
Son of Linda Hegg
Son of Robert & Mary Ann Grazier
Son of Raphael & Mirtha Vidal

ANNIVERSARIES

Lila Ruffolo
Andrew C Perkins
Rachel Salomonson
Erin Dinklenburg
Kyle Glueck
Aaron Barrera
Megan Candice Grace
Nicole Parfitt
Shane Betar
Nathan Enright
Mike Reardon
Alyssa Burnstine
Sean Jones
Mitchell Rodefer
Felicity Patrick
Andrew Muno
Scott Ewing
Nick Battis

November 1
November 3
November 15
November 16
November 17
November 18
November 18
November 19
December 1
December 5
December 6
December 6
December 6
December 6
December 6
December 15
December 16
December 24

Daughter of Jenny Selle
Son of Richard & Thelma Perkin
Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
Daughter of Kelli Brooks
Dolores Krason
Son of Tammie & Ernie Barrera
Daughter of Tim & Marilyn Grace
Daughter of Robin Parfitt
Son of Leia Betar
Son of Martin Boyle
Son of Sonia & Jim Reardon
Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veoukas
Son of Octavine Jones
Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
Daughter of Nicole Patrick
Son of Darlene Muno
Son of Alan & Renee Ewing
Son of Susan Battis



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.

(Continuing on page 7)



You Are Cordially Invited to the

The Compassionate Friends of Northern Lake Co. IL. World-wide Candle Lighting Ceremony

We Remember Them

To Honor Your Child or Sibling Who has Gone Too Soon

Sunday December 12, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Welcoming Music starts at 6:15 pm to begin joining. (Central time US and Canada)

A Virtual, Stay-Safe-At-Home Candle Lighting Ceremony

All You Need is A Candle,

Computer or Cell Phone



Susan Banks is inviting you to

The Candle Lighting Ceremony. Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85487269978?pwd=NWRwOHlvS2tKMlVTd0xqTDNOSlhmZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 8726 9978

Passcode: 822882

One tap mobile +13126266799, 85487269978#, *822882# US (Chicago) +13017158592, 85487269978#, *822882# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York) +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma) +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85487269978?pwd=NWRwOHlvS2tKMlVTd0xqTDNOSlhmZz09>

We Remember them...

"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."



The Compassionate Friends

Northern Lake County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Questions? Please call or text Susan; 847-366-9375 or email; lanwesmar@comcast.net



PAIN VERSUS SUFFERING

By Megan Devine www.refugeingrief.com

I've been talking to a lot of you about the difference between pain and suffering. It's an interesting – and useful – distinction, especially in grief. Not knowing the difference between the two is why so many intended words of comfort feel so awful: support people are trying to remove pain, instead of helping you address suffering. So, what's the difference?

In the first few months after Matt died, someone told me I would “do better” if I just turned away from the hole in my life. And as nicely as I could, which probably wasn't very nicely at all, I told them that the hole was my life; that I needed to find ways to stay with it, to stay beside that gaping hole, to find ways to stay present with it and not just skip over it. I couldn't just decide to ignore it. That would have been lying to myself.

Pain and grief are part of life. They're part of love. Pretending pain didn't exist wasn't going to make me better.

No matter what our medical model or the general culture believes, grief is healthy. It's a sane response to the physical loss of someone, or something, you love. You grieve because you love. That grief hurts makes perfect sense. That grief is painful doesn't make it wrong.

It's important here to note the difference between pain and suffering. Pain is pure. Pain is a natural response to loss and to hardship and

to death. There's nothing wrong with pain. Pain simply is. The answer to the pain of grief is not how to get yourself out of it, but how to **support yourself** inside it.

Being allowed to tend to your grief, without feeling like you need to fix it or clean it up, makes grief, itself, easier.

Suffering comes with all of the crap that gets loaded on us by friends and colleagues and random strangers who, with the best of intentions, correct, judge, or give advice on how we need to grieve better. Suffering comes when we don't eat, don't get enough sleep, spend too much time with toxic people, or pretend we're not in as much pain as we're in. Suffering comes when we rehash the events that led up to their death, punishing ourselves for not preventing it, not knowing more, not doing more. Suffering comes with anxiety, and fear, and isolation.

There's so much helplessness inside of grief, so much pain that cannot be fixed. Suffering, however, is optional. That distinction can help you figure out what things can be changed, and what things simply need to be supported.

In grief, pain gets tended, suffering gets adjusted.

You might ask yourself, where is there suffering? What tangible problems could be solved in order to reduce suffering? Are you eating, sleeping, moving enough? Can you spend more time with people who support your pain, rather than try to talk you out of it? Are there any places that induce even the smallest bit of calm inside your heart?

Taking even the smallest action on your own behalf to reduce suffering can bring back a little agency, a sense of personal power, inside a world that has turned upside down. With so many events outside of your control, leaning into those places where you can effect change – helps.

(Borrowed from A Journey Together, Winter 2021, Volume XXVI No. 1 www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

(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!



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.**



Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter

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

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 2021 – 2022

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 Sue Battis 847-445-7004 suebattis@yahoo.com son, Nick Battis Age 24 of suicide.

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/>