



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

October 2020 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leaders Notes from Toni & Susan

WE'RE HERE AND KICKIN'

Our chapter has taken a bit of a hit during this pandemic as many organizations have. While we can't resume meeting in person yet, we are doing our best to stay in touch with you through twice monthly Zoom meetings and the monthly newsletter by email as well as by US mail.

We have started working on the annual worldwide candle lighting ceremony which will take place on **Sunday, December 13 at 6:30 p.m.** This year it will be a **VIRTUAL candle lighting** done over our computers and cell phones. It is not our preference, but we are working to make it meaningful and safe for everyone. We will be mailing out further information soon.

Our chapter is in need of some updating and fine tuning. We are taking this time to assess strengths and weaknesses. We hope to strengthen our steering committee which had been dormant and make them more active in planning meetings and activities. We have also discussed seeking funding sources for events and community outreach. We welcome any thoughts or ideas you may have for us in these areas.

There are some positions for which we require new volunteers. One of those positions at this time is:

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY - Time commitment 1-2 hours per month.

Write out notes to parents and siblings in our chapter acknowledging their loved one's

passing during their anniversary month. A list of names and addresses for each month

will be provided to you and postage will be reimbursed.

Additional volunteer positions will be posted in future correspondence.

We welcome your feedback & questions:

Toni Nesheim, Co-Leader-
tnesheim@sbcglobal.net

Cell 847-204-7585

Susan Banks, Co-Leader-
lanwestmar@comcast.net

Cell 847-336-8375

We wish you health and peace,

Toni & Susan

The October "Millburn" Zoom meeting is Thursday, October 15. Susan Banks will be sending out notices prior to the meeting.

(Our children, grandchildren, and siblings loved, missed and remembered in October & November continued from page 3)

Megan Candice Grace

November 18

Daughter of Tim & Marilyn Grace

Nicole Parfitt

November 19

Daughter of Robin Parfitt

Keegan Cray

November 22

Son of Kristin & Ken Willis

Sven Christian Reinhard

November 22

Son of Astrid Reinhard

Kevin Lopez

November 22

Son of Diahnn Estes Lopez

Camden Frisby

November 23

Son of Kris Frisby

Rachel Elaine Robertson

November 23

Daughter of Regan Robertson

Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro

November 24

Daughter of David Scarbro

Mark Yates

November 24

Son of Richard & Linda Hegg

Zack Maslanich

November 30

Son of Karen Zimmerman

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

The Healing Power of Love Messages

There have been times in my life that I've questioned my sanity, and some of my friends have, too. When I would mention to them that I had talked to my daughter and that she also spoke to me, they would get puzzled and concerned looks on their faces. Their bewilder-

ment did not surprise me. You see my 21-month-old daughter has been dead for seven years.

If you have a significant loved one who has died, or if you have worked with bereaved individuals, then you are probably more familiar and comfortable with this different and very personal form of communication. For me, love messages from my daughter are very real and have sustained me through the darkest of times.

Kristen first spoke to my husband, Dan, and me very soon after her sudden death. When we arrived at the funeral home to see her before the wake, our first message was awaiting us. While standing at the entrance to the viewing room, Dan's body shuddered and I felt Kristen's presence through my eyes. We stood in astonishment as Kristen's spirit rose from the coffin, and then disappeared into the air. It was as if she waited for us so she could say good-bye.

Dan and I held each other tightly as we softly cried. After a few moments, we quietly revealed our identical feeling of an overwhelming sense of release. As painful as our grief was, and realizing how changed our lives had become, we were amazingly comforted by the knowledge that Kristen was okay.

Our unbelievable spiritual experience was not an isolated event, however. The following day, just as the funeral procession was slowly approaching Kristen's gravesite, I glanced out the car window and saw a mourning dove perched on a "LEE" headstone. To others, that was of no significance, but to me it was another sign that Kristen was with us during this difficult time.

A few weeks before Kristen died, we had kept a daily watch on a mourning dove family making its nest in our front-yard tree. Kristen was filled with excitement when two baby doves popped their heads out of the nest. She couldn't wait to see them learn to fly. She never saw that day.

Seeing the dove that morning at the cemetery was comforting to me, but when I noticed it on that particular headstone out of the thousands there, I was overwhelmed. "Lee" is my maiden name. To this day, when I see a lone dove sitting on the telephone wire outside our home, I feel Kristen's presence. To many, it may seem bizarre, but it gives me strength to keep going in this life and to move beyond survival, to a life worth living again.

(Continued on page 4)



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN OCTOBER & 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, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS

Levi Nichols	October 4	Son of Bambi Nichols
Mark Sailors	October 9	Son of Michelle Sailors
Susan Allbee	October 11	Sister of Toni Nesheim
Marc Hawkinson	October 11	Son of Mary Kay Clark
Marleea Gerfen	October 12	Daughter of Marsha & Lee Bell
Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro	October 15	Daughter of David Scarbro
Timothy James Pitzen	October 18	Granddaughter of Alana Anderson
Brian Keough	October 20	Son of Kathleen Keough
Donyel Prather	October 22	Son of Donna Prather
Kelly Klawonn	October 23	Son of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
Alyssa Burnstine	October 23	Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veouka
Aaron R Moore	October 24	Son of Rob & Sherry Moore
Colin Henderson	October 27	Son of Lisa Henderson
John "Jake" Mosansky	October 31	Son of Darlene & John Mosansky
		Sister of Veronica Steif
Heidi Anne Hermann	November 2	Daughter of Bonnie Brackus
Nick Battis	November 3	Son of Susan Battis
Jeremy M Govekar	November 12	Son of Maggie McGaughey
Lisa Rosemann	November 16	Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann
Stephanie Andrea Zamarron	November 16	Daughter of Vicky Zamarron & Juan Mungula
		Granddaughter of Alejandra Rodriquez & César Rojas
Nathan Clyde	November 17	Son of Valerie Clyde
		Sister of Michaela Clyde
Douglas Ramsay	November 17	Son of Carlene Ramsay
James McClintock	November 18	Son of Charles "Chip" & Louise Knoll
Marcia Castillo	November 19	Daughter of Sissy & Arthur Castillo
Amy Jo Baldwin	November 21	Daughter of Mike & Sheila Baldwin
Amanda Lauren Cecchi	November 22	Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi
Camden Frisby	November 23	Son of Kris Frisby
Mitchell Rodefer	November 24	Son of Dennis & Susan Rodefer
Zachary Taylor	November 30	Son of Mike Taylor & Karen Adams-Taylor
Zachary Maslanich	November 30	Son of Karen Zimmerman

ANNIVERSARIES

Sharon Beth Gray	October 4	Daughter of Pam Gray
Mark Sailors	October 10	Son of Michelle Sailors
Tracie Musich	October 19	Daughter of Trisha Musich
Kerrin Fleming	October 21	Daughter of Barbara Fleming
Heather Donnelly	October 23	Daughter of Daniel Donnelly
Lila Ruffolo	November 1	Daughter of Jenny & Rick Selle
Andrew C Perkins	November 3	Son of Richard & Thelma Perkin
Rachel Salomonson	November 15	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
Erin Dinklenburg	November 16	Daughter of Kelli Brooks
Kyle Glueck	November 17	Dolores Krason
Aaron Barrera	November 18	Son of Tammie & Ernie Barrera

(Continued on page 2)

**(The Healing Power of Love
Messages continued from page 2)**

Dan and I know what we've seen and felt. It doesn't bother us that others have a difficult time believing us. What is important is our perception of these messages and that we use them as a powerful force in our forever-changed lives.

Even though we no longer have a physical connection with our daughter, our eternal connection will forever be with us. I reached a point in my grief that I had to say a final goodbye to an earthly life with my child, but I never had to say good-bye to Kristen. Love messages, for me, have kept Kristen's spirit and memory alive in my heart and mind--where they will remain forever.

Deb Lee Gould, Greensboro, NC
~reprinted from Bereaved Parents Central Savannah River Area Chapters - October 2002 Newsletter



HALLOWEEN AND BEYOND

**By Shirley Carrigan
BP/USA of North Texas**

I was getting ready to go to the store to purchase candy for the "great Pumpkin day," which brought my attention to the holidays of preceding years: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah and New Year's - those days that threaten bereaved parents so much. This is the fifth holiday season since my Douglas's death, yet I still have a fleeting desire to run and hide. Although last season was not as terrible as the one before, I know I'll shed tears again this year during some lonely and sad times. These are very private moments of grief for me now.

For those of you who do not attend support meetings, our newsletters may be the only link you have to other bereaved parents. Please take time for yourself during the holidays. Take time to cry and to be alone. Try not to take on assignments from other family members who cannot know the exhaustion you experience. Ask for the things you think you need. Others cannot read your mind, yet it is so difficult to tell someone that you are hurting and need something from him or her.

There is no requirement to pretend you are okay, when in fact, you are not. Healing is a slow process requiring a lot of work. I always know when others have never experienced a great loss for they will say, "Time will heal all wounds." What they do not know and cannot know is that healing a great grief requires hard work and lots of time. Time itself cannot heal anything. It is not the passage of time in itself, but the pain and

suffering endured and the struggle to reclaim one's life which will make healing possible. Others see only the end result without realizing the work that went into the healing process.

Take the time you need to complete your work; to heal your spirit, mind and body; to regain your will to live. Be good to yourself. Remember that healing is possible through your own effort and determination and not simply by the passage of time.

Lovingly borrowed from the Fall 2008 newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA

Halloween

*The witches and hobgoblins
Were on the loose that night.
Our entryway eerily decorated
To present a gruesome sight.*

*Six-foot teenager dressed as Captain Hook,
Pegleg thumping on the tile,
Eye patch covering a freckled face
Accentuating a mischievous smile.*

*Popcorn balls concocted with delight
Lusciously snuggled in a plastic hump
Disguising a tape of wicked laughter
Guaranteed to cause a terrified jump.*

*Once, my darling son, this memory
of Halloween past was a time of despair.
Now, looking back, on the love you gave,
What pride I feel in a boy so fair.*

*The neighborhood hero to the younger set,
Adults viewed, skeptically, the pranks you played
Never in bad taste.... just good clean fun...
They will never forget the genius you displayed.*

*Though the tears have come,
Don't feel sorry for me.
It's just that I miss you
Oh, so desperately!*

Jean Lipson, Grand Junction, CO
reprinted from Bereaved Parents Central Savannah River Area Chapters, October 2002 Newsletter



Musings on Halloween's Past and Present

On the evening I type this, the nip in the October air is a reminder that the major holidays are just around the corner. Halloween decorations have been in the stores since July and Christmas décor even as early as August. For those of us who are bereaved parents, siblings and/or grandparents this means the sooner they are "in our face" the longer we have the constant reminders that we will be facing the holidays without our child. Whether it is your first Halloween following your child's death or years down the road, such as in my situation, the holiday season stirs the emotions bringing varying levels of sadness, anxiety and sometimes even anger. With Halloween, there is the sorrow of no longer having to find that perfect costume or witnessing the delight in your child's eyes when you found just the right one.

Many parents find Halloween a particularly hard one to get through. In the past, I always thought of it as innocuous enough; there were the costume parties with bobbing for apple, children excitedly dashing door-to-door trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving, and the occasional harmless prank. However, after my daughter Nina died, I became acutely aware of things that I never gave a second thought to in the past. For instance, my former neighbor made her whole front yard into a graveyard scene, complete with fake headstones that said R.I.P. with scary or silly epitaphs as well as hideous ghosts coming out of the earth with bony bloody fingers. Before Nina died, I too found the cemetery "creepy", but now I look at it differently, even with a sort of reverence, and no longer have a problem going out to my daughter's grave-site, even in the middle of the night. I find the solitude of the historic countryside graveyard where she is buried peaceful and dignified and worthy of respect, and I was hurt by what I felt Crumb One

We pick up a new sense of what is important and what is not. We suffer fools, superficial cocktail parties, and convenience friends poorly. We seem to develop an immediate impatience for the meaningless and the trivial. On the other hand, we pick up an incredible sensitivity to the world around us that we did not have before. We watch the news differently. We value people more than things. We live more in the moment and less in the future because we know that sometimes "tomorrow doesn't come."

was apparent ridicule and disdain for the final resting place of our loved one's physical bodies to the point of tears and anger. Moreover, some of the masks and costumes portrayed faces of death in a way that I

found highly offensive, especially since I knew many who lost their children to some of the means depicted. I took it personally and didn't appreciate what I perceived as a mockery of death.

Though I still don't pretend to understand the allure of the above-mentioned Halloween depictions, they aren't as painful to me as they were the first few years after Nina died. During the early grief years, we become very hypersensitive to our surroundings and more keenly conscious of anything related to death. It is pretty hard to look past the general non-bereaved populations

seeming nonchalance about something we take so personally. Though we wish there was more empathy and understanding, we also know all too well that they cannot truly sympathize unless they also have walked in our shoes. It is easy to forget that we too, before our children's deaths, may have shown the same indifference. I believe that we would like to think that we wouldn't have been so callous because we now personally know how much this hurts those affected; however, before we lost our "innocence" truth be told, we probably didn't give any of it much thought. That being said, oftentimes it is still easier said than done.

On this 10th Halloween without Nina, I pretty much ignore all the ghoulishness surrounding this time of year. If I do find I am having difficulty, I try very hard to focus on positive and precious memories of Halloween's past, such as her belated birthday/Halloween party where our basement became a makeshift haunted house where giggling blindfolded costumed witches and

princesses plunged their hands into bowls full of peeled grape "eyeballs" and wet macaroni "brains" to the shrieks of "Yuck!" or the photo taken of Nina on her last Halloween. No longer of trick-or-treat age, she stayed home to pass out the candy and carve an awesome Jack-O-Lantern that she is pictured proudly along side, with her ever present smile and that wonderful twinkle in her brown eyes. Or the photos I have of her in her costumes over the years from Care Bear to Punk Rocker. Because of my photographs and precious memories, I also realize that I was one of the "lucky" ones in that regard. There are those whose children died

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(Musings on Halloween's Past and Present
continued from page 5)

before they ever had the opportunity to create memories; there is the sorrow that they were never able to experience even one holiday with that child, yet alone several, and that saddens me very much.

For those with a missing trick-or-treater this Halloween or the conspicuous empty chair at Thanksgiving dinner this year, the first ones are the most difficult. Though I find they are easier to bear as time goes on, you never really forget the absence from the family holiday gatherings of one loved so much, nor do you want to forget, really. Please try to remember that this roller-coaster grief ride each year brings different feelings. It is important that you just allow those feelings and let them happen. Try not to be waylaid by other's expectations of you. Trust your instincts and go with them. Truly, only you know what you can or cannot handle.

With gentle thoughts,
Cathy Seehuetter
TCF/St. Paul, MN
peachy3536@comcast.net
~reprinted



GRIEF OF THE NEWLY BEREAVED

The news that our child is dead thrusts us into an experience that is horrendous beyond our wildest imagination. Our child, literally a physical part of our bodies at one time, is torn from us by death and we are left with the seemingly impossible task of learning to live without him or her. And absolutely no one is ever prepared for it. Few bereaved persons are ever prepared for the experience of grief — certainly bereaved parents are not. One learns to cope with grief and eventually return to some normalcy. This takes much time and considerable grief work that we must learn how to do, but it might be helpful to discuss some aspects of grief that are special problems for the newly bereaved.

The most common phrase heard from the newly bereaved is, "I feel like I'm going crazy." The pain and the accompanying emotions are so intense that it doesn't seem possible that a normal human being can experience them and still live. You may believe that you are going insane, or at least on the verge of it, but you are not. You are experiencing the normal physical and psychological reaction to a deep loss. With your child's death you

have experienced the ultimate loss, therefore you will experience the ultimate grief, which is deeply, deeply painful, and all the emotions will be in the extreme.

Another surprise in early grief, (by early grief I mean any time up to approximately the first anniversary of your child's death), is that you may not experience the most painful part of your grief in the beginning. Many parents have said, "I thought it was bad in the first few months, but it got worse around three to six months." In the first few days most of us are in deep shock that prevents us from facing reality all at once. This protects us for a short time, but then that begins to wear off slowly and the pain begins. Oh yes, we know in our heads very soon that our child is dead, but at a deeper level we are still expecting him/her to come home or that this is all a nightmare that we will soon wake from. The full reality sets in some months later. It is then that the real pain of grief begins. As a matter of fact, grief that heals CANNOT begin until we know at a deep level that our child is dead. It isn't for a few months that that happens, therefore the deepest pain comes later.

Another aspect of grief that is a surprise to the newly bereaved is the intensity of the emotions felt. Grief consumes us. It takes us over so completely that we feel we are the epitome of pain and anguish. We radiate pain from within and without. We feel we are a totally different self. Nothing is familiar. It is as if the me I have been all my life no longer exists and that someone else has taken over my body. It is as if I am standing alone, vulnerable and defenseless. It is as though only I exist and all the world is looking at me. This feeling has been described by bereaved parents as having "an aura around me," or as having "the words 'bereaved parent' tattooed on my forehead." We feel "different" and exposed, and alone.

Another unimaginable experience follows from this feeling of aloneness and vulnerability —

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(Grief of the Newly Bereaved continued from page 6)

that of amazement that others are so insensitive to your feelings or to your needs. You will be amazed that the world keeps turning and that people continue to go about their everyday lives as if nothing had happened. There is a "centeredness on self" in grief that few of us have ever experienced in our lives before. You may be shocked and angered over and over again by the comments and innuendoes made by others. They will expect you to function as if nothing was different. It is likely that others will be uncomfortable around you and it will be the rare person who will speak your child's name or allow you to do so. Generally people see you as "sick" or abnormal, and you may be amazed that those from whom you expect some understanding and empathy will be unable to give it to you. People will tell you what you should and should not do to make your hurt go away, and when their advice doesn't work (and I can guarantee you it won't) they will tell you that you are not trying hard enough. Unfortunately, you will be expected to be the one to understand, ignore, and/or forgive them. The result of this insensitivity will add considerably to the normal anger and hurt of your grief, because, try as you may, you will not be able to understand, ignore or forgive them for a long time.

No one gets "used" to grief, but as a newly bereaved parent you have been thrust into an experience that is different beyond your wildest expectations. From a comparatively comfortable existence you are thrown into a pit of the most devastating and debilitating pain that anyone will ever know. Those of us who have been bereaved for a year or longer have experienced these "surprises" and have found ways to protect themselves and to survive.

There is only one thing worse than the grief we experience after our child(ren) dies, and that is to experience it in ignorance of what is normal and what is likely to be experienced. No one can grieve for us. We must do it ourselves, but we can eliminate the added anxiety that this ignorance can create. Information on the process of grief and suggestions for making the daily living of grief survivable abounds in TCF newsletters and in the many books on grief that are available. Take advantage of them. Even if you never attend a TCF meeting, you still have information available to you that will help you not only to survive your grief, but also to allow this unchosen and terrible experience to be a cause for the development of greater strength and growth.

If advice to the newly bereaved can be summed up in a few words it is this:

1. Learn about the grief process. Read, read, read.
2. Get a support system. Attend TCF meetings, or at least, find one friend who will let you talk about your child and/or your pain.
3. Know that what you are experiencing is normal. Know that there is no right or wrong way to grieve. The only "wrong" thing is to not grieve.

—Margaret H. Gerner, M.S.W., CGC

TCF/St. Louis, MO

(Margaret is a bereaved mother and also a bereaved grand-mother.)

(Loving lifted from TCF/St Louis, MO – Jul/Aug 1986)

Another Year

Another year has come,
 And you're so far away from us now;
 But in our hearts still.
 Forever, We will hold you close.
 Each smile, laugh and tear we've cried
 Are a testament to our love for you.
 We will always love you,
 No matter what happens.
 Your death can not separate us.
 We, re right here, loving you as always.
 Our hearts are true to you.
 We will never forget your love and spirit.
 We are no longer afraid -
 For to live or die is the same for us.
 You are still with us on this journey of life.
 We raise your light to the heavens, and
 smile as we remember you!

by Barbara Dwyer, TCF Gwinnett

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, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522 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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