



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

September 2019 Newsletter



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

Chapter Leader Notes



TCF EVENTS & TRANSITIONS

The HeART Remembers: Expressions of Love Through Our Hands

Our chapter initiated, what we hope to be, an annual event of positive, creative activity: “The HeART Remembers”. The event was planned to replace the balloon releases that we did for many years. The evidence of how the balloons and strings negatively impacted animals, birds and waterways was too overwhelming to ignore.

In May, Tammie Barrera, Aaron’s mom and Susan Banks, Westley’s mom, led the meeting in Waukegan with painting pots & potting flowers, painting & lettering inspirational rocks and creating decorative cables and lanyards with symbolic charms.

The event was also held in Lake Villa in August and was led by Kathleen Rettinger, Alex’s mom, who has done similar workshops on creating your personal memorial for your loved ones by making the above craft items as well as journaling and making pocket tokens.

The events were well received and well attended. Personally, it warmed my heart to see people smiling and talking casually about their loved ones.

We want to thank Susan Banks, Tammie Barrera and Kathleen Rettinger for leading these events. They were very pleasant and meaningful experiences. We hope to see you next year!

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National TCF Conference 2020

The Compassionate Friends office has announced the dates and location for the 2020 conference. The national conference will be held:

**“Sharing Sweet Memories of Love”
Atlanta, Georgia
July 24-26, 2020**

The conference offers nearly 100 workshops, sharing groups and speakers, given by professionals and individuals just like us.

• • • •

Toni

*Look at yourself
in the mirror.
Say to yourself
“It is hard
to lose a child.”
Say to yourself
“It is reasonable
to hurt.”
Say to yourself
“Healing takes
time.”
**BE GOOD TO
YOURSELF
From AGAIN
FROM SASCH***



WHY?

By Rabbi Earl Grollman, from
"Living when a Loved One Has Died"

How often in happy times did
you ask, "Why?"

When blessings were yours and life was joy-
ful, did you ask, "Why?"

Now death has shaken your
faith, "Why?" "Why me?"

"Why didn't I die first?"

"Why must my life be one of
sorrow?"

There are no pat answers.

No one completely understands the mystery
of death.

Even if the questions were answered, would
your pain be eased, your loneliness less terri-
ble?

There is no answer that bridges the chasm of
irreparable separation.

There is no satisfactory response for an unre-
solvable dilemma.

Not all questions have answers.

Unanswered whys are a part of Life.



GIFTS OF LOVE

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but donations can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of your chapters. Love gifts are acknowledged each month in the newsletter.

Thanks to Margarita Reyes
For her donation
in memory of her son
Luis F Reyes

"Gifts of Love" in remembering our children and sib-
lings 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
September 19 - 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
Millburn Congregational Church
19073 W Old Grass Lake Rd
(Corner of Old Grass Lake Road & Rt. 45
Lake Villa, IL 60046

Holy Family Church
October 3
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
450 Keller Street, Waukegan, IL 60085
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

Open Discussion



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

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>Chris Houchin</i> | September 3 | Son of Scott Houchin & Heather McDonald |
| <i>Shannon McCarty</i> | September 5 | Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hayes |
| <i>Mary Margaret (Maggie) Miles</i> | September 5 | Daughter of Jim & Mary Lou Miles |
| <i>Kevin Lopez</i> | September 13 | Son of Diahnn Estes Lopez |
| <i>Anthony Alexander Sosa</i> | September 16 | Son of Yvette Sosa |
| <i>Shane Betar</i> | September 21 | Son of Leia Betar |
| <i>José De Jesús Hernández</i> | September 24 | Son of Jesús and Virginia Hernández |
| <i>Eduardo Chavez-Nuño</i> | September 27 | Son of Maria Del Carmen Nuño |
| <i>Donette Klawonn</i> | September 30 | Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn |
| <i>Tony Trejo</i> | September 30 | Son of Martina Williamson & Victor Trejo |
| <i>Levi Nichols</i> | October 4 | Son of Bambi Nichols |
| <i>Mark Sailors</i> | October 9 | Son of Michelle Sailors |
| <i>Susan Allbee</i> | October 11 | Sister of Toni Nesheim |
| <i>Marc Hawkinson</i> | October 11 | Son of Mary Kay Clark |
| <i>Marleea Gerfen</i> | October 12 | Daughter of Marsha & Lee Bell |
| <i>Alexandria (Alex) Scarbro</i> | October 15 | Daughter of David Scarbro |
| <i>Brian Keough</i> | October 20 | Son of Kathleen Keough |
| <i>Kelly Klawonn</i> | October 23 | Son of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn |
| <i>Alyssa Burnstine</i> | October 23 | Granddaughter of Judi & Stan Veouka |
| <i>Aaron R Moore</i> | October 24 | Son of Rob & Sherry Moore |
| <i>Colin Henderson</i> | October 27 | Son of Lisa Henderson |
| <i>John "Jake" Mosansky</i> | October 31 | Son of Darlene & John Mosansky |
| | | Sister of Veronica Steif |

ANNIVERSARIES

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Brian Scott Ludlow</i> | September 1 | Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik |
| <i>Levi Nichols</i> | September 5 | Son of Bambi Nichols |
| <i>Anthony Alexander Sosa</i> | September 12 | Son of Yvette Sosa |
| <i>Marleea Gerfen</i> | September 13 | Daughter of Marsha & Lee Bell |
| <i>Brian Scott Engle</i> | September 13 | Son of Louise Engle |
| <i>Heidi Anne Herrmann</i> | September 14 | Daughter of Bonnie Brackus |
| <i>Mike Curtis</i> | September 17 | Son of Sonya Curtis |
| <i>Aaron R Moore</i> | September 19 | Son of Rob & Sherry Moore |
| <i>Joshua William Bowman</i> | September 26 | Son of Robin Bray |
| | | Nephew of Kimberlee Christensen |
| <i>Kelsey Heaps</i> | September 26 | Son of Dawn Heaps |
| | | Brother of Steven Heaps |
| <i>Sharon Beth Gray</i> | October 4 | Daughter of Pam Gray |
| <i>Mark Sailors</i> | October 10 | Son of Michelle Sailors |
| <i>Tracie Musich</i> | October 19 | Daughter of Trisha Musich |
| <i>Kerrin Fleming</i> | October 21 | Daughter of Barbara Fleming |
| <i>Heather Donnelly</i> | October 23 | Daughter of Daniel Donnelly |

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

A Poem for All Parents In Memory of Shane A GRIEVING PARENT

A grieving parent is someone who will;
never forget their child no matter how painful
memories are.

A grieving parent is someone who;
yearns to be with their dead,
but cannot conceive leaving their living ones.

A grieving parent is someone who;
has a part of a heart as the rest is buried with their
child.

A grieving parent is someone who;
begs for relief from the memories which plague
them and then feel guilty when they get it.

A grieving parent is someone who;
pretends to be happy and enjoying life, when they
really are dying inside.

A grieving parent is someone who;
can cry or laugh at the drop of a hat whenever
they remember their beloved child.

A grieving parent is someone who;
feels as if they just lost their child yesterday no
matter how much time has passed.

A grieving parent is someone who;
fears for their remaining family because they can-
not bear to have any more losses.

A grieving parent is someone who;
sits by their child's gravestone and feels a knife
stabbing their heart.

A grieving parent is someone who;
wants to help others who have lost loved ones
because somehow their loss is theirs all over
again.

Judy Skapnak
sent by Gail and HL
In memory of Shane Martin
Martinlgail@aol.com

How can we define what it means to enter the dark underworld of grief? We can use words such as pain, anguish, misery, shock, loss, and fear, but language itself cannot articulate the complex set of emotions that are experienced during a time of great loss. How is it possible to describe a metaphorical tidal wave that throws you onto the shore of a deserted island with no compass or adequate provisions, and leaves you stumbling, lost, and confused as you try to find your bearings? How can one give voice to the way the ice-cold arms of grief wrap themselves around you and penetrate your deepest defenses, leaving you shivering and numb? Grief is a land of shadows that speaks its own universal language ^ the language of suffering and sorrow that embodies the enormity of loss."

For every individual, "little" deaths can be experienced in every day life. The loss of a relationship, a job, or a cherished dream can bring great heartache, but none can equal the devastation of the death of a loved one. Nothing can remind us more of our impermanence in earthly existence, and that we have no control over the forces of nature that govern our own unique destiny.

Less than a hundred years ago, it was impossible to escape the reality of death and loss as epidemics of childhood diseases, shorter life spans and limited medical knowledge resulted in death and dying as being a part of everyday life. Support for those in the grieving process was offered by family members and the community.

Grief was acknowledged as an integral part of life and those in the mourning process openly displayed symbols of their grieving, as demonstrated in the Victorian and Edwardian eras when a black arm band or wearing "mourning" clothing for a certain period of time were a part of the rituals of grief.

In contemporary Western cultures, the disintegration of the family unit and local communities, combined with advancements in health care and a longer life span have resulted in society adopting the concept of ignoring death, the dying and the bereaved. This approach leads to fear and alienation and leaves us traumatized and feeling alone

(Continued on page 5)

Grief

By Annamaria Hemingway

GRIEF continued from page 5)

when the inescapability of death that can claim those of any age or circumstance touches our lives. Grief has its own timetable and is unique to each individual. When we enter the dark abyss of grief, the world we thought we knew becomes an alien planet, and life has no meaning. Time freezes and becomes suspended in a series of flashbacks that replay past cherished memories. They are entangled with an ache so deep that it threatens to submerge you. Often feelings of guilt accompany the loss, guilt for all the things unspoken, and all the things left undone.

Even the world of dreams offers no respite for the pain that invades our psyche, rarely sleeps, and leaves us tossing and turning through so many dark nights of the soul. Our only companion is often fear, an uninvited guest that accompanies the floods of tears that prick their way through hollow, smarting eyes.

Grief reflects not just something or someone that has been lost from the outer world, but can also mirror a similar death in the inner world of the individual, as hope and faith become victims to the ravages of some invisible force that silences the voice of God or a higher power, which surely has abandoned and deserted us.

The author, C.S. Lewis, described his own similar feelings in a diary that he wrote following the death of his beloved wife. These writings were later published in the book "A Grief Observed," in which Lewis recounts his painful journey and his struggle to reconcile the death of his wife to his strong religious convictions. He commented: No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid at other times it feels like being mildly drunk or concussed. There is a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me. What does everything matter now?

C.S. Lewis eventually emerged through the stages of grief and loss to find that his religious beliefs had strengthened and that he had become a radically changed person through his profound experience. Grief has a timeless quality and although the pain will lessen, the memory of a great loss becomes forever etched within our deepest being. Rather than trying to escape or ignoring the inevitability of grief touching our lives, we can become strengthened through understanding that grief, like love, ultimately has the power to transform and can offer us the chance to learn what it means to be most authentically human.

The Buddhist scriptures illustrate this teaching in the story of a woman who came from a poor family, and was looked upon with contempt by her husband's relatives. When she gave birth to a son, their disdain

changed to respect. However, a few years later, the son died, and the woman became distraught with grief.

She searched everywhere for a cure that would bring her dead son back to life, but could find none. In her despair, she visited the Buddha, to see if he could help her. The Buddha told her to go back to her community and collect a mustard seed from a household where there had been no death. The woman searched for days, believing that if she could fulfill the Buddha's request, her son would be returned to her. But she eventually returned to the Buddha empty-handed, and realized there was no cure for death; it was an irrevocable part of life that everyone had to experience. As he lay on his deathbed, the Buddha reminded his followers of the impermanence of life, and how all things would eventually decay and perish. He encouraged people to accept death as a motivating force that provides a foundation for living life consciously and well.

Grief is the most painful experience we can suffer in this lifetime. It is a deeply emotional struggle to become reconciled to the reality of loss. No conciliatory words or advice can make it any less agonizing. The hand of grief will change your life forever but for those in the grieving process, perhaps some comfort may be gained from the notion that grief can enable an inner strength to emerge in each of us, and can ultimately make us more fully conscious human beings.

Author of Practicing Conscious Living and Dying:
Stories of the Eternal Continuum of Consciousness

~reprinted from MissFoundation July/August newsletter

www.missfoundation.org

<http://missfoundation.org/newsletter/vol11/JulAug2007.pdf>



We Need Each Other

Many living things need each other to survive. If you have ever seen a Colorado aspen tree, you may have noticed that it does not grow alone. Aspens are found in clusters, or groves. The reason is that the aspen sends up new shoots from the roots. In a small grove, all of the trees may actually be connected by their roots.

Giant California redwood trees may tower 300 feet into the sky. It would seem that they would require extremely deep roots to anchor them against strong winds. But we're told that their roots are actually quite shallow - in order to capture as much surface water as possible. And they spread in all directions, intertwining with other redwoods. Locked together in this way, all trees support each other in wind and storms. Like the aspen, they never stand alone. They need each other to survive.

People, too, are connected by a system of roots. We are born to family and learn early to make friends. We are not meant to survive long without others. And like the redwood, we need to hold one another up. When pounded by the sometimes vicious storms of life, we need others to support and sustain us.

Have you been going it alone? Maybe it's time to let someone else help hold you up for awhile. Or perhaps someone needs to hang on to you.

~From the book, RICHES OF THE HEART by Steve Goodier. Special permission to reprint granted to The Compassionate Friends by the author.

The End of Summer, the Autumn of Our Healing and a Harvest of the Heart

September summer has always been a time of nostalgia for me. The days are noticeably shorter with daytime temperatures beginning to cool down and the slightest chilliness of beautiful star filled evenings requiring a sweatshirt or sweater. Early morning streets are filled with children going back to school. Most everyone is finally back to work, relaxed and sharing the adventures and experiences of summer vacations. And then one day, there is a wind from the west. And just by its feel you know these are the last days of summer and that fall will soon gently ease itself into our Rocky Mountains. Before we know it, the canyons are blazing with the fire of fall color working its way down into our valley.

It is a beautiful season and perhaps my favorite time of the year. We can sit for hours in Sugar House Park, watching the birds gather and head south for the winter and enjoy the trees now fully aflame with oranges, browns and reds so beautiful it can make our hearts sing with joy. And yet, with all the beauty that surrounds us, we as bereaved parents sometimes struggle to let it all in. For as summer wanes, and fall begins, our thoughts naturally turn to grammar school homework, high school parties and dances, college football games, shopping for new clothes, and the specter of holidays ahead without those of our children who have too soon been taken from us.



It is difficult to write about this just today. I just went to a wedding of my closest friends' son, where Jacob's cousins, nieces and nephews, brothers and sisters and past friends all came to gether for three days of reunion and celebrations filled with stories of the past. On Sunday, over thirty people were at my place sharing enchiladas and childhood memories of those years we were all together. And of course, the occasional, "I wish Jake were here to see this." For me, not an hour went by that I did not think of him or see his face in his young nephew who bears his name.

And yet ... and yet the season, the color, the beautiful days and evenings, the weddings, the parties and football games, and the eminent holidays now fill me with thanksgiving that Jake was part of my life for sixteen years. No small thing that. I consider myself lucky for that much time, for I know so many friends who had much less time with their beloved children. So this year, I choose to find the good and the beautiful of the season, and let the holidays come. For, it is in remembering his face and the goodness of his life and the beauty of the season, I find sweet healing for my grieving soul.

(Continued on page 7)

(The End of Summer, the Autumn of Our Healing and a Harvest of the Heart continued from page 6)

Very soon now, autumn and the harvest season will be upon us, and the bounty of summer's growth will begin to fill our barns and sheds. And this will be an opportunity for us, even though we grieve, to discover the rich harvest of memories with those of our lost children. In their season, they provided us with a bounty of their own. If we are able to accept it, this can be a fall season where we reflect on their abundance of smiles, laughter, humor, growth, learning, and sharing of love. God how we loved them and how they loved us. Even through all the difficulties, the energetic exchanges of opinions and ideas, the heartaches, the tears, anxiety and disappointments, we cannot avoid the fact that we loved them with a measure beyond our comprehension. And in spite of the difficult times, their sweet and sometimes very short lives provided us with an abundant harvest of experiences that are able, if we let them, to bless us with healing memories to last for as long as we live.

So as we say goodbye to summer, as best we can, let us welcome the fall season and the coming holidays and all the beauty these seasons can and will bring to us. I fully realize that for those of us most recently bereaved, this will be difficult, and in our sorrow and grief, seem perhaps almost impossible. Please let me reach out my hand and my heart to you in the quiet of your reading this right now.

If you can, imagine I am looking right into your eyes with all the compassion I can muster. And in that moment, I will share your tears, your agony of loss, and your grief, for I am truly one of you. I am after all, and have been a Compassionate Friend for over eleven years now. And as we share this moment, please hear the warmest feelings of my heart as I say to you this wretched agony of grief, this painful time of suffering, and this nightmare and horror you now feel will pass. At some point I promise you will begin to experience the light at the end of this painful tunnel of grief.

I promise you will have summers and falls and holidays to come filled with healing memories of your children. I promise as Halloween comes, and you are finally able to turn your porch light on to welcome trick-or-treaters, you will see your own children in the bright and joyful faces at your front door, and smile and be glad they once blessed your life. I also promise the time will come when you will move past Halloween and look forward to Thanksgiving and the December holidays.



As I wrote earlier, I realize this may be too soon for some of you. All I ask is that you be willing to let these

most difficult times pass -- as I have promised they will, and allow your hearts to soften and show you their rich places where you still love your children. For it is in those painful, tender places you will begin to find the abundance of love given to you by your children which will bring healing. And when that happens, you will look forward to Thanksgiving Day with its abundantly filled table, and realize an equally abundant harvest of the heart.

Whenever we are able to accept it and embrace it, the grace of healing will come to all of us. Of course our lives will never be the same. We will always have the sadness of their absence in our lives and experience those frequent bittersweet times when we simply miss them. But the dark pain and suffering of their passing will itself pass - this I can promise you. For in these past eleven years I have looked into every dark and secret corner of grief, and have spent with you, all those endless weeks and months of intense pain and tears.

I have shared those endless days of self-recrimination and regret and anger. And in all this I have finally found the autumn of my healing, and have feasted in the abundant harvest of love. Yes indeed, I promise you the light of joyful memory at the end of this dark tunnel.

So may you look forward to the fall and all its beauty and grace, and anticipate the holidays' peace and joy with a sure knowledge that this present darkness will pass, and that your life will once again be able to embrace the abundance of harvest enjoyed by the rest of your family and friends. And along with Rabbi Harold Kushner, who wrote the book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, be able to say as he did of his own son's life and death, "... I think of Aaron and all that his life taught me, and I realize how much I have lost and how much I have gained. Yesterday seems less painful, and I am not afraid of tomorrow."

Erin Silva
erinsilva@earthlink.net
 TCF, Salt Lake City, Utah
 ~reprinted from Salt Lake City Sept/Oct/Nov 2002
 Newsletter

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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TREASURER/COMMUNITY OUTREACH Tammie Barrera 847-872-9684 Julyson2@gmail.com *Aaron Barrera* Age 29 – Auto accident due to Diabetes

SECRETARY Bambi Nichols 262-220-9323 lcbtsec@aol.com Levi Nichols Age 19 - Accidental death

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Thelma Perkins 262-279-6178 *Andrew C Perkins* Age 17 – Auto Accident

LIBRARIAN Kathleen Rettinger 847-922-7456 *Alexander Rettinger* Age 18 – Of suicide

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

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