



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

September 2020 Newsletter



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



Chapter Leaders

Notes from Toni & Susan

ZOOM MEETINGS

Our meeting locations are still not open so we will continue the virtual meetings through Zoom. Susan Banks has spearheaded this effort. Our next Zoom meetings will be on **Thursday, September 24th and October 1st**. Susan will send out email notices to all members and explain how the meeting works as well as give the code for joining the meeting. The topic of that meeting is "Ask It Basket" members will be asked to give Susan questions that they have about their grief experience. Once gathered, the questions will be presented to the entire group (anonymously) and discussed by everyone. It should be interesting. We hope to see you on the 20th!

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY FALL CLEANUP

Our next Adopt a Highway clean-up day for Autumn is Saturday September 26, 2020, 9:00 – 12:30. We will meet at 9:00 am in the Walmart parking lot. We will meet in the parking section across from the garden department. Dress in long pants, socks and shoes to protect your feet, long sleeves and a hat for sun protection. You can bring Water and a light snack to enjoy, when you take a break. The rain date is Saturday October 3, 2020. More information will be available as the date gets closer.

ANNUAL CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY - VIRTUALLY

We have started to plan for the Compassionate Friends of Northern Lake County Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony. This year we will have our ceremony by zoom, at this time the church is limiting access to the facility. *The Ceremony will be Sunday December 13, 2020 beginning at 6:30.* We will have more information to send to you as we complete our planning. If you have any questions, please contact Toni at tnesheim@sbcglobal.net or cell 847.204.7585 or Susan at cell 847.366.9375 or lanwesmar@comcast.net

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 cannot 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 Martinhlgail@aol.com

Autumn Tears



We look back on September and we realize that somehow, we made it through those dreaded first days of school. Whether it was the anticipation or the actual

days that were the worst, we survived. We used our faith, our support systems or just plain hard work and made it over yet another hurdle. We watched small children heading for their first day of kindergarten, listened to excited teenagers talk of high school and heard stories of children leaving home to attend post-secondary school. Somehow, we rode the waves of grief and found ourselves ashore again.

As these waves subside new ones will build as we head into the holidays that speak of, and to, children. Halloween will soon approach and for some, painful memories. Thanksgiving arrives to exemplify family and togetherness and Christmas looms ahead. These special days are forever reminders of our loss – the costumes we'll never sew, the empty chair at turkey dinner, the fun and magic we'll never share with someone we love. Forever reminders that our child has died.

To survive when these events and anniversary days come around let's find time to think of the good memories we have – the announcement of our long awaited pregnancy at Thanksgiving dinner, the look of excitement on our son's first Halloween night, the vision of our daughter helping prepare the turkey dinner. These holidays will always be reminders that our child died. Let us also make them reminders that our child lived! They left us memories more precious than any others to hold and celebrate!

By Penny Young, TCF Powell River, British Columbia

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 a while. 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.

It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens, but it's never gone.



- Rose Kennedy



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

Chris Houchin	September 3	Son of Scott Houchin & Heather McDonald
Shannon McCarty	September 5	Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hayes
Mary Margaret (Maggie) Miles	September 5	Daughter of Jim & Mary Lou Miles
Kevin Lopez	September 13	Son of Diahnn Estes Lopez
Anthony Alexander Sosa	September 16	Son of Yvette Sosa
Shane Betar	September 21	Son of Leia Betar
José De Jesús Hernández	September 24	Son of Jesús and Virginia Hernández
Eduardo Chavez-Nuño	September 27	Son of Maria Del Carmen Nuño
Donette Klawonn	September 30	Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
Tony Trejo	September 30	Son of Martina Williamson & Victor Trejo
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

ANNIVERSARIES

Brian Scott Ludlow	September 1	Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik
Donyel Prather	September 1	Son of Donna Prather
Levi Nichols	September 5	Son of Bambi Nichols
Anthony Alexander Sosa	September 12	Son of Yvette Sosa
Marleea Gerfen	September 13	Daughter of Marsha & Lee Bell
Brian Scott Engle	September 13	Son of Louise Engle
Heidi Anne Herrmann	September 14	Daughter of Bonnie Brackus
Mike Curtis	September 17	Son of Sonya Curtis
Aaron R Moore	September 19	Son of Rob & Sherry Moore
Joshua William Bowman	September 26	Son of Robin Bray Nephew of Kimberlee Christensen
Kelsey Heaps	September 26	Son of Dawn Heaps Brother of Steven Heaps
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

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

We are Survivors

By Phyllis and Moe Beres
TCF, Babylon, NY

In the beginning we are survivors groping and clawing
merely to rise and face each day without our children
WITHOUT OUR CHILDREN
Intellectually we know the reality we have gone through
funerals wakes/shivas memorials
WE KNOW THE REALITY
but emotionally we cannot (nor should we) come to
terms with this reality
one cannot make this emotional commitment called
parenting
then abruptly shut it off after a funeral
whether our child was six months or sixty our love
our sacrifice our future cannot be measured by a
chronological clock
thus we cling to the hope that this is a bad dream
a mistake that soon there will be a knock at the door
the phone will ring we'll hear their footsteps upstairs
and they will be back where they belong
BACK WHERE THEY BELONG

In the beginning we face each day with disbelief we
plod on
but we want our children back
not their pictures not their clothes not their memories
WE WANT OUR CHILDREN BACK

As months turn into years, years into years
our lives start to "normalize"
(although we will never be the same again)
emotions begin to catch up with intellect
we gradually grudgingly come to realize that they are
never coming back
to the way they were
(we seek out psychics to connect with them where they
are now)

As parents we have the need to nurture
(I will ALWAYS be your parent you will ALWAYS be my
child)
we are compelled to make an emotional compromise
and
keep them alive in different ways
like the caterpillar transforming into a butterfly our chil-
dren take on new lives
to be sure it is not the way we want it to be but now
in our hearts and in our heads we say
"this is the way it is this is the way it is going to be"
Now we are parents again and they are our children
we have paid the ultimate price for wisdom strength
and courage
and though we will never be the same again
we will BE

We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of
The Compassionate Friends. Copyright 1997



**The beautiful wildflowers that
burst forth in the spring have
inspired a host of stories in
many cultures. – myths that
describe the flowers' origins and uses.**

**A Shoshone Indian legend even
explains the existence of all
wildflowers: "Wild blooms are
the footprints of little children
who have died and come back to
gladden us."**

Elizabeth Silverthorne
Texas Highways, April 1999
From Denton Texas BP/USA
Newsletter

DEATH'S AFTERMATH

(To a recently bereaved parent)
By Shirley Ottman
North Texas Chapter BP/USA

**Just a little while ago
I walked where you are walking now.
Your child was special too, I know,
and was quite different from mine.
Yet love is love and death is death
and pain is pain.
Your pain is mine;
my pain is yours.
Come, friend, let us search for hope to-
gether.**



Bread Crumbs-- Finding Our Way Back

By Rich Edler

Bread crumbs are all we have.

They are what are left behind after the death of our child. They are our memories and our mementos.

A bread crumb is the little answering machine cassette tape that says "Hi, it's me. Leave a message at the beep." We may be the only people with a cassette tape in our safe deposit box. It's not much, a few quick words, but it's his voice - a small crumb from the original.

A bread crumb is his favorite shirt that I still can't part with, so I wear it for good luck on special days. A bread crumb is the last Father's Day card he wrote in his own hand before he went off to college.

Thanks for everything Dad, especially the \$. My years at home were better than words can say and I never took anything for granted. I've had the best childhood anyone could have. Thank you for the ideas and opportunities I grew up with. I love you. Mark

I call these things crumbs because they are a disappointing piece of the real thing, but treasured because they are all we have.

I also think there is a second way of looking at this. Bread crumbs are a part of children's stories symbolizing signposts along the way to help lead us out of the forest - to find our way back to the land of the living, at least if the birds don't eat them.

I like to think that the return from grief is like finding our own way out of the forest. Great changes or signposts mark the way if we will only follow the bread crumbs. I think of them as gifts left behind by our children. They change us and they lead us out of the forest-but at a very different place than we first went in. Here are three I have found. Maybe you will find others.

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."

Crumb Two

We find our real self on the road back. After the loss of a child and a period of emptiness, we do eventually come back. But we come back differently - and I believe better - than the person that entered that awful forest. With our new understanding of priorities, we listen again to "that still small voice" that we silenced in the race to climb the career ladder or have the "perfect life" or do what our parents or teachers thought we "should" do. We find new courage to be the person we really are.

We begin living from the inside out instead of the other way around - from a sense of what is important, not what is expected. From a life of "what's in it for me?" to "how can I help you?" We discover new and compassionate friends, and sometimes drift away from old ones. We go from a thousand name Rolodex of contacts to a handful of people we love.

We often also find our spiritual center and an inner peace. We become unafraid to die, at the same time we are beginning to live again.

Crumb Three

We pick up one more gift that I have noticed. We seem to get anointed with an ability to help someone else. You know what I mean. We didn't want it. We didn't ask for it. But we got it, anyway. It's almost like a giant invisible radar screen gets mounted on our head and we now pick up vibrations from other people in need. And we find that we really can help. People seek us out. People who don't know what to say when a child dies call us and ask: "Could you please go over?" We know we can and will, if only to listen.

(Continued on page 6)

(Bread Crumbs--Finding Our Way Back
continued from page 5)

I am reminded of the story of a little boy who arrived home late from school. "Where have you been?" his mother asked. "I was helping Timmy who broke his bike," the child answered. "But, Honey," the mother said, "You don't even know how to fix a bike." "I know Mom," came the reply, "But I was just helping him cry."

Sometimes we can just help someone else cry, and that is enough. Unlike most other people, we can walk directly up to a bereaved parent or sibling, look them in the eye, and say, "I know how you feel." That is what TCF is all about. And in helping another person, we help ourselves heal too.

So, what do we do with these new gifts or breadcrumbs left along the way for us? New priorities. A new sense of self. And the ability to help someone else.

These are definitely good things. They did not come from the death of our child. Nothing good comes from the death of a child. As Rabbi Harold Kushner said in Seattle: "There is no silver lining." But there is change. These changes come after the death, when we recognize that we can't change what happened, but we can change what we do about it.

One day our surviving son, Rick, put his arms around us in a family hug and said "Okay, Mom and Dad, now that we are a family of three instead of four, we each have to live our lives one-third better." That, more than any other moment in our grief, marked our turning point.

My wife has a reoccurring dream. She is in Heaven many years from now and she greets our son. "Okay, Mom," Mark says, "So tell me everything you did after I died?" On that day she will be proud to answer: "I lived the rest of my life one-third better in your name."

I suspect most bereaved parents divide their lives into those two distinct stages of time: before and after the death. What we do in State Two we do in our child's name.

And because we do it, the world after our child died in some small way is changed forever. And when the world in some small way is changed forever, then our child's life continues to make a difference.

And when our child's life continues to make a difference, he or she is never entirely gone.

Rich and his wife Kitty are founding members of the South Bay/LA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. Son Mark died in 1992 and Rich's first book "If I Knew Then What I Know Now" is dedicated to him. His following book, "Into the Valley and Out Again" is the story of a father's grief after the loss of his son and the changes in priorities and approaches to life that follow. Rich served on TCF's National Board of Directors for several years including as president of the board. He died in February of 2002. Kitty is the current president of TCF's National Board of Directors.

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The Secret of TCF

The secret of the Compassionate Friends is simple: there is no line between helped and being helped. In the early months of peoples' membership in TCF, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying and letting the grief flow, and "learning the ropes" of being a bereaved parent.

The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. It is not a big step, for listening to another person sort out their life helps us to sort out our life too. But it is an important step because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All of the energy had been going inward. We had been feeling so empty inside that we kept withdrawing into ourselves. But the point when we turn around is the point when we first listen to another, speak the words of comfort and hope, share out pain instead of just feeling our pain. At that time the real healing has started.

~Dennis Klaus PhD, TCF, St. Louis, MO
~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Newsletter July/August 1999
www.tcfatlanta.org/JulyAug99.html

Sometimes We Have To Let Go

Written by Hattie Pridgen, TCF Wilmington, NC (Cape Fear Chapter)

How many times did I tell you that you could not die before I did? Because I could not live if you died. SO MANY TIMES. Did I hold you here too long to suffer more than you should? I could not bear the thought of life without you. Children should not die before their parents.

How many times has my heart cried "I lied, I lied, I didn't mean it," since that last afternoon when I knew it was time to let you go. You told me that you loved me more than anything but you wanted to go home to Heaven. I told you it was Okay, that I wanted you to go and not have to suffer anymore.

I told you that when a child is born the cord that binds a mother and child together is cut, but there is an invisible cord that binds us that can never be broken. That wherever you go I will always be with you, and no matter where I am you would always be with me.

Because I loved you more than life itself I had to let you go. But my heart still cries, "I didn't mean it, it was a lie, I didn't want you to die."

But I will always carry you in my heart, and part of my heart and soul went with you that day. I know that you are waiting for me in Heaven. ONLY THEN WILL I BE WHOLE AGAIN.

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Newsletter July/August 2002

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/JulyAug2002.html>

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 or courage 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 shares 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.

Renée Little Fort Collins, CO
~reprinted from the TCF Colorado September 2007 Newsletter
<http://www.tcfcolorado.org>.)

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 joyful, 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 terrible?

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

There is no satisfactory response for an unresolvable dilemma.

Not all questions have answers.

Unanswered whys are a part of Life.

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 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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