



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter

September 2023 Newsletter



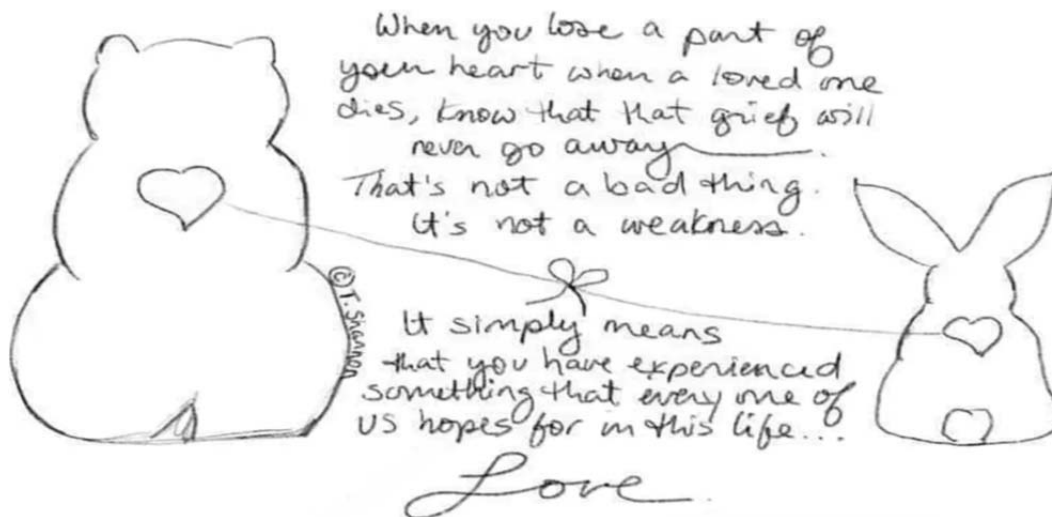
A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents



Chapter Leader Notes from Susan

Dear friends

Autumn is approaching and this brings changes to our lives. For some of us it's the start of a new school year, the season will be changing, and we will need to prepare our gardens and homes for winter, and most will be thinking ahead for the holidays. As the new season arrives, embrace it and be gentle with you. I know I'm always thinking of my son, Westley as I return to school and what he might have been doing with his life. It does cause me sorrow and I give these thoughts time to settle, and I do my best to continue and move forward into my work and know that this time of year will come and go. I do my best to join the season and find the moments that are meaningful to my family and myself. Your friend, Susan ~ Westley's mom.



We have a few events coming up for our chapter please take a moment to read the up coming chapter events.

I will have detailed information about our candle lighting ceremony in the October newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact me at Lanwesmar@comcast.net or 847.366.9375

Take care, Susan, Westley's mom

Lake Villa Meeting Northern Illinois Chapter TCF

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

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

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

Holy Family Church

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



Upcoming events for our Chap- ter.

You are invited to attend The HeArt Remembers memorial "make and take" event for parents, grandparents, siblings, family members and friends. Each person may choose a simple craft project and create a very personal memorial of your loved one for you to take home. We will have a brief meeting before we begin our evening of creating art. Thursday September 21, 2023. 7:00 – 8:30pm

Saturday October 7, 2023, Adopt a Highway Clean – up, rain date Saturday October 14, 2023.

Our Adopt a Highway event for our Northern Lake County IL Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is SATURDAY, October 7, 2023. Meet at 8:45 am to review rules and safety guidelines. (Front Garden side of the Walmart parking lot) Begin clean-up at 9:00 am. *Rain date is Saturday, October 14, 2023.* We can organize with more detail at the site on Saturday October 7. The section of road we have adopted begins at the corner of Deep Lake Road and IL Route 173 going north on Deep

Lake Road to the County Line. It is approximately 2.02 miles. There is a sign with our group name identifying the location.

A few things to know for the cleanup:

No children under 10 are allowed.

Wear long sleeves, long pants, a hat, and gloves that are waterproof.

Bring water, bug spray and sunscreen.

Bring a "grabber" if you have one or we a few to share.

Please review the video for your information before joining us at our event.

<https://lakecountyil.new.swagit.com/videos/16309?t=s=446>

First Thursday of the month meeting on December 7, 2023, is our Zoom meeting. At this meeting you will be invited to light a candle for your loved one and share a picture with those joining the meeting. This will not be a formal Candle Lighting Ceremony, but we will honor the memories of our loved one with readings, lighting a candle and showing a picture. I will send an email and the Zoom link for the meeting the week of November 27, 2023.

Sunday December 10, 2023, Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony; The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. Informational flyers will be included in the October and November newsletters.

If you have any questions about the mentioned events, please call, email, or text Susan at 847.366.9375 or Lanwesmar@comcast.net



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED 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, if 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
Korey Hill	September 6	Son of Deena Hill
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
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
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
Nick Weber	October 16	Son of Glenda Weber
		Brother of Karen Lumusga
Martin H Bernal	October 17	Son of Leticia Bernal
Jennifer Corbett Dennis	October 17	Daughter of Joan Corbett
Timothy James Pitzen	October 18	Grandson of Alana Anderson
Brian Keough	October 20	Son of Kathleen Keough
Autumn Ward	October 20	Granddaughter of Erin & Luke Ward
Donyel Prather	October 22	Son of Donna Prather
Kelly Klawonn	October 23	Son of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
Aaron R Moore	October 24	Son of Rob & Sherry Moore
Colin Henderson	October 27	Son of Lisa Henderson

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
Brendan Hall	September 5	Son of Diane Arndt
Anthony Alexander Sosa	September 12	Son of Yvette Sosa
Marleea Gerfen	September 13	Daughter of Marsha & Lee Bell
Heidi Anne Herrmann	September 14	Daughter of Bonnie Brackus
Mike Curtis	September 17	Son of Sonya Curtis
Victoria Pickett	September 17	Daughter of Rose Hernandez
Luke D Laskowski	September 18	Son of Pam & Mark Laskowski
Aaron R Moore	September 19	Son of Rob & Sherry Moore
Kelsey Heaps	September 26	Son of Dawn Heaps
Sharon Beth Gray	October 4	Daughter of Pam Gray
Martin H Bernal	October 6	Son of Leticia Bernal
Elora Jane Montgomery	October 11	Daughter of Linda & Christopher Montgomery
Tracie Musich	October 19	Daughter of Trisha Musich
Autumn Ward	October 20	Granddaughter of Erin & Luke Ward
Kerrin Fleming	October 21	Daughter of Barbara Fleming
Heather Donnelly	October 23	Daughter of Daniel Donnelly



The Garden of Memories

Once there was a garden of most beautiful flowers, their sweet scent would drift on the air, and butterflies would grace the blooms with their gentle wings. People would come from all over to visit this quiet serene garden, and spend time to get to know each other, and the quiet older woman that owned it. She was happy to share her garden with all who came, and would reflect back on her life in stories she would share.

One day this lovely lady passed away and her house and garden were sold. The new owner loved the flowers, but she was a very selfish person, she would cut the blooms, and take them inside to display in vases around inside. This made the people of the town very sad, as the lovely garden slowly disappeared. And all that remained were the memories.

Are we any different than this new owner? The old lady knew the way to really enjoy the garden, was to share it, and not keep it inside for herself. Our children we have lost are our gardens, and to fully spread the beauty of their garden we must share them with others. Let their beauty and fragrance drift free, share them with others, tell a memory, someone is listening.

Remember the movie, Forrest Gump? How he sat on the bench and reflected on his life to all that came by? People would sit letting bus after bus go by just so they could listen. We all have a story to tell and others are waiting for us to share our gardens.

Borrowed with love from Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends Atlanta Area Chapters July - August 2002



Can We Hold Back the Night?

I read with interest Mitch Carmody's response to Linda (Ryan's mom) in the August 12, 2007 on-line newsletter. I especially like the last two sentences in Mitch's writing. He said: "The world is very harsh and the moment our child is born they are vulnerable to attack from all fronts. We love them unconditionally and do the best we can, but we cannot hold back the night."

Guilt is a powerful emotion, and it seems to be a common feeling for a newly bereaved parent. We "what if" ourselves to death. "What if" I had noticed the symptoms sooner and taken my child to the hospital. "What if" I hadn't bought that new car for my child? "What if" I had paid more attention and noticed that my child was severely depressed and gotten help for him/her? "What if" I had been more watchful and noticed that my child was getting in with the wrong crowd, etc., etc., and.....etc.. It seems normal and right to feel guilt. But one of the problems with guilt is that it is a somewhat useless and debilitating emotion "after the fact" (after the fact of our child's death). It is true that sometimes guilt will prompt us to change a bad habit, stop doing something we shouldn't do and begin to do something we should do. When guilt is correctly tied to our conscience it can cause us to take a better

(Continued on page 5)

(Hold Back the Night continued from page 4)



action, go down a better path, make a change we need to make, become a better person. In these cases, guilt prompts actions, which are better and right. But, when our child is dead and we cannot take an action to bring the child back, guilt may lay like a

heavy rock on our heart, since there's no way to correct what went wrong.

The specific cause of my daughter, Bonnie's, death was an automobile accident. Bonnie was an inexperienced driver and she made a driving mistake. A terrible series of random occurrences played out, and it happened that a larger vehicle traveling the legal speed on the highway over the rise in the road and slammed directly into her side (the driver's side) of the vehicle. No, I didn't tell her to drive this other person's vehicle, and I certainly wish she hadn't. But, "What if" I had exercised more parental control over her? "What if" I had been a stricter father and demanded that she be at home at a certain reasonable time each night? "What if" I had broken up her friendship with the guy who owned the vehicle she was driving (then she wouldn't have been out with him that night, all night)? "What if" I had taken her on many driving sessions myself and helped her be a better driver? "What if" I had impressed on her firmly that she was never, ever to drive someone else's car? "What if", "what if", "what if".....

As a bereaved parent, I was troubled by my part in the chain of events that led to what happened. Simply by not doing something (being strict, etc.) had I allowed/caused this to happen? In fairness, Bonnie on her own had corrected some things in her life a few months prior to her accident. She had pulled away from most of the bad influences in her life, had gotten a part time job, and was going down a better path. And maybe I can say this on behalf of bereaved fathers (and mothers), we are pulled in many different directions as parents. For fa-

thers, there's bills to pay, grass to cut, cars to repair, toilets to unstop, etc. For mothers there's meals to fix, housework to do, children to take to the doctor, teachers to talk to, etc.. And I think I can safely say that we are all imperfect parents. All human beings are imperfect, and since parents are human, well.....you see the point.

So then, how should we see our "part" in what happened to our child? As mature adults usually 20 to 35 years older than our child, we are obligated to set a good example for our children using our values, morals, and experience. And of course, we should share verbally with our child what she/he needs to hear. And our children have certain basic needs that we must satisfy. But can we hold back all the "night"-the bad influences, the dangerous deeds, the random occurrences, genetic bad health, etc.? Maybe we need to "cut ourselves some slack" as bereaved parents.

We are imperfect just like our children. Maybe now is the time to look at the man in the mirror and say, "I tried, I tried. I made some mistakes, in fact, I may have made a lot of mistakes, but in my own way, I did try." We loved our children and we didn't want this to happen to them, but maybe they understood our frailties better than we know. And maybe we can come out of our own "night" of sadness and move into the sunlight.

Written by David Haddock Clinton, Mississippi
In memory of Bonnie Catherine Haddock
(02/06/1985-08-13-2002)
David.Haddock@mid.state.ms.us



Welcome...The Classroom for Learning to Live Again

Many of us are very aware of classrooms at this time of the year as the new school year begins for our children and young people of all ages. For some, the experience is not one they look forward to with pleasure, and it means the end of the carefree, unscheduled days of the summer. There was no need in their lives for continuous disciplined thinking and living. There were happy vacations, lots of swimming in a pool, picnics, and lots of baseball playing --- all requiring lots of running and yelling, and of course the quiet lazy times when they could read about their special interests, work on hobbies, or just do nothing.

Now they are required to settle down into a set schedule and routine of doing what they may not especially enjoy at school, in the classroom and at home. They must adjust to the confinement of sitting behind a desk for a specific time and to the need to concentrate for long periods of time on courses that are required for their education, but in which they have no special interest and which they may not even be able to comprehend. So, they must discipline their thinking, or they will be disciplined with extra work, low or failing grades, seemingly unfair, demanding teachers, and with questioning parents.

We can liken this setting somewhat, but in a much more intense way, to bereaved parents as they attempt to pick up the pieces of their lives after their child has died and attempt to make some sense out of it all. Our happy carefree summer was the time before we experienced this most crushing loss, no matter how large or numerous our problems may have been. Compared to this loss, all other problems simply fade away as if they never existed. And now, at least for a time, we are faced with the belief that there can never be any more summers. We must learn to climb out of this abyss. For those who have accomplished this, they report that this education is the most difficult work anyone will ever do. We can imagine that we are in a classroom. Here, we are encouraged because we learn that all the other students are bereaved parents. So, the first step upward is when we learn that we are not alone, that there are those around us who do understand, and who really do know how it feels and how painful it really is. Next, we discover that there are no

teachers to tell us what is right and what is wrong. Instead, there are guides to assure us they and others more advanced than we are, have also had the same thoughts and feelings, or similar ones. This assurance that we are not "cracking up" gives us the confidence we need to climb up several more steps.

At this point, we find that it is becoming easier to concentrate on at least some of the simple daily tasks, such as grocery shopping or planning and preparing a meal or making a special dessert the family hasn't had for so long. Seeing their approval and appreciation gives us the power to discipline ourselves to try even harder because we see and feel that we have made a lot of progress with this "course" which we are required to "pass".

It doesn't matter if, during our most difficult periods, we slip back down a few steps. Because by this time, we have climbed the steps of concentrations and disciplines. We have the assurance that there are many hands reaching out to us and voices encouraging us, assuring us that we are almost there. However, it is always necessary for each one of us to take each step by himself. Finally, we just know beyond a shadow of a doubt, that if others did it and they believe in us, then we can do it, too. So, no matter at what step you are in the "course" in this classroom, you can receive the help, the assurance, and the encouragement you may need to "graduate". Then you may help the many others who every day are just beginning and are just entering this classroom.

For you the first step may be to come to our meeting where you can meet and talk with the other "students" who are still struggling at various levels with the same "course" that you are. Even if you don't need us, we need you. Take that first big step and come to the meetings... you will get the help you need.

Reprinted from the --Bereaved Parents USA of Tri County, MO Newsletter



Sibling Grief - Certain Words

By Scott Mastley,
Duluth, GA

My mother paged me while I was at work this afternoon, and I called her at home. She asked if I would like to go see a movie. Her question triggered many thought waves. I wanted to go with her, to be with her, but I couldn't just leave work. I wish I could have protected her from the loneliness. She was having a rough day like me, and I needed to talk. How was dad at work? Was he struggling to perform like me? Did he have to concentrate to finish anything?

I regret not doing what is most important. I should have talked with my boss and left work to be with my mother when she wanted to spend time with me. I feel great sympathy for my parents, but I have to admit that I don't grieve with them. We don't grieve together. We talk about it, but we usually grieve on our own. I'm guilty of trying to protect them in the same way that my friends try to protect me.

My parents say, "We are here for you. Call us when you need us."

I say, "I know. I will."

They say, "You haven't. You know we think about it every day, all the time. We can talk about it."

I say, "I don't want to be depressing."

They say, "You can be depressing with us. It is depressing."

I say, "I know. I know. I'm here for you too. I just don't want to come out there and cry. I want to be positive."

I think about how I always say "it referring to the car accident, to Chris, death. I should say him." I say "it" because the accident took his life; it was the turning point. I am really talking about Chris, his life, and his absence. I'm tired of thinking about the accident, picturing the scene, remembering Chris, last words, and imagining him as he arrived at the hospital. These things are too painful. It is hard to say that Chris died or that he is dead.

If I say that he died, in my mind, it implies that he was sick or weak and that he could not sustain himself any longer. He was vibrant and healthy and full of life. The life didn't leave him on its own; it was knocked out of him in a car accident.

I know that there are people who are walking along the street when they suddenly die. They were also vibrant and full of life. This is just an example of one of our little struggles. I hear surviving siblings say, "My brother was killed in a car accident. A tumor killed my sister. My little brother lost his life to an accidental drug overdose. My big sister didn't make it through surgery." We generally prefer to say that something is responsible for taking the life of our sibling. Saying that he died on a Monday doesn't place accountability for his death on any event. If the event had not occurred, our siblings would still be here, so we feel a need to mention the event in connection with the death.

It is difficult to say that my brother is dead. It is shocking to hear myself say it. The word is final and leaves no questions. It lets you know that Chris is gone forever. He's not going to show up later in the evening. He is not going to call. He is not going to write a letter. He is dead. I hate to say it. He did die and he is dead, but I squirm when I say it like that. It is so matter of fact.

~reprinted with permission
www.survivingasibling.com

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta June/July/August
2003 Newsletter

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/JuneJulyAug2003.html>



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.

Thanks to Rosita Hernandez

**For her donation in memory of her daughter,
Victoria Hernandez**

"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.



WE REMEMBER SUSAN BATTIS

WE ARE SAD TO INFORM YOU THAT, SUSAN BATTIS, PASSED AWAY ON JULY 28, 2023. SHE JOINED THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS IN 2017 AS SHE STRUGGLED WITH THE DEATH OF HER SON, NICK, 24. SHE CHOSE TO HONOR NICK BY VOLUNTEERING TO CREATE A NEW WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE FOR OUR CHAPTER. SHE RECEIVED A TERMINAL DIAGNOSIS SHORTLY AFTER RETIRING FROM HER JOB LAST YEAR. SHE LEAVES AN ADULT DAUGHTER, GWEN. **WE WILL REMEMBER YOU, SUE, AS WELL AS YOUR SON, NICK. GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.**



Butterfly

A butterfly came to me today
and landed upon my knee
His wings were heavy from the rain
I knew you had sent him to me

Only an Angel such as yourself
would care about these things
so I dried him with my breath
and sat him on some leaves

As I sat there watching him
soaking in the Sun
I thought how great it must be
to fly it looks like so much fun

My Angel now you have your wings
Don't let my tears weigh them down
I know someday I will see you again
Until then keep sending the butterflies
around.

by Mary Woody

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta June/July/August
2003 Newsletter

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/JuneJulyAug2003.html>





THE HEART REMEMBERS

Expressions of Love Through Our Hands

You are invited to attend The HeArt Remembers memorial "make and take" event for parents, grandparents, siblings, family members and friends. Each person may choose a simple craft project and create a very personal memorial of your loved one for you to take home.

WHAT: Make your own memorial to your loved one by painting an inspirational rock, color a picture, planting a small terrarium or creating a memory charm cable.

WHEN: THURSDAY, September 21, 2023. 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Millburn Congregational Church
19073 W Old Town Court
Lake Villa/Old Mill Creek, Illinois 60046

WHO: Susan Banks and the steering committee will facilitate the activities.

We hope you will join us for conversation, creativity, and community as we remember our loved ones ♥

Questions? Contact Susan Banks at lanwesmar@comcast.net or 847.366.9375



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

www.iltcf.org

LOVE GIFTS

Enclosed in a check in the amount of _____ to be used as follows (check all that apply):

In loving memory of _____

In honor of _____

Sponsor the newsletter for _____ month) (\$25 pays ½ monthly cost)

Pay for a book for the chapter's Lending Library _____

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter _____

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be included in the "special days" list each month in the newsletter, you must fill out this form that gives us permission to list this information. If you are making a donation, please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends**.

Return to Tammie Barrera, 821 Roberts Road, Winthrop Harbor, IL. 60096

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always appreciated. Please include the author of any written works. Send your items for the newsletter to Vicki Szech at vszech@comcast.net or 31023 Prairie Ridge Road, Libertyville, IL 60048.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive

TCF National Office - 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI - 48393 PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246. The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

Steering Committee 2022 – 2023

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

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

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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

SECRETARY / LIBRARIAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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