



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Miami Valley Chapter Newsletter

TCF Chapter No. 1732, P.O. Box 292112, Kettering, OH 45429 (937) 640-2621

Jan-Feb 2016

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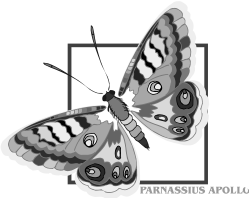
Heartfelt thanks to all of you who joined us for our beautiful **Candle Lighting Ceremony** which was held on December 13th!

Together, at this sweet event, we remembered and honored our children, siblings and grandchildren who have left our world too soon.

And thanks, too, to those of you who couldn't be there but lit your own candles and had your own remembrances!

Now, as we begin another new year, your Miami Valley Chapter Planning Team wishes you peace and comfort and hope.

May we all continue to help each other on our grief journey!



**Chapter meetings are on the
third Wednesday of the month
at Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church
Corner of Bigger Road & Wilmington Pike
Kettering, Ohio**

Directions: from Rt 35, exit at Woodman Drive,
go south approximately 4 miles to Wilmington Pike,
turn left, church is about 1/2 mile on right

OR

from I-675, exit onto Wilmington Pike (Exit 7),
go north 2 miles. Church is on left, just after David
Road

Upcoming Meeting Schedule and Topics

**Wednesday, January 20th, 7pm
New Year—New Challenges**

**Wednesday, February 17th, 7pm
Time Doesn't Heal All Wounds**

It's so curious: one can resist tears
and "behave" very well in the hardest hours of grief.
But then someone makes you a friendly sign
behind a window, or one notices that a flower
that was in bud only yesterday has suddenly blossomed,
or a letter slips from a drawer
... and everything collapses.

~Collette
The Compassionate Friends

Today in some strange way
I believe the darkness is where we find
the truest beauty that exists.
Pain strips away all the stuff
that truly has no meaning.

~Angie Cartwright

Grief work is life work – I used to think that my daughter Ashley's death meant I would have to work through my grief. Today I understand that I have to let my grief work through me. We are forever blessed by the experience of loving our children, grandchildren and siblings who have graced our lives. We are forever changed by the experience of grieving their death. TCF allows us to fully experience the pain of loss and the joy of their memories.

~Alan Pederson, TCF

*The Compassionate Friends— A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding,
and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.*

Thank You for your "Love Gifts"
in remembrance of these loved ones ...

- ♥ Tom Gilhooly in memory of his son Ryan:
"Merry Christmas, Ryan!"
- ♥ JoAnn & Brad Nielson in memory of their grandson,
Corey Andrew Richards
- ♥ Tina Grimme & family in memory of her son Keith's
27th birthday on November 16th
- ♥ June Madden in memory of her son,
Donnie Grzywinski
- ♥ Debbie Garber in memory of her son Justin Ratliff's
December 14th Angel Date
- ♥ Mary & Nick Bulzomi in memory of her son, TJ
- ♥ Mary & Bruce Hobbs in memory of their son, Bret
- ♥ Inge Knowles in memory of her son, David
- ♥ Miriam Maue in memory of her son, Chuck
- ♥ Jan Lehman in memory of her son, Bryan Holl
- ♥ Maryellen Fargey in memory of her daughter, Beth
- ♥ Deanna & John McGrath in memory of their son
Jake's 32nd birthday on January 27th
- ♥ Thomas & Dorothy McGrath in memory of their
grandson Jake's 32nd birthday on January 27th
- ♥ Tammie Spence in memory of her son,
Shannon Mason

*And thanks to ALL who gave anonymously!
 (Please contact us if we accidentally omitted any love gift)*

Every donation we receive is greatly needed and equally appreciated and is used to further our vision, "That everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped."

**Please send your "Love Gifts" (tax deductible)
 to**

**The Compassionate Friends,
 Chapter # 1732
 Karen Brown, Treasurer
 P. O. Box 292112
 Kettering, Ohio 45429**

Chapter financial reports are available at the planning meetings.

If you'd like to designate your gift for a particular use, such as a new library book or a newsletter mailing, or towards an event such as the Butterfly Release, please let us know!

Did you know that your United Way contributions can be designated to our local Miami Valley TCF Chapter #1732?

The Compassionate Friends
 Miami Valley Chapter #1732, Dayton, OH 937-640-2621

Chapter Support Meetings
 3rd Wednesdays, 7pm, Sugarcreek Church

Planning Team Meetings
 (all are welcome!)
 2nd Thursdays, 7pm, LaRosa's
 2801 Wilmington Pike near Dorothy Lane

Other Nearby TCF Chapter
 Miami County TCF, West Milton, OH
 Contact Barb Lawrence 937-836-5939

Other Local Dayton Area Support

- *Miami Valley Hospital Perinatal Loss Hot Line, Pregnancy Loss/I Infant Death 937-208-6363
- *Oak Tree Corner, Grief Support for Children 937-285-0199
- *Survivors of Suicide 937-226-0818
 www.suicidepreventioncenter.tk
- *Hospice of Dayton Grief Support 937-256-4490
 800-653-4490
- *Crossroads Hospice Grief Recovery 937-312-3170
 800-603-6673
- *HEALing Together, Franklin, OH Miscarriage, Infant & Toddler Loss, Parent/Grandparent Support 513-705-4056

Other Resources

- *Alive Alone, Support for Death of Only Child or All Children
 Kay Bevington, VanWert, OH: alivalon@bright.net
 419-238-1091, www.alivealone.org
- *American Association of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org

Websites to check out:

www.thegrieftoolbox.com
 Tom Zuba www.TomZuba.com
 Paula Stephens www.crazygoodgrief.com
 Paul S Boynton www.beginwithyes.com

The Compassionate Friends national magazine "We Need Not Walk Alone" is available free through an online subscription at www.compassionatefriends.org - click on "sign up for national publications". If you do not wish to subscribe, you can still view the magazine in the archive once the next issue has been published.

Words for a new year from Lillian Julien



Dear COPE Families:

The New Year often brings a pang of sadness. January is the month of my daughter's passing and each new year I am reminded of the years passing by without her. I think of how much I miss her and all that she is missing.

For so many years the pain felt like my only connection to her. I remember being so afraid that without the pain, she would drift further and further away from me. When eventually I reached a point where I had no room left inside me for the pain, I found a poem she'd written in one of her sketchbooks. When I read it, I felt as if she was speaking to me...

*Pain can only be what you make of it.
If you give it all your power then you are giving into it.
Fight the pain and look one step beyond your hurt
And you will broaden your own self-worth.
If you love yourself enough you are worth it.
If you don't you are not.*

I knew how much I loved my daughter, but the question remained—How much did I love myself?
I had to think long and hard about my own self-worth and a life worth living.
How powerfully my daughter's words impacted my life!

Ironically, this past month I led an art therapy program for COPE parents in my studio. Each one made a collage with a photo of their child and words and images they found in magazines. I asked the group to consider this question. If your child could speak to you, what would they say? If they could create your vision board, what would it look like?

As we begin a new year, you might ask yourself to imagine—what message would your child want to communicate to you in the coming year?

Wishing you answers that bring you peace and comfort in the New Year.

Love,
Lilly

Lillian Julian is the President and Founder of COPE (Connecting Our Paths Eternally), a grief and healing organization dedicated to helping parents and families living with the loss of a child. Find COPE at www.copefoundation.org.

When you hear of others that have joined this journey, it breaks your heart because you already know the path that is ahead of them. You know each footstep along the way, the twists and turns, the ups and downs and the many tears that will be shed. You know how others will expect you to be over it after the funeral, but then there are those that offer kindness and comfort just by being 'there'. You know that when a child, sibling or grandchild dies, grief is not experienced in stages. Grief is messy and tangled. You know the feeling of not knowing who you are any more. The feeling of isolation. You want to share with others to take it one moment at a time and remember that you are not alone.

~Karen Cantrell
The Compassionate Friends, Frankfort, KY

When you accept what has happened, you aren't acknowledging that it is okay
but rather, that you know you must find a way to keep growing and living — even if you don't like it ...
Don't let grief be your constant companion ...
Realize that your grief is born out of unconditional love for your child and rejoice in that love will never end ...
Embracing life again is not a sign that you have stopped missing your baby, but an example of a love that is eternal.

~Wisconsin Perspective Newsletter (Infant Death Center of Wisconsin) via www.compassionatefriends.org



We've barely made it through the holidays of December and January, and now the stores are filled with hearts and flowers and candy, all of it in celebration of the gift of love. But February 14th can be a difficult day for those of us who are grieving and for some it will be the first Valentine's Day since our precious Valentine died. For us there is no celebration; there is only grief.

Sometimes, for fear of "letting go," we may find ourselves "holding on" to our pain as a way of remembering those we love. Letting go of what used to be is not an act of disloyalty and it does not mean forgetting our loved ones who have died. Letting go means leaving behind the sorrow and pain of grief and choosing to go on, taking with us only those memories and experiences that enhance our ability to grow and expand our capacity for happiness.

If our memories are painful and unpleasant, they can be hurtful and destructive. If they create longing and hold us to the past, they can interfere with our willingness to move forward in our grief journey. But it doesn't have to be that way. We can choose which parts of life we shared that we wish to keep and which parts we wish to leave behind. We can soothe our pain by thinking of happy as well as sad memories. The happiness we experienced with our loved ones belongs to us forever.

If we decide to do so, we can choose to embrace Valentine's Day as a special day on which to commemorate our loved ones and to celebrate our love for them. Death ends a life, but it does not end the relationship we have with our loved ones who have died. The bonds of love are never severed by death and the love we shared will never die either. For Valentine's Day this year, we can find a way to honor our loved ones, to remember them and to show them that our love is eternal.

We can build a piece of "memory time" into that particular day, or we can pack the entire day with meaning. Think of it this way: it's much easier to cope with memories we've chosen than to have them take us by surprise. Whether we are facing Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, an anniversary, birthday or any other special day of our own choosing, we can immerse ourselves in the healing power of remembrance. We can go to a special place, read aloud, listen to a favorite song. We can celebrate what once was and is no more.

Personal grief rituals are those loving activities that help us remember our loved ones and give us a sense of connectedness, healing and peace. Creating and practicing personal grief rituals can also help us release painful situations and unpleasant memories, freeing us to make our memories a positive influence in our lives.

What follows are just a few examples of personal grief rituals. The ideas are as unique and as varied as the people who invented them; think of ways that you can adapt them and make them your own. You are limited only by your own imagination.

- * If you're a writer, write. It could be an article, an anecdote, a story, a poem, a song, a letter, an obituary, a eulogy. If you don't want to write for someone else, keep a private journal and write about your feelings as you journey through your grief.
- * Buy a very special candle, decorate it and light it in honor of your loved one.
- * Purchase a book - perhaps a children's book - on coping with the loss of a loved one, and donate it to your local library or school. Place a label inside the front cover inscribed, "In memory of [your loved one's name]."
- * Plant a tree, bush, shrub, garden or flower bed as a permanent growing memorial to your beloved. Mark the site with a memorial plaque, marker, bench or statue.
- * Memorialize your beloved in cyberspace by lighting a virtual candle online.
- * Write a special note, letter, poem, wish or prayer to your beloved, go outside, attach the paper to a balloon and let it go - or place it in a vessel and burn it and watch the smoke rise heavenward.
- * If you are harboring bad feelings or regrets, gather symbols to represent those hurtful or painful situations, events or feelings from your past, place them in a container and hold a private burial or burning ceremony, saying goodbye and releasing them as you do so.
- * Ask relatives, friends, co-workers and neighbors to gather their contributions and put together a scrapbook or box of memories containing mementoes, letters and photographs of your loved one.
- * Celebrate the life of your loved one by continuing favorite traditions or eating favorite foods.
- * Select a Valentine card that you wish your beloved would have picked for you, and mail it to yourself.
- * Give yourself a gift from your loved one that you always wished he or she would have given you, and think of your beloved whenever you use it or wear it.

When you died,

I didn't know the pain
could be this searing, like a
hot blaze burning my soul.

That the depth of despair would
be this jagged, like a razor sharp
abyss or a bottomless hole.

That the sorrow would be this
unspeakable, like an abandoned
ballad void of all lyric.

That my family could recover
from loss so unbearable, it was
simply too hysteric.

I didn't know that the sorrow
would leave me exhausted,
without any reserve.

That the world could be
blind to my suffering, too
uncomfortable to observe.

That it was capable of
shattering my world so
completely out of the blue.

That the fog was this thick,
coating my life like
dense viscous glue.

When you died, I didn't know
my heart would break open
to bleed like a wound.

That the grief dance was this
ugly, like two left feet
cemented in gloom.

That I could survive a
journey without
purpose in view.

That my heart would know
smiles and laughter
not fake or askew.

I didn't know that I would
embrace a sunrise in all its
glory every tomorrow.

Or that my heart would hold
joy at the same time
as sorrow.

When you died, I didn't know
that your death would
propel me into a life full
of gratitude and care.

That your death would
be this heartbreaking,
and compassion for others
would be my repair.

Now I know.

-LYNDA CHELDELIN FELL

Grief Diaries

www.GriefDiaries.com

National TCF

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.,
P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
(630) 990-0010

Toll-Free Number: 1-877-969-0010

TCF web site:

<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

TCF Regional Coordinator for Ohio

Dean Turner

Email: Edean234@aol.com

or phone: 614-402-0004

Miami Valley TCF Chapter Leaders

Tom Gilhooly and Richard Miller

937-640-2621

<http://miamivalleytcf.com>

Tom and Dick honor their sons,

Ryan Gilhooly and Brad Miller,

through their service.

*The sun will rise and set
regardless ...*

*What we choose to do
with the light while it's here*

is up to us.

*~Life's a Dance
Margaret B Moss*



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

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Chapter
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