



**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

July-Aug 2015

Website: <http://www.miamivalleytcf.com>

E-mail: [miamivalleytcf@gmail.com](mailto:miamivalleytcf@gmail.com)



**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

### **Newsletter Address Update Note!**

We're continuing to update our newsletter files/contact lists. If you're receiving this newsletter and want to change your contact info (name, spelling, preferred e-mail or postal address), please e-mail [miamivalleytcf@gmail.com](mailto:miamivalleytcf@gmail.com) or call 937-640-2621 and leave a message—slowly and clearly, please—with your updated info. Also, if you're receiving your newsletter via postal mail and are willing to switch to e-mail, we'd so appreciate saving the postage cost! If by chance you no longer wish to receive the newsletter at all (we hope not!), please let us know, we'll remove you from our list. Thank you!

### **Upcoming Meeting Schedule and Topics**

**Wednesday, July 15th, 7pm  
Loneliness**

**Wednesday, August 19th, 7pm  
Anger**

**A BIG THANK YOU** to all who joined us for our beautiful Butterfly Release on Saturday, June 27th! It was a great afternoon—in spite of the weather—and we hope you all enjoyed sharing it with us!



### **Butterfly**

As you danced in the light with joy, love lifted you.  
As you brushed against this world so gently, you lifted us.

~T.C. Ring

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

- ♥ Tammie Spence in memory of her son,  
Shannon Mason
- ♥ Anne & Mike Schleich in honor of their son,  
Matt's 48th birthday on June 13th
- ♥ Quenetta Wolan in memory of her son,  
Brandon Taylor
- ♥ Brad & JoAnn Nielson in honor of their grandson,  
Corey Richards' June 3rd Angel Date and 27th  
birthday on June 26th
- ♥ Rae Lynn & Mark Cummin in honor of their son,  
David Vantrease's 27th birthday on June 5th

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

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

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

*We depend on and are so grateful for your generous donations  
to continue our mission to reach out to grieving families  
who have lost a precious child, grandchild or sibling.*

*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 Candle Lighting, please let us know!*

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

I don't grieve just for  
the moment my loved one passed.  
I grieve the past, the future, and the now.  
A human being is more than just one moment in time.

~Angie Cartwright

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](http://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](mailto:alivalon@bright.net)  
419-238-1091, [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)
- \*American Association of Suicidology  
[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

Websites to check out:

[www.thegrieftoolbox.com](http://www.thegrieftoolbox.com)  
Tom Zuba [www.TomZuba.com](http://www.TomZuba.com)  
Paula Stephens [www.crazygoodgrief.com](http://www.crazygoodgrief.com)  
Paul S Boynton [www.beginwithyes.com](http://www.beginwithyes.com)

The Compassionate Friends national magazine "We Need Not  
Walk Alone" is available free through an online subscription at  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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 pub-  
lished.

### The Cord

We are connected, my child and I,  
by an invisible cord, not seen by the eye.  
It's not like the cord that connects us till birth -  
this cord can't be seen by any on earth.  
This cord does its work right from the start,  
it binds us together attached by my heart.  
I know that it's there, though no one can see  
the invisible cord from my child to me.  
The strength of this cord is hard to describe -  
it can't be destroyed, it can't be denied.  
It's stronger than any cord man can create.  
It withstands the tests, can hold any weight.  
And though you are gone, though you're not here  
with me,  
*the cord is still there, but no one can see.*  
It pulls at my heart, I am bruised, I am sore.  
But this cord is my lifeline as never before.  
I am thankful that God connects us this way -  
a parent and child, death can't take this away.

Anonymous

### Time Will Ease The Hurt

The sadness of the present days  
Is locked and set in time,  
And moving to the future  
Is a slow and painful climb.  
But all the feelings that are now  
So vivid and so real  
Can't hold their fresh intensity  
As time begins to heal.  
No wound so deep will ever go  
Entirely away,  
Yet even hurt becomes  
A little less from day to day.  
Nothing can erase the painful  
Imprints on your mind,  
But there are softer memories  
That time will let you find.  
Though your heart won't let the  
Sadness simply slide away,  
The echoes will diminish  
Even though the memories stay.

*By: Bruce B. Wilmer  
Loving lifted from  
East Central Indiana's newsletter,  
Jan. 2012 issue.*

### Don't Tell Me

Please don't tell me you know how I feel,  
Unless you have lost your child too.  
Please don't tell me my broken heart will heal,  
Because that is just not true.  
Please don't tell me my son is in a better place,  
Though it is true, I want him here with me.  
Don't tell me someday I'll hear his voice, see his face,  
Beyond today I cannot see.  
Don't tell me it is time to move on,  
Because I cannot.  
Don't tell me to be thankful for the time I had,  
Because I wanted more.  
Don't tell me when I am my old self you will be glad,  
I'll never be as I was before.  
What you can tell me is you will be here for me,  
That you will listen when I talk of my child.  
You can share with me my precious memories,  
You can even cry with me for a while.  
And please don't hesitate to say his name,  
Because it is something I long to hear every day.  
Friend, please realize that I can never be the same,  
But if you stand by me,  
*You may like the new person I become some day.*

~Judi Walker (In Memory of Shane) Copyright 1998

I thought I heard you call out "mom" in the still  
of the night, but it was only my heart wishing,  
longing to hear your voice ... The pain is so  
great at times we wonder if we will survive,  
sometimes we don't want to. We have layers  
and layers of love in our hearts for our children  
whether we had them for 50 years or they were  
silently born. Those layers of love will help us  
continue on, living not one life now, but for  
two.

~Karen Cantrell, Frankfort, KY TCF

Judging another's grief journey  
Only serves to add pain to the heartache  
Every path is different  
Everyone grieves differently  
Help comes from giving  
A hand to steady us  
A shoulder to cry on  
An ear to listen  
As we each walk our own path

~The Grief Toolbox  
[www.thegriefftoolbox.com](http://www.thegriefftoolbox.com)  
[www.facebook.com/griefftoolbox](http://www.facebook.com/griefftoolbox)

by Paula Stephens 3/23/2015

Paula is Founder of Crazy Good Grief, on Facebook and at [www.crazygoodgrief.com](http://www.crazygoodgrief.com)

## What I Wish More People Understood About Losing A Child

**Four and a half years after the death of my oldest son**, I finally went to a grief support group for parents who have lost children. I went to support a friend who recently lost her son. I'm not sure I would've gone except that when I was in her shoes, four years ago, I wish I would've had a friend to go with me. Losing a child is the loneliest, most desolate journey a person can take and the only people who can come close to appreciating it are those who share the experience.

The meeting was a local chapter of **The Compassionate Friends**, an organization solely dedicated to providing support for those who have lost children, grandchildren or siblings. The facilitator was a tall gentleman who had lost his 17 year old son eight years ago. He opened the meeting by saying that dues to belong to the club are more than anyone would ever want to pay. Well, he couldn't be more correct: no one *wants* to belong to this group.

The group of incredible survivors included parents whose children had been killed by drunk drivers, murdered, accidental overdose, alcoholism, suicide and freak accidents. The children's ages ranged from 6-38 years old. When hearing the stories, I had a visceral reaction to being part of this "club," but was also humbled by the greatness of these mothers and fathers.

Most of what I share in this article came from this meeting, but also from my own experience of having lost a child and being four years into that lifelong journey of healing from deep grief. The following five tips can be your compass to help you navigate how to give support to grieving parents on a sacred journey they never wanted to take.

### 1. Remember our children.

The loss of children is a pain all bereaved parents share, and **it is a degree of suffering** that is impossible to grasp without experiencing it first hand. Often, when we know someone else is experiencing grief, our discomfort keeps us from approaching it head on. But we want the world to remember our child or children, no matter how young or old our child was.

If you see something that reminds you of my child, tell me. If you are reminded at the holidays or on his birthday that I am missing my son, please tell me you remember him. And when I speak his name or relive memories relive them with me, don't shrink away. If you never met my son, don't be afraid to ask about him. One of my greatest joys is talking about Brandon.

### 2. Accept that you can't "fix" us.

An out-of-order death such as child loss breaks a person (especially a parent) in a way that is not fixable or solvable — ever! We will learn to pick up the pieces and move forward, but our lives will never be the same.

Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We appreciate your support and hope you can be patient with us as we find our way.

Please: don't tell us it's time to get back to life, that it's been long enough, or that time heals all wounds. We welcome your support and love, and we know sometimes it's hard to watch, but our sense of brokenness isn't going to go away. **It is something to observe, recognize, accept.**

### 3. Know that there are at least two days a year we need a time out.

We still count birthdays and fantasize what our child would be like if he/she were still living. Birthdays are especially hard for us. Our hearts ache to celebrate our child's arrival into this world, but we are left becoming intensely aware of the hole in our hearts instead. Some parents create rituals or have parties while others prefer solitude. Either way, we are likely going to need time to process the marking of another year without our child.

Then there's the anniversary of the date our child became an angel. This is a remarkable process similar to a parent of a newborn, first counting the days, then months then the one year anniversary, marking the time on the other side of that crevasse in our lives.

No matter how many years go by, the anniversary date of when our child died brings back deeply emotional memories and painful feelings (particularly if there is trauma associated with the child's death). The days leading up to that day can feel like impending doom or like it's hard to breathe. We may or may not share with you what's happening.

This is where the process of remembrance will help. If you have heard me speak of my child or supported me in remembering him/her, you will be able to put the pieces together and know when these tough days are approaching. (continued next page ...)

#### 4. Realize that we struggle every day with happiness.

It's an ongoing battle to balance the pain and guilt of outliving your child with the desire to live in a way that honors them and their time on this earth.

I remember going on a family cruise eighteen months after Brandon died. On the first day, I stood at the back of the ship and bawled that I wasn't sharing this experience with him. Then I had to steady myself, and recognize that I was also creating memories with my surviving sons, and enjoying the time with them in the present moment.

As bereaved parents, we are constantly balancing holding grief in one hand and a happy life after loss in the other. You might observe this when you are with us at a wedding, graduation or other milestone celebration. Don't walk away — witness it with us and be part of our process.

#### 5. Accept the fact that our loss might make you uncomfortable.

Our loss is unnatural, out-of-order; it challenges your sense of safety. You may not know what to say or do, and you're afraid you might make us lose it. We've learned all of this as part of what we're learning about grief.

We will never forget our child. And in fact, our loss is always right under the surface of other emotions, even happiness. We would rather lose it because you spoke his/her name and remembered our child, than try and shield ourselves from the pain and live in denial.

**Grief is the pendulum swing of love.** The stronger and deeper the love the more grief will be created on the other side. Consider it a sacred opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with someone who has endured one of life's most frightening events. *Rise up with us.*



#### Our Library

This article was submitted for our chapter newsletter by  
Deanna McGrath, mom of Jake.  
Thank you, Deanna!

Did you know we have a very robust library with many great books available to borrow for FREE! Simply sign the book out and bring it back when you are done. Stress and hassle-free.

The books featured offer short reflections, affirmations, quotations, bible references, prayers (warning-religious content!) on different grief topics.

#### **A Season of Grief** by Ann Dawson

Reviews describe this as poignant, inspiring, and encouraging reflections for those who grieve from one who has been there. For Ann Dawson, her "season of grief" came with the death of her 18-year-old son, Andrew, who was killed in a car accident the summer after his high school graduation. As she sought to find meaning in the senselessness of her son's death, Ann looked to the words of others who had grieved the loss of a loved one. The insights and stories from Ann's own experience are carefully placed alongside the comforting and often inspiring words of writers like C.S. Lewis and Kahlil Gibran.

#### **Getting Out of Bed in the Morning** by Alice J. Wisler

Reviews characterize this as a safe place to reconcile painful losses - a graceful guide through the uncharted and often complex landscape of grief and loss. The book written in devotional format as a companion for those going through sorrow associated with loss. Alice lost her four-year-old son, Daniel, in 1997, after eight months of vigorous cancer treatment.

On a personal note, I have read excerpts from each book. Though a bit too religion based for my taste, I enjoyed the format of short independent vignettes that require no commitment to the entire book. And, as with any grief book I have read, there are many passages that speak to me and offer comfort. Let me share two.

#### From **A Season of Grief** –

"I used to wonder if there would ever come a day when I would stop weeping for my dead child."

"Gradually I came to realize that the shedding of tears was part of my healing, like a cool salve on a wound. My tears are my gift to myself, a way of physically acknowledging the love I have for my child, a way of saying 'I love you to the innermost depths of my being.'"

#### From **Getting Out of Bed in the Morning** –

*My eyes have grown dim with grief; my whole frame is but a shadow. -Job 17:7*

We don't choose grief; it winds itself around us. It damages our eyes with tears, and it entangles our body and our soul. It can make us short of breath, lack energy, and become all consuming. With horrendous new grief, there is agony, and it feels like there is no escape.

**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](mailto: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.



In French, you don't really say, "I miss you."

You say, "tu se manques," which means,  
"you are missing from me."

I love that.



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

*Miami Valley  
Chapter  
Newsletter*

TCF Chapter No. 1732  
P.O. Box 292112  
Kettering, OH 45429

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

*July-Aug 2015*