



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

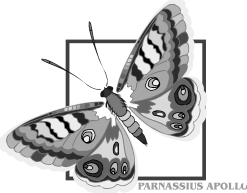
*Miami
Valley
Chapter
Newsletter*

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

May-June 2016

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

E-mail: miamivalleytcf@gmail.com



Balloon/Butterfly Release!

***Saturday, June 18th
2:00-5:00pm
Phillips Park
2144 Dayton Xenia Road, Beavercreek***

Please join us for our annual summertime event, family-friendly and fun! Spend the afternoon with us for a short program, snacks and a beautiful release of balloons and butterflies! Remember all our children in this sweet way ...

We will release the balloons — with your messages written on them if you like — shortly after the 2:00 starting time, so keep this in mind when planning your arrival time. Then we'll follow with food, the remainder of the program and the butterfly release.

A snack to share is appreciated but not required.

Hope to see you there!

**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, May 18th, 7pm
Lessons Learned From Grief**

**Wednesday, June 15th, 7pm
Resilience**

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

When grieving the death of your child, grandchild or sibling, the simplest task can become so difficult. You may also find it difficult to return to work, take part in celebrations and do the things you used to do. Give yourself as much time as you need, we have suffered a tremendous, devastating loss and are on a journey that lasts a lifetime. Surround yourself by others that truly understand what you are going through. "We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends."

~Karen Cantrell, TCF, Frankfort KY

We welcome contributions to the Newsletter, whether composed by you or found in your reading!

*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's birthday on April 15th
- ♥ Tammie Spence, in memory of her son, Shannon Mason
- ♥ JoAnn & Brad Nielson, in memory of their grandson, Corey Andrew Richards' June 26th birthday and June 3rd angel date

And thanks to ALL who gave anonymously!

(Please contact us if we have made an error or 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

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

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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)

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Websites to check out:

www.thegrieftoolbox.com
Tom Zuba www.TomZuba.com
Paula Stephens www.crazygoodgrief.com
Paul S Boynton www.beginwithyes.com
Lexie Behrmdt www.scribblesandcrumbs.com
Dr Joanne Cacciatore www.facebook.com/joannecacciatore
Clara Hinton www.clarahinton.com
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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 published.

After you died  
all things changed.

Dust collected around the house  
payments went unpaid  
and calls unreturned.  
Casseroles went uneaten  
teeth unbrushed.  
Plants unwatered  
'thank you' cards, unmailed.

After you died  
the smell of rain disappeared  
birds lost their melody  
stones turned to ash  
and clouds to concrete  
the sky surrendered its blue  
grasses withered and trees fell.

After you died  
a part of me did, too  
and what remained  
collapsed under the weight  
of your constant absence  
and all things changed.

And, I realized that all things had to change  
because my world could not remain  
the same without you.  
Sameness would not sufficiently honor  
the holiness of your mark upon my heart  
the longing for every part of you  
even parts I would never know.

After you died  
all things changed.  
All things changed  
except my love for you.

~Dr. Joanne Cacciatore 2/8/16©  
find Joanne on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/joannecacciatore](http://www.facebook.com/joannecacciatore)

But with every bit of fight within me,  
I choose to say that  
death does not have the final say.  
That as long as I live,  
I will carry him in my heart.  
And as long as my feet stand  
upon this dry earth,  
the world will still quake from  
the impact of his days,  
because that's what happens  
when love lives on in spite of death.  
Nothing is wasted.  
Life arises from the ashes.  
Redemption comes like a flood.

~Lexie Behrndt  
Scribbles and Crumbs



I began to understand that the real  
betrayal of my daughter's life lay not in mov-  
ing into the light, but rather in  
staying in the dark. She didn't live in the dark  
— only my pain lived there. And while I knew  
I would never be free of the pain, I also knew  
that clinging to it wouldn't bring my daughter  
back to me.  
I began to understand that the best way to  
remember her and honor her life was  
to move into the light, taking her with me  
every step of the way.

~Mandy Hitchcock  
[www.oncomingalive.com](http://www.oncomingalive.com)

The longest walk any parent will take,  
is to follow their child home.

~from Our Angels in Heaven on Facebook

When you believe beyond what your eyes can see  
Signs from Heaven show up to remind you  
Love never dies

~Spiritual Medium Julie Clapp

May the stars carry your sadness away.  
May the flowers fill your heart with beauty.  
May hope forever wipe away your tears.  
And, above all, may silence make you strong.

~Chief Dan George

## How To Handle Mother's Day After Losing A Child

by Paula Stephens on April 28, 2015

Many people consider Mother's Day to be a 'Hallmark Holiday' drummed up by greedy retailers. And maybe it is. I read the other day the average Mother's Day gift is \$172.00. But \$172 won't bring our beloved children back and Mother's Day, sans the Hallmark card, becomes a day when we are surrounded with reminders of our loss.

This past week I asked everyone who is on my email list to send me their best wisdom about how to handle Mother's Day after losing a child. I also posted it on my Facebook page and asked for people to share tips that support other bereaved moms. Wow ... I've been overwhelmed with love, compassion, insight and kindness. This includes the amazing women who have said, "I have no idea what to do, help me!"

I believe that part of our healing journey is to offer our wisdom and insight into those who have come after us, and those who are just now coming out of the darkness regardless of time. I know for me, I never thought about how I would handle Mother's Day after losing a child — until I had to. You are such a source of profound healing — pay it forward!

### **Here are my Top 4 Tips on how to handle Mother's Day After Losing A Child**

1. Grief is a dynamic process, what worked last year might not work this year and what works this year will change next. Leave yourself open to new ways of approaching where you are. Also, if you have a tough year, don't get attached to thinking, "that's how it's going to be for the rest of my life!" Accept it as simply being a tough year and look to find ways to improve it.
2. There is no right or wrong way to do this. You are the only one who can determine what you need. You are as individual as the relationship you had with your loved one. Honor your uniqueness.
3. Know that it's not just 'the day' that makes it hard. Often it's the days leading up to and following it that weigh on us. The anticipation and the let down can be very exhausting. Set aside 10 minutes to check in with yourself — how's your energy, your mood, your body, your emotional state?
4. Don't be afraid to feel like you're moving forward — We don't HAVE to stay stuck, we can choose happiness ... **If for no other reason that you, of all people, deserve it!**

### **Tips and Wisdom From Incredible Moms Who Know**

The remainder of this post is a summary of how other bereaved Mothers have handled Mother's Day after losing a child. I have had to edit some a bit, but have made sure to leave the message untouched.

- ◆ I guess my advice is maybe more for families as a whole ... Don't feel you can't celebrate the day. You are a mummy and it is as much your day as any mother. ~Hannah
- ◆ Last year I bought myself the most vivid flowers I could find at the store (with purple in them of course), "from Kade." ~Jenny
- ◆ I have been walking this road for 23 years. Our son, Marc, was 18 when complications from a 4month battle with lymphoma ended his life. I would suggest to someone just starting, to make their child's favorite dessert and then eating it in his or her honor. Memories are so very important now, as this is all we have to keep our children alive in our hearts. And memories of those living years must not be overshadowed by the actual time of illness and death. There are more good memories than that. It also feels good to be doing something in remembrance of them. I have been serving cherry cheese cake for 22 Mother's Days now and will continue the tradition. ~Linda
- ◆ On the days that have huge overwhelming significance to me (not just Mother's Day), what I've done is plunge into volunteer work. I am working with my hands which for some reason feels very good, and I am helping others for a whole day. I volunteer weekly throughout the year, but make a special point to work all day on these two significant days. I send love and support to all who will read this message. ~Karla
- ◆ We lost Patrick the week before Mother's Day. I dreaded the day, but dread doesn't keep those days at bay. Time passes the same with or without your child. Early in the day, Patrick's 12 pall bearers, all very close, rang my doorbell. They presented me with a James Avery bracelet, from Patrick and them. I've never taken it off. It's my permanent Mother's Day gift. I suggest that you purchase something that you wear everyday that reminds you that you're still a mother to someone in Heaven. Dread is a poison that can ruin every month, every holiday of the year. I find that the dread is more painful than the day itself. I do acknowledge that there is a great deal of power in a holiday, for grieving people. But, I simply refuse to let it steal my entire life. Yes, I battle with special days, but I always win. My proof? It's my 4th Mother's Day. I may not like it, but it hasn't taken me down. The Monday after, I will still be standing ... I'm a survivor, scarred and battle-worn, but still standing. ~Patti B
- ◆ This is my "trick" to help me make it through all the special days/holidays which I spend with family. The rub comes when they expect me to be happy and celebrate while I feel like I'm dishonoring the memory of my child by being so. My "trick" is to PREGRIEVE. I select a day in which I celebrate the life of my child who died. Then later on the holiday I can more freely attend the other celebrations. ~Anne M
- ◆ When my son died, my thoughtful sister-in-law made ribbons for us to wear to the memorial service from his blankets. With this energy, I can take him with me everywhere. On Mother's Day, I pin this ribbon over my heart and in spirit, he joins us in the celebration. We also practice honoring our son every year on his birthday with a hike in nature and a "release" of some kind — balloons or a boat float, for example. This event allows me to reserve other dates for their own purpose as well. Lots of love, understanding and forgiveness — self to self. ~Jennifer R
- ◆ We are coming up on my third Mother's Day without Kade. A couple of my girlfriends were running the Rockies Homerun for the Homeless 5K with their families, the race fell ON Mother's Day. It was perfect. My hubby and I trained a little for it, did it with friends, and had a patio lunch with them afterward. **I have learned that it is important to have \*a plan.\*** ~Jenny R
- ◆ I like to get inexpensive flower pots, plant some pansies in them and put on porches of friends that aren't expecting anything:) makes me feel good and not think about my sorrow!!!! ~Saraha

(continued from previous page...)

- ◆ Since I have other children, I feel like I need to let them have the day. I spend time alone in the morning before the day starts and remind myself I am creating memories with my surviving children. ~Pam
- ◆ I am trying to keep my son's name alive by supporting a foundation that helps families with a child with cancer. ~Hulya
- ◆ I switched around what I'm doing at work that day so I'll be working with 2 special people and we can make it a nice day :). ~Carol
- ◆ Give yourself permission and grace to NOT celebrate if it doesn't feel right. Mother's Day for a bereaved mother is not the time to bow to the expectations of others. ~Amy
- ◆ Prior to the passing of my son I used to celebrate (brunch get-together) with all the moms in my family. After his passing (and now) I find alone time (take a walk/get a massage, etc) to reflect how my life is, as a mom, right here right now. Mother's Day has changed through the years for me. I am thankful to be at a place of gratitude now. ~Olivia
- ◆ I'm choosing to keep it low key this year. It's only been three months since I lost my oldest daughter. I will do something low key with my youngest daughter ... maybe a small meal out. Maybe I'll read sitting out in the sun and take a nice walk. ~Stephanie
- ◆ Make time for grief. If I don't do this and just keep pushing it off, the grief will seek me out and make itself known with no warning and usually at the most inopportune times. It is ok to be ... angry, happy, sad, frustrated, depressed, fatigued, passionate, etc. Grief takes so many different shapes and sizes. No two are the same. ~Jenna

~ Paula Stephens is Brandon's mom, Founder of Crazy Good Grief, on Facebook and at [www.crazygoodgrief.com](http://www.crazygoodgrief.com)



### **Child Loss — Understanding a Father's Grief**

by Clara Hinton on 4/7/2013

Men go through all kinds of identity changes when they experience the loss of a child, especially a child who is older and has lived long enough to create established memories with his father. A man identifies himself by mainly two things: the job he has and the children he has. When a child is taken away by death, a man suddenly loses the largest, most important part of his identity and a real crisis situation has been created, not just for the father, but also for the role the father plays with the family. Fathers love to feel needed and they love to feel like they are the one responsible for the happiness of the entire family.

Men are far less verbal than women by nature and it makes it much more difficult for family members and friends to understand the changes that are taking place with a father when he loses a child. He often feels like a total failure because he was unable to prevent the death or to fix the death once it took place. This is especially true if the child's life was lost due to an illness or a preventable accident. Fathers are notorious for fixing things that are broken or in need of repair and when they cannot fix their child's illness and the end result is death, a father goes through a deep grieving period of feeling tremendous guilt and failure.

A father who loses a child also loses such a large part of his dreams. Fathers don't always openly talk about their dreams of hunting and fishing with their children or of taking bike rides together, going to ball games together or of tossing a ball in the backyard, but they think about these events all of the time. Father of girls daydream about walking their daughter down the aisle and dancing that first dance at the wedding. They dream about taking care of all of their child's hurts, wiping their tears away and being called "hero" for all of the ways they show their strength to their son or daughter. Child loss, in a father's eyes, often represents weakness. Men believe fathers are to be strong and in charge, not at a loss for knowing what to do when death turns life upside-down. Child loss is such a helpless feeling and often this is a foreign emotion for fathers who have been immersed in a society that looks to fathers as the tower of strength for their child.

What is a father to do? How can a father go on and feel whole once again? It takes time to work through the pain of loss. It takes a long time to build back a feeling of belonging as a father. It will often take years for a father to be able to reclaim his identity of a father. It will take lots of working through feelings of failure and loss to feel like a man who can always proudly wear the name father.

Take it a day at a time, a step at a time. Begin by telling yourself over and over that you will always be a father. Nothing can change that — not even death. Remind yourself often that some things cannot be fixed by you and child loss is one of those things. Remember often that lost dreams are part of the pain every parent feels when a child dies. It takes a lot of tears and years to work past the milestone markers of such things as dreams of your child playing ball, driving a car, dating, getting married and having children. These are not easy dreams to release, but with time you will be able to more vividly remember the times you had with your child than to sorrow over the time you never had.

Be patient with yourself! Be kind to yourself! Forgive yourself! And, when you fall into the emotional pain of feeling like a failure, remind yourself that you will always be a father and nothing can take away that badge of honor, not even death!

Lastly, remind yourself over and over again that you will make it! There will be a day when you can say with confidence, "I am a father — always and forever, and I am so thankful for that!"

~Clara Hinton, Author of "Silent Grief" and "Child Loss: The Heartbreak and the Hope".

Her blog is <http://www.silentgriefsupport.com>

And her website is [www.clarahinton.com](http://www.clarahinton.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](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.

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

**Saturday, June 18, 2016**

**Miami Valley TCF Chapter**  
**Balloon/Butterfly Release**

**details inside ...**



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COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

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