



# 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 2015

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

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

We rarely cancel our monthly chapter meetings! However, meeting cancellations due to inclement weather will be announced on our phone line:

**937-640-2621**

Please check before braving the roads.

### 2014 Candle Lighting Ceremony

Thanks so much to all who joined us for our annual Candle Lighting Ceremony on December 14th. It was simply beautiful and your presence made it even more so!

We have some extra DVDs of the photo video presentation. They will be available at our monthly chapter meetings until they are gone. Or, if you would like one and cannot get to a meeting, please let us know and we will mail you one.



Sometimes we feel so alone in our grief.  
Never forget, although our path is unique,  
we are all part of the whole

Paula Stephens  
Crazy Good Grief  
[www.crazygoodgrief.com](http://www.crazygoodgrief.com)

~~~~~  
When you light the way for someone else,  
you can also  
brighten your own path.

[www.thescienceofeating.com](http://www.thescienceofeating.com)

~~~~~  
Once you choose hope,  
anything's possible.

Christopher Reeve

**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 21st, 7pm  
Reflections of the Holidays**

**Wednesday, February 18, 7pm  
Taking Care of Ourselves**

*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 . . .*

- ♥ Karen Brown in memory of her son, David Allbery's 25th birthday
- ♥ Tina Grimme in memory of her son, Keith's 26th birthday
- ♥ Maryellen Fargey in memory of her daughter, Beth
- ♥ Tammie Spence in memory of her son, Shannon Mason
- ♥ June Madden in memory of her son, Donnie Grzywinski
- ♥ Tom Gilhooly in memory of his son, Ryan
- ♥ Don & Nadine Seela in memory of their daughter, Loretta Seela VanAusdal
- ♥ Gordon & Catherine Nelson in memory of their son, Ted
- ♥ Jan Lehman in memory of her son, Bryan Holl
- ♥ Inge Knowles in memory of her son, David
- ♥ Rae Lynn & Mark Cummin in memory of their son, David Vantrease
- ♥ Daina & Jim Arnett in memory of their son, Andrew, and their nephew, Kevin
- ♥ Teresa & Neil Parks in memory of their son, Jacob
- ♥ Bob Withrow in memory of his daughter, Kelli

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 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?*

**The Compassionate Friends  
Miami Valley Chapter, No. 1732, ph: 937-640-2621**

**SUPPORT MEETINGS**

**3rd Wednesday at 7pm at Sugar Creek Church**

**PLANNING TEAM- ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME**

*Meetings are the second THURSDAY at  
7pm at Larosa's, 2801 Wilmington Pk. (near Dorothy  
Ln.)*

**OTHER NEARBY TCF CHAPTERS**

*Miami County TCF—Nashville Church of Christ, Rt. 571, W. Milton, Ohio  
Contact Barb Lawrence 937-836-5939*

**OTHER LOCAL SUPPORT**

♥MVH Perinatal Loss Hot Line, Pregnancy Loss or Infant Death  
.....208-6363

♥Oak Tree Corner - Grief Support for Children .....  
.....285-0199

♥Survivors of Suicide Meetings - Miami Valley Hospital - 1st, & 3rd Mon. -  
7pm

♥Hospice of Dayton .....256-4490,  
ext .1147

♥HEALing Together-parent support for miscarriage, infant & toddler loss. 3rd  
Tues, 7-8:30 pm (no meetings in December due to the annual HEAL Mem-  
ory Tree Lighting) Atrium Medical Center campus, Hilltop OB/Gyn office-  
Prof. Bldg. 1, Suite 160 Franklin Ohio 45005. Contact the HEAL office at  
(513) 705-4056 or email [SGYoung@AtriumMedCenter.org](mailto:SGYoung@AtriumMedCenter.org).

**OTHER RESOURCES**

*Alive Alone (death of only child or all children) - Newsletter (small donation)*

Kay Bevington: [Alivalon@bright.net](mailto:Alivalon@bright.net) Ph: (419) 238-1091

1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891

*American Assoc. of Suicidology*

4210 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 310, Washington, DC 20008

Hours

turn into days.

Days

turn into years.

The memory

of your precious child

never disappears.

~Jeannie Sousa

~~~~~

There are no rules when it comes to grief.

Heal your heart

in your own way,

in your own time.

~RaeAnne Fredrickson

# So What Does a New Year Mean?

By Pat Schwiebert, R.N.

pat@tearsoup.com

In simplistic terms when life was uncomplicated by grief it meant starting over...a clean slate...making resolutions to clean up our act. Some of us like the feeling of getting a fresh start and forgetting the past. We like believing that, during this next year, things will be better.

But when we are grieving, our tendency is to stand at the threshold of a new year looking back rather than forward. We fear that to walk through that door into a new year means leaving our lost loved one behind. To move on seems like an act of betrayal of or abandonment of the one we love. There may also be a fear of forgetting, or maybe a fear of letting go. We experience a contradiction: we want to feel better, but at what cost?

Remember, January 1st is just another day. It has no meaning or power except the meaning we choose to give to it. Acknowledging our special needs as grieving persons, we can choose to make softer resolutions for the new year—resolutions that can still be challenging, yet are not unrealistic. Why not frame your New Year 's resolutions in terms of hope for a gentler year; for gaining control of your emotions, for better understanding of the grief process and what we can learn about ourselves as we journey thru it? Why not resolve to enter into a future that can be good, even though it lacks all that we might desire, and offers a hope that we will be at peace with sorrow and enjoy life even though we grieve.

We 've learned a lot this past year. We have experienced public grief with natural disasters and acts of violence. And we have experienced personal grief. We know we are not the only ones who grieve, though sometimes we have felt all alone. And still we survive, even though at times we questioned if the struggle was worth it. We have tasted the bitterness of loss but have not allowed it to destroy us. And together we will rise out of the ashes of grief and say YES to life. None of us can do it alone. We need each other to lean on and celebrate our newness.

from [www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)



# Grieving in the New Year

Written by [Coralease Ruff](#) on Sunday, January 27, 2013

The New Year is a perfect time to plan for self-care and work on personal grief. I readily admit that making a commitment to deal with grief is a big commitment, which will take a lot of hard work. But it can be done.

I offer the following six tips on how to get on track with your grief this year.

1. Put a support system in place. Grief is not the kind of work that should be done alone. You are not alone and there are many people willing to help. The support can consist of family members, close friends and other acquaintances or you can choose to participate in a local support group. Many bereaved parents received their greatest help from a support organization called The Compassionate Friends.
2. Face your grief head-on in spite of the pain. There is a normal desire to avoid or deny the loss because it hurts so badly. I encourage you to try not to hide from it but find ways to approach it. You can write about it, talk about it with a trusted friend, argue, scream, or fight with it; but don't give up on it. And don't try to rush it to completion, because it has no time frame and no template. It is in walking through the grief that we come out on the other side of the pain. Grief causes pain, but it will not always hurt so badly.
3. Learn about grief—attend seminars and workshops as well as read everything you can find on the subject. Knowledge is power. Learning about grief helps us to understand that we are not alone and it helps with preparation for what to expect along the journey. It takes courage to overcome the normal resistance to want to avoid the subject. There are many print resources, including beautifully written books and magazine articles as well as electronic resources, poetry, and music of all types.
4. Engage in a regular program of exercise and other physical activity. Exercise not only helps to relieve stress, but it strengthens the bones and muscles, helps with weight control and most importantly, for newly bereaved individuals, it elevates the mood.
5. Keep your child's memory alive. One of a bereaved parent's worst fears is that a beloved child will be forgotten. Choose something as simple as lighting a candle, making a scrapbook, planting a tree, writing a book or establishing a foundation. In addition, when we carry a linking article (something that belonged to our child) it helps keep the memory alive.
6. Reach out to help others, by giving a service or doing volunteer work. Because of our experience, we can understand more fully than many others, what others may be going through. When you use your pain to make a difference in someone else's life, for a moment you take the attention off yourself and put someone else's needs ahead of your own. This reaching out benefits the giver as much, if not more, than the receiver. It is fulfilling and adds meaning to life.

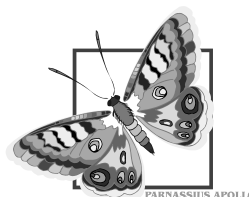
The hard work of grieving includes seeking support, facing grief, learning about what to expect, daily exercise, cherishing memories of your child and reaching out to others. There are no easy answers for how to go on living when a child dies. Living with grief is neither quick nor easy, but it can be done. The reward of doing so is to add meaning and bring joy back into life. I wish for you and yours, a blessed new year.

Coralease C. Ruff

from [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly,  
but rarely, admit the changes it has gone through  
to achieve that beauty.

Maya Angelou



## Honoring a Deceased Child on Valentine's Day

Written by [Sandy Fox](#) on Monday, February 7, 2011

Valentine's Day is a day for love, and a day to celebrate with those you love. It's also another holiday to remember your child, who can no longer celebrate with you. It is a difficult day for all of us who grieve the loss of our child or children.

So I say, embrace Valentine's Day as a special day to commemorate your child and celebrate your love for him or her. Death may end our child's life, but it does not end the relationship we had and still have. Bonds of love are never severed by death, nor is the love we shared with our child.

What can we do to celebrate this day? I am a writer and what better way than write about my child. I can do a poem, an anecdote, a letter, a song, or a story about something memorable she did for me on Valentine's Day.

As an example, my daughter never forgot to give me a card. Nor did she ever let her dad forget. She then had to check out not only the card he bought but also the gift as well. A stamp of approval meant we could all go out for dinner to celebrate. I wish I had kept all the cards she gave me. I only have a few. Usually, they were cute cards with a touch of humor, while her father's cards were more on the romantic side.

Another thing you can do is to go on a short trip to a special location you both loved. I remember one year, Valentine's Day fell on a weekend, so we all went to romantic Sedona, AZ, to celebrate with my daughter and her boyfriend at the time. I have gone back to Sedona on special occasions and immerse myself in the healing power of remembrance.

This Valentine's Day, light a special candle for your child. Perhaps do it every Valentine's Day and continue that tradition as you remember the good times you shared. Or make it a holiday where you decide that since it is February, and Arbor Day is around the corner, you will plant a tree at your child's school.

Talk about your child to anyone who will listen. You will find that people do care and do remember him or her. They may even contribute to the conversation something they, too, remember about your child. Recently, I had that experience, and it made my day.

Volunteer some time to an organization that could use your help. Do it in honor of your child. It could be a child-related organization, a pet organization (if your child had special pets), or a local hospice group. Doing something good for others can help ease your pain.

If you work in an office, show your thoughtfulness to colleagues by cooking a nice dish and bringing it. If cooking is not one of your strengths, buy a Valentine cake to share. There is nothing wrong with celebrating the occasion with those whom you work with all year long. It can also strengthen your workplace relationships.

For those who work for you (for example, the newspaper boy, your doctor, your housemaid, or the postman), present each with a small token gift like a white rose or a little chocolate box. The smile you get in return will make the gesture worthwhile.

Finally, be creative on this day and make a Valentine's Day craft, like your child used to do for you. It can be a home decoration item for the rest of your family to enjoy or even given as a gift for a loved one. Use materials easily available around the house.

My wish for all of you on this holiday is that you always have wonderful memories, accented with a smile, a laugh or a giggle, and remember your child, who can not be with you physically on this day but will always be with you in your heart.

Sandy Fox 2011



We welcome contributions to the Newsletter, whether composed by you or found in your reading. Please submit suggestions to [www.miamivalleytcf@gmail.com](mailto:www.miamivalleytcf@gmail.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 Leader**

Tom Gilhooly

937-640-2621

<http://miamivalleytcf.com>

Tom honors his son,

Ryan Gilhooly,

though his service.

We tend to look at life through the "lens of grief" after the death of a child. We have a figurative scale in our hands that weighs the happenings of life against the experience we have had. For a time tasks that we used to feel important may not be so much anymore. Because we have survived the worst we will be able to continue on in time, and possibly reach out to help others. Our child's, grandchild's or sibling's death has changed us in many ways and has also taught us the true meaning of life.

Karen Cantrell, TCF Frankfort KY



**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.*

*Jan-Feb 2015*