



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

Organization *Providing Grief Support After the Death of a Child*

MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870

JUNE 2016 NEWSLETTER Vol. 25 No. 5

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Father's Day

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father's Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday.

Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son's life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan's arrival, but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die.

Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child's death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex's memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might.

June Meeting—June 23, 2016

7:00 P.M.

Nashville United Church of Christ

4540 W. St. Rt. 571, West Milton, Ohio

Meetings are held in the basement of the church. Please park in the lot on the west side of the building. Enter the building Through the door facing the west parking lot.

Topic: Your Child's Favorites

Share your child's favorite song, movie, game, or book. You may bring the item or just tell us about the item or a memory of them with their favorite item. It is a wonderful night of remembering our children!

June Refreshments:

Sandy O'Dell (Memory of Mark Kurtis)
Tammy Elam (Memory of David)

Thank you for May Refreshments

Sarah Murphy (Memory of Molly)
Kim Duvall (Memory of Aaron)

Next Meeting - PICNIC July 28, 2016

So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother's needs on Mother's Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husbands this Father's Day as well. It is frequently said that we males don't often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and 'warm fuzzies' when we hurt also. Please remember us on June 18, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonald's, Hallmark and AT&T. Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.

Doug Hughes

I Can Only Imagine

I can only imagine
 What our hearts would feel
 If that day had never happened
 If your death had not been real
 I can only imagine
 What our eyes would see
 If they hadn't shed a million tears
 Pleading, Why you? Why not me?
 I can only imagine
 A happier life
 One where all your dreams came true
 You fell in love and took a wife
 I can only imagine
 What a wonderful father you'd be
 What names you'd give your children
 Would you be anything like me?
 I can only imagine
 If I'll live to see the day
 When the mere thought of you
 No longer takes my breath away
 I can only imagine
 If things had ended differently
 A family of four, now a family of three
 But the one that's missing should of been me
 When our work is done
 And our time to go has come
 Our arms at last again will hold
 Brennan, our beloved son
 I can only imagine...

Tom Murphy Greater Cincinnati
 TCF - East Chapter, OH

When Fathers Weep at Graves

I see them weep
 the fathers at the stones
 taking off the brave armor
 forced to wear in the work place
 clearing away the debris
 with gentle fingers
 inhaling the sorrow
 diminished by anguish
 their hearts desiring
 what they cannot have--
 to walk hand in hand

with children no longer held--
 to all the fathers who leave a part
 of their hearts at the stones
 may breezes underneath trees of time
 ease their pain as they receive healing tears
 ...the gift the children give.

Alice J. Wisler
 For David, in memory of our son

Dads Need Hugs Too

When a child dies, everyone has such compassion for the mother. Months after the death, people still ask how she is doing. There is always a shoulder available for her to lean on to release some of her pain. Let's not forget the father. The child was a part of him, too. That child was his son, to play ball with, coach in sports, watch sports with or collect baseball cards.

Or she was his daughter, his princess, the most beautiful girl that ever lived. Daddy's perfect angel. Fathers hurt deeper than mothers sometimes because there is no release for their pain, no one there to listen to them say, "I feel terrible. I miss my child so much." Or "Today reminds me of when ..." The longer fathers keep silent, the more hurt they have to keep inside, pushing it deeper and deeper to make room for more.

The next time you see a father that has lost a child, don't forget to ask how he is today and give him a hug or just put your hand on his shoulder to let him know you see his pain. Dads need hugs too.

Kathy Hunsicker,
 TCF Lehigh Valley, Penn.

FATHER'S DAY - JUNE 19TH

REMEMBER THE FATHERS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE GONE,
 BECAUSE ALL TOO OFTEN THEY GRIEVE IN HEARTBREAK-
 ING SILENCE.

*Thank you
love gifts!*

- ♦ Naomi Brown for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of her son, Chris Brown 03/1952 -- 06/2006.
- ♦ Ralph & Vera McLean for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their son, Antonio McLean 06/1972 -- 04/2003.
- ♦ Ken & Betty Quinn for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their son, Kyle Quinn 12/1994 -- 05/2014.

Love Gifts should be made out to:

The Compassionate Friends and mailed to Barb Lawrence, 4031 Wolcott Place, Englewood, OH 45322. Please send your donation by the 15th of the month prior to the month you want your child remembered in the newsletter.

You Were On My Mind

When I woke up this morning ... You were on my mind.
You were on my mind. You with that genuine enthusiasm,
like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement that dads love to be
there for.

There's so much of you still with me. Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or that we won't share your
ways anymore. But in reality, after all the tears and inner feel-
ings of pain and sadness pass we will have joy and great
happiness because we shared your days.

Your laughter. You. And when I wake up each morning

It will be OK that you were on my mind ...

You are on my mind. That's a special place for you to be,
because it will be forever.

*Michael Tyler
TCF Lighthouse Chapter
Lewes, Delaware*

CHAPTER NEWS

Upcoming Topics

Topics are subject to change. Refer to the month's newsletter for confirmation of meeting topic.

July - Picnic celebration & butterfly release.

August - How to help our employers, friends, and family members to understand our grief. A speaker is being invited for this topic.

September - Child's Favorite Food. Everyone will be invited to bring their child's favorite dish to share in a pot luck dinner.

October - Surviving the Holidays. Ideas and suggestions will be discussed for both including our children in the festivities and how to handle our grief through these extra difficult holiday events.

November - Topic Card Questions. Random questions will be chosen from our cards and discussed around the members.

Please let Chapter Leader, Kim Bundy, know if you have new suggestions for meeting topics. This is your chapter and your input is very welcomed.

In times of darkness

Love sees....

In times of silence

Love hears...

In times of doubt

Love hopes...

In times of sorrow

Love comforts...

And in all times,

Love remembers.

From a Hallmark Card

NEED A PHONE FRIEND?

A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.

Kim Bundy (suicide)	573-9877
Lori Clark (organ donation)	233-1924
Pam Fortener (cancer death)	254-1222
Sheryll Hedger (siblings)	997-5171
Lora Rudy (infant death)	339-0456
Cathy Duff (auto accident)	473-5533



Annual Picnic & 25th Year Celebration July 28th - 6:00pm

SPECIAL BUTTERFLY RELEASE This is a “Don’t Miss” event

It is time, again, for our annual picnic. Come join us for a peaceful evening with family and friends. Everyone is welcome so don't come alone! Look for the balloons marking the gravel drive that will take you back to the picnic area. It is located a short distance west of the church, on the north side of St. Rt. 571. We'll be using the covered shelter where there are plenty of picnic tables and benches. For comfort, you may want to bring along folding chairs so you can sit under the trees where it might be cooler.

We provide plates, napkins, dinnerware, condiments, cups, drinks and ice. A variety of meat selections will be provided. Everyone is asked to bring a salad, vegetable, fruit dish, or a dessert to share with the group and include a serving utensil. (If you are going to bring a store-bought item, please consider a salad or vegetable as we generally have a good number of homemade desserts.) -- Don't forget to bring your child's picture for the photo table.

This year will be extra special. We will celebrate our chapter's 25th year by holding a butterfly release in place of our usual balloon release. There will be one butterfly for each child that has passed for the whole family to release. The order for the butterflies need to be submitted by July 7th. ***Please RSVP no later than July 5th*** to Cathy Duff (937) 473-5533 or email mcduff79@windstream.net (Please provide your child's name, your name, phone number, and the number attending for this child.)

For those that would like to continue with our traditional balloon release, you are most welcome to bring your own balloon and send it up to heaven with your messages after the butterflies are released. SEE YOU AT THE PICNIC!!

The Surviving Children

Being a parent is never easy. When one's child dies, it is even more difficult being parents to the children who survive. In those first days and weeks, shock may cause us to make decisions (or allow others to make them) that we will later regret. We may wish later that we had included the children more, that we had not permitted ourselves to be isolated from them, that we had explained things differently. Most of us never expect to face this situation, so we have never thought through in advance what the best course would be.

At some point in our grief, we do become more sensitive to these "forgotten grievors" who have lost a brother or sister. They are having struggles of their own. The first thing to remember is that everything going on with our other children is not caused by the death. They are still, through it all, growing up, going through the various developmental stages that have always concerned parents. Any special problems they had before will not have magically disappeared. Just as we proclaim repeatedly that there is no one way for a parent to grieve, so each child has his own style and timetable for everything, and we cannot control these. We can only try to understand and help when we can. We cannot make it "go away" any more than we can make any of the other harsh realities of life go away.

The very foundations of life has been shaken. The home, so sheltering and safe, has been invaded by forces our surviving children do not understand and parents, who seemed all-powerful and all-wise, may have been reduced to quavering, uncertain robots. Probably for the first time, death whatever that is-has claimed someone who is not old. Worse, if there has been the usual quota of sibling rivalry and squabbling, the child may be afraid that he has caused the death by being "bad," or by wishing there were no such bothersome person to have to share with or "take a back seat to."

Just as every child is different, every relationship is different. Feelings toward an older brother or sister who was protector, teacher, idol, and those toward a younger one who may have been a sometime responsibility, hanger-on, biggest fan, are not the same. They may have been best friends or rivals who didn't get along very well. Their responses to the death will be as varied as our own.

A child's place in the family system is changed. The second oldest finds himself suddenly the big brother. The buffer between the others may be gone. Most difficult of all, a child may have become an "only child." Any child younger than the one who died has to go through the scary years of being the same age. Similar symptoms and situations are so frightening. Brothers and sisters often do look and behave very much alike, and these resemblances can be a source of discomfort or of pride. There may be efforts to exaggerate these, to replace the missing child, to make things the way they used to be.

What can we as parents do to help? Most of all, our children need reassurance and honesty. They need to know they are loved and that the family and the home will continue. They need all the facts they can understand. Part of this honesty requires that they know of your grief. By your actions, you can teach them it is okay to cry (even fathers!), it is okay to admit you are angry at "life" for being this way, that you too are confused about "why." Maintaining a "stiff upper lip" in front of the children only encourages them to suppress their feelings.

Try to be available when they want to talk, but be prepared for the possibility that they may not want to talk with you about their feelings. Many children hold back because they are afraid they might make you cry. You can try explaining that you are not worried about that, but they may still prefer to talk to someone else. They may be ashamed of some common reactions such as feelings of anger, guilt, jealousy, even relief. Perhaps you can help them find someone they can talk to comfortably. They may have already found such a person without you realizing it.

Be honest in the way you remember the child who has died. It is tempting to reminisce about only the good and wonderful qualities, but was this really a saint? Surely not. Recall, and talk about, the not-so-good and wonderful things too. Be sure you are remembering a real child, for everyone's sake. A saint is hard to live up to. Talking with other parents at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends can give you practical suggestions about things that have worked for other families. You will hear ideas you may not have thought of. Some will have received help from caring professionals and you may decide to consult someone too. When you recognize your family in what others are saying, you may decide that you and your children are really doing pretty well, hurting and healing together and that it just takes longer than you thought it would.

Ronnie Peterson TCF Star Lake, NY

Our Children Lovingly Remembered

June Birthdays

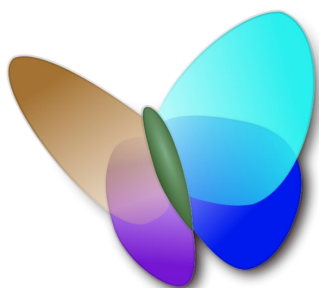
Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Antonio McLean - Vera McLean
 Christian Michael Copits - Richard & Beverly Copits
 Karen Kay Paschal - Linda Paschal
 Linda Kimerling - George & Harriet Holbert
 Danny Gene Winchell - Sally Entingh
 Brandon Fox - Theresa Fox
 Brooklyn Renae Pope - Darin Pope
 Jerrid Younker - Susan Cole

June Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Chris D. Brown - Naomi Brown
 Andy Glaser - Steve & Cindy Glaser
 Larry Todd Cavanaugh - Linda & Larry Cavanaugh
 Michael David Rhoades - David Rhoades
 Michael Guerra - Terry Guerra
 Nan Marie Hendrix - Jo Hendrix
 Silas Carver - Mary Anne Evans
 Taylor Davis - Barbara Davis
 Susan Eileen Lawrence - Barb Lawrence
 Scott Miller - Marilyn Miller
 Jared Michael Belcher - Kelly Belcher
 Kaitlynn Ariana Yvonne Preston - David & Michelle Preston



We all know how difficult those "Special Days" can be - birthdays and death anniversary days. Please remember these parents on their special days and let them know that they are not alone; someone cares about their pain and their grief. It means so much to be remembered!

Every effort is made to publish accurate information regarding the birth and remembrance dates. Please let me know if there is an error in the listing, in order to correct our records. If you receive this newsletter and you have not given us the name and dates for your child, but want them listed here, please contact me. - Editor

NOW for book review....Jackie Glawe

"Heaven is for Real"

By Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent



The amazing story of Todd Burpo's little son's near death experience and trip to Heaven. No matter what your beliefs are this is a very interesting read and there are things that the little boy Colton knows and can recall that just don't have a logical explanation. This family lives in Nebraska and this book came out a year after we lost our daughter to a car accident in Nebraska. I was drawn to this book right away. The book was very comforting and I even had the opportunity to meet the little boys mom. I would highly recommend this book.



S i b l i n g P a g e

A Sibling's Feelings

The pain of a sibling is so real we sometimes hide it deep inside of ourselves. As we watch our parents hurting we see the pain in their eyes. We are also hurting not only for the loss of our brother or sister but also for our own parents. We need to reach out to each other to let each other know we are hurting inside.

Our lives have all changed forever. I know they lost a son but I lost my younger brother I loved, and as siblings we share a special bond that we'll never have anymore for he no longer lives ... my brother, my friend.

I will always miss you and I will never forget you for you will always live in my heart, and I have wonderful memories no one can ever take away from me. In my heart you will stay, love you forever.

*Marie Porreca
TCF Rockland*

All the Things I Miss

I think about all the things I miss about my brother. There are a lot, some painful, some I never would have believed at the time that I would miss. And I find that what I miss the most are the things that should have been: I bought my first car the year he would have turned sixteen. He should have been here to ask to borrow the keys-not that I would have given them to him-but he should have been here to ask. He should have been a senior this year, getting ready to face the world with no summer vacations and deciding what to do with his life. He should be here when I fall in love

to tease me and give his opinion of the man I choose. He should be here when I have a child to be godparent and uncle, friend and confidant. My brother was my friend and my foe in a way that only a little brother can be. And as I sit here and think about my brother, what I think the most is he should be here. I love and miss you little brother.

*Shannon Odessa Steiner,
TCF Lowell, IN*

Sometimes

Sometimes, something clicks,
And with a tear
Remembrance of the pain
And the loneliness
Flood the heart.
Sometimes, something clicks
And with a smile
Remembrance of the love
And the laughter
Flood the senses.
And there are times
Where nothing clicks at all
And a voice echoes
Through the emptiness
And numbness
Never finding the person
Who used to fill that space.
And sometimes
The most special times of all,
A feeling ripples through your
Body heart, and soul
That tells you
That person never left you
And he's right there with you
Through it all.

*Kirsten Hansen
Bereaved Sibling*



The Compassionate Friends

Miami County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

9665 W Covington Gettysburg Rd
Covington OH 45318

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

What is The Compassionate Friends?

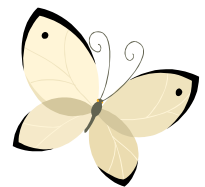
The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

We gather to listen) to share) and to support each other in the resolution of our grief. We need not walk alone, we are The Compassionate Friends.

MISSION STATEMENT ... The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

If you are receiving our newsletter for the 1st time, it is because someone told us that you might find it helpful. To find out more about The Compassionate Friends, please call our Chapter Leader, Kim Bundy (937) 573-9877. We cordially invite you to our monthly meetings held on the fourth Thursday of each month. Nothing is ever expected of you. You don't have to speak a single word. Parents who do attend, find comfort, support, friendship and understanding from others who have also lost a child. You do not have to come alone - bring a family member or friend with you.

**You need not
walk alone!**



IF YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER, AND WISH TO HAVE YOUR NAME REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST, PLEASE CALL (937) 473-5533 AND LEAVE A MESSAGE.

Thank you.