



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC. International Organization
Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents
MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870
MAY 2017 NEWSLETTER Vol. 26 No. 4

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MOTHER'S DAY

As I write this, I am very much aware that Mother's Day is coming soon. That will be a doubly difficult day in countless homes. For all the thousands of mothers who will be glowing with a radiant kind of pride and happiness on that day, there will also be those of you whose hearts are aching for that phone call that will never come, that special visit, that one Mother's Day card that will not arrive. For us, the reading and rereading of that one last card - "Mom, you are the greatest and I love you" - will have to last a lifetime. How does a mother face a lifetime of silence on "her" day? Ask those of us who have "been there already, and we will tell you of lonely Mother's Day visits to spring-green cemeteries where the sweet clear notes of a single spring bird, perch nearby, float over our heads and seem surely to have been intended as divine comfort for a heart full to breaking. You will hear of yellow roses being sent to a small church - "in memory of ... " - and a cherished story of a kind and sensitive friend who sent a single rose that first Mother's Day "in remembrance."

Always we struggle with the eternal question - how does life in fairness exact from us the life of a beloved child in exchange for a clear bird call in a spring-green cemetery, a slender vase of yellow rosebuds or even the kindness and sensitivity of a friend who remembered our loneliness and pain in that day? Where is the fairness and justice of such a barter?

The answer comes back again and again - life does not always bargain fairly. We are surrounded from birth to death by those things which we cannot keep, but which enrich, ennoble and endow our lives with a foretaste of Heaven because we have been privileged to behold, to experience, to wrap our arms around the joyous and the beautiful.

Can we bottle the fragrance of an April morning or the splendor of a winter's sunset and take it home with

May Meeting—May 25, 2017

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: How Does Mother's Day & Father's Day Affect You Now?

Open discussion about these "special days", how they affect us and ways to readjust these days in our grief journey.

May Refreshments:

Kim Bundy (Memory of Randy)
Call Deb 667-4761 to help with May

Thank you for April Refreshments

Kim Duvall (Memory of Aaron)
Pam Carpenter (Memory of Tasha)

us to place on our fireplace mantle? Can we grasp and hold the blithesome charm of childhood's laughter? Can we capture within cupped hands the beauty and richness of a rainbow? Can we pluck the glitter of a million stars on a summer night or place in a alabaster box the glow and tenderness of love?

No, we cannot. But to those who have been given the splendor, the blithesome charm, the glory, the glitter, the tenderness and the love of a child who has departed, someday the pain will speak to you of enrichment, of compassion for others, of deeper sensitivity to the world about you, of a deeper joy for having known a deeper pain. Your child will not have left you completely, as you thought. But rather you will find him in that first clear, sweet bird call, in those yellow rosebuds, in giving and in receiving and in the tissue- wrapped memories that you hold forever in your heart.

Mary Wildman, Mora, II

Newsletter of BPIUSA. A JOURNEY TOGETHER

A Mother's Heart

I'm stuck, yes I feel completely stuck, as any mother would be. I am stuck between this life and the next. I was supposed to precede you, not you, me. There is so much I wish for. I wish to hear your voice again, stroke your cheek, gaze at your beautiful face, enjoy your dynamic personality, laugh hard like you used to make me do. I wish for just 5 more minutes with you, to tell you how much I loved you, how better my life was for having you in it. To tell you how cherished you are by me. To tell you how much I learned about life from knowing you. If you had to go, I so much wished I could have held you in my arms, one final time, that I could have said goodbye to you until I met you on the other side. I am your mother. When you left this life, you took a huge piece of me with you.

That's why I'm stuck. Everyone speaks words to me like closure, move on, you must go on with your life. Only someone who has not lost a significant other, can naively speak such ridiculous terms. It will be five years this March 2006, and I feel as if I live in a constant cloud. I feel numb for the most part; unable it seems, to easily partake in life's constant activities. Every once in awhile, I feel myself come back and experience this life. For example, when I attended the Annual Service of Remembrance located in Anne Arundel County, a service which is held every year at Christmas for families who have lost a beloved child. At the service I felt myself come back. I am quite shocked when this occurs, because I am not consciously aware that I am living half here, and half there, where you are. I wanted and hoped so very much for you my first-born son. Predominantly a future, a full life, possibly a wife, children, a home and a rewarding career. Your deepest desires to have been accomplished. I hoped you would be happy, joyful, and content. That you would possess self confidence and to like who you were, to never be hurt or feel pain, (yes I am aware this is a ridiculous statement) but at the same time it is a mother's heart. She cherishes her children, she becomes like a savage mother lion when it comes to her cubs. She wants only the best, the very, very best, and no harm, absolutely no harm. However, you experienced much harm, did you not my dear beloved?

If I could have but one more moment with you my son, I would ever so softly permit the sound of your name, to escape my lips, your chosen with much passion name, the name of Ryan. I would gaze at your face and your dazzling hazel green eyes, now wishing that I had never once taken my eyes away from you. I wish for just one more earthly

moment my son to lay my ear across your chest and listen to your heartbeat and to love you again, as only a mother can.

I wish for you to know you were and are and will forever remain my cherished gift. My son I will forever love you.

Happy Birthday to you dear Ryan! ! !

Deborah Sheahy, December 5, 2005

Anne Arundel County Chapter

To her son Ryan Michael Sheahy

May 4, 1997 - March 16, 2001

WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE

A little child who has never drawn his first breath-
A child who lives a day, a month, maybe a year-
A child who finishes school-
perhaps marries and then dies ...

Who is to compare which parents suffer the greatest heart-break?

What about the mother whose breasts are full of milk
But has no little angel to feed.

What about the dreams that new parents had for their baby-
The empty nursery, a constant reminder.

An older child who leaves behind
a room full of trophies,
treasures and mementos...

A knife in the heart reminder.

What about the children who grew up
and had everything to live for ...

They come from every walk of life.

They have babies of their own,
which will never get to see their mommy or daddy ...

All of their goals and dreams gone.

My heart breaks for young parents
who never had the chance
to see their dreams materialize.

Their children never quite learned to walk nor talk,
start school or go out on their first date.

There is no such thing as one loss
being greater than another.

We are all equally devastated ...

and therefore, we are forever bonded to one another,
in a very special way ...

that no one else can truly understand.

Author unknown

For your
Thank
love gifts! **you**

- ♦ Kern & Pam Carpenter for the Love Gift to honor their daughter, Tasha Nicolle Longyear, 11/1978 -- 04/2008.
- ♦ Linda Paschal for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of her daughter, Karen Kay Paschal, 06/1971 -- 05/1998.

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.

A Mother's Lament

If I had known
 The pain I'd bear
 The sadness and the great despair
 Would I have chosen the path I did
 To have this child
 Who so briefly lived?

Yes, I am certain
 That I would
 For all the laughter
 All the good.

He taught us all
 So much you see
 Through his kindness,
 Love and generosity.

Though he's gone
 From us physically
 He lives on in our hearts
 Eternally.

Sandy Roush TCF Lakes Area, MI
 In Memory of Whit

CHAPTER NEWS

Upcoming Topics:

June - Grief's Emotional Roller Coaster
 Special Speaker Rev. Bobbie Predmore.

July - Annual Picnic & Butterfly Release

August - Journaling & Your Child's Acrostic Poem. Pam Fortener, facilitator.

September - Secondary Losses Experiences

The 40th TCF National Conference

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Orlando, Florida, will be the site of the 40th TCF National Conference on July 28-30, 2017. "Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope" is the theme of next year's event, which promises more of this year's great National Conference experience. The 2017 Conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek. For registration and workshop details proceed to the national website at:

www.compassionatefriends.org.

Plan to be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Pre-registration will be available until July 7, 2017. Please note: while on-site conference registration will be available, the Friday lunch and Saturday dinner is only available with pre-registration.

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

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

Making Mother's Day and Father's Day Special

Posted on May 1st, 2017 TCF National

Here are a few hints to help you through these days after the loss of a child.

1. Pamper yourself-this is a special day in your life. You are a parent forever and your child is your child forever.
2. Do what you need to do-what helps you. Grieve your way.
3. Be with those who surround you with love, not demands or advice.
4. Plan ahead-do things that make you feel good or give you a moment's peace.
5. Start new rituals to make new memories.
6. Share your thoughts with family members; decide together what the day should include. (If you are alone, find a good friend.)
7. Include deceased children in the day-through prayer, lighting a candle, telling stories about them, looking through pictures, planting flowers or a garden, doing a good deed, writing about them, making their favorite recipe.
8. Join with another bereaved family to honor this day and have mutual support.
9. Start a garden or add to a special garden in memory of your child.
10. Use this day to plant spring flowers so you can always see your child in each bloom and each bouquet that you cut.
11. Visit the cemetery if that helps your heart on this day.
12. Plant a flower or shrub that will come to bloom this time of year.
13. Do something special for someone else or something special in your child's name (helping Cancer Care, MADD, a Compassionate Friends' Chapter, Scouting, a nursing home, etc.)
14. Listen to music that makes your heart feel good.
15. Cook some favorite recipes that your child enjoyed or cooked for you.
16. Buy a present for yourself from your child and enjoy the comfort it brings you.
17. Write a poem or article in memory of your child, sharing memories or whatever has helped you.
18. Attend a family gathering of relatives – their love and support can give you a lift on this day.
19. Make a booklet of favorite poems that help your heart, and give copies to dear relatives and friends in memory of your child.
20. Take part in a special church ceremony honoring Mother's Day and Father's Day.
21. Pray to your child-talking is the best medicine and prayer is simply talking.
22. Set aside some special time to grieve, unloading all the frustration and sadness that can envelop you on such a day giving you time to meditate alone.
23. Write a letter to your child, telling what's in your heart (perhaps some unfinished business or some new blessing that has enriched your life).
24. Allow the tears to flow- crying is healing and allows a release for your feelings.
25. Think of a way to "share your child with the world"-making sure his or her memory lives on through scholarships, writing, good deeds.
26. Give and get plenty of hugs.

~ Elaine Stillwell, TCF Rockville Centre, NYN

Note from the editor: I know that this article below was written for the support of those grieving the loss of a spouse, but I believe that it can apply to our grief journey also. I am sure many of us felt this way when we first began attending TCF.

THE WIDOWS' CHAIN AND BUTTER **from After Goodbye, by Ted Menten**

One of the most devastating emotions after the death of a loved one is the feeling of isolation. The great loss of connection is very often coupled with a sense of being abandoned by the one most loved and trusted. In this widows' group, each member is in a different stage of grief, in their journey back to life. As a symbolic ceremony, they form a chain with those newly bereaved at the end of the chain. Using this chain, they start bringing each other forward with a symbolic tug. Motion is the only way out of grief. When people feel that they want to get back into life, this is a good way to get going. This process forges a strong chain of healing--link by link.

At the end of this group's meeting, they were asked to hold hands and do an exercise of remembrance, which lets them honor the one they love by saying one word that brings back a memory of that person. The memory word did not have to be explained to the group; it was like a secret code word that only they knew the real, true meaning of. The list of "magic" words; hamburgers, ocean, Rover, chocolate, Babe essentially expressed the same thing - a remembrance that gives both pleasure and comfort, the comfort of release. It is always just one word that say it all. And that word always means exactly the same thing: "I love you and I miss you."

BUTTER

Rachel had been a widow less than a year. After a few months of devastating mourning - she seldom got out of bed before noon and almost never left the house - she came to our widow's group.

Reluctantly, she visited our Wednesday night group. Silently, she listened and observed without joining in. When we spoke our closing words of "remembrance" she remained outside the circle. She left abruptly, with a simple thank you to the group, and I thought that was the last we'd ever see her.

The following week Rachel appeared again as if nothing had happened. Once again she observed the group in silence, and once again she remained detached and aloof. At the end she thanked us and left. I wondered if she would return, and she did.

In time, she became part of the group. But when the chain was formed at the closing, she was always at the end - by her choice. Even after three months, she kept assigning herself the last link. Others who had joined the group after her were moving along. But Rachel insisted she was still at the end of the chain.

One Wednesday night, the subject was honoring and remembering how after our loved one has died, we can remember and honor them with our life and our living. Susan had just begun to talk about some of her memories of her husband when Rachel suddenly stood up and started shouting.

"Stop it! Stop it!" she screamed at us. "Stop talking about remembering. that! ... What's the matter with you all? How can you talk about remembering. Where's your pain?" She stopped suddenly and faced me directly. "Don't you get it? I don't want memories - I want my husband!"

It was a truth we all knew and lived with, but seldom spoke of. It was the very core of our grief. A memory is a poor substitute for the real thing. A memory can't hold you in its arms or fill you with pleasure, or laugh at your jokes or pitch a ball, or brag about your cooking and fight back unfairly, or surprise you on your birthday. In a world where the living are diamonds, memory is a paste imitation - a lackluster copy of the gleaming original.

No one wants a memory. We all want the real thing.

Rachel raged on for a few minutes more, and then faced with our stunned silence, she sat down, hands folded primly in her lap, and waited for us to respond. I wondered who would answer her, and hoped it wouldn't have to be me because I didn't believe I had the words. Thank-

fully, Barbara did.

"For weeks now Rachel, you've assigned yourself the last link in the chain and we let you. We let you because all of us have been there and don't really want to admit that we are moving along - making progress. Moving along seems like forgetting. Moving along seems like infidelity. Moving along says 'I have stopped caring and loving.' So we let you stay there for your own good and your own comfort."

"But tonight, dear friend, you have moved forward and you have brought us with you. You have said the words we all fear and hate and opened all the old wounds we thought were healing. Your rage gives meaning to your love and to ours."

She reached out her hand to Rachel. "Not one of us wants to settle for less than the real thing, but the real thing is gone. Margarine isn't the real thing. Butter is. But if there is no butter, then you make do with the next best thing.

"I don't want my life to be dry toast. I want it covered with rich golden butter. But my butter is gone, and all I have left is the memory of its richness, its pure golden quality, its sweet taste. The margarine of memory will never, ever, replace or even approximate the real thing. But, Rachel, it is far better than dry toast!

"Stewart is dead, Rachel, dead and buried and gone. Forever. Your butter is gone, just like mine is, and everyone else's in this room. All you have to do - all you 9!!!...do now - is decide if you want the rest of your life to be dry toast."

In silence we all examined the loss of rich, golden butter in our lives and knew that it was the prospect of a life of dry toast that had brought us here together. There, in our group, we shared our recipes for a life, using margarine.

That night as we held hands and closed with our one word memory, I asked Rachel to start.

"Butter," she intoned

"Butter."

"Butter."

"Butter. "

And I completed the circle, whispering,

"Butter."



Our Children Lovingly Remembered

May Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Blaize Mansur - Stephanie Mansur
 Brent A. Snyder - Claude & Mary Snyder
 Erika Leigh Wetzel - Susan Wetzel-Philpot
 Jacqelyn Elizabeth "Jackie" Ahlers - Bob & Peg Ahlers
 Lindsay Rose Donadio - Rick & Janell Claudy
 Michael James McGuffey - Kathy McGuffey
 Randy Lee Hess - Kimberly A. Bundy
 Jared Michael Belcher - Kelly Belcher



May Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Bill Meadows - Fred & Pat Meadows
 Blaize Mansur - Stephanie Mansur
 Cody S. Pressler - Joe Miller & Tamra Pressler
 Ian Wesley Clark - Neil & Lori Clark
 James C. "Jimmy" Skaggs - James & Bonnie Skaggs
 Karen Kay Paschal - Linda Paschal
 Marlisa Bok - Lowell & Marilyn Bok
 Ryan S. Thuma - Scott & Renee Thuma
 Stephen Anthony Freeman - Tom & Kathy Freeman
 Terry A. Baker, Jr. - Candy Ullery
 Tony Robert Lavy - Robert E. & Sharon Lavy
 Nick Koleff - Bob & Linda Dils
 Brian Swartz - Lisa Swartz
 Kyle Alexander Quinn - Ken & Betty Quinn
 Jeremiah Lee Bubeck - Rick & Becky Bubeck
 Molly Murphy - Kerry & Sarah Murphy

Mark Your Calendars & Reserve a Butterfly for Your Child!

Don't miss our 2nd Annual Butterfly Release & Picnic July 20, 2017 Nashville UCC Picnic Grounds

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.

Members enjoyed our last year butterfly release so much, we will again release butterflies for our children. 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 1st** to Barb Lawrence (937) 836-5939 or email barb.lawrence1961@gmail.com (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!!**

In Loving Memory of Brian

~by Kate Ludwig

This year was the fifth anniversary of the day my brother Brian passed away at age 34. He was at home alone with his two youngest children, (two and five years old at the time), and he had a pulmonary embolism. To know they saw their Daddy die was so very hard to accept. That is something they will never forget and it breaks my heart. I have lost all my grandparents but have never lost someone so close who was also so young. It is a really difficult thing to understand. I find myself incredibly sad all the time lately. Growing up, we were not what you would call extremely close. I was the only girl and with three brothers you tend to fight a lot, and get on each others' nerves. But if anyone of us was in trouble, we were always there for each other. Once we got older, Brian was more like the protector. He would even accompany me to clubs when I wanted to hear a band play and no one else could go. He said there was no way I was going alone. It was really sweet of him because we didn't exactly like the same kind of music. He was a country music fan. Once he had kids, he and I had an even better relationship; he was so happy being a father, those kids were everything to him. He always told me he just wanted them to be happy, that if he knew they were happy, he would be happy too. The night before he died he spent it in the basement with his five-year-old daughter teaching her how to skateboard. That was how he was. Whenever he had time, he spent it with his kids. He was the type of person who always worried about everyone but himself, and was the first person to volunteer to help if you needed anything. Now don't get me wrong, he wasn't perfect by any means, and I don't mean to say he didn't have his flaws, but he was a generally good person. He loved cars-especially fast cars and his son has followed in his footsteps there. I am so thankful I still see his kids on holidays, and special occasions. Every year for his birthday, we get together but there is always that hole. It hit me really hard for the first time at his oldest daughter's First Communion. It was not too long after he died and it was so sad to see all the other kids with their parents and my niece missing one. I actually struggled to hold back tears during the ceremony. It still hits hard at certain times, especially because his son was only two years old at the time, and he doesn't remember much about his dad. But his sisters are good about remembering and telling him stuff his daddy did. I realize now that even though my brother was taken much too soon, his memory will live on forever. Brian, we all miss you so much! ...

Kate Ludwig works for a lighting distribution company and lives in St. Louis, Missouri. She is 38 years old, (although she says she pretty much stopped celebrating birthdays but does want to plan a really big trip the year she turns 40), and has two younger brothers. She tried to start a TCF chapter in St. Louis, and although it didn't come together, she has not given up hope that one day there will be a chapter there.

We Need Not Walk Alone Winter/Spring 2010-2011

Ask Dr. Paulson

Q: I'm thirteen years old and have been waiting a long time for a little brother or sister. I have no siblings and I'm awful lonely. My mom and dad have been waiting a long time too. Since I was born, Mom had a stillbirth and several times lost the baby before it was born, which is what just happened again a few weeks ago. Dad and I have tried everything to make Mom feel better, but nothing works. Is there anything I can do to help her?

A: Every person in a family anticipates the birth of a new brother or sister in their own way. Each of you has separate expectations and hopes, not only for your new little brother or sister, but also as to how you will relate to this new baby, as well as wondering how the family might change. Instead of being an only child, now you'll be the oldest of two children, and as an older child, you might be asked to help in raising the younger sibling.

I know your question specifically asks how to help your mother through this difficult time, but I think it's also important to realize that in addition to your mother, each of you will be grieving unmet hopes, dreams, and expectations. You were already learning to love the little one who hadn't yet been born; looking forward to creating a relationship with him or her. Those feelings don't just disappear when a miscarriage or stillbirth occurs. Each of you will need to recognize, accept, and perhaps find ways to express the emotion that comes from losing a baby you already loved.

Recognizing grief and the discussions that come from understanding inspires healing. Opening the door to communication can also lead to opportunities to celebrate the little one. Even though you won't have experiences you shared with that child, you can find ways to remember him or her that are unique. Planting a tree or a flower garden, or donating toys to a nursery or pediatric clinic are just a few ideas. Talk it over with your mother. Perhaps together you can discover ways to remember that brother or sister in a unique way that will celebrate their memory and help each person in your family begin to heal. ...



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?

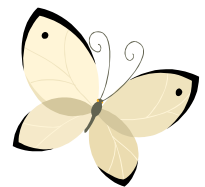
The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

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.