

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC. International Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents

MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870 FEB 2016 NEWSLETTER Vol. 25 No. 1

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Welcome to TCF



Did you walk through these doors Scared and desperate for hope Are you here for the first time Struggling to find ways to cope

Have you been here before And found that sliver of light The one that seemed impossible In the darkness of grief's night

Have you finally found peace From a place deep within Do you come to share their love From where it has always been

Here we wish to listen To the stories held so dear We want to share the laughter And the hidden, darkest fear

We want to see the pictures Hear their name spoken aloud We want to hear the memories The sad, funny and the proud

Whatever your reason Whatever brought you here

February Meeting—Feb 25, 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: Show & Tell

You are invited to bring a little something of your child, grandchild & sibling to share with our group. It could be a picture of a special event, a favorite toy, a favorite blanket or shirt, an award, etc. The sharing of your memory offers us all an opportunity to get to know something special about your child.

> February Refreshments: Cathy Duff (Memory of Shaun) Darlene Brown (Memory of Denise)

Thank you for January Refreshments Don & Kitty Bernard (Memory of (Jeff) Jackie & Jeff Glawe (Memory of Jordan)

Next Meeting - March 31, 2016 Topic Cards - Kim Bundy

We are a special kind of family One that understands each tear

There is one profound truth That we compassionately live by Love lives on forever and ever Love did not and will never die

In a world gone so chaotic Where stability has been thrown Know that here among all of us You need never walk alone

© Tanya Lord

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

Waiting for Hope by Bob Baugher, Ph.D.

Hope: what an amazing word. What does it mean? Type hope into Google and you get 562 million hits. Merriam - Webster. com tells us that it is "to want something to happen or be true and think that it could happen or be true:'

Hope Has Gone

You are reading this because someone you love died-your child, your sibling, or your grandchild and the word hope has gone out of your life. In fact, hope may have become lost in another word that has taken over your life: hopelessness. Does this sound familiar? Your loved one is permanently gone from your life and you are hurting so much you wonder how you can go on. Your life has been changed forever. You see the world differently. Hopelessness has taken over your life. You are a different person living in a different world. Where is the hope?

Getting Hope

So, how do we get hope? There are only two ways to get something: wait for it to happen or go out and get it yourself. In this article we are going to explore how we wait for hope. In the next issue we'll look at ways to actively find hope.

Waiting

Why would we wait for something when everyone around us tells us to go and get it? We've all heard the well-meaning phrases that are uttered in an absurd attempt to instill hope into us: "It's time to move on;' "He would want you to be happy;' "At least you have other things to be thankful for" and so on. Why don't these phrases give us hope? Two reasons: first, in our initial shock and emotional pain we are not ready to look at life with hope when hopelessness is all we feel. Second, hope often comes from the inside. No one can hand it to us, force us, nor entice us to get it. When hope does begin to enter our life, it may begin with a flicker, with a quiet awareness that something has shifted, that somehow the world has again changed, when in fact it is we that have begun to change. How does this happen? Here comes a word that you may not like. A word that I've heard again and again over the years when I have spoken with parents,

grandparents and siblings who thought they would never laugh again, that they would always carry the denial, the bitterness, the anger, the guilt, the sadness deep within them. What is the word? Time.

It's What You Do

Of course time by itself may not change things. It's what you do with the time while you're waiting for it to pass. And, what do you do with all these crazy thoughts and feelings? You think about them and feel them over and over and over again. When a terrible thing happens in our life, our brain must review it, ponder it, analyze it, assess it, feel it, and do it again and again until it doesn't need to anymore. Until then, hope waits patiently, looking at its watch wondering, "Hmm, I wonder how long the intense emotions of grief are going to last until I get my turn?"

Someday

So, if waiting is one way for hope to arrive, you may be saying, "I'm not 'waiting' for anything, let alone hoping, because I will always feel this way:' What I'm going to say next is something I've said to hundreds and hundreds of bereaved people over the years:

Even though you may not believe it right now, at some point in the future you will not feel this bad. You won't.

This may be hard for you to believe right now. Brain research has revealed that our brain is wired in such a way that, during times in our lives when we experience a highly negative (or even positive) event, we have a difficult time believing that we will ever feel much different. However, somewhere in the months and years following a death, was your hope that the nightmare wasn't true replaced with the hope that your own life would end and you would join your loved one? If so, you are not alone in this feeling. In the depths of their grief many people feel this way. Eventually this hope may transform into hoping that somehow you would stop hurting this bad, and stop feeling so alone, so empty, so lost. However, even during these confusing times you may have had brief glimpses of hope. See if any look familiar:

1. Hope during those times you discover you are not in as much pain

In all your weeks and months of unrelenting grief have you ever gotten to a point where you felt the pain let up just a little? That is, were there moments in your day where things "weren't so bad?" In looking back on their early grief, many people report that these moments were the beginning of hope.



- Lowell & Marilyn Bok for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their daughter, Marlisa Bok, 01/1968 -- 05/1989.
- Kern & Pam Carpenter for the Love Gift in memory of their daughter, Tasha Nicolle Longyear, 11/1978 -- 04/2008.
- Neil & Lori Clark for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their son, Ian Wesley Clark, 12/1982 -- 05/2002.
- Ann Flory for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of her daughter, Elizabeth Flory Duff, 04/1975 -- 01/2005.
- ♦ Jo Hendrix for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of her daughter, Nan Marie Hendrix, 12/1967 -- 06/2009.
- Ed & Judi Hoke for the Birthday/Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, Jeremy Hoke, 01/1975 -- 12/1985.
- Pat Meadows for the Love Gift in memory of her son, Bill Meadows, 03/1966 -- 05/1991.
- James & Marilyn Mitchell for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their son, Mike Mitchell, 12/1980 -- 09/2003.
- DeDe Mott for the Love Gift in memory of her son, Montgomery Alan "Monte" Mott, 10/1973 -- 02/2001.
- Ken & Betty Quinn for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their son, Kyle Quinn, 12/1991 -- 05/2014.
- Dennis & Susan Ream for the Love Gift in memory of their daughter, Kristen Ream, 03/1974 -- 08/2011.
- Kathy Russell for the Christmas Love Gift in memory of her granddaughter, Ava Nicole Liskey, 03/2002 -- 04/2002.
- The Schaaf Family for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of Marlene's son, Matthew Schaaf, 09/1971 -- 12/2003.
- Bob & Penny Walters for the Birthday/Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, Rob Walters, 01/1982 --02/2009.

Love Gifts should be made out to:

The Compassionate Friends and mailed to Barb Lawrence, 403I 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.

CHAPTER NEWS

MARCH MEETING DATE MOVED!!

Our March meeting will need to be moved back a week to March 31st due to a church event on our regular scheduled date.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Steering Committee will be meeting on Thursday February 18th at 6:30 PM. Chapter Leader, Kim Bundy, will be hosting the meeting at 1870 Westwood Rd. in Troy. Anyone that would like to participate in planning events and meeting topics are welcome to this meeting.

CHAPTER 1870 HAS A FACEBOOK PAGE!!

Please review our new facebook page "The Compassionate Friends of Miami County Ohio Chapter 1870". Thanks to the creative and generous talents of chapter member, Jackie Glawe, we have a presence on facebook.

Our chapter steering committee realized that we needed to offer another way for members to find us. With the new privacy laws, we were no longer allowed to ask for contact information from the funeral homes or hospitals to reach out to those grieving the loss of a child. We did not have anyone able to set this up at the time, but we have since been blessed when Jackie came to our chapter.

Thank you, Jackie. If anyone has suggestions to help our facebook page grow, pass them onto Chapter leader, Kim Bundy573-9877 -or Mickeycentral@woh.rr.com

> **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

2. Hope for a future event

Have you found yourself looking forward to a graduation, a wedding, a vacation, a holiday, a sports event, a movie, a play, or a family get-together? In the past you may have found yourself dreading these upcoming events because your loved one would not be there. Now, intermixed with those feelings is the hope that you can still enjoy the moment.

3. Hope as you come to realize that you will never forget this wonderful person

As time has gone by, your feelings of concern that memories of your loved will fade into nothingness have been replaced with the realization that, despite the fact that time continues to move forward, your child, Sibling or grandchild will always be a part of you and that you have found ways to carry their memory with you.

4. Hope as you discover that it is okay to laugh again, to love again, and to live your life

Do you remember the first time you laughed after your loved one died? For many people, such a moment elicits pangs of shock and guilt. How could a mother or father ever laugh again? How could a brother or sister find themselves enjoying a moment of time when their Sibling is dead? How could a grandparent be enjoying one grandchild when another is missing? When you begin to realize that it is okay to laugh and love again, hope has begun to return.

If I Could Just See Hope

Hope is an amazing word, but sometimes it seems so far away. These four examples of hope tell us that, even though you don't believe it or feel it at this moment, hope will come. You may have heard the amazing Darcie Sims speak at a conference or perhaps read one of her books. Dear Darcie died on February 27, 2014. Fortunately her words of wisdom live on. One of Darcie's books is entitled *If I Could Just See Hope*. In it she speaks of hope in her own eloquent way:

We are always in search of hope, in search of that magical moment when we remember first that our loved one lived.

Hope isn't a place or a thing. Hope is not the absence of pain or fear or sadness. Hope is the possibility of renewed joy ... it's the memory of love given and received. Hope is here, within the magic and the memories of your heart.



Thank you, Darcie. I couldn't have said it better.

My Dear Friend,

First of all, I am deeply sorry about the loss of your child. I wish I did not know much about grief but I too have been in the trenches of gutting sorrow. I will share however that I have learned quite a few lessons along the way and while I'd give them all back without hesitation for the safe return of my daughter, there have been many gifts I have received in the process of learning to live with grief.

In 2004, my middle child died at the age of six from a sudden high fever. I know for myself that in the early days of my grief I was paralyzed not just by the agony of the loss of my daughter but to a lesser and yet also powerful extent by the fear that life would never be good again. Perhaps not unlike you, I felt I had won life's lottery prior to my daughter's death. Relationships were solid and life was on a delightful and natural course. Death made me lose all of my bearings and I found very few resources and people who were able to bring any sense of hope that life could and would be better at some point in the future. That, for me, made the grief even more insufferable. I lost hope for any future that did not include a diminished version of the life our family had prior to the death of our daughter.

My experience with loss led me to believe that we all have three stark choices when we lose a loved one we thought we could not live without: We can DIE. We can EXIST. Or we can LIVE. Many, many people spend the rest of their lives existing for a number of reasons, not least of which is lack of resources out there to guide and encourage them through positive grief. I promise you, that if you seek hope, resilience, or faith that you will find them. I promise you. But I will share with you that one of the keys to getting there one day is giving yourself permission to find them.

There are few books out there about surviving then growing and thriving after grief. This was frustrating and disheartening to me and it ultimately drove me to write a memoir of my own journey to embrace and live with grief. I shared my story simply because I needed something like it on my nightstand 10 years ago. I wanted HOPE. I wanted someone to take me by the hand and let me know that after all of the suffering that I might deepen and grow and emerge a better person than when I started grieving. Yes, despite that loss. Despite wanting to not go on in the early days after my daughter's death I wanted to hear that someday I might truly want a different outcome. I wanted someone to assure me that all of the work of grief would not be for nothing. If I could not have my daughter back and all of the joys of her childhood then could I find a way to recapture the joy of living at least so that the time would pass more quickly until we saw each other again?

It wasn't easy. I can honestly tell you there is still a large hole in my heart and likely there will always be one in yours as well. But what I can tell you is that out of compensation for that hole my heart has grown larger. The hole is still there but there is room to carry love for others. There is more capacity now than before. No one told me that in the early days. No one told me I could be transformed into a better, stronger, wiser and a more enriched version of the woman who I was prior to my daughter's death and that made the agony of the early days even more difficult. (It can never go without saying that I'd trade every ounce of this hard won zest for life back without hesitation to have my daughter's safe and healthy return but that is not to be.)

There is more. I could go on and on. You must receive many letters and I do hope there are nuggets of wisdom and support in each of them. (There are also some that are terribly off base. Dismiss them. The intent of the letters almost universally is to help. Often people just don't know how to deal with people like us. Forgive them if they say the 'wrong' thing.) The outpouring of kindness of others that I experienced in grief was another gift. It is encouraging to witness the embrace given so freely from the community. I do hope that has been your experience as well.

I can assure you that with the decision to dig deep and be resilient you will thrive. What that will require is equal parts looking inside yourself and listening to what Ralph Waldo Emerson refers to as the "wise silence" and equal parts looking outward with an open mind for places that will bring your comfort. Grief requires us to push the envelope and look outside a bit more. That is a gift in itself though it may not feel that way to you at the moment.

I know you will find comfort in ways meaningful to you. Your relationship with your child was unique. Just as all of our relationships are. Some of that will be preserved and never changed. That deep connection provided you with the gift of a solid foundation from which to build. I hope you will share your journey

with your friends and family. I know I will be out here hoping and waiting for more inspiration each day. We are so much to so many. For those of us with surviving children we owe it to them to get back in to life and to show up for them. For me, that was what kept me moving initially. There was a lot of just plain showing up until things slowly started to feel ok in small ways. Then in bigger ways. Then one day, life was mostly good. And mostly good doesn't feel at all like a compromise. Mostly good feels awesome.

I wish you all the best. I am sorry for your loss. Please know that you will be ok. Life will feel better again one day. You will smile and even laugh easily. You will be a better version of yourself. I feel that is an easy promise to make because I have stood in shoes similar to yours.

You. Will. Be. OK. You will be better than OK if you choose to be.

With kindest regards and sympathy,

Sukey Forbes

Sukey Forbes is the author of the bestselling memoir "The Angel in My Pocket: A Story of Love, Loss, and Life After Death." She lectures on resilience and positive grief For more information please visit her at <u>www.sukeyforbes.com</u> or you can find her on social media platforms as sukeyforbes.



The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the **elixir of hope**.

It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to **live and love again**.

-Simon Stephens, founder of the Compassionate Friends

Our Children Lovingly Remembered

February Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Clifton Alexander - John Alexander James C. "Jimmy" Skaggs - James & Bonnie Skaggs Cameron Forror - Chad & Tonya Forror Ken & Louise Forror Jeffrey Scott LaCoste - Peggy LaCoste Nick Koleff - Bob & Linda Dils Brian Swartz - Lisa Swartz David J. Elam - Danny & Tammy Elam Amelia Beeman - Peggy Beeman Jeremiah Lee Bubeck - Rick & Becky Bubeck

February Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Brian Patrick "Stew" Stewart - Joel & Connie Kempton Mark Kurtis O'Dell - Tim & Sandy O'Dell Mark Nordquist - Peggy & Tom Nordquist Michael Milton Earl Cattell II - Michael & Patricia Cattell Montgomery Alan "Monte" Mott - DeDe Mott Robert M. Walters III - Robert Jr. & Penelope Walters

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

SEEKING NEWSLETTER HELP

The newsletter editor is seeking a person to provide the articles for the Sibling Page and Book Reviews each month. It takes time to research the internet and other resources for the articles provided in our newsletters.

Due to the need and desire to participate in some online courses, your editor would really appreciate the help of a compassionate and caring individual, perhaps someone that has experienced the loss of a sibling, to support siblings through finding articles for our newsletter. For Book Reviews, someone could just view a few of our books description pages and provide the info to add to the newsletter. **PLEASE...**

Call Cathy Duff 473-5533 or email mcduff79@windstream.net.

YOUR HELP WOULD BE GREATLY APPRE-

CIATED. If I do not get some assistance, I may need to change from monthly to bi-monthly or quarterly newsletters.

SORRY NO BOOK REVIEW

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

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WHAT WOULD WENDY DO? By Karen Soltero

For most of my life, I lived in a box. Not a real box. I didn't grow up on the street surrounded by cardboard. I had made my own, carefully stacked around me in rows, built up, year after year into a solid shape that hovered around me like an aura. Sharp comers, crisp lines and strings of words that I had applied to myself and they included a lot of shoulds and musts and don'ts and can'ts. I'm a rule-follower.

What rules? Oh, the ones I applied to myself. I never had a curfew in high school, mostly because my parents knew I would never sneak out, never drink and never lie about where I had been. And it wasn't the parenting, though we had excellent parenting, because my sister did ALL of those things. I was just, as they say, a goody twoshoes.

In my early college and post grad years, I remember starting to see friends or other students sporting bracelets, usually those woven ones, with the letters WWJD on them. It stood for What Would Jesus Do? According to Wikipedia, Christians ".....used the phrase as a reminder of their belief in a moral imperative to act in a manner that would demonstrate the love of Jesus through the actions of the adherents:' The bracelets were supposed to help you remember to be a better person, to make wise choices. I didn't need a personal relationship with Jesus or a bracelet around my wrist with a jumble of letters to tell me what NOT to do. It was really the other way around.

During a Southern California fall, on a chilly night just before Halloween, my younger sister, Wendy, was killed during a random robbery in her car, on a quiet block in Hollywood. In the time it takes a young girl with a gun on a quest for money to say "give me your wallet or I'll shoot;' and then shoots anyway, just because, I lost my only sibling.

Wendy was the opposite of me. If there was a rule to be found, she was going to do her best to break it. Not because she was contrary by nature. She was warm and engaging and you'd be hard pressed to find anyone who didn't get along with her. Her world just simply didn't have walls. There are a million stories I could relate that would illustrate this statement, but for now, here's one.

It was in 1999. I was in grad school and Wendy was an undergrad student. We lived together, in a little house in Los Angeles. It was probably in desperate need of a wash. The start of the Golden Globe awards was on TV.

"I'm headed to school," I said. I had a project due. "I'll be back later:'

"Okay;' she said. "I might go to the Golden Globes:' There was no sarcasm in her voice.

"Right. Let me know how that goes:' There was a lot of sarcasm in my voice.

I came home about four hours later to an empty house. Then I got a text from Wendy, on my brick of a cell phone. She had done it. She had pulled an old formal dress from a school dance out of her closet and driven to Hollywood. Later, when she came home, she would tell me that she walked right in like she was supposed to be there. A few days after, she would produce photos with a handful of television celebrities and in most of them, she's got this crazy face on and is gesturing at them with a "look who I'm with" expression.

After Wendy died, I was shattered. To be honest, I still pick up pieces of myself every now and then and try to stick them back on. I came apart, and as I put myself back together, over days, and weeks and years, the pieces fit differently. My rules hadn't stopped Wendy from dying, they didn't stop me from grieving, and the box they had built had failed to keep me safe. Yet, I still clung to them, as if they gave me structure, helped to keep the pieces together. I still do, a lot of the time.

But somewhere along the way, maybe four years after Wendy died, when I was most struggling with how to keep her in my life as the years fell away, I thought of those What Would Jesus Do? bracelets. I suddenly realized I needed one. But mine would read, WWWD. What Would Wendy Do? When choices in life would come up, some little and some big, I started to ask myself that question. There was something immediately reassuring when I discovered that I always knew the answer. It connected me to her in a way I hadn't expected and connected me to life in a way I had never experienced.

If my gut reaction to Wendy's answer was "No Way!" then I stuck to my guns. But if I thought to myself, "that sounds a little crazy;' or "Id love to, but I'm afraid;' I'd look down at my invisible macrame bracelet and say, "Okay, Wendy, you win, I'm doing it your way:'

What Would Wendy do got me on a plane by myself for a solo vacation to London in 2007, which to this day, was one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had. It got me to open a business in an industry I knew little about. It got me to give in on days I needed to get stuff done, and to stay in my bathrobe until dinner time. It got me to stand up for myself in moments when it's far more comfortable for me to keep quiet. What Would Wendy Do? also left me once stranded at a house in the Hollywood Hills with a party full of crazy actors until 4 in the morning in days before Google Maps and iPhones so I couldn't call a cab because I couldn't tell them how to find me.

This isn't just about Wendy. It's is about me, about you, about all of us. It's about understating that our Siblings (and children) are always with us. It's about getting comfortable with the things that make you feel like you're wearing a too tight pair of shoes. It's not about breaking all of the rules, because there's a "No Way!" in all of us and it's there for a reason. But there's also a "maybe;' and a "why not;' and all kinds of other wonderful words that make pathways instead of boxes.

Some days we all need a circle around our wrist, real or imaginary. A daily reminder that some rules are meant to be broken, that some boxes are meant to be opened. That an experience, good or bad, is just that, a wonderful, magical experience. And that life, for as long as we have it, is meant to be lived.

Karen Soltero is a bereaved sibling, having lost her younger sister Wendy in 2000, when Wendy was shot and killed during a random robbery attempt in Hollywood, C.A. Karen has been an active participant in The Compassionate Friends, attending both local Chapter meetings and National Conferences. Karen works hard on a daily basis to keep the spirit of her sister Wendy alive - by celebrating her, talking about her, commemorating birthdays and anniversaries and always working hard to make sure that even new friends have an opportunity to get to know her.



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