

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC. International Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870 AUGUST 2017 NEWSLETTER Vol. 26 No. 7

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My Road to Healing –

Now a Chance for YOU

By Cathy Duff, newsletter editor

I lost my son, Shaun, January 11, 2009. Thankfully, through The Compassionate Friends newsletter, I joined the local chapter. I depended on the monthly newsletters and the meetings to help me with the difficulty of this terrible grief journey that we all understand too well.

Barbara Lawrence was the newsletter editor and I told her just how much her newsletters meant to me. Well, I needed a way to remember Shaun and also help others in our chapter. So, when Barb asked for someone to help with the newsletter, I knew this was a wonderful way to do both. I published my first newsletter for our chapter January 2012. I loved reaching out to my Compassionate Friends family each month with articles and poems that I hoped would help each one to find comfort and ideas that they could use to move through their grief.

Each newsletter helped me heal a little more and has been a tribute to my Shaun. As I come into my sixth year of publishing the newsletter, I now need to offer up a chance for one of you to move into the position of newsletter editor in memory of your child and continue to help our Compassionate Friends family.

August Meeting—August 24, 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: Journaling & Your Child's Acrostic Poem.

Pam Fortener, facilitator

Pam will discuss the benefit of journaling in your grief journey and help members create an acrostic poem with your child's name. A journal will be provided.

August Refreshments:

Kathy & Rod Barker (Memory of Nicole) Dawn Duff (Memory of Cassie & Tonia)

One of you needs this chance and our chapter and other families that recently have lost children need you, too.

My last newsletter will be December 2017-January 2018. I will be happy to assist you to assume this special role in our chapter. Call me, 937-473-5533. Leave a message and I will get back to you promptly. I hope that you won't delay, because the members rely on the newsletter just as you and I have.

We need not walk alone!

Our children are remembered!

Reopening of School and No Child!

Summer ends, and across our nation, from the middle of August to the week after Labor Day, schools open for another year. For those parents surviving a child of school age, be that from nursery school to college or university, this can be as trying a time as the holidays.

School buses travel again the busy highways of our cities and the quiet lanes of our countryside. Anxious parents stand with children about to make the first ride to school. Gaggles of youngsters play at countless stops across our land. America's most precious and costly activity is renewed. The children are off to school.

I remember well the silences of the September mornings of those first years. The bus no longer stopped at our home. It simply drove casually by, the people within never realizing it once carried the focus of my love, the repository of my dreams. The drone of its wheels marked anew the mind-numbing dullness of my fragmented senses as it moved its way down the tree lined lane once alive with my son's comings and goings.

It was always possible to avoid "back to school" sales. Seeing young people and their weary parents gather school supplies and clothing was just too much in those earliest years. Somehow, the perfect notebook, the brilliant sweater, the odd-shaped erasers were simply unendurable. The stream of vehicles heading for Cape Cod for that final Labor Day weekend, the last family outing to end the summer, was another scene to avoid. It was a ritual from which we seemed excluded. Could we still be a family without him?

Those years are gone now. Having returned to education, I now have "back to school" buying to do myself. I see the buses arrive to unload their treasured passengers, no longer feeling the emptiness of a bus that drives on, barren of hopes and dreams. But I do and will forever remember the pain of those unhappy years and sometimes I reflect on the many parents who now feel as I did.

If you are such a parent, if you mourn a child who leaves a school desk somewhere unfilled, I promise that you are not alone in that pain. But even though you are not alone, you know that you are forever marked, that the death of your child or children has altered you in some basic manner.

Perhaps time and much grief work remain before your spirit can yield up the agony and permit a new self to emerge. That time and work was necessary for me, as it actually is for all of us. For me, grief resolution finally recalled me to my original work. I teach. I no longer administer or direct. The need for that fled before bereavement's assault.

I teach math, science, and social studies to sixth grade children, ages 11 to 12 over the course of a year. In wondrous ways they have restored love to my living. There is nothing of an intellectual character with enough value to equal that, so I have given them the love and caring that was mine, evoked by and for Olin. Thus do Olin's gifts live on, called forth and given new lift through the innocent and selfless love of schoolchildren.

All who walk this road realize this is not substitution. Such is not possible. But it does reflect qualities of successful reinvestment, something each of us sorely needs.

Today as schools prepare for another year, I look forward to a new group of children. But cautions arise within as well, the legacy of that time over 12 years ago, when the world came to a sudden halt, when the laughter of lifetimes ceased, when dreams evaporated with a morning mist.

For those of us who dare live and love again, for those fortunate enough to have found a reinvestment encouraging the same, there is always risk. After all, tragedy can strike again. Our present or past pain grants no immunity. Students, the children within the school, invited me, albeit unknowingly, to take that risk again, although certainly not at the rich and deep level of father and son. Nevertheless, it feels right, and though I will never again know the depth of love which belonged to Olin and me, I welcome the chance to live once more on its margins.

So schools, which were once just another manifestation of hurt, have helped me to restore purpose and balance to daily living. There is surely such a reinvestment awaiting all of us, but we must seek the circumstances and create the opportunities for it to occur. I pray that all of us who have not yet had such good fortune may soon do so. All of our children would want this for us as well. With that thought in mind, it is indeed worth striving for that dimension in life once more.





 Cathy Duff for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of her son, Shaun Bradley Duff, 08/1985 -- 01/2009.

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.



Chasing Butterflies

So many times I wonder now How will I make it through? As years go flitting by me Taking memories of you

Elusive, fragile, here and there I chase and cast my net Tiny pieces of our long agos I fear I might forget

Like a thousand butterflies So many, yet too few Each one a treasured moment Each one a part of you

Time may bring me closer To the day I see your smile But time can be my enemy Stealing from me all the while

So I will chase each memory Seen through this Mother's eyes Until I'm with you once again I 'll be chasing butterflies

> Donna Gerrior TCF Pasco County, FL In Memory of Rob

CHAPTER NEWS

Upcoming Topics:

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

September - Secondary Losses Experiences

HELP NEEDED:

Our Chapter is important to so many on this hard and difficult journey of grief. Remember when you began the journey, how you couldn't think, function, or even breath at times. Much of the healing comes to us through the sharing and the reaching out to others that feel our same pain. We survived together through the support of our Compassionate Friends. We are not walking this path alone.

Our Chapter needs more members on our steering committee, helping with our special events, and continuing the newsletter and facebook functions, and sending cards to members during those difficult months of birthdays and angel-versaries.

Our Chapter Leader, Kim Bundy, has been doing a wonderful and dedicated job of keeping our Chapter strong and here for the new and old members alike for support in the pain that so many outside our Chapter think should just go away. Kim could use a Co-leader to share some of the responsibilities of this leadership position.

The Steering Committee is reaching out to all of you that know The Compassionate Friends Chapter is needed and ask you to join us and help our Chapter remain strong and keep growing to support other families in their loss of a child.

Call Kim at 573-9877 and let her know that you are willing to keep us strong together.

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE? A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.

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

Borrowed Hope

Lend me your hope for a while I seem to have mislaid mine. Loss and the hopeless feelings accompany me daily.

Pain and confusion are my companions.

I know not where to turn.

Looking ahead to the future times

Does not bring forth images of renewed hope.

I see mirthless times, pain filled days, and more tragedy.

Lend me your hope for a while.

I seem to have mislaid mine.

Hold my hand and hug me.

Listen to all my ramblings.

I need to unleash the pain and let it tumble out.

Recovery seems so far distant.

The road to healing, a long and lonely one.

Stand by me. Offer me your presence.

Your ears and your love.

Acknowledge my pain, it is so real and ever present.

I am overwhelmed

With sad and conflicting thoughts.

Lend me your hope for a while.

A time will come when I will heal.

And I will lend my renewed hope to others.

Eloise Cole TCF Phoenix, AZ

Signs and Symbols

We had a small group at our Bereaved Parents group recently so we just sat and talked about anything anyone brought up. We talked about how, before our children died we might have thought some people's conversations about experiences they had a bit weird, but now we understand and have our own stories to tell.

I have thought more about that in the days since. I think there is something to be said to grieving parents, grandparents and siblings about signs and symbols. How often has a newly bereaved parent told us, -I think I'm losing my mind or -I just can't concentrate like I used to~ and how relieved they are when we tell them that they are NORMAL - we have all felt that way and experienced that. Maybe some of them - and some of you - have had signs too and just haven't said anything for fear someone will think we have really gone over the edge. An old catechism I had to memorize as a child said that a miracle is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. As children we used to be taught allegories and to think deeply about things to find a meaning. There was a Santa Claus, an Easter Bunny, Angels, etc. Lucky is the child who is still taught this way!

In the June 16 issue of TIME, in the report about the first anniversary of the tragedy at Oklahoma City, the story of the Memorial to be built there was told and every design offered includes what they call the Survivor Tree, in this case an elm tree, that is the only thing in the lot surviving the bombing. One father, who met his daughter there at the tree for lunch, still goes there each day since her death in the bombing and remembers her and talks to those who pass by. This is his sign and continued communication with his daughter.

When we were in England recently, we went into Westminster Cathedral and looked at the memorials to kings, queens, poets, warriors, etc. We lit a candle at the bank of candles for Ruthie and, as we left, I couldn't help but have a tear in my eyes as I thought of that candle burning there in the great cathedral as a sign to Ruthie that we haven't forgotten and love her always. The next day we took Chunnel to Paris. As we returned to London and emerged from the Chunnel, we found that it had rained in England. And there in the sky was - not a single rainbow - but a double, beautiful rainbow. In that we saw. a sign from Ruthie that she remembers and loves us still too! As our group talked we found we had things that had happened or that we had seen that we knew we couldn't mention these things to some because they wouldn't understand. We wouldn't have before! But now we do understand and we can tell each other about these signs and what they symbolize to us. (Signs and Symbols)

So if you have a sign or a symbol, treasure it and don't let anyone tell you it has no meaning. It has meaning to you! And these signs and symbols are of a deep grace and peace that means much to us all. Share your Survivor Tree, your candle, your rainbow, your butterfly and don't doubt for a minute that there is a reason for the happening or sign even though you may not know exactly what it is right now.

> Betty Ewart, Bereaved Mother, Lewisburg, WV

> > son!

^^^^

Butterflies Make Me Happy

Sometimes in our grief we truly believe we are going crazy. We hurt so bad we don't think we can manage to go on living without our precious child here with us. Part of the grieving process is learning how to do just that. Some parents need the reassurance that their child is okay. I think the human mind can only take so much pain and jumps at the chance to see signs from their children, reassuring them that they are okay. The way I look at it, if you get comfort from a dream or a sign ... enjoy it. You've suffered enough, and believing in signs, butterflies, dreams or what ever else gives you comfort and hurts no one else, is your right as a bereaved person.

Are these signs real, or just in my imagination? Can I prove they are messages from my son? Does it even need to be proven? No, I can't scientifically prove it. But I know that dreams, butterflies, signs and enjoyment in nature makes me feel closer to Eric and therefore I will continue to enjoy them. It hurts no one, I'm not obsessive about it and anyone who chooses to think I'm nuts for believing in such things, can think I'm nuts. We've all heard how the butterfly is a symbol of rebirth. Whether it's our child moving from this world onto a higher plane, or a bereaved parent emerging from the cocoon of grief into a world without our child here. With us, butterflies are a comfort for many.

When I'm missing my son and see a butterfly flittering from flower to flower, I smile and feel better. When I'm in a happy mood and see a butterfly, I enjoy the beauty of such a delicate creature. Taking the time to slow down and watch such a fragile creature going about its business is calming and I don't think anyone should discount the benefits from having a calming moment.

About four months after Eric died, I had a dream about him. I woke myself up from tears of joy running down my face, I knew he was okay ... what a relief that

was. I still hurt terribly and missed him more than I thought I could endure, but I felt comforted by the dream. Some could say it was my subconscious trying to sort things out, but I choose to believe it was his way of trying to comfort me. Either way, it made me feel better. Maybe it's because bereaved parents walk around in such a fog and function on automatic pilot that we are moving slow enough to notice the signs that are around us.

Maybe dreams are one way for us to accept messages we need to hear and take into our hearts without logically trying to interpret them. Maybe faith is what we rely on when nothing else makes sense and we instinctively know we need something to hold on to. Whatever it is, just give me a second helping; I like feeling closer to my

Lynn Vines

WANTED

I wanted to see you graduate And marry a nice girl one day I wanted to see you happy But the angels called you away

I wanted to be grandma To children of yours through the years Instead I sat and thought about What I've missed with misty tears

I wanted to see you happy And call me daily on the phone Instead I stood in an empty house Feeling so alone

I wanted to have so many things To do in your life through the years Instead I look at photos And wipe away the tears

I wanted you with me forever I wanted you with me when I grew old I wanted your love my child To cherish, love and hold

> But what I wanted And what I got instead Are memories from long ago As they run through my head

Now I want you to be happy And wait for the day that I get there And remember the good times on earth And all the love that we shared

I love you my child forever I wanted things to be different for us But I know you're with God and are happy So I'll try not to make a big fuss

Be waiting for me when my name's called And let me see your face and your smile I wanted to see you before this But I can wait a little while

Lead me down the path you walk Take me to God's throne For when I get to hug you again I know then that I'll be Home

Sharon J. Bryant In Memory of my son, Andy Dunbar January 22, 1972 – October 24, 1977 I'm his mom and he's my angel...forever Copyright 2002 TCF South Bay/LA., CA

Our Children Lovingly Remembered

August Bírthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Adam Douglas Cheadle - Gary & Elaine Meyers Brian Keith Willis - Keith & Linda Willis Brian Patrick "Stew" Stewart - Joel & Connie Kempton Emily Watson - Mary Watson Jill Myers - Saundra Saurber Leslie M. Turner - Randy & Debra Turner Ryan S. Thuma - Scott & Renee Thuma Shaun Bradley Duff - Michael & Catherine Duff Tony Robert Lavy - Robert E. & Sharon Lavy Chad Fisherback - Tammy Sackett Nicole Barker - Rod & Kathy Barker Cassandra "Cassie" Campbell - Dawn Duff



August Angel-versaríes

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Brad M. Massie - Barbara Massie Denise R. Brown - Darlene N. Brown Emily Watson - Mary Watson Jeffery L. Miller - Marilyn Miller Jill Myers - Saundra Saurber Jordan Elizabeth Glawe - Jeff & Jackie Glawe Samuel James Barga - Linda Barga

Silent Stories

Somehow they press against the windowpane of your mind. Tales of wanting Tales of longing Tales of grief. A drumbeat. Heartbeat, Calling out loss. But We remember. But We still love. We will not be silent We will speak their names, Always, We will love them, Forever. Melissa Anne Schroeter TCF Rockland County, NY

BOOK REVIEW by Jackie Glawe (Jordan's mom)

Angel Catcher, A Journal of Loss and Remembrance

This is a journal that is set up with open questions and statements



This is something you would want to purchase and keep since you would be journal-ling in it.

Angel Catcher, A journal of Loss and Remembrance by Kathy Eldon and Amy Eldon Turteltaub is available to purchase through Amazon, Barnes and Nobles and Centering Corporation.

If you would like to see my copy let me know and I will bring to a meeting.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

I remember all the things we did together, even though we were very young.

I laugh and feel warm each time I think of a *particularly funny one.*

Sometimes I get so angry that he's no longer here to share,

But I know he knows it's only because of how much I still care.

I miss him, so even though at times we didn't agree,

Just knowing he was there made things feel safe for me.

He a/ways felt he had to be my *strong, protective big brother,*

And thet's a bond we'll a/ways share forever with each other.

He tried to protect me *even when he, too, was just scared.*

No, I won't stop loving that big brother of mine, Not now, not ever, not till the end of time. He will always be a part of what makes me be me. And that's the part of our love that will live eternally.

> Jackie Rosen TCF N.Dade/S. Broward, FL

Not The Same

He was a very nice man, like so many others, and yet he was so different. His quick smile and gentle ways were like those of others and yet, he was so uncommon.

He was kind and loving with unshakable faith like others, and yet he was so unique. He was a dutiful soldier who gave his life like many others, and yet he was so special. The same as others? No. Not to those who knew him. He was himself, an individual, and he was my brother.

> Pamela Miller Farrell TCF, Evansville, IL

Dear Sister in Heaven

I sit here and I ponder how every much I'd like to talk with you today There are so many things That we didn't get to say.

I know how much you care for me And how much I care for you. And each time that I think of you I know you'll miss me too.

An angel came and took you by the hand, and said Your place was ready in Heaven, far above... And you had to leave behind, all those you dearly loved You had so much to live for, you had so much to do...

It still seems impossible that God was taking you. And though your life on earth is past, in Heaven it starts anew You'll live for all eternity, just as God has promised you.

And though you've walked through Heaven's gate We are never far apart For every time 1 think of you, You're right here, deep within my heart.

Unknown Author

Do I Have To?

Mom, do I have to stop loving my brother because he is not here? Willi forget all about him because he's not near?



A



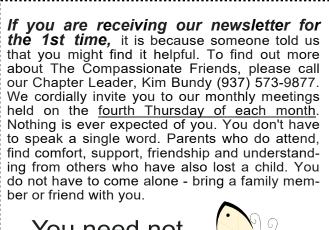
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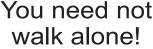
What is The Compassionate Friends?

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. <u>We need not walk alone</u>, we are <u>The Compassionate Friends</u>.

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.