



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

*Miami
Valley
Chapter
Newsletter*

TCF Chapter No. 1732, P.O. Box 292112, Kettering, OH 45429 (937) 640-2621

Sep-Oct 2015

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

E-mail: miamivalleytcf@gmail.com

Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony
Sunday, December 13, 2015
Request for Photos ...

Each year on the second Sunday in December, The Compassionate Friends holds a Candle Lighting Ceremony. At 7pm *around the globe*, TCF chapters meet and light candles, one for each child, so that for 24 hours there is constant candlelight in our children's memories. As one time zone extinguishes candles, another lights theirs. We hope you will join us for this beautiful program of candlelight, readings and music!

Our Miami Valley chapter creates a lovely slide presentation of our children's photos for the program. Please submit a photo of your child (**JPEG format, please**) to our chapter e-mail at miamivalleytcf@gmail.com.

OR send an actual photo to us:
TCF Chapter 1732
PO Box 292112
Kettering, OH 45429

Please include his/her full name as you would like it read. If your child's photo has been included in previous Candle Lightings, no need to resubmit — unless you would like to replace the photo we have with another.

THANK YOU!

**Chapter meetings are on the
third Wednesday of the month
at Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church
Corner of Bigger Road & Wilmington Pike
Kettering, Ohio**

Directions: from Rt 35, exit at Woodman Drive,
go south approximately 4 miles to Wilmington Pike,
turn left, church is about 1/2 mile on right

OR

from I-675, exit onto Wilmington Pike (Exit 7),
go north 2 miles. Church is on left, just after David
Road

Upcoming Meeting Schedule and Topics

Wednesday, September 16th, 7pm
HOPE: Dirty Word or Desired Goal?

Wednesday, October 21st, 7pm
Masks We Wear

I found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary
folk that keep the darkness at bay.
Small acts of kindness and love.

~Gandalf, speaking to the Elves in
"The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey"

We never really get over devastating loss.
In the thick of it, we almost stop breathing; sometimes even wishing we could.
And we know deep within that we will never be the same.
Yet, one day we feel the sun on our face again.
We find ourselves smiling at a child or a joke or a memory.
And at that moment, we realize we are finding our way back.
Changed forever?
Yes.
But also softer, deeper, more vulnerable and more loving too.
And we are breathing again.

~Paul S. Boynton, Begin with Yes, www.beginwithyes.com, and Begin with Yes on Facebook



*The Compassionate Friends— A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding,
and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.*

Thank You for your "Love Gifts"
in remembrance of these loved ones . . .

♥ *Tammie Spence in memory of her son,
 Shannon Mason*

*(Please contact us if we accidentally omitted
 any love gift)*



***We depend on and are so grateful for your
 generous donations to continue our mission to
 reach out to grieving families who have lost a
 precious child, grandchild or sibling.***

**Please send your "Love Gifts" (tax deductible)
 to**

***The Compassionate Friends,
 Chapter # 1732
 Karen Brown, Treasurer
 P. O. Box 292112
 Kettering, Ohio 45429***

***Chapter financial reports are available at the
 planning meetings.***

***If you'd like to designate your gift for a particular use, such as a
 new library book or a newsletter mailing, or towards an event such
 as the Candle Lighting, please let us know!***

***Did you know that your United Way contributions can be
 designated to our local Miami Valley TCF Chapter #1732?***

There is a beautiful thread of love
 connecting my soul to yours
 If you feel a tug on your heart-strings,
 It's just me saying,
 "I'm still here."

~www.molliemorningstar.com

The Compassionate Friends
 Miami Valley Chapter #1732, Dayton, OH 937-640-2621

Chapter Support Meetings
 3rd Wednesdays, 7pm, Sugarcreek Church

Planning Team Meetings
 (all are welcome!)
 2nd Thursdays, 7pm, LaRosa's
 2801 Wilmington Pike near Dorothy Lane

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Other Nearby TCF Chapter  
 Miami County TCF, West Milton, OH  
 Contact Barb Lawrence 937-836-5939  
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Other Local Dayton Area Support

*Miami Valley Hospital Perinatal Loss Hot Line, Pregnancy
 Loss/I Infant Death 937-208-6363
 *Oak Tree Corner, Grief Support for Children 937-285-0199
 *Survivors of Suicide 937-226-0818
 www.suicidepreventioncenter.tk
 *Hospice of Dayton Grief Support 937-256-4490
 800-653-4490
 *Crossroads Hospice Grief Recovery 937-312-3170
 800-603-6673
 *HEALing Together, Franklin, OH Miscarriage, Infant &
 Toddler Loss, Parent/Grandparent Support 513-705-4056

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Other Resources

\*Alive Alone, Support for Death of Only Child or All Children  
 Kay Bevington, VanWert, OH: [alivalon@bright.net](mailto:alivalon@bright.net)  
 419-238-1091, [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)  
 \*American Association of Suicidology  
[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)  
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Websites to check out:

www.thegrieftoolbox.com
 Tom Zuba www.TomZuba.com
 Paula Stephens www.crazygoodgrief.com
 Paul S Boynton www.beginwithyes.com
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The Compassionate Friends national magazine "We Need Not  
 Walk Alone" is available free through an online subscription at  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) - click on "sign up for national  
 publications". If you do not wish to subscribe, you can still view  
 the magazine in the archive once the next issue has been pub-  
 lished.

*The topic for our October 21st chapter meeting is "MASKS" ...*

This is a good time of year to talk about the "masks" of grief. Earlier and earlier, stores, television and radio market Halloween. Decorations, costumes and masks are everywhere. And masks are a great metaphor for the bereaved.

The purpose of a mask is to cover or conceal. Think about how often we put on masks that say... *Look at me, I'm fine*. The phrase, *I'm fine*, is stated by everybody at least once a day. For many, it's a lie we tell ourselves as much as we tell others. On the inside, we may be far from fine. We may be reeling with emotions. Sometimes, we may even put up a mask internally when we are afraid to look at our own innermost bits and pieces. Perhaps we fear that we'll crumble and fall apart.

Every now and then we need to wear a mask. We may want to project a certain image and wearing a mask helps us play the part. Some people refer to this as the... *fake it 'til you make it* approach. And of course, we have masks for various occasions. There are masks we wear at work, at home, at school, and in the community. But, it's important to recognize what mask we are wearing so that we do so with care and remember how to take them off. From time to time, we must take a deep look inside.

One activity we do with school age children and adolescents at *Together We Can* grief camp, is create inner and outer masks to increase awareness of our feelings. Once the campers can recognize and label these feelings, they are encouraged to share their innermost ones with the group—where they are safe and their feelings will be accepted.

As an adult, you may or may not want to actually create a mask, but consider what one might look like. To see the mask you wear outward, look to other's reactions towards you. Your inner mask may be more difficult to picture, but it's worth the effort to look deep. Stuffing feelings far below the surface can result in a plethora of mind, body and spirit symptoms. Remember, you do not have to grieve alone.

~Hospice of the Western Reserve, The Elizabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center Blog

"Do not judge the bereaved mother.

She comes in many forms.

She is breathing, but she is dying.

She may look young, but inside she has become ancient.

She smiles, but her heart sobs.

She walks, she talks, she cooks, she cleans, she works,  
she IS, but she IS NOT, all at once.

She is here,

but part of her is elsewhere for eternity."

If I had to draw a picture of a mother's grief, this would be it. So poignant. I know several grieving mothers who are hurting very badly right now. And I know several others who are hurting "regular". There are different ways to carry the grief, but the pain is always there. For any angel moms who are hurting really badly right now, I'm here to remind you that there will be better days ahead. Keep moving forward, go with the flow, and you will get there. You're not alone. There are many (too many) other moms also learning to build their lives around the loss of their child. Sending SO much love to you brave women!

~Ollie Hinkle Community on Facebook, 8/21/2015

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We welcome contributions to this Newsletter,  
whether composed by you or found in your reading.  
Please submit suggestions to  
miamivalleytcf@gmail.com.

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*"HOPE: Dirty Word or Desired Goal" is the topic  
for our September 16th chapter meeting.*

It is the gift of HOPE which reigns supreme in the  
attributes of The Compassionate Friends:

HOPE that life can still be worth living and  
meaningful.

HOPE that the pain of loss will become less acute,  
and above all else,

the HOPE that we do not walk alone, and that we  
are understood.

The gift of HOPE is the greatest gift that we can  
give to those who mourn.

~Rev. Simon Stephens,  
Founder of The Compassionate Friends

I give myself and others permission  
to grieve at their own pace,  
recognizing that all people are different  
in their journey of healing.  
I give myself and others grace,  
acceptance, compassion and kindness  
on their grieving journey.

~Lee Horbachewski  
[SimpleeSerene.com](http://SimpleeSerene.com)

## To See One Another Broken by Courtney Martin

Courtney E. Martin, author, speaker, blogger, writes a weekly column at *On Being*. Read her fresh commentaries each Friday at [onbeing.org/column/courtney-e-martin](http://onbeing.org/column/courtney-e-martin).

I grew up in a house devoid of religious ritual. Which is not to say, devoid of ritual.

There was the cranberry-colored “you are special today” plate, pulled out only on noteworthy occasions. There were the giddy minutes my brother and I spent combing the cereal aisle of the grocery store on our birthdays, when we were allowed to pick out one “sugar cereal” each. (You can imagine my wide eyes, upon waking in a tangle of blankets and skinny limbs at my first sleepover, when I discovered that other kids had “sugar cereal” year round!) There was the occasional gift under the Christmas tree, which we would discover was actually something we already owned, re-wrapped by my clever mom in order to send a message about valuing what you already have.

In the family I’m creating now — my husband, my 20-month-old daughter, and me — there are, so far, no religious rituals to speak of either. There are rituals around bedtime and waking up and eating. Maya loves to holler “Cheers!” these days while forcefully bouncing her sippy cup off of our water glasses.

She seems to crave ritual rather desperately; I suspect it’s a way of feeling safe in a world where she is learning so much every-day, constantly charged with confronting new phenomena and fitting them into her limited schema or making entirely new ones. Can you imagine? Every new object. Every new word. Every new behavior observed. All of it must be filed away somewhere in her brain. What a relief to have some practice that is comfortingly familiar. She absolutely needs “blankie” — yellow and white checkered, the exact one I had as a baby — to come with us into the bed when we snuggle with “dada” in the mornings. If I don’t grab it, she screams, as if the matter of the blanket is life or death.

I listened to Krista Tippett’s powerful interview with Dr. Rachel Yehuda last week while on a walk through a beautiful cemetery near my house (surprisingly appropriate), and had to hit pause a few times to process the profundity of what they were saying. One of the “pause” moments was when they began talking about the importance of ritual as a kind of container for trauma. Krista said:

*“There’s always been this innate wisdom to that. Kind of creating a container where the pain and the trauma is acknowledged, but not allowed to — that it has its place.”*

And it got me thinking... I think that those of us who don’t identify with an organized religion are actually fairly good at inventing rituals around joy. Maya’s exuberant toasts, my savored Cocoa Puffs, that shiny plate — it’s all the stuff of celebration to some extent and it feels rather intuitive to integrate into our lives.

When it comes to grief, I think those of us without a religious tradition to lean on are more challenged to invent or integrate ritual. Sadness, disappointment, disease, loss become largely private or intellectualized. Many of us struggle to acknowledge when something traumatic happens in a way that feels like it matches the emotional weight of the experience, or what we imagine it to be. Sometimes we do things that feel inadequate — order flowers, send cards, cook lasagnas, say something well-intentioned — but often feel it’s too formal or too presumptuous, or just say nothing at all because we don’t want to risk it.

We’re dumb about grief, truth be told. I think many of us long for rituals when funerals either aren’t enough or it isn’t death, per se, that we’re dealing with. We long, not just to celebrate when we feel whole, but to see one another when we are broken.

It’s tempting to live a life where you only show up in public once you’ve stitched yourself back together again. It’s so much easier to acknowledge pain once you have a pat story about the meaning that’s been wrought, the silver lining that’s been carefully drawn. But it’s not honest. Rituals are so powerful because they provide structure for the full spectrum of our emotional lives: the births and the deaths, the union and the disintegration. Without them, we live a few octaves short. We do what seems safe and stay quiet and private about our sadness, and instead, our silence can be dangerous to our very selves, our very cells.

My husband and one of his closest friends go on long runs in Redwoods Park near our house together these days and talk about their chaotic, wonderful lives. One afternoon, John came back and there was something different about him. It was like he was moving through the world with more reverence, with more breath and light and less dogged direction. He said, *“Today, Peter and I talked about the death of his son.”* Peter’s son, Lars, died at just three weeks old. He and his wife have since had another gloriously healthy baby who is almost two, and have another on the way. They’re resilient, courageous people. They’ve experienced the worst of life and continue to make the best.

I don’t know exactly what John and Peter said that day, but I know it made John more fully human. They made a ritual out of their sneakers in the dirt and their eyes straight ahead, sweat and tears — I can only guess — intermixing, the unimaginable spoken and heard, the forward momentum of their legs and their hearts. It must have been a muddy, sacred thing.



## Our Library

This article was submitted for our chapter newsletter by  
Deanna McGrath, mom of Jake.  
Thank you, Deanna!

It is a great pleasure to introduce you to the book **When Bad Things Happen to Good People** by **Rabbi Harold S. Kushner**. There are so many beautiful words and concepts I would love to share with you from this book. It is a truly special exploration of the "Why?" that torments many of us, myself included.

Rabbi Kushner's three-year-old son was diagnosed with an incurable degenerative disease. At that time, he was faced with one of life's most difficult questions: Why, God?

"I knew that one day I would write this book," says Rabbi Kushner. "I would write it out of my own need to put into words some of the most important things I have come to believe and know. And I would write it to help other people who might one day find themselves in a similar predicament. I am fundamentally a religious man who has been hurt by life, and I wanted to write a book that could be given to the person who has been hurt by life, and who knows in his heart that if there is justice in the world, he deserved better. . . . If you are such a person, if you want to believe in God's goodness and fairness but find it hard because of the things that have happened to you and to people you care about, and if this book helps you do that, then I will have succeeded in distilling some blessing out of Aaron's pain and tears."

In the preface, he highlights two passages of the book that are most often quoted back to him. The second passage, which is originally from the last chapter, resonated with me.

*"I am a more sensitive person, more effective pastor, a more sympathetic counselor because of Aaron's life and death .....and I would give it up in a second if I could have my son back."*

He shares why he believes this quote is so popular among readers ---

"Other bereaved parents, other men and women who have gained strength, insight and compassion from their trials have told me that they share these sentiments. But of course we cannot choose. We can only try to cope. That is what one does with sorrow, with tragedy, with any misfortune. We do not try to explain it. We do not justify it by telling ourselves that we somehow deserve it. We do not even accept it. We survive it. We recognize its unfairness and we defiantly go on living."

His use of the word "defiantly" seems particularly fitting. Surviving defiantly despite the unfairness of the tragedy that has unwelcomely invaded our lives. Fitting description.

Another of my favorite quotes --- "I was reminded that people going through a hard time need consolation more than they need explanation. Feeling so singled out by fate, they need the reassurance that they are in fact good people and do not deserve what happened to them."

Consolation and reassurance is what Compassionate Friends has offered me. People who understand our pain and struggle and offer that understanding to us are priceless.

In summary I offer Norman Vincent Peale's reflection "This is a book all humanity needs. It will help you understand the painful vicissitudes of this life and enable you to stand up to them creatively."

Consider adding **When Bad Things Happen to Good People** to your "MUST read" (or your "MUST read AGAIN") list. And, it's available to borrow FOR FREE, from our Library!!



Just another ordinary day... but I had learned long ago that it was typically the most ordinary days that the careful pieces of life can break away and shatter. ~Elizabeth Edwards



**National TCF**

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.,  
P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
(630) 990-0010

Toll-Free Number: 1-877-969-0010

TCF web site:

<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

**TCF Regional Coordinator for Ohio**

Dean Turner

Email: [Edean234@aol.com](mailto:Edean234@aol.com)

or phone: 614-402-0004

**Miami Valley TCF Chapter Leaders**

Tom Gilhooly and Richard Miller

937-640-2621

<http://miamivalleytcf.com>

Tom and Dick honor their sons,  
Ryan Gilhooly and Brad Miller,  
through their service.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Annual Candle Lighting**

**Ceremony**

**Sunday, December 13, 2015**

**See inside for details!**



When someone dies,  
You don't get over your grief by FORGETTING,  
You get through your grief by *remembering*.

~author unknown



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

*Miami Valley  
Chapter  
Newsletter*

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P.O. Box 292112  
Kettering, OH 45429

*The Compassionate Friends— A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child of any age, from any reason.*

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