



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

International Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents

MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870

OCTOBER 2017 NEWSLETTER Vol. 26 No. 9

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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.

***** MEETING DATE *****

**October Meeting—October 26, 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: Getting Through the Holidays

We will talk about ways to handle the first few holidays without our loved one and taking care of yourself in these painful times. We will have open discussion about ways to include our child in current traditions and creating new traditions.

October Refreshments:

Elaine Meyers (Memory of Adam)
Pam Fortener (Memory of Melissa)

Thank you for September Refreshments

Sarah Murphey (Memory of Molly)
Carolyn Pearson (Memory of Sam)

November Topic - TBA

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.

DON'T MISS THIS SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY!

***We need not walk alone!
Our children are remembered!***

Light Rekindled

Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into a flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who rekindle this light.—Albert Schweitzer

This quote was recently in the daily newsletter at the hospital where I work. Having just returned home from my ninth National Conference of The Compassionate Friends, it really hit home and made sense to me regarding my journey “through the valley.”

Our family had experienced grief in several forms in the years prior to our daughter Anna’s death. However, at this particular time in our life, everything was moving along smoothly. Life was full of hopes and dreams for the future. Then the unthinkable happened. Anna’s “sinus headaches” became so severe that she became incapacitated. Over the next few weeks the doctors struggled to establish the right diagnosis, finally providing us confirmation of the worst of their considerations. Anna had several horrible, malignant brain tumors. In forty-nine days from the diagnosis our “light went out” as our precious child breathed her last breath.

Like others who have experienced the death of a child, our lives were turned upside down without our permission. It all happened so quickly that we were spinning out of control, functioning on auto-pilot, relying on friends to perform many daily tasks. As we now look back, we realize that the numbness that we felt during those first days and weeks following her death was truly a gift. Surely no one could survive this overwhelming, gut-wrenching pain if the reality of it hit all at once. The reality comes soon enough as the intensity of grief seeps into our entire being. As life goes on for everyone around us, we are left to deal with our shattered world and wade into the mucky waters of grief.

Fortunately my husband and I became aware of The Compassionate Friends. We attended national conferences and soaked up all the information, support and hugs that were offered. We soon were committed to starting a chapter in our area, but the exhaustion of grieving prevented us from moving forward with this plan for four years.

Today, through the support of family, loyal friends in our church who allowed us to lean on their faith and hope when ours was weak, and with the new friends we have made through The Compassionate Friends, we have found our way to “the other side of grief.” It has not been an easy road, but it was one that we had to travel in order to discover wholeness and find the “new normal” that defines the rest of our lives.

Yes, this was the ninth conference we have attended. People ask “why?” “Why do you continue to be part of The Compassionate Friends?” The answer is easy. The people are fabulous. No one cares what kind of house you live in or what kind of work you do. They care about YOU and the grief you bare. They want to HEAR your story and KNOW YOUR CHILD and SEE his/her picture on the picture board.

Their compassion is genuine. They ask how you are because they really want to know. The world tells us to “be over it.” The Compassionate Friends, whether it is a local meeting or national conference, affirms and validates YOUR unique grief. TCF is a safe place where you can say anything, cry or not cry, laugh or not laugh, do whatever you want (without causing harm to self or others) without explanation. In addition, the workshops are excellent. The speakers are phenomenal. As hospital and hospice chaplains we have benefited in recent years from the professional day workshops, where we have learned new ways to bring hope to those who have experienced the death of a child of any age.

Ten years after Anna’s death, we continue to attend the National Conference. A high percentage of those who attend are quite newly bereaved, two years or less. On the final evening as we are gathered together in the banquet hall, I look around the room at the hundreds of people in attendance. There is an overwhelming amount of pain in that huge room. Yet, as one by one the candles are lit during the service of remembrance, there is also an enormous amount of hope. Within this family of The Compassionate Friends, bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents find assurance that their child will remain in their hearts forever and that one day life can be good again.

All of my Compassionate Friends are high on my list of those to whom I express my deepest thanks for helping to rekindle the light that went out for me the day my daughter died. It is the vision of The Compassionate Friends that “everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped.” Won’t you please give us a try—no matter the age of your child or cause of death or how long it has been, we want you to know that “you need not walk alone” on this life-long journey, and that your child is forever loved and remembered.

Paula Funk
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI
In loving memory of my daughter, Anna

We Travel

We Travel

Our individual path has lead us on a collective journey traveling the winding road of grief—with hearts searching for a street called "Comfort." We pause at intersections with landmarks of love, pain, sorrow, reflection, and remembrance.

Carefully we navigate through the busy traffic of sincere condolences, tender moments, awkward moments, displaced comments, stronger friendships, new friendships, strained family gatherings, and surprising wonderful encounters. Some of us, many of us navigate through major road construction wearing hard hats of anger, guilt, denial, regrets, what ifs, and if I had only known. We fuel up on various helps, many requiring that we walk in faith. We find ourselves better equipped to gently hear others as they travel on their personal road of difficulty.

In our grief we are directed, pulled, air lift

to a new place expecting to arrive at a specific, individual destination of purpose and peace. But as we travel on the road, there will be times that the tears will come like a hard rain but Love will cover us, Love will shelter us. There will be times when we are shipwrecked in sorrow and The Angel of Light will provide a life jacket to keep us afloat.

Yes, THE SUN HAS SET ON THE ONE WE LOVE but He will be a Candle of Light to guide---to comfort

He Is The Sunrise of HOPE

He will preserve us, He will sustain us.

Our waterfall of tears will render sweet mist rising,

Spring flowers blooming.

So we remember the ones we love, we talk about the ones we love, we hold onto them---every sweet thought, every beautiful memory.

We encourage one another to find That Secret Place, spend time there, find rest there, find love, healing, forgiveness, peace, and so much

More than we ever knew---ever imagined

And TOGETHER, HEARTS CONNECTED we trust

The Sunrise of HOPE----

The Light at midnight, The Crisp Air of a new dawn

HE IS THE SUNRISE OF HOPE.

Honoring all those who have touched

our life, and will forever occupy beautiful heart space.

Pamela Graves Hagens

In Memory of Samuel Christopher Hagens

*Thank For your
love gifts! you*

- ◆ Joe & Wanda Bailey for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their daughter, Heather Denise Bailey, 09/1975 -- 04/1982, who would have been 42 years old on September 8th.
- ◆ Claude & Mary Snyder for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, Brent A. Snyder, 05/1953 -- 10/2005.

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.

CHAPTER NEWS

Upcoming Topics: TBA

Steering Committee will meet in October. If you have suggestions or wish to help with topics and the candlelight memorial service, please contact Kim Bundy, chapter leader.

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.

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

Our Children Lovingly Remembered

October Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Brad M. Massie - Barbara Massie

Allison Rudy - Lora Rudy

Montgomery Alan "Monte" Mott - DeDe Mott

Zachary O. Patrick - Mike & Tina Patrick

Joshua Matthew Lightle - Matt & Kristi Lightle

Jessica Back - John & Roberta Back

Gina Marie Baker - Margery Marshall

Where Are You Now?

where are you now
but in my heart
your voice clear in my mind
I know we're never far apart
mind to mind
heart to heart
and, maybe, if I'm fortunate,
soul to soul
we connect
you, watching over me
me, so unaware
but, oh, to actually see you
how you've grown and changed
still, oh, to embrace you
feeling your strength and youth
breathing in your life
now held only within
mind's eye
heart of hearts
and lonely soul

Victor Montemurro
TCF Brookhaven in Medford, NY

October Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Brent A. Snyder - Claude & Mary Snyder

Douglas Ray Lavy - Robert E. & Sharon Lavy

Samuel Pearson - Randi & Carolyn Pearson

John Patrick McLaughlin - Don & Pam Fortener

Justice Meade - Jenni Warner

Justice Meade - Sue Brown

Linda Kimerling - George & Harriet Holbert

Aaron T. Duvall - Kim Duvall

Joshua Matthew Lightle - Matt & Kristi Lightle

David J. Elam - Danny & Tammy Elam

Brooklyn Renae Pope - Darin Pope

Liam Seamus Gillespie - David & Julie Gillespie



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

- Editor

NOW for book review....

Holding Onto Love

Searching for Hope When a Child Dies - By Chuck Collins - Reviewed by Janet Sieff

Chuck Collins writes from the heart. You can feel his kind words easing the pain just a little bit as you read this book. He writes from his personal experience as a bereaved father, and addresses issues- obstacles, emotions, family matters, and working situations- that will challenge bereaved families.

The book discusses not only the time immediately after a child's death but also the years following. Chuck guides newly bereaved parents through the dreaded tasks of planning a funeral and finding a support system to get through the time that it is impossible to be emotionally unprepared for. Because he has been there, Chuck refers to his story to support bereaved parents and families on the journey through the deaths of their children, knowing they have a friend out there to guide them.

One of the unique offerings of this book is a Comfort checklist for family and friends in the back of the book. It is an excellent set of suggestions for immediately after the death, the funeral process, the first month, the first year, going back to work, and more. This is followed by examples of how other parents have memorialized their children in positive ways, such as organizing remembrance walks and creating scholarships.



ASK DR. HEIDI

Dr. Heidi Horsley, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a psychologist. She is the executive director of the Open to Hope Foundation, cohost of the Open to Hope radio program, www.opentohope.com, an adjunct professor at Columbia University, and a national board member of The Compassionate Friends.

Please send your question to:

Dr. Heidi Horsley
c/o Catherine Patillo, WNNWA
P.O. Box 526194
Salt Lake City, Utah 84152-6194
E-mail: catpatillo@comcast.net

Question:

My younger sister died in a car accident one year ago, and I continue to feel guilty that I am still alive. I was her older sister, and never expected to outlive her. I replay the accident over in my mind and wonder if I could I have prevented it. I also regret that we didn't always get along. Are my feelings of guilt normal?

Answer:

You are not alone in your feelings of survivor guilt; bereaved siblings often dissect everything about the sibling loss and wonder if they could have done anything to prevent it. Hindsight is always 20/20, and most of the time, there is nothing that could have been done. Most guilt is irrational; we are trying to make sense out of an unpredictable world. We often feel guilty about experiencing things that our sibling should be experiencing too, like graduations, weddings, and holidays. Just enjoying life can also bring us guilt. The sibling relationship is complicated: we compete with each other, laugh together, defend each other, love each other, fight, and know each other inside and out. When I interviewed Craig Scott, whose sister Rachel died in the Columbine School shootings, he said he felt guilty over a fight he had with her the night before she died. His pastor asked him to forgive himself, saying: "Forgiveness is like setting a prisoner free, and finding out that prisoner is you." Even though we may not always get along with our siblings, we still love them and miss them tremendously when they're gone.

My Brother

by Susie Galloway
(Pahrump, NV)

Who knew that morning, God
was going to call your name
He took you so quickly, we will never be the same

You are now without pain, no more tears
no more days and no more years
I miss you so much and wish you were here
I've cried every single day for the last year

You watched out for me when I was young
if ever I needed someone, you were the one
It didn't matter, wrong or right
You would stand up for your little sis and fight

It doesn't matter what they say,
who cares what you did, 'back in the day'
I'll always love you anyway

I guess what they say is really true, we
were never promised tomorrow
Our short time on earth is only borrowed

I'm trying so hard to understand, that
we will all be together again

Until we meet on God's Golden Shore
I'll just miss you more and more

Love you brother

A poem by Ellie:

*I know you walk beside me, In this journey we call life.
I know you have long since passed
But I feel your presence in my heart.
I think of you so often, And always speak your name,
For a sisters bond will never be broken,
And you never heard these words spoken,
But I miss you more with everyday
And I know that memories of you are never far away.*

Ellie's older sister Rebecca suddenly passed away on the 24th of April, 2008. She wrote this poem one night while thinking of her lost sister, and wanted to share it with the Brothers and Sisters readers.

Brothers & Sisters Magazine (August/September 2011)



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.