



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC. International Organization  
Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents  
MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870  
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by Len Szymborski  
Gold Bar, Washington

There was no card next to my coffee cup this morning.  
In the past, there always was,  
But not today.

I would always tell her, "Don't get me a card; that's silly. "  
But she always would, and it would be next to my coffee cup.  
But not today.

When I would see the card next to my cup,  
I'd go to my hiding place and get out my card for her,  
But not today.

How I miss telling her, "Don't get me a card,' that's silly. "  
She always would anyway,  
But not today.

I never thought I could miss that card next to my coffee cup.  
I never thought how much I could miss her,  
Until today.

I wanted to have a card for her.  
I know it would have made her happy)  
But not today.  
It's Valentine's Day, and there's no card next to my coffee cup.  
In the past, there always was,  
But not today.

I love you, Beth.

**February Meeting—February 23, 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: "Show & Tell"***

*Members are invited to bring an item or two of their loved one to the meeting and share the story around it. It can be a picture, clothing, an award, a toy, favorite book, etc.*

***February Refreshments:***

*Darlene Brown (Memory of Denise)  
Cathy Duff ( Memory of Shaun)*

***Thank you for January Refreshments***

*Bob & Penny Walter (Memory of Rob)  
Pam Fortener ( Memory of Melissa)*

Don't think of him as gone away....

His journey's just begun;

Life holds so many facets....

This earth is only one.

Just think of him as resting

From the sorrows and the tears

In a place of warmth and comfort

Where there are no days and years.

Think how he must be wishing

That we could know, today,

How nothing but our sadness

an really pass away

And think of him as living

The hearts of those he touched...

For nothing loved is ever lost-

And he was loved so much.

Unknown

## **The Evolution of Grief** -By Dave Roberts

My daughter Jeannine died on March 1, 2003, at the age of 18 from a rare and aggressive form of cancer. In the beginning of my journey, I never envisioned that I would ever get through my excruciating pain to the point where I would experience joy or happiness again. Today, in the ninth year of my journey, I have experienced joy amid the sadness resulting from Jeannine's physical absence. The raw, emotional pain of my early grief no longer consumes me. My pain has become more manageable and is now channeled into service work with other parents who have experienced the death of a child. I have also become more at peace with the circumstances of Jeannine's death.

I want to share the evolution of my grief journey and the lessons that I have learned as a result. I also acknowledge that some of you who are reading this may be in so much emotional pain that you can't even begin to conceptualize gains made or lessons learned as a result of the struggle with the death of your children. Even if you can't identify with my story today, you may down the road. Our journeys are marathons and not sprints. There are still days when the pain of losing Jeannine outweighs any benefit of the lessons learned as a result of my struggle with her death. The pain of losing our children never truly goes away. Our grief journeys are circular, lifelong, and don't progress in predictable, linear stages.

One of the most important things that facilitated the evolution of my grief was an activity that helped me stay connected to Jeannine. She and I shared a love of music; some of the best memories that I have of her and with her are because of our shared passion for music. It made sense that I began to confront the pain of her death by: (1) listening to music that we both enjoyed, and (2) using lyrics from performing artists such as the Counting Crows, Jackson Browne, and the Wallflowers to connect with my thoughts and feelings during my early, middle, and later grief.

This passage from Neil Peart's book, *Traveling Music* expresses the overall significance that music has had for me throughout my journey:

*In the swift whirl of time, music is a constant, reminding us of what we were and that toward which we aspire. Art thou troubled? Music will not only calm, it will ennoble thee.*

My musical journey of grief was the springboard for other important lessons about coping with catastrophic loss and of unconditional love, faith, service, and the enduring power of relationships. Here is what I have learned so far:

•**Keep moving; something will come up.** I read a book titled *Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road*, also written by Neil Peart. Peart is the drummer for the Canadian band Rush. In the span of often months in 1997 and 1998, his daughter Selena died at the age of 19 in a car accident, and his common-law wife, Jackie, succumbed to stomach cancer. One year and ten days

after the death of his daughter, he embarked on what turned out to be a 55,000-mile, 14-month journey on his motorcycle across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. He rode "to try to figure out what kind of person I was going to be, and what kind of world I was going to live in." The book describes his travels and the intense emotional pain associated with his losses. He also rode in the hope that "something would come up" to give him a reason to live. In the beginning of his journey, Peart described that the first possible hint of an upturn was when he looked at two wedge-shaped rocks sticking out of a lake and realized he liked them because they looked like two ducks facing each other.

He goes on to say, "My eyebrows lifted at the realization; I actually liked something; and thus from that pair of rocks, I began to build a new world." Sometimes the promise of a new world after the death of our children comes from the most unusual places.

•**Working through your pain with the help of others.** This allowed me to celebrate Jeannine's life and, in the process, find a renewed sense of purpose.

•**If we commit to working through the pain of our grief, that pain will transcend to unconditional love for others.**

•**Progress made is never progress lost.** Sometimes the emotional roller coaster of our grief makes us lose sight of this fact. Make it a point each day to celebrate your progress, no matter how big or small. Either verbalize it to yourself or to someone else (including your child) or journal about it, whatever you are comfortable doing.

•**The power of rituals.** On Jeannine's eighth anniversary date in March of this year, I listened to songs on my iPod that Jeannine and I both enjoyed. I kept her in my thoughts and eventually felt her presence. This is what occurred. The first two songs that "randomly" played were by the Gin Blossoms and the Goo Goo Dolls. The first concert that I ever took Jeannine to featured these two bands, and constitutes some of my fondest memories of my relationship with her on earth. Whatever rituals you develop, let them reflect the unique relationship that you shared with your child.

•**Pieces of Jeannine are now pieces of me.** Embodying the best qualities of Jeannine has allowed me to redefine myself and has enabled her to become my partner in my service work. Our relationship is different, but as strong now as it ever was, and purer.

•**Our grief journeys are not about closure; they are about adjustment and staying connected.** My adjustment to Jeannine's physical absence has been made easier by the understanding that she continues to guide me in my redefined world. I have also discovered that not everyone will support our continued connections to our children because of their perceptions that grief is a time-limited process. Instead of becoming frustrated, I find individuals and groups who are willing to support my journey.

*For your*  
**Thank**  
*love gifts!* **you**

- ♦ Lowell & Marilyn Bok for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their daughter, Marlisa Bok, 01/1968 -- 05/1989.
- ♦ Neal & 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.
- ♦ Ed & Judi Hoke for the Birthday/Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, Jeremy Hoke, 01/1975 -- 12/1985.
- ♦ Bob & Fran Karl for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, Matthew Karl, 11/1961 -- 01/2002.
- ♦ Ralph & Vera McLean for the Love Gift in memory of their son, Antonio McLean, 06/1972 -- 04/2003.
- ♦ James & Marilyn Mitchell for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their son, Michael Mitchell, 12/1980 -- 09/2003.
- ♦ Kathy Russell for the Christmas Love Gift in memory of her granddaughter, Ava Nicole Liskey, 03/2002 -- 04/2002.
- ♦ Bob & Penny Walters for the Birthday/Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, Robert Walters III, 09/2003.

### 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.**

*(continued - Evolution of Grief)*

What I have discovered today is that my grief journey has evolved into this wondrous mix of love, joy, pain, and challenges. Our ability to be totally present in those joyful moments, give and accept love, and learn from the pain and challenges, will determine the quality of our lives after loss.

*When you change the way you see the world, you change the world. -Warren McDonald*

*David Roberts, LMSW, CASAC, is an addictions professional and an adjunct professor in the psychology and psychology-child life departments at Utica College. He is a contributing writer for the Open to Hope Foundation ([www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)). and has written articles for other grief and self-help publications, as well. He has presented at national conferences of The Compassionate Friends since 2008 and was a keynote speaker at this year's national gathering of the Bereaved Parents of the USA. He is also a TCF chapter leader. He can be reached at [info@bootsyandangel.com](mailto:info@bootsyandangel.com).*

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Upcoming Topics

#### March - STAGES OF GRIEF

Facilitators, Tri County Mental Health

*The representatives from the Tri County Health Department will be invited to share with our members the different stages of grief and how we can expect to react to them.*

#### Artist Information about Pencil Portrait

At the Christmas potluck I (Connie Gilhooly, [cg9983@aol.com](mailto:cg9983@aol.com)) was asked by two people who the artist was who did my son's portrait. They gave me their email addresses and I was going to hook them up with the artist. However, I'm afraid those addresses must have gotten thrown away with some receipts in my purse. I can't find them! I am hoping they are readers of this newsletter so I can keep my promise. The artist has given me permission to share his information in this newsletter, so perhaps others of you are interested as well. His name is Michael Bockoven and he lives in Miamisburg. He is very reasonably priced. He captured Ryan in my portrait very well by looking at a few photographs I gave him. Michael Bockoven has a Facebook Page and a web page ([michaelbockoven.com](http://michaelbockoven.com)) where you can see more of his incredible work. 937-554-6553 You can email him on the contact page of his web site. He would be happy to hear from you.



#### NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.

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

## Should I Keep My Changing Grief a Secret?

By Bob Baugher, PhD

When your daughter or son died, you discovered what the depths of grief were. You didn't want to live. Why go on when your precious child has been torn from your grasp? Like many parents, you may have thought of suicide. Early in their bereavement process many parents have said to me something like, "Bob, I'm not going to go out and kill myself, but if I'm driving down the street and a semi-truck is coming at me, I'm not going to get out of the way. I can't take this. The pain [of living each day] is too great." These feelings are common; but fortunately for most parents, the power of these feelings subsides as the months and years go on. And so does, as one father called it, whose three year-old son died in an auto accident, "the white-hot pain of grief."

If you are more than a couple of years from the day of your child's death, you may have begun to notice that the white-hot pain is not so intense. Although the grief is still there and although you would give anything to bring back your child, the pain may have eased in certain areas of your grief. For example, when your child died, you may have experienced incredible guilt. You might have said to yourself, "What kind of parent am I whose child would die?" Do any of the following phrases sound familiar? "If only ... " "I should have ... " "Why didn't I ... ?" "I feel so guilty about ... " These are guilt statements. Anger is also a huge issue for many. Have any of the following words come up for you following your son's or daughter's death? mad, upset, irritated, enraged, ticked, po'd, furious, bitter, frustrated. As time has passed have you seen yourself not as mad, upset, irritated, and so on? In addition, are you not as numb, fearful, and sad? Has your concentration improved somewhat? In other words, is your grief changing?

At the same time, have you noticed that people around you have not changed as much as you? That is, even though you have begun to see the intensity of your grief subsiding, you see that others who also love your child are still feeling the white-hot intensity of grief. The question I have for you is, "Should you tell others that your grief has been changing?" Let's look at the positives and negatives of this question. First, sharing where you are in your grief process is quite helpful for most people. It is at the core of the credo of The Compassionate Friends and is the title of this magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone. However, should you tell everyone? Including those who are not as far along as you? (By the way, isn't the term "far along" interesting? It assumes that grief is a straight path, when in fact grief is more like a maze in which you hit dead ends, circle back to the beginning, and often get lost.) Sharing our feelings is an honest

reflection of who we are as humans. Why hide what we are truly experiencing? Those who care for us would want to know if we are beginning to feel better. Make sense?

However, there is another side to sharing your grief journey. What if you told the people in your life that the heaviness of your grief is lifting? What harm could this do? Those of you who have done this, know what is coming in this paragraph. Telling others that you are not hurting so much can lead and has led to some of the following responses:

1. "Oh, you must not love your child as much as I do."
2. "Good, you're getting over it. Now I don't have to support you as much. And you don't need to go to those Passionate Buddies meetings or whatever they call themselves. I never knew what you saw in that group anyway."
3. "You must be blocking your feelings. You haven't really dealt with your grief. Perhaps you need therapy."
4. "So, you're not as angry anymore? Well, I still am."
5. "Are you forgetting the life of our daughter (or son)?"
6. "I guess I'm glad you're getting better; but I'm not."
7. "I'm glad you're recovering. I'm looking forward to getting the old you back."

Which path is preferable regarding your changing grief: sharing it or keeping it a secret? We've come to the point where you can begin to answer this question for yourself. Think of each person in your life who is coping with the death of your child. One by one, imagine what his or her response might be if you shared your changing grief. Can you take a moment now to do the following? If you are married, think of your spouse. What would he or she say about your grief? If your parents are alive, what would they say if they knew exactly how you are now feeling? The same question for your siblings and other relatives. How would your brother react? What about your sister? What would she say? And what about your close friends-how would they react? In which of the ways (1-7 above) might any of these people respond?

How did you do? Of course, you cannot always predict how a loved one will react. Remember to permit yourself to grieve however you grieve. Try not to be so hard on yourself and decide whether or not you wish to share with others where you are in your grief. If you've already done what you need to in this area, good for you. If not, I hope this article has given you a way to make the decisions that are best for you.

*Dr. Bob Baugher is a psychology instructor at Highline Community College in Des Moines, Washington, where he teaches courses in psychology, death education, and suicide intervention. He is a 22-year member of the South Seattle Chapter of TCF, serving as a professional adviser. Bob has given more than 500 workshops on grief and loss, has presented at several of the TCF National Conferences, and has written several articles and seven books on the bereavement process.*



## A Parent's Lament

By Pat Thibault

I know not if there'll come a day  
When I'll wake to not feel this way  
The empty ache ... the sudden fear  
Reminds me you're no longer here

But in my dreams you still abide  
As in days before these tears I've cried  
Laughing, smiling ... nary a care  
I live in hope, but without a prayer

My friends tell me to 'just believe'  
Then I won't feel the need to grieve  
But that sounds much like 'letting go'  
And so my response is always "no"

At times I think they may be right  
That grief is a foe that I must fight  
Is winning truly mine to choose  
Or what's left, when nothing's left to lose  
I see myself in some abyss  
A void to fill with the YOU I miss  
I can't be sure what happens now  
All I know is this solemn vow

I'll take you with me where e'er I go  
To heights of dreams or in grief so low  
For now I can only hope to heal  
The pain I feel is all too real

Maybe somehow you'll be my guide  
To live my life on the softer side  
Beyond the torment of your loss  
And lift the burden of this cross

For in you lies the chance to smile  
If only for a little while  
Your mem'ries are my Joy to keep  
And not just dreams for when I sleep

## What Do You See?

By Natalie Sanchez

When you look down on us  
What do you see?  
Do you see how we are missing you?  
Are you missing me?

Maybe you see Riley with his toys all on the floor  
Or maybe baby Zoey crawling from the bedroom door

You probably saw Lindsay  
Wrapping all day long  
Everyone's loving support  
Is continuous and strong

Did you feel the visitors,  
Who sat upon your grave?  
Bringing flowers and ornaments  
That was very brave

I know you see us from above  
We can feel you everywhere  
First holiday without you was very hard  
There is nothing that can compare

I hope you don't feel sadness  
When you look down and see  
PJ, you never leave our hearts and thoughts  
That is the place you'll always be

*In memory of Patrick "PJ." Johnson,  
March 21, 1979-September 11, 2010*

*Written by PJ. S niece, Natalie, and lovingly shared.*



# Our Children Lovingly Remembered

## February Birthdays

### Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Clifton Alexander - John Alexander  
 James C. "Jimmy" Skaggs - James & Bonnie Skaggs  
 Cameron Ferror - Chad & Tonya Ferror  
 Jeffrey Scott LaCoste - Peggy LaCoste  
 Matthew Cameron Ferror - Ken & Louise Ferror  
 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



## NOW for book review....Jackie Glawe

### "ANDREW, YOU DIED TO SOON" By Corinne Chilstrom



The author and mother of Andrew tells the heart's story: the love for her son which had to continue without that son; the embrace of speechless grief and of a murmuring, speaking community; the deep, spiritual events that occurred for her and her family when one son took his life. It is the author's intent that reading this will be an experience which enhances life; one which will help make the encounter with grief not only more bearable, but actually growth-producing. Readers will find here therapy, catharsis, understanding, and even fresh grounding for faith, hope, and love--hope, being at such times and momentarily, "the greatest of these."

This was one of the books I read in the first couple years of my grief. It still is one that gives me some comfort and acknowledges my feelings. Even though my child was killed in a car accident, it doesn't matter the circumstances of your child's passing for you to receive comfort from this book.

This book is available in our chapters library.

# S i b l i n g P a r t n e

## Dear Dr. Heidi,

My sister died two years ago and I feel like I'm taking it harder than anyone else. I'm 22 years old and at the time of her death, my sister was 18 years old. We were very close and I just miss her so much. Everyone keeps telling me to be strong for my parents, because they have lost their daughter. No one understands what I'm going through.

*Unfortunately, many people really don't understand a sibling loss, and as you've said we are often told to remain strong for our parents because they're going through a worse loss. This only serves to minimize and invalidate our grief, leaving us feeling further misunderstood. While this has been very hard for your parents, it has also been very hard for you. The death of a sister or brother is horrible, it turns our world upside down and puts everything we ever believed into question. This was definitely the case for me after my brother died. My heart goes out to you, as you grieve the loss of not only your sister, but of a lost future together. Everyone grieves the death of a sibling differently, depending on the kind of relationship they had with their brother or sister and what roles they played in their life. If you are feeling pressure from others to grieve less intensely than your parents, you may want to seek support from The Compassionate Friends and find a sibling chapter in your area, or go onto facebook and join The Compassionate Friends, Sounds of the Siblings facebook page. You may also want to watch the TCF sibling loss webinars. Remember you are not alone, there are a lot of bereaved siblings out there who will understand what you are going through, and will support you. You hurt so much because you loved so much, please reach out to those a little further down the road.*

Dr. Heidi Horsley, PsyD, 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](http://www.opentohope.com), an adjunct professor at Columbia University, and a national board member of 'The Compassionate Friends. She will be answering your questions related to loss, grief, and recovery for Siblings. Please send your question to: Dr. Heidi Horsley, c/o 'The Compassionate Friends, PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696.

## For Christy

*By Kendra Taylor  
Wheatridge Colorado*

I never knew true sorrow, until the day you were taken from me, I never knew real sadness, until I realized I would never laugh again with you. I never realized what taking somebody for granted was, until I did it to you.

I never thought this time could be the last time. If only I could see you one more time, I would tell you how much I loved you, sister of mine! If I could hear your voice again, I would realize how much your silly teasing meant to me. If I had one more chance, I would do anything to ease the pain you were in.

But I can't, because you, my big sister, are gone. You have gone to rest with God. I just hope you know I love you! So, while you rest with the angels, please look down on me, because life without you beside me just could not be. And, please, wait in Heaven for me, because on that day we meet again, I want to stay with you forever, my friend!

And, Christy, please know how sorry I am! May you rest in peace without the pain and hurt you were in. Until we meet again, goodbye, my sister. Goodbye.

Love, Kendra





## **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?*

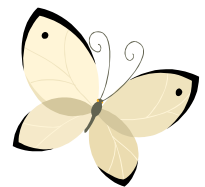
*The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.*

*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.