



**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

September-October 2016

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

E-mail: miamivalleytcf@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!

Please plan on joining us on the second Sunday of December for The Compassionate Friends annual Worldwide Candle Lighting!

Our chapter participates in this event uniting families and friends around the globe with a beautiful program of music, readings and lighting candles to honor the memories of our children, siblings and grandchildren gone too soon.

***Sunday, 12/11/2016, 7pm
Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church***

More details in our next newsletter!

**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 21st, 7pm
Guest Speaker, Stephanie Hittle, MS, LPCC**

**Wednesday, October 19th, 7pm
Secondary Losses in Grief**

When I die if you need to weep,
Cry for your brother or sister walking in the street beside you.
And when you need me, put your arms around anyone
And give them what you need to give me.

I want to leave you something, something better than words or sounds.

Look for me in the people I've known and loved.
And if you cannot give me away,
At least let me live in your eyes and not in your mind.

You can love me most by letting hands touch hands,
By letting bodies touch bodies
And by letting go of children that need to be
Free.

Love doesn't die, people do.
So when all that is left of me is love,
Give me away.

~Author Unknown



We do not heal the past by living there;
we heal the past by living fully
in the present.

~Marianne Williamson

Some of the most comforting words
in the universe are "me too".
That moment when you find out that
your struggle is also someone else's
struggle, that you're not alone
and that others have been down
the same road.

~Rita Ghatourey

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

- ♥ *Tammie Spence, in memory of her son,
Shannon Mason*
- ♥ *Mary and Nick Bulzomi, in memory of her son,
TJ*
- ♥ *Susan Bierlein, in memory of her son,
Marcus Bowling*

And thanks to ALL who gave anonymously!

*(Please contact us if we have made an error or if
we accidentally omitted any love gift)*

Every donation we receive is greatly needed and equally appreciated and is used to further our vision, "That everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped."

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
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 Butterfly Release, please let us know!

Donate to our local Miami Valley TCF Chapter #1732 via your Kroger Plus Card
(We are enrolled in the Kroger Community Rewards© Program, FREE to you. Sign up your Kroger Plus Card at www.krogercommunityrewards.com and our chapter gets a small percentage of what you spend.)

AND

Your United Way contributions can be designated to our local Miami Valley TCF Chapter #1732

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

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

Other Local Dayton Area Support

- *Miami Valley Hospital Perinatal Loss Hot Line, Pregnancy Loss/ 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

Other Resources

- *Alive Alone, Support for Death of Only Child or All Children
Kay Bevington, VanWert, OH: alivalon@bright.net
419-238-1091, www.alivealone.org
- *American Association of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org

Websites to check out:

- www.thegrieftoolbox.com
- Tom Zuba www.TomZuba.com
- Paula Stephens www.crazygoodgrief.com
- Paul S Boynton www.beginwithyes.com
- Lexie Behrnt www.scribblesandcrumbs.com
- Dr Joanne Cacciatore www.facebook.com/joannecacciatore
- Clara Hinton www.clarahinton.com

DID YOU KNOW ... The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of closed Facebook Groups, moderated by bereaved parents, siblings or grandparents, established to encourage connection and sharing among those grieving the death of a child, sibling or grandchild. See http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Find_Support/Online-Community/Closed_Facebook_Groups.aspx

The Compassionate Friends national magazine "We Need Not Walk Alone" is available free through an online subscription at 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 published.

Back to School and The Grieving Heart

Reprinted from The Compassionate Friends FB post 8/11/2016 by Tracie Loux, From The Heart, www.tracieloux.wordpress.com

As I flip the calendar each year to August, my stomach drops. Mattie died on August 21, 2014. School started the next week, though our lives did not carry on as normal. So for the past two years, the back to school swirl is a bit muddled for me. It is muddled with memories of the most hellish time of my life, and it is muddled with movies I play in my head of the should-have-beens.

Mattie had pre-school at home. Due to his health, his teachers and therapist came to our house.

For his big pre-school evaluation, he went to the school where at least a half a dozen teachers and therapists evaluated him. He wore little red shorts, a grey checkered shirt and a red tie, with his white shoes over his ankle supports. He held his head high and he was so proud.

School time at home was full of fun and celebration for us. We even had little teacher assistants from time to time. We watched him reach milestone after milestone. We were looking at a few more months of home education, and the possibility of going to school the following spring with Daddy as his personal assistant.

My eyes are full of tears as I write this next sentence. ***This is the year Mattie would have started Kindergarten.*** The lump in my throat will not go away.

So as I get everyone new backpacks and lunch pails and school shoes and first day of school outfits, as I buy pencils and notebooks and folders, my heart will ache a whole lot that I am not throwing 4 of everything in my cart.

And as I work really hard at making space for healing in my heart (and friends, it is the hardest work I've ever done), I am reminded that Mattie was always more of a teacher than a student.

So to my little teacher, my sweet boy, my steady joy,

I wish that I could lace up your high tops and tighten your tie. I wish that I could order a Land's End back pack embroidered with, "Mattie Loux" because that's what your brothers and your sisters all toted through Kindergarten and beyond. I wish I could buy you crayons. I wish I could take your picture on the first day of school with a little sign that read, "Kindergarten." I wish that I could follow you to school and hide in the corner and watch every glorious moment of your first day of school.

But you, my love, came fully knowing. You came as a teacher. So this whole Kindergarten thing that I'm mourning, though it would have cracked you up and made your head tilt to the side with pride, you never needed it in the first place.

You came knowing all the things that matter in this life and this is what you have taught me: to love everyone with abandon, to laugh at life even when it's hard, to make funny faces for no reason at all, to be joyful over the little things, to treat the ones I love like the treasures that they are, and to live every day to the fullest.

And my son, you have taught me that I am stronger than I ever knew and braver than I could have ever imagined. You have softened me and turned my heart upside down. For every "broken" part of you, you reached out and healed the broken in me.

The thought of you still leaves me breathless for a moment. But I inhale with the very next thought because you taught me how to truly breathe.

Thank you, Brené Brown for so often putting into words what my heart feels at its very core, "To love someone fiercely, to believe in something with your whole heart, to celebrate a fleeting moment in time, to fully engage in a life that doesn't come with guarantees- these are the risks that often involve vulnerability and often pain. But, I am learning that recognizing and leaning in to the discomfort of vulnerability teaches us how to live with joy, gratitude and grace."

And so to all of you, breathe in, ***love fiercely*** with ***your whole heart.***

If you join me in walking into a new school year mourning another missed milestone- crying in the Target school supply aisle, gasping when you see another child's photo on Facebook with a "Kindergarten" sign, or standing at the window watching a school bus that will not pick up your child - will you join me also in ***leaning into the discomfort*** of it all so that we can all learn to ***live with much more joy, gratitude and grace?*** It seems impossible doesn't it? But I am telling you, it is possible, and together with our shared vulnerability, we can rise, we can heal.

To all of you, I challenge you to ***whole-hearted, fierce love***, even in the midst of a world that is full of ***risk and pain***. Let's be vulnerable together, lean into it together, and be willing to truly learn the lessons life is waiting to deliver. I have to believe that it is worth it. My life is proof. I've walked the road of love poured out with no guarantees, and I promise you, what I have gained far outweighs having not risked at all.

To The Newly Bereaved ...

You Are Not Alone

When your child has died, suddenly it seems like all meaning has been drained from your life. When you wake in the morning, it's difficult to get out of bed, much less live a "normal" life. All that was right with the world now seems wrong and you're wondering when, or if, you'll ever feel better.

We've been there ourselves and understand some of the pain you are feeling right now. We are truly glad that you have found us but profoundly saddened by the reason. We know that you are trying to find your way in a bewildering experience for which no one can truly be prepared.

When you're newly bereaved, suddenly you find yourself on an emotional roller-coaster where you have no idea what to expect next. Here are thoughts on some of what you may be experiencing or feeling (many of these will apply to bereaved siblings and grandparents):

Psychological

- Your memory has suddenly become clouded. You're shrouded in forgetfulness. You'll be driving down the road and not know where you are or remember where you're going. As you walk, you may find yourself involved in "little accidents" because you're in a haze.
- You fear that you are going crazy.
- You find there's a videotape that constantly plays in an endless loop in your mind, running through what happened.
- You find your belief system is shaken and you try to sort out what this means to your faith.
- Placing impossible deadlines on yourself, you go back to work, but find that your mind wanders and it's difficult to function efficiently or, some days, at all. Others wonder when you'll be over "it," not understanding that you'll never be the same person you were before your child died—and the passage of time will not make you so.

You find yourself reading the same paragraph over and over again trying to understand what someone else has written.

Emotional

- You rail against the injustice of not being allowed the choice to die instead of your child.
- You find yourself filled with anger, whether it be at your partner, a person you believe is responsible for your child's death, God, yourself, and even your child for dying.
- You yearn to have five minutes, an hour, a day back with your child so you can tell your child of your love or thoughts left unsaid.
- Guilt becomes a powerful companion as you blame yourself for the death of your child. Rationally you know that you were not to blame—you most certainly would have saved your child if you'd been given the chance.

You feel great sadness and depression as you wrestle with the idea that everything important to you has been taken from you. Your future has been ruined and nothing can ever make it right.

Physical

- Either you can't sleep at all or you sleep all the time. You feel physical exhaustion even when you have slept.
- You no longer care about your health and taking care of yourself—it just doesn't seem that important anymore.
- You're feeling anxiety and great discomfort—you're told they're panic attacks.
- The tears come when you least expect them.
- Your appetite is either gone or you find yourself overeating.

Family & Social (continued from previous page)

- If you have surviving children, you find yourself suddenly overprotective, not wanting to allow them out of your sight. Yet you feel like a bad parent because it's so difficult to focus on their needs when you're hurting so bad yourself.
- You find that your remaining family at home grieves the loss differently and you search for a common ground which seems difficult to find.
- You've been told by well-meaning people, even professionals, that 70-80-90 percent of all couples divorce after their child dies. You are relieved to find that new studies show a much lower divorce rate, from 12-16%, believed to be caused by the "shared experience" aspect of the situation.
- Old friends seem to fade away as you learn they cannot comprehend the extent or length of your grief.
- Things you liked to do which seemed so important before now seem meaningless.
- Others say you'll someday find "closure," not understanding that closure never applies when it is the death of your child.
- Fleeting thoughts of pleasurable activities bring about feelings of guilt. If you child can't have fun, how can you do anything that brings you enjoyment?

New friends come into your life who understand some of your grief because they've been there themselves.

Finding the "New Me"

When you're newly bereaved, you don't see how you can put one foot in front of the other, much less survive this loss. You'll never "recover" from your loss nor will you ever find that elusive "closure" they talk of on TV—but eventually you will find the "new me." You will never be the same person you were before your child died. It may be hard to believe now, but in time and with the hard work of grieving (and there's no way around it), you will one day think about the good memories of when your child lived rather than the bad memories of how your child died. You will even smile and, yes, laugh again someday—as hard to believe as that may seem.

When the newly bereaved come to a meeting of The Compassionate Friends, you will be able to listen and learn from others who are further down the grief road than you. They will have made it through that first birthday, first death anniversary, first holiday, and so many other firsts that you have not yet reached. You will learn coping skills from other bereaved parents who, like you, never thought they'd survive. There are no strangers at TCF meetings—only friends you have not yet met.

Even though you are newly bereaved and the road is long, we invite you to walk with us for as long as the journey takes.

Grief is tremendous but love is bigger.
You are grieving because you loved truly.
The beauty in that is greater than the bitterness
of death.
Allowing this into your consciousness will not keep
you from your suffering
but *it will help you survive the next day.*

~Cheryl Strayed



The person you love that died is right here.
Beside you.
Above you.
Below you.
In front of you.
Beneath you.
Now and forever.

~Tom Zuba
"Permission to Mourn: A New Way to Do
Grief"

You never know
how strong you are
until being strong
is the only
choice you have.



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

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!!

**Sunday, December 11, 2016
Annual World-Wide
Candle Lighting Ceremony**

See inside and more details to follow



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

*Miami Valley
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**TCF Chapter No. 1732
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.

September-October 2016