

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

Organization Providing Grief Support After the Death of a Child

MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870

SEPTEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER Vol. 25 No. 9

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September Musings

You are going about your everyday tasks, thinking that just maybe this might turn out to be an "okay" day, one that you think yon might actually get through. But then a certain song plays on the radio, or you see someone tilt his/her head and smile in that certain way your child did, or the smell of the air after a rainstorm brought you back to,. a poignant memory of your child. And without warning, you find yourself suddenly spiraling into despair, collapsing in a torrent of tears. Even something that may seem harmless can trigger a grief storm, sneaking up on you when you least expect it. I remember one of the parents in our group telling how the sight of a box of Kraft Macaroni & .Cheese could make her leave her cart behind and flee the grocery store because it was one of her son's favorites.

For example, the month of September may seem innocent enough. There aren't any major holidays like Christmas to deal with. But this is a month that isn't easy for me and I am sure that many bereaved parents would agree. Starting the school year is a momentous occasion for many children. Those whose child that died wasn't old enough for school will never get to see the excitement on their child's face as they go off to their first day of school with their new lunch boxes and backpacks, knowing that their child should be among them and is not.

Those whose children were older when they died have memories of the preparation of getting ready for the school year. For example, my daughter Nina LOVED to go shopping with me for school clothes. The first fall after she died I could barely endure walking into the department stores, seeing those mannequins dressed in all the latest back-to-school fashions. I could picture how she would scurry through the racks of clothing picking out her favorites. She would run into the fitting rooms where she would poke her head out to ask me what I thought about her choices. Seeing the moms and daughter shopping together was agonizing. Listening to those mothers with irritated, hassled voices chiding their children to "Hurry up, I don thave all day!" made my head swim. If they only knew that there could come a day when they would be sorry they did not savor the time spent doing those kinds of mother/child things.

The dilemma for me was that Nina would be of college age and, knowing her love of school, I am quite sure she would be headed off to college. She would have been so excited. The September after she would have graduated, a parent whose child had left for a college out West called me and said "Now that Kim is at college, I know exactly how you feel about losing Nina. That was one of those moments that I was rendered speechless. I might now have the wherewithal to respond, but not at that particular juncture in my grief journey. I remember my mind racing and wanting to say, "You can hop on a plane whenever the urge strikes you to see her is overpowering; you

September Meeting—Sept. 22, 2016 7:00 P.M.

Topic: Child's Favorite Food

Everyone will be invited to bring their child's favorite dish to share in a pot luck dinner.

No September Refreshments - Pot luck dinner Nashville United Church of Christ

4540 W. St. Rt. 571, West Milton, OhioMeetings 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.

Thank you for August Refreshments Tammy Elam (Memory of David) Deb Turner (Memory of Leslie)

Next Meeting - October 27, 2016

can pick up the phone and hear her voice 24-hours a day; she will be coming home over the holidays and summer vacation when the school year has ended. But my daughter will NEV-ER come home again! How can you compare the two???" I guess we can only forgive them for their lack of empathy and comprehension, and be glad for them that they don't really know how it feels.

We can't block out what is happening around us or change the sometimes inappropriate things that come out of people's mouths. But we can keep those close to us who understand - a spouse or

significant other, our surviving children if there are any, close family and friends. And, of course, we know our Compassionate Friends will always be there: those TCF friends who appreciate the difficulty of the path we are walking; those who understand that we need others to be gentle with our fragile hearts, and accept that there are no timetables in grief and recognize our present frailties. Those same priceless fellow grievers who know the sun will shine again, but, <u>for now</u>, realize they may need to hold the umbrella for us.

Bless all of you who have been there, and who continue to be there, for other bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents in need of understanding. May all of us be that fortunate to have people like. that in our currently shattered lives, so that someday, when the cloud has lifted, we can be that "Compassionate Friend" for someone else.

With gentle thoughts, Cathy Seehuetter, Nina's mom

TCF, St. Paul, MN

As all of you know, our chapter offers its members a variety of grief support books in its library. A short time back many of these books were damaged. Below is a list of the books that we have lost and would like to replace. If any of our members have any of these books, or would like to purchase one of the books, and donate them to our chapter library in memory of your child, we would greatly appreciate it.

Feel free to inscribe your child's name and a brief word of inspiration inside the front or back of the book. It will offer hope and comfort to other members on their own grief journey.

Strand, Robert Mini Moments with Angels

Bolton, Iris My Son ... My Son Accord (S)Holiday Help
Stillwell, Elaine E. Death of a Child

Evans, Susan Later Courtney, A Mother Says Goodbye

Buscaglia, Leo Ph.D Fall of Freddie the Leaf

Cobain, Beverly Dying to Be Free, A Healing Guide for Families after Suicide

Mitchell, Ellen Beyond Tears - living after losing a child

Ilse, Sherokee Single Parent Grief

Doerr, Maribeth Wilder For Better or Worse - A handbook for couples whose child has died

Faber, Rebecca A Mother's Grief Observed - A personal account of how God brought hope and

healing following devastating loss

Noel, Brook & Blair, Pamela Ph.D I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye-surviving, coping & healing after the sudden

death of a loved one (& Workbook)

Lerner, Harriet Goldhor, Ph.D. Dance of Anger, The A woman's guide to changing the patterns of intimate relationships

Panuthos, Claudia & Romeo, Catherine Ended Beginnings - Healing childbearing losses

Doka, Kenneth J. Children Mourning- Mourning Children

Smith, Rosemary Children of the Dome-Twenty-eight True stories of survival and hope after the loss of a

child

McGovern, George TERRY,..., My daughter's life and death struggle with alcoholism

Pinksto, Suzi Grief Walk

Nassal, Joseph Conspiracy of Compassion - Breathing together for a wounded world

Clayton, Jean Women in Mourning

Sanders, Catherine M., Ph.D. How to Survive the Loss of a Child Filling the Emptiness and Rebuilding

Your Life

Henry-Jenkins, Wanda Just Us "" Homicidal Loss and Grief- Two small words which define the plight and capture

the essence of what it feels like to be survivors of murder victims (and workbook) 2 books

Hickman, Martha Whitmore I Will Not Leave You Desolate - Some thoughts for Grieving Parents

Wagner, Shelly The Andrew Poems

Moody, Raymond A. Jr. (1975) Life After Life and Reflections on Life After Life

Katz, Carole Laurie, Laurie Hallelujah!

Rank, Maureen Free to Grieve ... • Healing & encouragement for those who have experienced the physical,

mental & emotional trauma of miscarriage & stillbirth

Kaldhol, Marit Goodbye Rune (When her best friend accidentally drowns, a little girl with the help of her

parents, tries to come to terms with his death and her feelings of loss and sadness.)

Turnbull, Sharon Who Lives Happily Everafter? A handbook for families whose child has died violently.

Bozarth, Alla Renee Journey through Grief - Gentle specific Help to get you through the most difficult stages

of grief.

White, Juanita Never Too Old for a Lullaby



There are no September Love Gift Announcements.

Love Gifts - A Way to Remember

There are no dues to belong to the Compassionate Friends, because we have already paid the ultimate price; the loss of our loved one(s). A **Love Gift** is a gift of money given in Honor of a child who has died from their family members or as a Memorial from friends. Your gifts are tax deductible and are used to reach out to other bereaved parents, grand-parents, and siblings.

Your gifts support this newsletter, our TCF Library, Brochures and other Chapter Expenses.

Love Gifts should be made out to:

The Compassionate Friends and mailed to Barb Lawrence, 403l 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.

Sometimes all we need is someone that understands and is willing to listen.

NEED A PHONE FRIEND?

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

CHAPTER NEWS

Upcoming Topics

Topics are subject to change. Refer to the month's newsletter for confirmation of meeting topic.

September - Child's Favorite Food. Everyone will be invited to bring their child's favorite dish to share in a pot luck dinner. Each one can tell about the dish and/or tell a story about how their favorite dish is shared today.

October - Surviving the Holidays. Ideas and suggestions will be discussed for both including our children in the festivities and how to handle our grief through these extra difficult holiday events.

November - Topic Card Questions. Random questions will be chosen from our cards and discussed around the members.

Please let Chapter Leader, Kim Bundy, know if you have new suggestions for meeting topics. This is your chapter and your input is very welcomed.

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

Searching for Joy

A survivor's story of moving on, attempting to live again while anchored to the past

by Tina Zarlenga

Darkness arrives without her knowing as she sits quietly mourning her thoughts. The shadows in the room fade into memories of the past, the place she often hesitates as she attempts again to push away the anguish in search of the joy she desires. Avoiding all awareness of the mirror, she rejects the image before her, no longer recognizing who she has become, as the tears come calling again. Tired of stumbling regularly, she leans into the hurt that betrayed her, longing for a breakthrough not cloaked in sadness.

Fractured recollections are carved deep within, cutting through the skin in a tattoo, scars engraved on your heart, casting a wound with images engrained in her soul. Shaking her head, as if this will dislodge the sadness, she recalls the tear as it slid down his face, devastating her further.

He died before her, in her arms as she cradled him, saying goodbye while the shock clung to her breath. There were no words to console her; his life was ending and all that swirled within her was an invitation to join him.

There was no time to question our lives in search of a remedy. No time to call in a team of experts for help. When loss occurs everything is stripped away. Nothing arrives, just in time, no remedy to fix him, no lifeline to save her, the life they once shared flutters into a memory, and time continues slipping away.

A shell of her former self, she is empty, and the act of going on is too overwhelming to bear, so she sleeps. But sleep is just another ruse in the mysteries of grief, waking in a fog, feeling happiness until the crash of reality sends you back to the puddle you left behind earlier, back into the sorrow that echoes from the emptiness.

Using compassion to embrace this place of grief she begins her pursuit, seeking more love, true happiness and pure joy. But joy does not just appear, it must be discovered, unearthed beneath the debris that sadness has dragged in, blanketing the life she once knew, as it masks all the dreams she previously held.

This new beginning was hers to catch, the time to uncover the obscurity and allow in the light. Exploring her motivation, she unravels the softness that she has cultivated through grief. This kindness fills her heart, captivated by the beauty she had to be taught when stumbling through heartache.

The prospect of joy continues to intrigue her, commanding her attention to pursue the changes she needs to explore. She wants joy; she wants to believe in joy again, allowing it into her heart without the fear that lingers so closely behind it.

For so long she has muddled through her life, forcing the faded smile to appear, broken and set to burst as she attempts to get through one more day. Unwrapping sad stories and heartbreak that go on unnoticed, with the tears of what was, she has to learn to move forward.

I don't remember how long it took or if there was a day that I started living again. I had fought against the current for so long, I did not notice when it changed directions. I did not feel the embrace of joy when it first arrived, or the compassion around me when I let it in. It was a slow melting of the iceberg, revealing a bitter taste of joy with its mixture of happiness and guilt, but it was a beginning.

While searching for a reason to go on after losing their five-year old son Ryan, she discovered that giving back could actually save her. Tina Zarlenga is married with two children, sharing stories of inspiration and hope, as well as her journey through grief with emotional essays of life on her website Unraveling My Heart the Write Way, http://www. unravelingmyheartthewriteway.com.

What Would He Tell Me About His First Day of School

OK. I didn't think it was going to bother me this much. I've been saying for weeks that I couldn't wait till school started to get Scott and Ashley out of my hair. (They couldn't wait to get me out of theirs, either!)

So here it is, the eve of the first day of school, and I'm thinking, "What would tomorrow be like if Nicholas were here?" His turn finally comes to stand outside with backpack and new shoes, waiting for the big yellow school bus. Or would he have been the only one of the three who wanted Mom to take him to his first day of kindergarten? What would he come home and tell me about his first day of school?

And what about the kids- "his class?" Will I forever look at these kids (and their parents) and wonder "what if?" They don't even know that they're missing a classmate.

Here it's been almost six years and I feel compelled to" hang around the school and grab every kindergarten parent I see and say" I would have had a child in this class." I surprised myself because I don't usually have those urges anymore. But this is harder than I thought it would be.

Another milestone of life- the first day of school- that Nicholas (and I) missed. The thing is, nobody will think of this. It's not a birthday or Mother's Day or Christmas. It goes by unnoticed except by a mother with kids too excited to sleep tonight - one starting 5th grade, one starting 2nd, and one ...

> Linda Moffaft TCF of St. Louis, MO

I Can Only Imagine

I can only imagine What our hearts would feel If that day had never happened If your death had not been real I can only imagine What our eyes would see If they hadn't shed a million tears Pleading, Why you? Why not me? I can only imagine A happier life One where all your dreams came true You fell in love and took a wife I can only imagine What a wonderful father you'd be What names you'd give your children Would you be anything like me? I can only imagine If I'll live to see the day When the mere thought of you No longer takes my breath away I can only imagine

If things had ended differently A family of four, now a family of three But the one that's missing should of been me When our work is done And our time to go has come Our arms at last again will hold Brennan, our beloved son I can only imagine...

Tom Murphy Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy

Together We Will Walk the Stepping Stones

Come, take my hand, the road is long. We must travel by stepping stones No, you're not alone, I'll go with you. I know the road well, I've been there. Don't fear the darkness, I'll be there with you. We must take one step at a time. But remember we may have to stop awhile. It is a long way to the other side and there may be obstacles.

We have many stones to cross, some are bigger than others, shock, denial, and anger to start.

Then comes guilt, despair, and loneliness. It's a hard road to travel, but it must be done.

It's the only way to reach the other side.

Come, slip your hand in mine.

What? Oh, yes, it's strong, I've held

so many hands like yours.

Yes, mine was one time small and weak like yours.

Once, you see, I had to take someone's hand

in order to take the first step.

Oops! You've stumbled; go ahead and cry.

Don't be ashamed; I understand.

Let's wait here awhile and get your breath.

When you're stronger we'll go on, one step at a time.

There's no need to hurry.

Say, it's nice to hear you laugh.

Yes, I agree, the memories you shared are good.

Look, we're halfway there now; I can see the other side.

It looks so warm and sunny.

Oh, have you noticed, we're nearing the last

stone and you're standing alone?

We've reached the other side.

But wait, look back, someone is standing there.

They are alone and want to cross the stepping stones.

I'd better go, they need my help.

What? Are you sure?

Why, yes, go ahead, I'll wait.

You know the way, you've been there.

Yes, I agree, it's your turn, my friend--

To help someone else cross the stepping stones.

Barb Williams, TCF. Ft. Wayne, IN

Our Children Lovingly Remembered

September Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Douglas Ray Lavy - Robert E. & Sharon Lavy
Heather Denise Bailey - Joe & Wanda Bailey
Samuel Pearson - Randi & Carolyn Pearson
Kathryn Trushaw - Tim & Julia Trushaw
Mark Kurtis O'Dell - Tim & Sandy O'Dell
Mark Nordquist - Peggy & Tom Nordquist
Matthew "Matt" Schaaf - Marlene Schaaf
Michael Guerra - Terry Guerra
Patrick O'Neill - Betsy O'Neill
Silas Carver - Mary Anne Evans
Terry A. Baker, Jr. - Candy Ullery
Molly Murphy - Kerry & Sarah Murphy

September Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Cameron Forror - Chad & Tonya Forror
Lindsay Rose Donadio - Rick & Janell Claudy
Matthew Cameron Forror - Ken & Louise Forror
Michael Daniel Mitchell - James & Marilyn Mitchell
Michael James McGuffey - Kathy McGuffey
Chad Fisherback - Tammy Sackett



We all know how difficult those "Special Days" can be - birthdays and death anniversary days. Please remember these parents on their special days and let them know that they are not alone; someone cares about their pain and their grief. It means so much to be remembered!

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....

Review by Jackie Glawe (Jordan's Elizabeth's mom)

"FIRST YOU DIE"

by Marie Levine



"FIRST YOU DIE" chronicles a mother's harrowing and painful journey after the death of her only child and the daily steps of courage and strength it took to begin to live again and realize the incredible healing gift her son left behind.

This was one of the first books I found on the loss of an only child and it helped acknowledge so many of the feelings I was experiencing, it still speaks to the parents who have surviving children as well. I have met the author several times and she continues to live this journey and has written a second book in follow up to this one.

^{**}This book is available in our chapters library.

The Language of Sisters

by Karen Soltero

I don't expect it's this way with all siblings, but Wendy and I could talk to each other about almost anything. We didn't always agree; in fact it was often the opposite, but we could communicate in that way I always imagined only certain Siblings possibly can - without fear of alienation, without risk. No matter what was said, we would always be connected, and even in the midst of disagreement, we would understand one another. We could talk about our parents and our shared history, we could talk about our friends, and we could talk about our fears. When she died, I knew I would never have that again.

I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know what I would find. It was summer in Los Angeles and I had agreed to go to a conference. My mom had heard about an organization.

"We should check it out, she said, the conference is in Hollywood. It is 10 minutes from your apartment so I can just come out and stay with you. See if we like it. See if it helps:'

It sounded good to me. It was worth a shot, anything was worth a shot. Wendy had been gone for almost four years. I had been thrust into only childhood as a 26 year old. We were finally done with murder trials, the ones responsible put away for good. The driving purpose we'd had since her murder to see justice served was about a year and a half gone. I didn't have a job or a direction. I had just turned 30, on the cusp of what was supposed to be the next decade, the next era of my life. I was living in limbo.

The hallways were filled with people. On the first day, I sat by myself in the back of rooms filled with chairs. I sat in circles without talking. I drank too much wine in the lobby bar with my mom. I bid on some things in the silent auction and listened to speakers at a luncheon in the middle of a banquet room on Hollywood Boulevard and thought, this is not my life. In my life, Hollywood Boulevard means a crazy night out with Wendy that ends with her in the back of a tattoo parlor getting a tongue piercing. It means me laughing with her and she sticks her swollen tongue in a cup of ice from the convenience store across the street. That is my life. I don't know what this is.

On the second day, I saw a workshop. "On Becoming an Only Child After the Death of a Sibling:' That's me, I thought, starting to wrap my head around my new normal. So I sat in the circle and a girl with impossibly long black hair started to talk. About her sister Emily and how she died in a car accident when she was only 16. How suddenly at 20, her life wasn't the one she recognized anymore. Her name was Kim. She swore and laughed and talked with her hands for the next hour and fifteen minutes. And something clicked. I felt a moment of connection and belonging, found a place free of judgment and fear. Kim and I talked in the hall. I thanked her.

The next summer, the conference was in Boston. This time I met more siblings and Kim was there again. Staying at the hotel and not in my apartment was more inclusive, and so I started to find more connections with brothers and sisters from everywhere. Deep friendships

formed, ones that continue to exist outside of the conferences and outside of our shared losses, but the one with Kim was something different. A place I never expected to find. We spent more time together that year, talked about the challenges of holidays and she invited me to Raleigh for Thanksgiving. That following fall, I just up and went. It was still too hard for me to be home with my own family so I welcomed the invitation to borrow hers.

And we discovered new things. That I was born in April, the same month that Emily died, and that Kim was born in October, the same month Wendy was killed. Kim and I are six months apart in age and so were our sisters. She was 20 and I was 26 when the deaths happened but we had both been adults, living on our own, albeit in very different ways. These things are all just the uncanny coincidences. The fact that she purses her lips the same way Wendy did when she's thinking. The part where she is so much like Wendy, not just in her features, but in her adventurous and outgoing nature, the part where she tells me as much as she is wild like Wendy, that I am serious like Emily, these are all certainly remarkable. And maybe these are all parts of the why, but ultimately incidental to the biggest thing.

I have close friends, the ones I've know my whole life, the ones I lived with in LA, went to college with, talk to every Single week, see all the time. They are all pieces of my heart, but Kim is a piece of my soul. We don't need to talk every week or even every month. We don't see each other every year, though we are getting better at that again. But I can tell her things that I can't tell anyone else. Can talk to her in ways I can't talk to anyone else; ways that are only like how I talked to Wendy. It doesn't matter if time has passed; we never have to catch up or reconnect, beyond recapping the facts of any missed time. We don't share the same family, but we share the same pieces of being a family, of losing parts of our family. We don't share the same past, but our pasts are connected. We live lives we once didn't recognize as our own, and somehow, I think, that helps us to recognize one another. Almost from the get go, we spoke the same language. It's that one of sisters. The one I thought would never exist again.

It's not exactly the same, but it's as near as I can *imagine something could* be. If my thought is *this is only something I can talk to Wendy about*, I know that means that I can call Kim. It isn't like having Wendy back with me, nor do I imagine that it is like having Emily back for her. But it's a consolation prize like no other. A gift handed over to us from Emily and Wendy. Wherever they are, I imagine them sometimes together, looking on, laughing, and nodding in agreement at their genius.

Karen Soltero is a bereaved sibling, having lost her younger sister Wendy on October 28th, 2000, when Wendy was shot and killed during a random robbery attempt in Hollywood, CA. Karen has been an active participant in Compassionate Friends, attending both local chapter meetings and national conferences. She is also involved with the Brady Campaign for the Prevention of Gun Violence and has spoken about her sister at a number of events. Karen works hard on a daily basis to keep the spirit of her sister Wendy alive - by celebrating her, talking about her, commemorating birthdays and anniversaries and always working hard to make sure that even new friends have an opportunity to get to know her.























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. <u>We need not walk alone</u>, 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!