



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

International Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents

## MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870

April 2020 NEWSLETTER Vol. 39 No.14

Facebook page "The Compassionate Friends of Miami County Ohio Chapter 1870".  
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National Office - THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC. - P.O. Box 3696 - Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 - Ph. (630) 990-0010 or toll free (877) 969-0010 [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) - e-mail: [nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org).

### COVID-19 and Our Grief

I'm just now writing this as we live as bereaved parents confined to our homes under the "Stay at Home" order to help flatten the curve of this horrible virus that has invaded our world.

My emotions travel up and down like a roller coaster as I first feel like I can't worry about this so much and then I suddenly am thrust into worrying about it excessively. Sometimes I wonder why I am not more anxiety ridden about the world of seclusion we are living in now, then I remember that 10 ½ years ago my world as I knew it was turned upside down. I've already experienced the "end of the world" when I lost my daughter on this earth Aug 6, 2009. And if you're reading this, you too have had your world turned upside down before this pandemic arrived.

It has been 10 ½ years for me now so as I think back on what those first days, months and years were like I can't even imagine being in those firsts now as this pandemic is happening at the same time. I can't imagine not having the people around me who supported me. I can't imagine not receiving the months worth of homemade meals that were brought to our house, along with many hugs. If your child's birthday or anniversary falls during this pandemic time, I can't imagine not getting to have your family, friends and loved ones around you for support. I can't imagine not getting to attend Compassionate Friends meetings as they were my husband and my lifeline. I can't imagine what you are feeling so newly bereaved and also having to deal with this pandemic on top of your loss of your child. I only know how it feels 10 ½ years out and it still hurts just not as intense, so I can't even imagine how bad it must be for you.

So in these times of no Compassionate Friends meetings, no hugs, no family and friend get together, I will go for a walk, hug my dog, hug my husband, call, text or email another bereaved parent and write in my journal (fancy word for notebook). I might write a letter to my daughter in Heaven, write a letter to God, facetime a close friend, watch a comedy movie/show to help me laugh. Maybe this is a respite time for you. After the loss of a child you may need a lot of alone time. I needed the time to cry, read and sleep. Grief is exhausting so getting enough rest is very important. Maybe this is a welcome time to rest and to be OK with getting to take that time to take care of your grief and give it the space and time it needs.

~Jackie Glawe/TCF, Miami County, Ohio Chapter, newsletter editor

### No April Meeting due to Covid-19

**May meeting May 28<sup>th</sup>, 7pm  
Providing the "Stay Home Order" has  
lifted.**

**Thank you for February Refreshments**  
*Kelley Dyer (memory of Zach)*  
*Jonnie Shoemaker (memory of Justin)*

Meetings are held at:  
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.

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### **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT WHILE MEETINGS ARE NOT AVAILABLE**

To set up a Free Conference Call with family, friends, etc.  
go to: [Freeconferencecalling.com](http://Freeconferencecalling.com)

Free live video meetings go to: [Zoom.us](https://Zoom.us)

Our chapter Facebook page:  
[The-Compassionate-Friends-of-Miami-County-Ohio-Chapter-1870](https://www.facebook.com/The-Compassionate-Friends-of-Miami-County-Ohio-Chapter-1870)

Facebook also has many support groups for Loss of a child you can find by searching on facebook or go to TCF national website.

#### **Call other bereaved parents:**

Kim Bundy 937-573-9877  
Pam Fortener 937-238-4075  
Donnie Fortener 937-760-2238  
Cathy Duff 937- 473-5533  
Jackie Glawe 937-478-3318 call, text, facetime  
Email: [im4song@aol.com](mailto:im4song@aol.com)

We are all bereaved parents, going through this pandemic.  
We are all in this together.  
We are the Compassionate Friends.  
You need not walk alone.

# AWAKENINGS

By Tina Zarlenga

The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places. ~ Ernest Hemingway

For years I cursed spring...

During that time my heart woke to the bitterness of life. In the harsh frost of winter, my anguish and the season were one, a climate where I felt safe, cocooned in a blanket of grief, a camouflage that ensconced me from the world outside.

Like grief, winter brings the bitter cold to our life and those withered months drenched in sorrow tasted natural.

In the time I lingered frozen in my shroud of despair, spring had arrived, with feathered creatures whistling joyous songs while the leaves danced up our driveway. The warmth of the sun was a charlatan, exasperating my pain while seducing me like a stranger to a foreign place.

Welcoming the signs of spring felt like a betrayal of my grief, and for years I remained suspended, cursing the seasons as if they had something to do with my anguish.

Spring represented an unwanted gift and this rebirth offended me. How could life continue when I stood so raw?

Marooned in a well of grief, I felt alone in a world surrounded by people, a place where I was unable to articulate the wound that clutched at my soul.

My attention oscillated with an assault of questions, an endless loop of uncertainty that blemished my heart. Feeling guilty for being alive when he was gone, for waking each day, even the shame I felt running out of tears depleted me until nothing but darkness remained. Each day another upheaval when I woke peacefully until the ambiguity dissipated and exposed me to the pain again.

Meeting with other bereaved families and sharing our lives brought the courage I needed to begin functioning again. Slowly a thaw occurred and the bitter cold that once surrounded my heart began to warm.

The heartache that previously consumed me now unfolded into a treasure of memories and the gifts they bring with the passage of time. Gratitude can nourish us when our heart feels empty, though learning through loss is difficult, it remains powerful.

Embracing this enlightenment and the growth it provided filled me with love and compassion. Through years of grief, love, and self-examination I began to find myself authentically whole again, and as the new buds of spring, my heart began to open.

Eventually, spring's return blossomed within me and I looked forward to the new beginnings it would bring, perhaps because of the cold, seemingly endless winter, or the accumulation of snow all around us?

But when I happened upon an old journal from twenty years ago, the place where all this grief began, the year our five-year-old son died, the fog began to lift.

Finding a quiet room I sat down and began slowly turning the pages, revisiting the season of loss I had endured. Tenderly I stroked the pages acknowledging that despairing period of my life.

As I read, I recalled the brave woman I was, surviving the loss of my child, and I could not help but honor her and the battle she had forged to survive.

For days I continued reading the journal entries, discovering stories that swelled my heart and welled my eyes with tears. Yellowed pages filled with letters and poetry, notes and emotions bringing the words to life again, reminding me of how far I had come.

Entries I had written cursing the seasons stung at my vision, until suddenly aware of the anger I once held with spring. For it was not the season that hurt, the pain that gripped me was witnessing life moving on without me.

It took me years of unraveling to find myself again, and there are still days when I hear his sweet voice in the quiet of my day and know that he is still with me. Learning to step beyond the loss and share the love I had for my son in positive ways became one of my greatest blessings.

.....continued on Page 3.....

Awakenings .....continued from Page 2.....

Gratefulness is plentiful when we look beyond ourselves and see the beauty that exists in life all around us. Ryan's story became a story of love, one of giving to others the way this small child gave to us. Caring for strangers with random acts of kindness began filling the emptiness that once consumed me.

The power connected to giving is immeasurable and that influence sustained me. Beginning with small acts that kept me anonymous was the tipping point I needed to shift directions.

Paying at a drive-through where I remained nameless energized me and instead of the melancholy I had previously felt, a new kind of optimism emerged.

Solace can be found in that quiet place of grace when you release a kind deed into the universe and let the laws of nature embrace it.

Over twenty years later, I was running a race on Ryan's birthday and aspired to do something special. Although I was unclear on how I would present it, I went prepared, picking up two \$10 gift cards from a local store. This time I needed to step out of my anonymous comfort zone and be present.

After asking permission, I handed the two gift cards to two young siblings there to run the race. The delight alone was a gratification to witness, but this act gave more.

After sharing Ryan's story, they all thanked me and I returned to my own daughter, both of us beaming. Within a few minutes, the children bashfully approached me, thanking me again and sharing how special they felt. Smiling, I looked up at their mom who stood watching with tears running down her face.

Allowing Ryan to live on in positive ways is a gift I have given away countless times without regret, connecting us with one another makes the world a more loving place.

Although we try and live with a strategy in mind, planning how many children we want or the house we need, within all of this, there is no immunity from loss. When we realize that material things are fleeting collections of wants and will not sustain us in tragedy, we begin to embrace the little moments of life.

Giving of ourselves is the most valuable offering we can present, shaping the world in a perfect light. A beautiful sunrise, a child's laughter, even the smile we bring the elderly neighbor when we stop to visit, will be the pause that will anchor us if our ship begins to sink.

Posted on The Compassionate Friends website March 19, 2020  
~by Tina Zarlenga

~Tina Zarlenga is a married, mom of 3 (one in heaven) as well as a writer of short stories with a passion for family, photography, scrapbooking and running.

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Upcoming meetings:

**Apr** - Meeting *CANCELED* due to COVID-19

**May** - *Share your child with us by sharing cherished items and/or stories*

**Jun** - *20 Questions presenter Pam Fortener*

### NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

*A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.*

<i>Kim Bundy (suicide)</i>	<i>573-9877</i>
<i>Pam Fortener (cancer)</i>	<i>238-4075</i>
<i>Donnie Fortener (cancer)</i>	<i>760-2238</i>
<i>Pam Fortener (siblings)</i>	<i>238-4075</i>
<i>Lora Rudy (infant death)</i>	<i>339-0456</i>
<i>Cathy Duff (auto accident)</i>	<i>473-5533</i>
<i>Jackie Glawe (auto accident)</i>	<i>478-3318</i>

*Thank You  
for your love gifts!*



Ralph & Vera McLean for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, "Tonio" McLean 06/1972 -- 04/2003. (Vera says that April 18, 2003 was the saddest day of her life!!!)

*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.*

### The National Conference

The Compassionate Friends - 43rd TCF National Conference "Sharing Sweet Memories of Love" will be held in Atlanta, GA at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, the weekend of July 24-26 2020. See The Compassionate Friends National website for further details.

## *Our Children Lovingly Remembered*

### *April Birthdays*

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Aaron T. Duvall - Kim Duvall  
Amanda Kay Pitts - Darla Pitts  
Elizabeth Flory Duff - Ann Flory  
Kevin Michael Harshbarger - Kenneth & Carolyn  
Harshbarger  
Rebecca M. "Becky" Bole - Ken & Sue Bole  
Ryan Patrick Gilhooly - Constance Gilhooly  
Will Mohr - Valerie Mohr

### *April Angel-versaries*

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Allison Rudy - Lora Rudy  
Amanda Kay Pitts - Darla Pitts  
Antonio McLean - Vera McLean  
Ava Nicole Lisky Kathy Russell  
Heather Denise Bailey - Joe & Wanda Bailey  
Lydia Herrick - Patty Herrick  
Maci Eickman - Josh & Elizabeth Eickman  
Malachi (Mack) Bell - Mark & Lori Bell  
Shawn Edward Smith - Marcia Nowik  
Tasha Nicolle Longyear - Kern & Pamela Carpenter

Happy Birthday

*It is your birthday today.  
Happy Birthday!  
Can't help but think of you,  
Wishing we could talk, laugh, play  
And remember together.  
We would sing "Happy Birthday" to you,  
Watch you blowout candles and make a wish.  
We might talk of your birth, the past  
And dreams of tomorrow.  
Instead I shed tears as I smile.  
~Sherokee Ilse*



*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 a book review....*



*There are many books on loss of a child and grief available to purchase in book or ebook form from the sites listed below. You can also find **free** ebooks on some of these sites.*

*Amazon.com  
Barnes & Nobles  
Centering Corporation.org  
Booksamillion.com  
Ebay.com  
Thriftbooks.com*

*If you have a library card at your local library or Dayton Metro Library you can also check out ebooks from their websites.*

**Beautiful Dream**

Eyes open wide  
I awake from a beautiful dream  
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in  
I find myself wanting to scream

Grief so strong  
Impossible to explain  
Living with a broken heart  
Struggling with the pain

Eyes closed tight  
I pray for that beautiful dream  
A short escape from the painful reality  
That makes me want to scream

~Robert Willis  
TCF, Frederick, MD

**Like the Butterfly**

It fluttered above my head  
Weightless in the soft breeze.  
I reached up my hand  
It lit on my finger.  
Waving glistening wings gently,  
It looked at me for timeless moments.  
I smiled, reaching deep and  
Finding all those cherished memories.  
As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,  
I knew we had said hello once more.

Leslie Langford  
TCF, North Platte, NE

**Open Letter to Our Siblings**

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each others children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief.

There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

~Mary Lamourex  
TCF Marin County, CA



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**

*Miami County Chapter*  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

2445 N Montgomery County Line Rd  
Tipp City OH 45371

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*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) 478-3318 AND LEAVE A MESSAGE. Thank you.