



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

International Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents

## MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870

February 2020 NEWSLETTER Vol. 37 No.12

Facebook page "The Compassionate Friends of Miami County Ohio Chapter 1870".  
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### The Circle of Love



Together, we shall join hearts and hands across the earth and decorate the world with hope and healing and remembered laughter. We shall remain forever linked through the love of our absent children, parents, husbands and wives, siblings, grandparents, friends – all of our loved ones who dance across the rainbows ahead of us.

**WE ARE A FAMILY CIRCLE – BROKEN BY DEATH,  
MENED BY LOVE!**

May this day, and every day, be days for us to laugh and sing, to dance and dream. May this day, and every day, be days of celebration and the chance to give one more hug, to say one more, "I love you."

**MAY LOVE BE WHAT YOU REMEMBER MOST!**

By Darcie Sims



**We talk about them because we're proud. We talk about them, because they deserve to be remembered. We talk about them, because even though they are not physically with us, they are never far from our mind.**

**We talk about them, because they are part of us, a part that we could never ignore or disown. We talk about them because we love them still and always will. Forever. Nothing will ever change that.**

~SCRIBBLES & CRUMBS

### February Meeting – Feb 27, 2020, 7:00pm

**Topic:** *Celebration of Life in other cultures*  
*Presenter – Julie Gillespie*

#### **February Refreshments**

*Sandy O'Dell (memory of Mark)*  
*Josh & Liz Eickman (memory of Maci)*

#### **Thank you for January Refreshments**

*Cathy Duff (memory of Shaun)*  
*Bob & Barb Brower (memory of John)*  
*Debbie Turner (memory of Leslie)*

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.

*In times of darkness,*

*Love sees...*

*In times of silence,*

*Love hears...*

*In times of doubt,*

*Love hopes...*

*In times of sorrow,*

*Love comforts...*

*And, in all times,*

*Love remembers.*

~Hallmark

## FIVE LESSONS GRIEF TEACHES

By Maria Housde, Lecturer and Author of "HANNAH'S GIFT: Lessons from a Life fully Lived"

Twenty-two years of grief changes a lot of things. I am a new person every day. I never expected to survive my daughter's death. For months after, I prayed to die. More than once, I considered taking my own life, though I could not leave all I love here. There is no good way or time to lose a child. When someone you love dies, everything unnecessary falls away. I have learned to see grief as a spiritual practice, and it has taught me to see life in new ways.

**TRUTH:** telling it and living it

My daughter Hannah died of cancer at the age of three. This is the first true moment in my human story. Everything I am begins with this. The truth of Hannah's death is fierce and unrelenting. I cannot change it, but I can change the way I live with it.

When Hannah died, my life entered a "no drama" zone. I only had time and energy for the few things that mattered. I lost my politeness and learned to tell the truth. I let the phone ring and stopped reading fiction.

Pretending not to grieve does not make our children less dead. When tears are not seen as weakness, sorrow becomes a wise teacher. I also see now that truth is mutable. Truth changes as we change, and it waits until we are ready to see it.

**JOY:** finding it in the darkest places

For a long time after Hannah's death, I was afraid to laugh or smile. I didn't want to betray her suffering by feeling happy. As time passed, this feeling lifted. I smiled more and cried less. I noticed signs and synchronicities that reminded me of Hannah. Joy is fleeting when grief makes a home in your life. I learned to find it in the darkest places. Saying 'yes' in the moment reveals unexpected happiness. I rarely make plans ahead of time now, as I can't be certain how I will feel.

This way of seeing allows us to release the need for everything to be perfect. Joy is the possibility of happiness in every moment, the feeling that we are right where we need to be.

**FAITH:** from "my will be done" to "thy will be done"

Three months after Hannah's death, I stood by the side of a road, prepared to take my own life. I was not afraid of death, no matter what happens Hannah is already there. As a truck approached, I suddenly became aware of my lungs breathing. I forgot about the truck and focused on my breath. I realized that something in me is still choosing life. I stayed alive to find out why. There are no words to describe the space left absent when a child dies. The love you feel has nowhere to go. The longer your child is gone, the more you miss them. This missing becomes a part of you.

In my grief, I began to explore other religions and belief systems, hungry for validation of life after death. The God I believe in now is not the God that I grew up with. Though Christianity remains the first language of my faith, I now see threads of truth connecting many understandings. For me, God is a force of a thousand names and one love. Hannah's spirit lives on as part of everything. Strange comfort, this holding of everything in one place; yet I see an intelligence beyond imagining which orchestrates life and nature. While it is painful to accept Hannah's death, I also see her life making a difference in this world. Someone once described the earth as the planet for slow-learners. Faith trusts and breathes when it's all we can do.

**COMPASSION:** from specialness to belonging

I do not know why Hannah died and other children didn't. At first, I felt a sense of specialness. No one could know the depth of my pain. For a while, I didn't want to speak with anyone unless they had lost a child. Gradually, I began to connect with other people. Forgiveness is key throughout the journey of grief: forgiveness of those who live and of those who die. As I learn to forgive myself, I find it easier to forgive others. Our intent in harnessing grief makes transformation possible. 'Grief' shares the same root as 'grave', 'gravity', and 'gravitation'. It is a force with weight and heft. Once engaged, it can be redirected.

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When Hannah was first diagnosed, one of her doctors gave us good advice. He said, "Remember, no matter what happens, make the best decision you can with the information you have AT THAT TIME." Of course, we would change things if we knew then what we know now. There is no solace in blaming ourselves and others for not knowing.

Although I sometimes have less patience for other people and their problems, I see each of us is a unique lens in a shared experience. Compassion softens our gaze and allows us to appreciate new perspectives. When we reach beyond our specialness, we realize we are not alone.

WONDER: from needing to know to letting go

There was a house in our little town which was painted pink from top to bottom. Hannah loved this house. In the last year of her life, each time we passed it, she would say, "That's where I am going to live!"

A year and a half after Hannah's death, my daughter Madelaine was born. One day, when Madelaine was almost three-years old, we were driving to the grocery store. Suddenly Madelaine started shrieking from the back seat, I turned to see what was happening and saw her pointing to the pink house. "Mommy," she exclaimed, "That's the house where Hannah and I played in heaven before I was born!" I had no idea how she knew, and in that moment I didn't need to. Hannah's death opened me to realms I never knew existed. Having watched my Father and my daughter take their last breaths, I remember a peaceful presence entering the room. This energy called life is where I feel our children's presence is, and their spirits still make themselves known.

*Posted on January 17, 2020 on the national website of The Compassionate Friends*

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**"There are some people who could hear you speak a thousand words and still not understand you. And there are others who will understand without you even speaking a word."**

*– Yasmin Mogahed*

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Upcoming Topics:

- Feb** - *Celebration of Life in other cultures*  
*Presenter – Julie Gillespie*
- Mar** - *Share your child with us by sharing cherished items and/or stories*
- Apr** - *topic cards*

### NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

*A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.*

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

*Thank You  
 for your love gifts!*



Joe & Maggie Risko for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of their son, Robert Risko, 01/1962 -- 12/1993.



Jeanne Spencer for the Birthday Love Gift in honor and memory of her cousin Bobby Risko's birthday.

*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.*

## Our Children Lovingly Remembered

### February Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Alex J. Ritchie - Joel & Diana Ritchie  
 Amelia Beeman - Peggy Beeman  
 Brian Swartz - Lisa Swartz  
 Clifton Alexander - John Alexander  
 David J. Elam - Danny & Tammy Elam  
 James C. "Jimmy" Skaggs - James & Bonnie Skaggs  
 Jeffrey Scott LaCoste - Peggy LaCoste  
 Jeremiah Lee Bubeck - Rick & Becky Bubeck  
 John A. Brower - Robert & Barbara Brower  
 Matthew Cameron Ferror - Ken & Louise Ferror  
 Nick Koleff - Bob & Linda Dils

### 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  
 Zachary James Dyer - Rod & Kelley Dyer



*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....

“HEARTBROKEN: GRIEF AND HOPE INSIDE THE OPIOID CRISIS

By Ellen Krohne, with Matthew Ellis, MPE & Diana Cuddeback, LCSW



This book addresses how parents can cope with their grief and survive society's stigma from the loss of a child to drug addiction. It recognizes that the children struggling with addiction have parents who care for them and were concerned about them.

Heartbroken has three authors who each write about their area of expertise. Ellen Krohne interviews 7 families and relates their personal stories. After each story is told, Diana Cuddeback, LCSW, reflects on the different strategies each family used to cope with their child's death and how and why those strategies worked for them. The third author, university researcher Matthew Ellis, provides information about the current opioid crisis. He gives a brief history of the opioid epidemic during the years 1999-2017.

All three authors discuss the stigma associated with overdose deaths and how it can be overcome. Educating ourselves and others about the grief process and about addiction is an important first step. There is also the hopeful aspect of The Butterfly Effect which suggests that small changes now have the potential to cause significant differences for the futures.

As the mother of a son who died from prescription drugs on 2004, I found the stories and the information in this book to be very validating and helpful.

*Book review by Liz Boenig, Mile's Mom, from the Alive Alone Newsletter Holiday 2019 edition*

**I Want to Say ...**

By Lisa M. Tate

I want to say I'm sorry for  
many reasons left unsaid  
I want to say I miss you and the life that we  
once led  
I want to be forgiven and forgive myself as  
well

I want to hold my head up  
high and no longer sit and dwell  
How do you learn to love yourself after perfecting  
self-hate?

I want to shout "I miss you so"  
yet knowing I'm too late  
So much time has already passed but one thing  
remains

The thought of you brings  
warmth to me and that will never change  
We all make mistakes in life, Lord knows I've  
made a few  
Please know that doesn't change the fact I truly  
cared for you  
The love we shared may have been brief,  
and now it's just our past  
But the impact that you have left on me will  
forever last

No matter where we go from  
here, no matter where we've been  
What I miss most of all, is not my lover, it's my  
friend

Dedication: In memory of my sister, April

**From A Sister to Her Brother**

It seems like yesterday when I saw your face  
But I know it's true that here on earth there's a vacant  
place.

My heart is sore and each day hurts more and more.

Gary, I hope you feel us with you every day

Because we feel you with us in every way.

My children will grow up learning about you, their  
uncle

From your glory times and time of trouble

How you were caring, hard working, loving &  
daring.

We can not see you or touch you we know

Please know that in our hearts our love for you will  
continue to grow.

Many may think I now have three brothers not four

But it will always be four, one just knocked on  
heaven's door.

My family is broken and part of my soul is missing

You were more to us than a Son, Brother & Uncle-

You were a blessing.

Just know one thing Gary -  
Day by day we're on our way ...

~Melissa Barnhart

Annie Arundel County Chapter in Loveing Memory of Gary  
Lee Downey, Jr. October 30, 1980 – Dec 24, 2005



**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.