



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

International Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents

MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870

May 2020 NEWSLETTER Vol. 29 No. 4

Facebook page "The Compassionate Friends of Miami County Ohio Chapter 1870".
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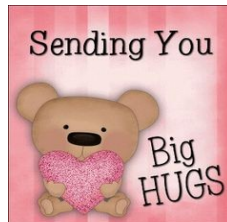
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Second Sunday of May

Many happy memories
Linger in our hearts this day
As we each remember our child
Who has left this earthly plane.
The day is bittersweet for us,
The mothers who have lost so much,
For to remove all pain could well
Erase the precious life we touched.
Tears will trace the memories of
Other, happier Mother's Days,
As we dwell in a quiet reverie
This Second Sunday of May

Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen



No May Meeting due to Covid-19

June meeting June 25th, 7pm
Topic: 20 Questions by Pam Fortener
(Providing the "Stay Home Order" and/or gathering limits have changed.)

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.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT WHILE MEETINGS ARE UNAVAILABLE

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?
A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.

Kim Bundy (suicide)	573-9877
Pam Fortener (cancer)	238-4075
Donnie Fortener (cancer)	760-2238
Pam Fortener (siblings)	238-4075
Cathy Duff (auto accident)	473-5533
Jackie Glawe (auto accident)	478-3318

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

A MOTHER'S CHORUS: GRIEVING A CHILD ON MOTHER'S DAY

From: WYG: What's Your Grief

Dear Friend,

I miss my child every day. This grief of mine will never leave me, and honestly, why should it? I love my child more than I ever could have imagined, and yes, I do mean present tense "love". It is excruciating knowing that my child will never return to my arms. However, a mother's love for her child doesn't require physical presence; this can be proven by the fact that most mothers love their children well before they are even born. I will love my child forever, and therefore, I will grieve my child forever. This is just how it goes.

I know it's difficult for some people to understand my ongoing grief, I guess because they want me to "get better" or return to "normal." However, I actually am normal. I'm just different now. I believe those who say they want to support me on difficult days like Mother's Day, but part of this is accepting me as a grieving mother who will always love her deceased child. Again, this is just how it goes.

My grief is like the weather. Somedays it's calm, quiet, maybe even a little sunny. Other days it's a devastating storm that makes me feel angry, exhausted, raw, and empty. I wake up in the morning and wonder – "Am I even alive at all? And if so, how am I supposed to make it through this day?" This is why when you ask me how I feel about Mother's Day, all I can say that it depends. Of course, I'm going to try my best to cope with the day, but while you're hoping that your Mother's Day picnic doesn't get spoiled by actual rain, I'll be praying that the grief storms stay at bay.

Like many things in a grieving mother's life, Mother's Day is bittersweet to the nth degree. On the one hand, I feel immense joy because I was blessed with my child and I feel gratitude for every moment I was given with them. On the other hand, the pain of missing my child – my greatest happiness, my life's purpose, and my best friend – is intense.

Bereaved mothers live with so many of these confusing contrasts. They are like undercurrents that tug at and toss about our hearts and minds. I am the mother of a child who is not alive. Perhaps a child who you've never met. You can't ask me about their school year, or how they're liking piano lessons, or whether they've chosen a major in college. In my mind, I've imagined my child doing all these things. People don't realize that I grieve each of my child's milestones, knowing they didn't get the opportunity to experience these special days.

Most people don't know how to validate my child's place in the world or my ongoing role as my child's mother. This is a difficult concept for others to grasp. Heck, sometimes even I grapple with the answers to questions like "Do you have children?" and "How many?." I know many bereaved mothers, like me, long for these questions to have straightforward answers.

Sadly, mothers who have experienced the death of their only child may even wonder whether they get to call themselves a mother at all in broader society. So, in addition to the pain of grief, these mothers have to cope with a sense of being left out, forgotten, and ignored. Can you imagine how that might feel? I think it must be like being stabbed through the heart and when you turn to others for help they say "What blood?" "What knife?"

Then, for mothers who have surviving children, there is this gem of a comment – "Don't forget, you're lucky to have other children." Please let me assure you, a mother does not forget any of her children. This mother loves each and every one of her unique and special children in unique and special ways, but one of her children has died and so her love for this child looks a little untraditional. Mothers do not have a finite amount of love to be shifted, divided, and spread around depending on the number of children they have on this Earth. So please be careful with your comments, because it's difficult enough for grieving mothers who often feel torn between feeling joy and happiness for their living children and grief for the child who has died.

.....Continued on Page 3.....

All that said, you asked me what it's like to grieve a child on Mother's Day, so here's what I have to say:

This day will forever be hard for me. I live with an emptiness that no one can fill; so I may be sad, I may be unsociable, and I may need to take a break to be by myself in a quiet place. Whatever shape my grief takes on this day, please allow me to feel the way I feel and please follow my lead.

Beyond that, acknowledge me as a mother. It makes me feel forgotten and as though my child has been forgotten when people act as though my child never existed. Also, I can sense that people feel uncomfortable talking about my child and I constantly feel like the elephant in the room, but it doesn't have to be this way. Honestly, I find it really comforting when someone talks about my child. I love hearing their name spoken out loud! I love hearing stories about them. Maybe you know a story I've never heard, or maybe I've heard it a hundred times before, but it really doesn't matter to me. Your acknowledgment alone is one of the greatest Mother's Day gifts you could give me.

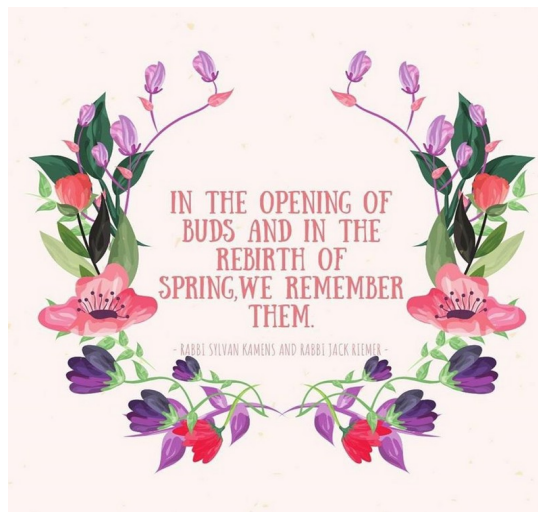
I guess while I'm offering my two cents, I also have something to say to my fellow bereaved mothers. No one has it all figured out, but I've learned a few lessons along the way. If you're worried about Mother's Day, you're not alone. Try not to get overwhelmed or wrapped up in anxiety. You may actually find that the anticipation of the day is worse than the day itself. You may want to plan a whole day of activities just to stay busy, or you may feel like doing nothing at all. There is no "right" way to handle Mother's Day – but do try to plan ahead a little. You may want to reach out to others who are struggling with the day and, if you can, it always helps to face the day with people who love and support you.

Whatever you do, believe you will make it through the day. With time, the grief storms will grow smaller and less frequent and you will find a little more balance and room to breathe. Believe you will be okay and have hope that in the future you will find yourself in a place where you can grieve and celebrate on Mother's Day all at the same time.

Let's take care of each other,

M

~From: WYG, whatsyourgrief.com



*"It's so much darker when a light goes out
than it would have been if it had never shone."*

~John Steinbeck, *The Winter of our Discontent*

TCF Regional Conference in Ohio Oct 3rd – 5th, 2020

The Compassionate Friends of Ottawa County and The Compassionate Friends of NW Ohio are partnering to bring a Regional Conference for parents, grandparents and siblings to Ohio October 3-5, 2020. This will be the second Regional TCF Conference held in this area and we expect to draw participants from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Pennsylvania. The speakers and workshop presenters are an impressive list of bereaved parents who will be here to share their journeys and experiences with our participants. This conference will be held at Maumee Bay State Park Conference Center. The conference will include workshops, sharing sessions, a walk to remember, candle lighting ceremony and fellowship with other bereaved families.

*Registration and hotel reservations will be available soon

CHAPTER NEWS

Upcoming meetings:

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

Jun - 20 Questions presenter Pam Fortener

Jul - Butterfly & Balloon Release/Picnic

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.

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



There is a need to talk, without trying to give reasons. No reason is going to be acceptable when you hurt so much. A hug, the touch of a hand, expressions of concern, a willing listener was and still is the things that helped the most. The people who were the greatest help were not judgmental. It's most helpful when people understand that what is needed is to talk about it and that this is part of the grief process.

Thank You for your love gifts!

★ Mary Snyder for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of her son, Brent A. Snyder 05/1953 -- 10/2005.

(I'm sorry to report that Mary's husband, Claude, passed away on April 8, 2020. Mary and Claude have been faithful members of our Chapter since 2006. We extend our condolences to Mary and the Snyder family. Claude will be missed!)

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 2020 TCF National Conference July 24-26

The Compa **CANCELLED** CF 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

May Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Blaize Mansur - Stephanie Mansur
Brent A. Snyder - Claude & Mary Snyder
Erika Leigh Wetzel - Susan Wetzel-Philpot
Jacquelyn Elizabeth "Jackie" Ahlers - Bob & Peg Ahlers
Jared Michael Belcher - Kelly Belcher
Lindsay Rose Donadio - Rick & Janell Claudy
Michael James McGuffey - Kathy McGuffey
Randy Lee Hess - Kimberly A. Bundy



May Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Bill Meadows - Fred & Pat Meadows
Blaize Mansur - Stephanie Mansur
Brent David Corn - Susan Hartrum
Brian Swartz - Lisa Swartz
Cody S. Pressler - Joe Miller & Tamra Pressler
David Allsbrooks - Brenda Slifer
Dominique Sims - Gina Williams
James C. "Jimmy" Skaggs - James & Bonnie Skaggs
Jeremiah Lee Bubeck - Rick & Becky Bubeck
Karen Kay Paschal - Linda Paschal
Kyle Alexander Quinn - Ken & Betty Quinn
Molly Murphy - Kerry & Sarah Murphy
Nick Koleff - Bob & Linda Dils
Ryan S. Thuma - Scott & Renee Thuma
Stephen Anthony Freeman - Tom & Kathy Freeman
Terry A. Baker, Jr. - Candy Ullery
Tony Robert Lavy - Robert E. & Sharon Lavy



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....



"Letters to my Son" by Mitch Carmody

Authored by a grieving father whose 9-year-old son died following a two-year battle with a recurring malignant brain tumor. During the months that followed his son's death, the author wrote letters and poems to him posthumously as a catharsis for his grief. A compelling story of love, loss and recovery that will grab your heart, nourish your soul and open your eyes. A must read for anyone who has experienced a great loss and is trying to find some path out of the darkness of their despair. Beautiful poems and illustrations by the author are woven throughout the text.

Do Not Discount Sibling Grief

I have come to think of sibling grief as “Discount Grief.” Why? Because siblings appear to be an emotional bargain in most people’s eyes. People worry so much about the bereaved parents that they invest very little attention in the grieving sibling.

My personal “favorite” comforting line said to siblings is “you be sure and take care of your parents’. I wanted to know who was supposed to take care of me... I knew I couldn’t.

The grief of a sibling may differ from that of a parent, but it ought not be discounted. People need to realize that while it is obviously painful for parents to have lost a child, it is also painful for the sibling, who has not only lost a sister or brother, but an irreplaceable friend.

While dealing with this double loss, he or she must confront yet another factor: The loss of a brother or sister is frequently the surviving sibling’s first experience with the death of any young person. Young people feel they will live forever. A strong dose of mortality in the form of a sibling is very hard to take.

The feelings of the siblings are also often discounted when decisions are being made.... on things ranging from funeral plans to flower selections. Parents need to listen to surviving siblings who usually know a lot about the tastes and preferences of the deceased.

Drawing on the knowledge that surviving siblings have about supposedly trivial things... such as favorite clothes or music... can serve two purposes when planning funeral or memorial services. First, their input helps ensure that the deceased receives the type of service he or she would have liked.

Second, their inclusion in the planning lets them know they are still an important part of the family. I realize that people are unaware that they are discounting sibling grief. But then, that’s why I’m writing this... so people will know.

Written by Jane Machado
From The Compassionate Friends,
Tulare, California USA

I’m Sorry

By Jack Tanner

It’s just a place to come to,
so I can show my love
I know that you’re not here now,
you’re with the Lord above
but its all that I have left now,
it’s where we said goodbye
I like to come and bring a flower,
and have a little cry.
I know it will never bring you back again,
But as I walk away,
I feel I’ve spent some time with you,
and it brightens up my day.
Sis I am so sorry, I love you, and if I could
turn back time I’d swap our places just so
you would be back on earth again. But we’ll
be together in the end, so I hope you’re the
one who holds the ages open for me.
All my love



**Life is not supposed to be easy
but it is not devastating either.
There are so many wonderful
things that happen and I have to
have the courage to realize it.
Life is not just a long line of problems.
It is also a long line of answers.
I have to trust myself
and my future and everything
will work out. It always does.
The answer to life’s problems
can only be found through hard
work and belief in yourself.
My believe in myself comes from a
big brother who always had faith in me.**

~Patricia Kelley
TCF, Richmond, VA
In loving memory of my brother, Sean
8/24/76 - 8/28/93

WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE

A little child who has never drawn his first breath
 A child who lives a day, a month, maybe a year
 A child who finishes school
 perhaps marries and then dies ...

Who is to compare which parents suffer the
 greatest heartbreak?
 What about the mother whose breasts are full of
 milk
 But has no little angel to feed.
 What about the dreams that new parents had for
 their baby.
 The empty nursery, a constant reminder.
 An older child who leaves behind
 a room full of trophies,
 treasures and mementos...
 A knife in the heart reminder.

What about the children who grew up
 and had everything to live for ...
 They come from every walk of life.
 They have babies of their own,
 which will never get to see their mommy or
 daddy ...
 All of their goals and dreams gone.

My heart breaks for young parents
 who never had the chance
 to see their dreams materialize.
 Their children never quite learned to walk nor talk,
 start school or go out on their first date.

There is no such thing as one loss
 being greater than another.
 We are all equally devastated ...
 and therefore, we are forever bonded to one
 another,
 in a very special way ...
 that no one else can truly understand.

~Author unknown

Our Credo...

We need not walk alone. We are The
 Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each
 other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and
 from many different causes, but our love for them
 unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as
 your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from
 many different circumstances. We are a unique
 family because we represent many races, creeds,
 and relationships. We are young, and we are old.
 Some of us are far along in our grief, but others
 still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful
 that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of
 strength, while some of us are struggling to find
 answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or
 in deep depression, while others radiate an inner
 peace. But whatever pain we bring to this
 gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain
 we will share, just as we share with each other our
 love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future
 for ourselves, but we are committed to building a
 future together. We reach out to each other in love
 to share the pain as well as the joy, share the
 anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well
 as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as
 well as to grow.

**We need not walk alone. We are The
 Compassionate Friends. ©2007**



**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.