



# The Compassionate Friends

## Minneapolis Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

8701 36th Ave N

New Hope, MN 55427

### Meeting Schedule

We meet 7:00–8:30 pm on the third Monday of each month.

**St. Joseph Parish Community**

**8701 36th Ave N**

**New Hope, MN 55427**

**Corner of 36th Ave N & Boone Ave N**

#### Monday, November 21

##### “Handling the Holidays”

The work and pain of grief doesn't take a vacation. The challenge is managing the pain. Sometimes the anticipation is worse than the actual day. We'll explore options to make a plan to handle the holidays.

#### Monday, December 19

##### “Candle Lighting Ceremony”

Join us for our annual, special remembrance program which takes the place of our regular meeting. Sign-in begins at 6 pm. See page 3 for details.

#### Monday, January 16

##### “Show and Share”

Help us get to know your child. Bring something to share that evokes a special memory...a blankie, toy, trophy, poem, etc. Any memento will do, because it provides an opportunity to speak our child's name.

#### Bereaved Sibling Group Meeting

Siblings 16 and older meet at the same location and time as our Chapter meeting. Join us for support in an informal setting. Facilitated by a bereaved sibling who is a certified Grief Recovery Specialist®.

## We Need Not Walk Alone

**The Compassionate Friends** is a self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child at any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents the opportunity to talk about their child and feelings as they go through the grieving process. Our meetings are also open to grandparents, older siblings, and extended family. There are no membership dues. There is no religious affiliation.

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. **The Mission** of The Compassionate Friends is to provide highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of

a son or daughter, a brother or sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

**The Secret of TCF's Success is Simple:** As seasoned griever reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward, and both are helped to heal.

**To Our New Members:** Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But, you have nothing to lose, and much to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you find the right person...or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work.

**To Our Members Further Down the 'Grief Road':** We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting, we have new parents. Think back. what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF “veterans” to welcome you and share your grief?



**About Our Meetings:** Please don't stay away from a meeting because the scheduled topic does not interest you. At each meeting there will be time to discuss whatever is on your mind. We welcome your participation, but it is not a requirement.

## Resources

### Check Out Our Chapter Website:

<http://compassionatefriends.wordpress.com>

You'll find back issues of newsletters, links to other grief support groups, and more.

### Our Local Chapter Is On Facebook.



Join our private community online. Log onto Facebook and find us by searching: The Compassionate Friends of Minneapolis.

### National Organization Resources

may be found by visiting:

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Click "Find Support" tab.

- National Magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*®
  - Monthly E-Newsletter
  - Online Grief-Related Webinar Series
  - Online Support Community
  - Facebook Closed (Private) Groups
- [TCF/USA National Facebook Page](http://TCF/USA National Facebook Page)  
[www.facebook.com/TCFUSA](http://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA)

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Monica Colberg, Treasurer  
(612) 521-8501**Newsletter Editor:**

Gloria Jordan

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Charlie Brown

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Gail Hokemeir

[tcf.mpls@gmail.com](mailto:tcf.mpls@gmail.com)**Steering Committee Meetings**Held quarterly to plan events and Chapter  
direction. Next meeting: November 11.**SURROUNDING AREA ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS****The St. Paul Chapter**Meets at Beaver Lake Lutheran  
Church at 2280 Stillwater Ave. in  
Maplewood.

Second Thursday each month, 7 pm.

Sandy, (651) 528-6073

Cathy, (651) 459-9341

**The Rockford Chapter**Meets at Our Father's Lutheran  
Church at 3900 Gilbert Ave SE.

Fourth Tuesday of each month, 7 pm.

Sandy, (763) 843-8685

**The Monticello Chapter**Meets at St. Henry's Catholic Church at  
1001 7<sup>th</sup> St. E in Monticello.

Second Monday of the month, 7 pm.

Beth Hill, (763) 295-3610.

**The South of the River Chapter**Meets at Shepherd of the Valley  
Lutheran Church at 12650 Johnny  
Cake Ridge Rd., Apple Valley.

Third Tuesday each month, 7 pm.

Susan, (651) 683-9236



### Save the Date: 2017 TCF National Conference

Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek in Orlando, Florida, will be  
the site of the 40th Annual National Conference*July 28-30, 2017*We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national  
website as well as on <https://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA>.  
Come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.**NATIONAL OFFICE**

Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010

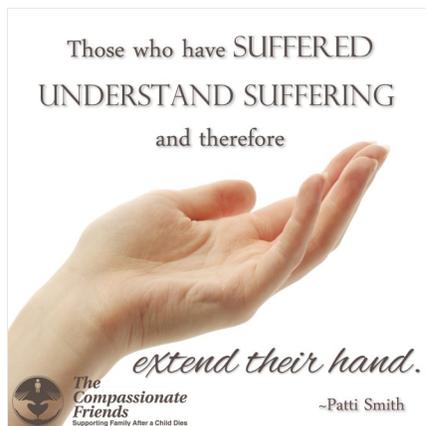
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Articles printed in this newsletter reflect the  
author's personal views, and not necessarily  
the opinion of the newsletter editor or  
The Compassionate Friends.

## Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit on the second Sunday of December, at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of beloved children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held annually, and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

You are invited to post a message in the online Remembrance Book which will be available, during the Worldwide event, this year on Sunday, December 11,, at TCF's national website, [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)



## Angel of Hope

Each year on **December 6th** at 7:00 pm a **Remembrance Vigil** is held at Angel of Hope sites. The public is invited to attend a short, simple, secular outdoor ceremony in memory of children who died at any age. Candles will be provided. Attendees are invited to bring a white flower to leave at the statue's base.

A newly dedicated Angel of Hope statue is located at 841 Santa Vera Drive in **Chanhassen**, just north of downtown along Santa Vera Dr, between Powers Blvd. and Kerber Blvd.

A second Angel of Hope location is in **Maple Grove**. Participants are encouraged to car pool as parking is limited. Additional parking is available across the street at the Arbor View Early Childhood Center, 9401 Fernbrook Lane and at the Assembly of God Church. Afterwards, refreshments will be served across the street inside the Childhood Center. For more information contact the Maple Grove Parks and Rec. Dept. at 763-494-6504, or visit [www.friendsoftheangel.com](http://www.friendsoftheangel.com).



## Love Gifts

LOVE GIFTS are tax-deductible donations given in memory of our children or other loved ones by family or friends who wish to support the work of The Compassionate Friends. There are no dues or membership fees. All contributions are voluntary.

Our Minneapolis Chapter depends solely on donations to fund our activities and special events such as the Candle Lighting and Balloon Release, room rental, speakers, meeting supplies, lending library, printing and mailing the quarterly newsletter, outreach materials, and more.

The chapter leadership is grateful for your contributions of any amount; whether it's renewing your newsletter, or commemorating a child's birth or angel date. The following donations by check were received recently. In addition, thank you for the anonymous cash offerings from recent events.

### Donation In Memory of:      by TCF Members/Family

Ben	Mary & John Alden
John	Mary & John Alden
Selene Anderson	Elizabeth Anderson
Joseph Engles	Deb & Paul Barland
Art Colberg	Marcia & Craig Benham
Molly	Pat, Charlie & Tyler Brown
Alex Charles C.	Charles Campbell
Luke	Jason & Amy Crotteau
Melissa Roeser	Marilyn & Steve Dahlmeier
Michael	Mary DeBruin
Matthew, Daniel, Carolyn	Robert & Barbara Demsky
Charlotte	Jon & Angie Downing
Corey	Mary & Tasha Feigh
Missy	Mary & Tasha Feigh
Mark Frain	Donna Frain & Steve Earl
Nic Harter	Sandra Harter
Steve Hokemeir	Gail Hokemeir
Krystie Anna	Richard Karl
Logan Bruns	Julie & Paul Kingsbury
Jeremy Klein	Chris Klein
Andrea	Martin & Joan Leeper
Vincent	Jeff Lewis
Vincent	Damien Lewis
Ann Longton	Barbara McNamara
Daniel	Dan & Chevis Peso
Elsie Kirabo	Mary Jo Peterson
Tim Puhek	Rozanne & John Puhek
Gregory	Nancy Sather
Art Colberg	Brandon & Jessica Schultz
Ross Alvin Joseph Stenerson	Barbara Stenerson
Keith Rosenwinkel	Wanda Van Holtum
Kevin	Shirley Williams

## First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful fills my heart with dread.  
They'll all be feigning gladness, not a word about her said.

These heavy shrouds of blackness enveloping my soul,  
pervasive, throat-catching, writhe in me, and coil.

I must, I must acknowledge, just express her name,  
so all sitting at the table know I'm thankful that she came.

Though she's gone from us forever and we mourn to see her face,  
not one minute of her living, would her death ever replace.

So I stop the cheerful gathering, though my voice quivers, quakes,  
make a toast to all her living. That small tribute's all it takes.

Genesee Bourdeau Gentry

## Candle Lighting Program

Our chapter's annual memorial candle lighting program is **Monday, December 19** at our regular meeting location, St. Joseph Parish Community in New Hope. This event takes the place of our regular Chapter Meeting. Parents, siblings, extended family, and friends are invited to join us.

The evening begins at 6:00 pm with sign-in; snacks and treats, along with cider and coffee will be served during social time. A free-will offering will be appreciated to help offset the costs. Ornaments are provided (one per family) which we will personalize with your child's name. You may hang it on the memory tree and afterwards, take home as a memento.

The candle lighting program begins at 7:00 pm with beautiful music as well as readings by our members, followed by lighting of candles in remembrance of our children. The evening will conclude with our memorial photo video presentation of our children.

To include your child's photograph in the video, please email a photograph to Steve at [sch2450@hotmail.com](mailto:sch2450@hotmail.com). Send a high quality .jpg for best results. **The DEADLINE is December 1.** You DO NOT need to send us a photo of your child if you have already sent one in previous years; we still have it in the system.

If you would like to participate in the program by reading a poem or prose, email Gloria at [tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com](mailto:tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com) with your name, and the title and author of your selection. **The DEADLINE is December 1 to be included in the program.**

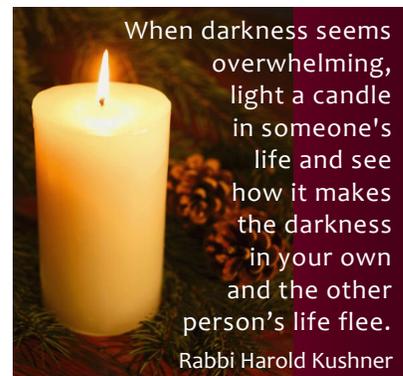
This is our largest event honoring our children, siblings, and grandchildren. We would appreciate your help! Come early to set up or stay after to help clean up, donate finger foods, fruit or veggie tray, or cookies, bars, or treats, or apple cider. To lend a hand, sign up at our November 21 chapter meeting or call Carol at 763-542-8528.

If we need to postpone due to severe weather, we will post a notice on our Facebook page, and [www.WCCO.com](http://www.WCCO.com) under "school closings."

## With Thanks from Grateful Hearts

In the depth of our grief, it's sometimes difficult to raise our eyes with gratitude. Among our family of The Compassionate Friends Minneapolis Chapter, we have much to be grateful for...

- The newly bereaved who muster the energy and courage to find us and attend a meeting, and to those further along who return to offer encouragement.
- Chapter Leader Carol who arrives early to make coffee and set up, welcomes the bereaved with grace, recalling names and faces.
- Co-leader Monica's dedication to managing our finances.
- Hospitality coordinator Gail, and those who sign up to take turns bringing treats to our monthly meetings.
- Thoughtful members who come early to help set up, and stay after to pitch in to clean up at meetings and events.
- Gloria who shares her creative talents producing our newsletter, and the crew who gather to fold/peel/stick to get it in the mail.
- Mary Jo who efficiently manages our database.
- Charlie, our resident creative Webmaster.
- Lisa who administrates our Chapter's private Facebook page.
- Our members for generous donations to aid our chapter mission.
- Pat R. for sending our donors thank you notes.
- Our Steering Committee (Mary Feigh & Pat B., along with above named individuals) who give of their time and talents to foster a hopeful, healing chapter
- The many more individuals not mentioned by name. For all of you, we are truly grateful.



When darkness seems  
overwhelming,  
light a candle  
in someone's  
life and see  
how it makes  
the darkness  
in your own  
and the other  
person's life flee.

Rabbi Harold Kushner

## Thanksgiving Marks Beginning of Holiday Madness and Sadness

In our society we have turned the holidays into a never ending round of parties, shopping, cooking, preparations for guests or travel and stress, lots and lots of stress. It begins in October with the not so subtle reminders from our friendly retail stores. Most of us dread this time of year because as members of Compassionate Friends, we have one more item on our list and it invariably is at the top...my child is gone...how can I handle the holidays?

This will be my third Thanksgiving without my son. We had 35 wonderful Thanksgiving celebrations together, and now it's just me. My only child is gone, my grandchildren now live solely in their mother's world. I am not a part of that world.

But I am learning to cope with this reality. I am learning that I can hold on to the traditions that don't cause me sadness and let go of those that do. As bereaved parents we fall into a unique category. As humans we accept that the loss of parents, spouses, aunts, uncles, siblings, friends and acquaintances is inevitable. But never, never, were we taught or conditioned to the idea that our children would or could precede us in death. The very notion of this shook us to our core.

Now we have lost our child to death. Nobody prepared us for this mind-numbing loss. The rules have been broken. We have no coping skills. Our friends usually can't help. Our families try, but until one endures a loss of this magnitude, the ability to fully comprehend the never ending rounds of sadness is simply not there.

We do have a support system...we can choose to participate or simply be there, in the moment, at our Compassionate Friends meetings. Here we find our most meaningful and helpful connection with other parents...parents who are walking the road we now walk. These bereaved parents are here to help us on this unfamiliar road. They cannot answer every question because the answers don't exist to most questions. When will this pain end? When will life go back to "normal"? There are different types of pain and new kinds of normal. We gather each month to help each other, to lean on each other, to find hope in each other's ability to function. From this meeting of kindred souls we do derive some solace, some peace and some hope.

I have watched the newly bereaved, raw in their sadness when they first attend a meeting. As the months move forward, I begin to see a change in these parents. Each changes in a different way, for each experiences their loss and their grief process in a different way. Some changes aren't apparent for months, even a year or two. Learning that we are not alone in the grievous burden of our loss is comforting. Learning that others have developed ways to cope with the holidays, the birthdays, the death anniversaries and other special occasions gives us the hope that we, too, will one day feel comfortable in our new "normal."

I have chosen to accept this group of gentle, kind and compassionate friends as an integral part of my life. The first holidays were horrible. I learned that I had to do what I felt was right. I learned to let go of the expectations of others and live in the moment. Even if I plan to do something and change my mind, I feel no guilt. I learned that those who truly love me understand. I have found that I am truly becoming myself...my new self. It is a slow process.

There are setbacks.

Holidays are extremely difficult for every parent who has lost a child...it matters not how long ago our child died. The pain is fresh, new and raw at this time of year. This is the season for leaning on our compassionate friends, for asking questions, expressing fears, anxieties, doubts, depression and anger and for finding the comfort, hope and understanding that each of us so desperately seeks.



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



## A New Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving morning 1991, I was standing at the sink, peeling potatoes. The turkey was in the oven, the pies were cooling on the sideboard. Just another normal holiday morning. At 10:30 the phone rang. I was closest, so I answered it.

That call from the San Diego medical examiner changed my life forever.

Within seconds our whole household was in chaos and shock our beautiful daughter Nancy had been killed in a car accident earlier that morning.

How could this be? I had just talked with her less than 24 hours before. She had wished us a "happy Turkey Day" and closed her call with "I love you, Mom." That was to be the last time I would hear her voice.

How did I get from that day of wrenching pain to this day nine years later? The simple answer is: a minute, an hour, a day at a time...putting one foot in front of the other, reaching out for people who had been where I was.

The first Thanksgiving after Nancy's death was the most difficult. I couldn't bring myself to cook or even look at a turkey. The decorated paper plates and napkins in the store were sickening to me. My solution to the turkey was to serve prime rib instead. That strategy got me through the next two Thanksgivings.

One of my watershed moments came on the fourth Thanksgiving after Nancy's accident. My surviving children wanted the traditional turkey-and-trimmings dinner. They missed the old ways. The truth is, they had moved forward and they wanted me to take that step also.

Reluctantly, I obliged, but with a heavy heart. With red roses nearby and her candle lit, we gathered together and counted our blessings.

Today with love and support of family and friends, I will once again prepare the Thanksgiving dinner. It will always be "different." I can't change what was. I can, however, choose to embrace the life I have now. There is so much more to be grateful for. Not a day goes by that I don't count my blessings. Among the greatest of these is the love of family and friends, and peace in my heart.

I truly believe that those blessings can be yours, too. Time, tears, love of family, good friends, and reinvestment can lead you there.

Mary Conway  
TCF, Nashville, TN  
In Memory of my daughter, Nancy

# Our Children Remembered...on Their Birthdays

## Loved...Missed...Forever in Our Hearts



### November

CHILD	MEMBER
Luke	Amy & Jason Crotteau
Noah	Jenna & Scott Rogers
JoAnna	Aron & Ruth Wilterding
Lauren	Dawn & Peter Duwenhoefer
Krista Anne	Mae & Bob Malmquist
Alex	Kathy Simanek
Barry Allan Beal	Carol Beal
Hallie	Todd & Kathy Brown
Sarah Tilman	Cathie Tilman
Kelly Ann	Theresa Nichols
Andrew	Jim & Sue Senger
Keith Rosenwinkel	Wanda VonHoltum
Michael DeBruin	Mary & Bob DeBruin
Jared Barnes	Julie Zapp
Owen Christianson	Anne & Grant Christianson
Leon Harwood	Antonia (Flipper) Filipiak
Tucker	Dana & Kevin O'Brien

### December

CHILD	MEMBER
Jelani	Alyce Hamilton
Michelle Franta (Sister)	Jeff & Melia Liedman
Michelle Marie Franta	Lynn & Stan Liedman
Jeremy Klein	Jeanne Klein
Jeremy Klein	Chris Klein
Melanie Laura Nelson	Dean & Allison Nelson
Natalie Perry Smead	Karen Prieto & Pete Smead
Daniel Christian Demsky	Barbara & Robert Demsky
Jeff	Beckie O'Connor
Deborah	Marion Swanson
Wilder	Tea Lee
Ashton Faye Anderson	Scott & Sharon Anderson
Vanessa Marie	Maureen Voltin
Joseph	Kim Corkins
Joshua David Collins	Aquila Collins
Joshua David Collins (Sister)	Priscilla & Ruth Collins
John Alden	Mary & John Alden
Juliette	Nancy Kilhan

### January

CHILD	MEMBER
Tara	Seth & Angela Engman
Allyson	Roger Graphenteen
Grayson Jett	Brian & Jennifer Jett
Michael Greeman	Marijo Greeman
Alex	Frank Commers
Joseph Engles	Deb & Paul Barland
Marlys Ann Wohlenhaus	Fran & John Munday
Zachariah Paul Benjamin Muonio	Michael & Anita Muonio
Shane Guedes	Denise & Tina Guedes
Adam Iesh	Deanna Iesh
Grace	Katie & Charlie Heitzig
Daniel	Dan & Chevis Peso
Brenden	Tammy Sperr
Jason Lynn Erickson	Mary Jo Kammerer
Nicole Jean Gallery	Janna Gallery
Cody	Dave & Jennifer Perna
Adrian	John & Stephanie Merfeld
Ann Longton-McNamara	Barbara & Richard McNamara
Krystie Anna (care giver)	Patty Beaudry
Krystie Anna	Rick Karl & Bruce Steiger
Kali	Peg & Roger Mann
John Alexander (Jay)	John Schafer
Kelly Hyatt	Maureen Hyatt
Lisa Marie Hall	Ron Hall
Missy	Mary Feigh & Tasha Feigh
Katherine Lee Boughton	Delores Boughton



## New Year Wishes

Where there is pain,  
Let there be *softening*

Where there is bitterness,  
Let there be *acceptance*.

Where there is silence,  
Let there be *friendship*.

Where there is despair,  
Let there be *hope*.

Ruth Eiseman  
TCF Louisville, KY

### Birthday Table

Birthdays are given special recognition at our monthly meetings. During your child's birthday month, you are invited to bring photos and memorabilia to share and display on our Birthday Table. Some like to sign up to bring a favorite snack or treat (even birthday cake) to celebrate the birthday of their child.

## Our Children Remembered...on Their Angel Dates

So that their lives may always shine, our children are remembered.



### November

CHILD	MEMBER
Payton Tripp (Granddaughter)	Janet & Richard Tripp
Jen	Karen & Gary Gross
Mary Kay Boughton	Delores Boughton
Deborah	Marion Swanson
Alicia Marie Queen-Wilson	Queen Wilson
Jehangir (J.J.) Merchant	Pheroza Merchant
Zachary	Darcie Rummel
Luke	Wendy Lemke
Nick Harter	Brian & Sandy Harter
Wyatt Mitchell Olig	Katherine Olig
Joseph	Kim Corkins
Matthew Robert Demsky	Barbara & Robert Demsky
Owen Christianson	Anne & Grant Christianson
Machael Greeman	Marijo Greeman

### December

CHILD	MEMBER
Lisa Marie Hall	Ron Hall
Jeremiah	Shawn Reeves
Rob Anderson	Sandy & Bob Anderson
Brian Joseph Henry	Janine Jordan
Malia	Alisa Matteson
Rachel Anne	Pam Dugdale
Carson Jordan	Gloria & John Jordan
Michael John Blesi	Carolyn Blesi
Jamie Lents	Leslie Elsenpeter
Kristin Reller	Pat & Don Reller
Sofia Buxton Anderson	Molly Remington
Peter	Peggy Saari
Cody	Dave & Jennifer Perna
Leah Strom Riele	Shirley & Ken Strom
Rosie DelMain	Cathy Smith
Tara	Seth & Angela Engman
Kali	Peg & Roger Mann
Jon Bleyul	Rich & Mary Welke
Drew	Judy Pehrson
Cora	Danielle Grinsel

### January

CHILD	MEMBER
Caitlin Louise Higgins	Jeffrey Weihe
Benjamin Segal	Lucinda Cummings
Frank	Mary Weber
Christopher Bormann	Susan Bormann
Alyssa	Rich & Dori Beattie
Lara Rogers	Kitty & Tom O'Brien
Grace	Katie & Charlie Heitzig
LaChance Skipper	Angela Johann
Eric Brodin	Judy & Buck Brodin
Mark Frain (Brother-in-law)	Michael & Terri Frain
Mark Frain	Donna Frain
Emily	Jae Germond
Scott (Brother)	Katie Murray
Keith Demry	Char Fonville
J. D.	Cathy Bailly
Ian Stevens	Kristine & Dale DeWitt
Zachary Govednik (Grandson)	Don & Georgia Govednik
Eric Lindquist	Bruce Lindquist
Ethan	Tom Lang
Steven Eric Hanson	Meg Hanson

## Giving Thanks

*I can not hold your hands today,  
I can not see your smile,  
I can not hear your voices now,  
My children, who are gone.*

*But I recall your faces still,  
The songs, the talks, the sighs.  
And story times, and winter walks,  
And sharing secret things.*

*I know you helped my mind to live  
Beyond your time with me.*

*You gave me clearer eyes to see –  
You gave me finer ears to hear –  
What living means, what dying means,  
My children, who are gone.*

*So here it is Thanksgiving Day,  
And you are not with me.  
And while I weep a mother's tears,  
I thank you for the gift you were,  
And all the gifts you gave to me,  
My children, who are gone.*

Sascha, Wintersun

## Hannukkah Thoughts



At this season of lights,  
we remember the light you  
brought into our lives:

The light of your laughter,  
The light of your wit and  
intelligence,  
The light of your love.

May the time not be different when the  
memory  
of these lights will illuminate our hearts and our  
minds and eradicate the darkness therein.

Stephanie Hesse  
Rockland Co., NY



## Fear of Forgetting

When my daughter died just after turning four years old, one of my biggest fears has been that she will be forgotten. But lately, I've been asking myself what does that really mean? What am I really scared of?



The idea that she will be forgotten is actually two separate fears. The first is that due to the notion of "out of sight, out of mind," friends and even family will stop thinking of her and, in essence, "forget her." In reality, this is the natural course of life. I have beloved relatives and dear friends who have passed, and yet I rarely think of them. Does it mean they didn't exist, or had any less impact on my life? No. Nor does it mean I love them any less. What it does represent is that life goes on, and current matters occupy our minds.

I think my fear is actually rooted in the reality of family and friends no longer talking about my daughter or – from my perspective – thinking of her, which feels as though it further isolates me from the "normal" world. It has been years since she died, and yet the pain is ever present and my daily thoughts are still filled with memories and longing for my daughter. Other than the news sensationalizing death and destruction to grab our attention for ratings, our society tends to not want to talk about grief or the lingering pain of loss after the funeral is over. So I go about my business and lead two lives: the "normal" one that goes about living a "normal" life, and the "private" one where I still struggle to figure out how to work through the pain of grief while learning to once again embrace the love, joy, and adventures that surround me.

The second part of my fear has to do with me and my memory. With my daughter no longer physically here, memories of her have become precious commodities. Those few memories of specific moments captured in time allow me to momentarily remember not just who she was, but remember life before the pain of her death forever changed me and my world. But with every passing day, and with all the new information coming in, those memories tend to get crowded out and forgotten. All those everyday moments that I took for granted at the time have already faded into the abyss of memories lost to time. It makes me sad that her older brothers say that they have very few specific memories of her. It makes me sadder that her baby brother never had the chance to meet her, and will have to rely on our stories and descriptions of her if he ever wants to get to know her.

To combat this fear, I have tried to write down as many memories as I can – even if they are mundane. I keep them in a journal, and some I post to [www.aliveinmemory.org](http://www.aliveinmemory.org) to share them with others. This way I can refer back to them and share them with whoever is interested in reading them. Her brothers can read them and share them with their eventual families.

But lately, I wonder is my fear of forgetting my memories really necessary? Does it make me a bad mother that I can't remember more moments I shared with her? Of course not. Does it mean my love for her will fade with the memories? Absolutely not. While I wish I could remember more specific memories of time that I shared with her, I will try to be content knowing that I will never forget how much I love my daughter, or how much she means to me. I will never forget her personality quirks, her vivid imagination, and endless creativity. And I will never forget how her life – and her death – have helped me grow tremendously in my understanding of this life and how best to live it.

Maria Kubitz  
TCF Contra Costa County, CA  
In Memory of my daughter, Margareta



## As the Holiday Season Ends

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways, they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this New Year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in your chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

The newsletter is another way you can become involved in your chapter. Let us know contributing poems or stories. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs. Have a Happier New Year!

Pat Akery  
TCF Medford, OR



## Honoring Unhappiness

I have re-read the book *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl more times than I can count. In it, Frankl quotes from a paper written by Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, who had been a professor at the University of Georgia. She wrote, "Our current mental-hygiene philosophy stresses the idea that people ought to be happy, that unhappiness is a symptom of maladjustment... in the present day culture of the United States, the incurable sufferer is given very little opportunity to be proud of his suffering and to consider it ennobling rather than degrading...so that he is not only unhappy, but also ashamed of being unhappy."

It is my hope that all bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings will have the chance to feel that our unhappiness is honored and respected by others suffering similarly. I hope we will find validation, whether from the embrace of others at chapter meetings, from words read in a newsletter, or from conversations with other bereaved parents and siblings. I hope we will not be ashamed of being unhappy. And when our time is right, I hope we may find some moments of joy and peace even as we keep our grief for our lost children and siblings.

Peggy Johnson  
TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA



# The Compassionate Friends

Minneapolis Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

c/o St. Joseph Parish Community  
8701 36th Ave N  
New Hope MN 55427

The Minneapolis Chapter of The Compassionate Friends operates solely with voluntary donations. The printing and mailing of this newsletter is the largest item in our chapter's budget. While there are no dues or subscription fees, donations to help offset this expense are much appreciated. A \$10 annual donation covers the expense of providing the newsletter to you for a year. Gifts in any amount are appreciated.

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We want to make sure everyone who is receiving our newsletter is interested in staying on our mailing list.

Perhaps you aren't able to attend monthly meetings, but wish to continue to be informed of our chapter news and events. Perhaps you find comfort in reading the articles and stories included in the newsletter.

To remain on our mailing list, all you need to do is one of the following\*:

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