



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

Bereaved Sibling Group Meeting

A bereaved sibling facilitates the group. Siblings meet separately, but at the same location and time as our Chapter meeting.

Monday, November 20

“Handling the Holidays”

Holidays can magnify our loss. The work and pain of grief doesn't take a vacation. Sometimes the anticipation is worse than the actual day. Seasoned grievers will share ideas, and together we'll explore options and make a plan to survive.

Monday, December 18

“Candle Lighting Program”

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 15

“Birthday Wishes”

With or without cake and candles, we can remember, reminisce, honor, and heal while celebrating our child's life. Is it possible to find joy as we preserve memories or create new ones?

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 grievers 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 and share whatever is on your mind. We welcome your participation, but it is not required.

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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 Minneapolis Chapter's private Facebook community online: [TCF Mpls](#)
Or log onto Facebook and search: TCF Mpls

www.facebook.com/groups/TCFMpls

National Organization Resources

may be found by visiting:

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

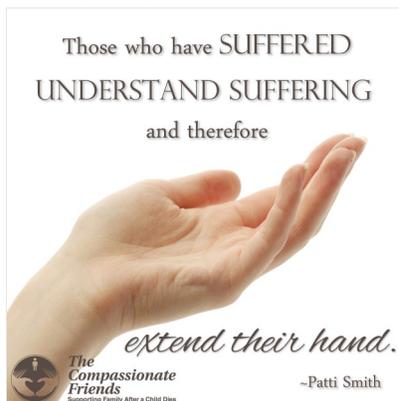
[TCF/USA National Facebook Page](#)
www.facebook.com/TCFUSA

MINNEAPOLIS CHAPTER INFO**TELEPHONE:** (612) 444-1301**EMAIL:** tcf.mpls@gmail.com**Minneapolis Chapter Leader**
Monica Colberg**Treasurer**
John Jordan**Newsletter Editor & Co-Leader**
Gloria Jordan
tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com**Database Coordinator**
Mary Jo Peterson**Webmaster**
Charlie Brown**Facebook Page Administrator**
Lisa Gross Crees**Hospitality Coordinator**
Gail Hokemeir**Donor Appreciation**
Pat Reller**Co-Librarians**
Pat Brown & Tasha Feigh**Special Events Coordinator**
Carol Hawk**Sibling Facilitator**
Maggie Bauer**Steering Committee Meetings**
Held quarterly to plan events and Chapter direction. Next meeting: Friday, January 12.**TCF NATIONAL OFFICE**

Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010

E-mail:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.orgwww.compassionatefriends.org*Facebook:* www.facebook.com/TCFUSA*Twitter:* <https://twitter.com/TCFofUSA>**REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

Cathy Seehuetter: 651-459-9341

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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.

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 7th 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.
Sue, (952) 797-6346

**TCF National Conference
July 27-29, 2018**

Save the date, and make plans to attend the 41st TCF National Conference in St. Louis, MO.

You'll find a friendly, warm, safe atmosphere surrounded by compassionate people. It's a weekend of hopeful and healing activities; keynote speakers, workshops, sharing sessions, a Walk to Remember, and the heartwarming Candle Lighting, and more.

Help Wanted

Our Chapter is seeking a volunteer Newsletter Editor for our quarterly newsletter. This opportunity provides a valuable and rewarding service to our Chapter. For more info, please email our current Newsletter Editor, Gloria Jordan, tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com.

Where Do I Sign Up?

I come from a long line of cooks cooking for others. My parents chaired many committees creating the good old fashioned, home-cooked turkey dinners offered at our small town church autumn festival. For several years, my sister made 40 lbs. of sloppy joes for the annual booster club's food stand.

After attending our Chapter meetings for about 18 months, I offered to make 20 lbs. of sloppy joes for our annual Picnic and Balloon Release. Staying busy distracted me from hearing the silence in our home after the death of our only child Carson.

The next volunteer opportunity presented itself when our Chapter's Newsletter Editor position opened up. I wasn't an expert, but I had some experience with creating bulletins and flyers. A little voice told me, "you can do this!" I was ready for more distraction, and the Chapter needed someone to sign up. It seemed like a good fit, and I was happy to help out. That was almost two years after Carson died; this December nine more years will have gone by. Being our Chapter's Newsletter Editor has been fulfilling, challenging, stimulating, inspiring, fun, heart-warming, and rewarding.

It's time, once again, for the stars to align. Are you interested in being a lifeline to members who can't make it to a meeting, but need the reassurance they are not walking alone? Would you like to share your creative talents? Do you have an interest in selecting articles from a database and arranging them on a page? Do you know a little about desktop publishing? If not, do you have a desire to learn? If a little voice in your head answered "YES" to at least one of these questions, please consider joining our team. I will tutor, be a reference tool, and walk alongside you until you feel comfortable, for as little or long as it takes. Email me with questions or interest, tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com

Gloria Jordan, Carson's mom
TCF Minneapolis, MN Co-Leader & Newsletter Editor

Candle Lighting Program

Our chapter's annual memorial candle lighting program is **Monday, December 18** 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 Charlie at cbrown4@comcast.net. Send a high quality .jpg for best results. **The DEADLINE is November 30**. 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 with your name, and the title and author of your selection. **The DEADLINE is November 30 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 20 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 Chapter Facebook page.

Leader's Corner

The other day I observed our chapter's steering committee at work. Discussion centered on monthly meeting topics and the upcoming newsletter. All were engaged in making the next meeting a better experience for our chapter. All had tender hearts and tears remembering the children, grandchildren and siblings of our chapter.

I am grateful for this group that makes coffee, sets out tissue boxes, and greets the families who walk into our meetings. I am forever grateful for the people who met my family at the door when I walked in 13 years ago.

During this season of giving thanks, let's honor this tradition that began decades ago. Welcome, everyone. Tell us about your children. Tell us about your siblings. We will listen with compassionate hearts.

Monica Colberg, Art's Mom;
TCF Minneapolis, MN Chapter Leader

Love Gifts

Our Minneapolis Chapter depends solely on donations to fund our activities; room rental, meeting supplies, speakers, lending library, printing/mailling the newsletter, outreach materials, and more.

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 membership dues or fees. All contributions are voluntary.

The chapter leadership is grateful for your contributions of any amount. The following donations were received recently, including funds raised from our annual Walk to Remember fundraiser. In addition, thank you for the anonymous offerings.

Donation In Memory of: by TCF Member/Family:

Joseph Engles	Deborah Barland
Paul Just	Kelly Barrett
Christopher Bauer	Bruce & Mary Bauer
Christopher Bauer	Maggie Bauer
David Lindgren	Janet Bowers
Juli Elisabeth Crees	Lisa & Steve Crees
Luke	Carolyn Crotteau
Luke	Amy, Jason & Kaylie Crotteau
Luke	Joan Aasen
Melissa Dahlmeier	Steve & Marilyn Dahlmeier
Carolyn, Matthew, Daniel	Robert & Barbara Demsky
Daniel Nelson	Michele Dooley
Lauren Duwenhoegger	Peter and Dawn Duwenhoegger
Tara Engman	Seth & Angie Engman
Tara Engman	Loretta Swartz
Tara Engman	Lesli & Joe Smith
Missy and Corey	Mary Feigh
Barrett Ugland	Renee Forst
Nicole	Janna Gallery
Alex Herrmann	Ed & Susan Herrmann
Steve Hokemeir	Gail Hokemeir
Lana Celinda Johnson	Eldon & Penny Johnson
Andrea	Joan & Martin Leeper
Vincent Lewis	Jeff Lewis
Daniel Nelson	Audrey Nelson
Mark Peterson	Todd & Helen Peterson
Ron Reinert	Sharon Reinert
Kristin Reller	Pat & Don Reller
Kristin Reller	Susan & John Byrnes
Kristin Reller	Jeff & Jennifer Sevaldson
Alec Smith	Nicole Smith-Holt
Peyton Tripp	Janet Tripp

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Check Out What's New In Our Lending Library

Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy by Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant

After the unexpected passing of her beloved husband, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg feared that she and her children would never find joy again. Fortunately this fear was unfounded. This book shows you how Sandberg, and many others who have overcome a wide range of profound hardships, triumphed over tragedy.

Losing Todd: A Mother's Journey, by Jeanne Harris Weaver honors her son and William & Mary alumnus 1st Lt. Todd Weaver '08, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2010.

On the day Todd was killed, Jeanne's art studio closed. Unfinished paintings sat on easels. Four months later she again began to paint in honor and memory of her beloved son, Todd.

It is a poignant read for anyone seeking solace and inspiration in navigating grief, as well as for those who seek insight into the particular tragedies shouldered by family members of fallen service men and women.

Preparing For the Holidays

There is no way to prepare for the feelings of grief when they come. I think we spend too much time and energy trying to figure out ways to get around these feelings. That, in and of itself, is very understandable. It speaks to the amount and intensity of pain surrounding the death of a child. Nothing can quite compare.

The word “prepare” may be very deceiving: people often feel that if they prepare enough or in the right way they won’t be as devastated. When that doesn’t work, I often hear people blaming themselves for not having “prepared” the “right way” or “enough.” When this happens, the pain and grief get inappropriately redirected onto the parents themselves rather than where it truly belongs – feeling the pain of the devastating loss and life changing experience.

Acknowledging that reality is a very crucial step. It prevents us from trying to get around feeling the anger, sadness, depression and emptiness, which is exactly what needs to be experienced. People often mistakenly think that dealing with their grief means that they are not feeling the intense pain anymore.

This might sound backwards, and is a paradox of sorts. The less one tries to prevent or lessen this inevitable and important process, the smoother the flow of grief. The metaphor that comes to mind is that of an ocean. The waves come and go and wash the beach. Trying to stop the waves never works. The time and energy spent would be exhaustive, futile and nonproductive.

For the holiday season it is important to just let come what will. Take deep breaths and when the strong waves of grief hit allow them to wash over you. If the waves don’t come at this time, trust that they will come when needed. There is no neat or effective way to stop the natural process of either the ocean waves or the grief of human existence.

Jeannie Shapiro-Downey, MN, ICCE,
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

Not Guilt, Regret

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn’t we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us.

Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn’t feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt - we feel regret.



Kitty Sanders
TCF Nashville, TN

In Search of Lost Joy

Just as it happened in your life, a single moment changed everything and so here I am with you tonight. My son's death took with him all our hopes and dreams. All of us here know that loss, the emptiness that brings us here in search of something to stop the pain, something to stop the tears, something to dream about again. We came tonight as a family to share with each other, loving each other, protecting each other during the storm. I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing right now than living.

That wasn't always true. After my son's death there were days when all I could do was think about dying, to join my son, or just to relieve my pain. Now there is a freshness about each day that I never understood before. I got to where I am today because of time and a commitment to rediscovering the joy of living.

Time does help fade the fabric of our grief. As time stretches us away from the moment of our child's death, we may begin to grow away from our child. And so we cling to that which we know, even though it tears our heart again and again. Is it not possible that one day some-time in the future, we will begin to understand that joy can return as we remember our child's life, not his death?

We once feared we would never be happy again, that only helplessness and darkness would prevail in our lives, but now ten years later, I can share with you the wonderful discovery that we can do more than survive. Survival is not enough: I want to live. We cannot find words to sooth the hurt; there simply aren't any.

We can, however, build supports and safety nets. Recovery from the death of a child is a matter of choice. Time does help heal over open wounds. Scars form and serve as reminders. Gradually, however, we must learn to live with those scars and, slowly, let them sink in place. Recovery begins to occur when we can learn to reinvest our energies, emotions and love rather than seek to replace it. When we completely understand we did not lose our child, recovery is possible. Our child died, but the love we shared between us can never be destroyed.

I cannot reach out alone. I need the love and strength of my new-found family to be a cheering section and a safety network of caring individuals who will support me if I fail, and who believe strongly enough in me to put me back on track to go on again.

The human spirit has an infinite capacity to survive, endure, and grow. It requires both laughter and tears to thrive and flourish. It requires love and faith, strength and support as well. Hurt and pain have their lessons too, and we cannot rob ourselves of the richness of the tapestry that hurt and love weave together. To eliminate one from the loom is to break the thread and steal away the fabric.

For those of you who are hurting too deeply, whose pain is too fresh, whose child's death is still too close to hear me, I want to give you the message: "HOLD ON, HOLD ON TIGHT." Right now for you, there seems to be little sunshine, little hope and no energy to choose life. So hang on tight.

And if you know parents who are struggling just to hang on, reach out to them right now. Loan them some of your strength, knowing they will loan you some of theirs when you need it. That's what TCF is all about: helping each other through the valley of the shadow, helping each other through the hurt, helping each other through the anger, the pain, the emptiness, the silence, helping each other rediscover life.

~ Darcie D. Sims,
PhD, CGC, CHT

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 Duwenhoegger
Yaya	Ron Garber
Krista Anne	Mae & Bob Malmquist
Nathan Scott Weidner	Amanda Weidner
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
Owen Christianson	Anne & Grant Christianson
Leon Harwood	Antonia (Flipper) Filipiak
Tucker	Dana & Kevin O'Brien

December

CHILD	MEMBER
Scott	Stephen Berzins
Scott	Cathy Drexel
Scott sibling	Suzie Berzins
Jelani	Alyce Hamilton
Daniel Nelson sibling	Michele Dooley
Michelle Franta sibling	Jeff & Melia Liedman
Michelle Marie Franta	Lynn & Stan Liedman
Jeremy Klein	Jeanne Klein
Jeremy Klein	Chris Klein
Monica Marie Collins sibling	Gladys Williamson
Diandre Hodges Jr	Diandre Hodges
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
Troy	Gloria Gaspar
John Alden	Mary & John Alden
Juliette	Nancy Kilhan
Daniel	Audrey Nelson

January

CHILD	MEMBER
Allyson	Roger Graphenteen
Grayson Jett	Brian & Jennifer Jett
Machael 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
Kyle	Lynda Kubousek
Daniel	Dan & Chevis Peso
Brenden	Tammy Sperr
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
Kelly Hyatt	Maureen Hyatt
Lisa Marie Hall	Ron & Ursula Hall
Missy	Mary Feigh
Missy sibling	Tasha Feigh



A Season of Many Feelings

Fall is a season of many feelings.
 Autumn is here once again as it comes every year,
 And with the leaves my falling tears.
 This time of year is the hardest of all.
 My heart is still breaking as once again it is fall.
 Memories once so vivid are seeming to fade.
 My time spent with you seems from some other age.
 This season reminds me of grief and of pain,
 But yet teaches hope and joy once again.
 For the trees are still living beneath their gray bark,
 And you my sweet child, are alive in my heart.

Cindy Schake TCF Butler, PA

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 Beloved Children...in Our Hearts Always especially during the Remembrance Month of their death.



November

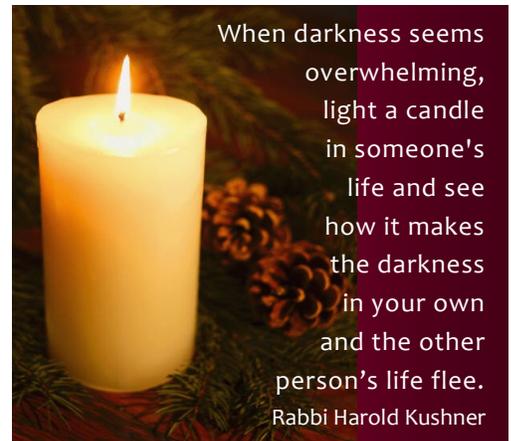
CHILD	MEMBER
Payton Tripp Granddaughter	Janet & Richard Tripp
Gregory	Mary Sincheff
Jen	Karen & Gary Gross
Deborah	Marion Swanson
Alicia Marie Queen-Wilson	Queen Wilson
Jehangir (J.J.) Merchant	Pheroza Merchant
Zachary	Darcie Rummel
Luke	Wendy Lemke
Nick Harter	Brian & Sandy Harter
Wyatt Mitchell Olig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

December

CHILD	MEMBER
Yaya	Ron Garber
Lisa Marie Hall	Ron & Ursula Hall
Rob Anderson	Sandy & Bob Anderson
Brian Joseph Henry	Janine Jordan
Malia	Alisa Matteson
Nathan Scott Weidner	Amanda Weidner
Rachel Anne	Pam Dugdale
Carson Thomas Jordan	Gloria & John Jordan
Michael John Blesi	Carolyn Blesi
Kristin Reller	Pat & Don Reller
Jamie Lents	Leslie Elsenpeter
Diandre Hodges Jr	Diandre Hodges
Sofia Buxton Anderson	Molly Remington
Peter	Peggy Saari
Cody	Dave & Jennifer Perna
Leah Strom Riele	Shirley & Ken Strom
Rosie DelMain	Cathy Smith
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
Monica Marie Collins sibling	Gladys Williamson
Eric Brodin	Judy & Buck Brodin
Mark Frain (Brother-in-law)	Michael & Terri Frain
Mark Frain	Donna Frain
Scott sibling	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



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

Windows

The breath of winter painted fragile stars
on all the windows of my quiet house.
And there I found your face, more fragile even
than the season's art, a wonder to my eyes.
How can it be that winter paints such
secret things in white-and-silver sheen for those
who cry alone at frosted windows?"

Sascha

The Survivors

We who are left behind in the shadow of the valley of death, we know about sorrow from the bones out.

We who choose to stay behind and not follow our loved ones through the portal of death, we are the brave ones.

We who survive abandonment by children who left unwillingly, struggle through the lonely night, into the empty day.

We who drink this cup of sorrow need to remember the joy that carved the cup so deep.

Anna Olson, In memory of Jennifer
TCF Winnipeg, MB

Seasoned Griever

Ten years. I'm what is considered a "seasoned griever." I guess I would agree with that term. When Lily died I made a concerted effort to grieve. I went to grief groups and retreats, I read countless books on child loss and grief, I spoke and wrote of my daughter's life and death, and I cried, and cried, and cried. I did this all very methodically because it is my firm belief that you cannot escape grief. You can postpone it, you can deny it, but you eventually must grieve, or you will never be able to move forward. I think I made the right choice about all of this and is the advice I would give anyone who has suffered a loss. The one thing that all of these efforts will not do, however, is end grief, especially that of a child.

I had lost before Lily. I knew the death of a very close friend when he took his own life. I knew the loss of my beloved grandparents, who, when I was little, I prayed would die on the same day as I did so we didn't have to miss each other. But these losses, however significant, are so different from losing a child. Grief of a child lessens over the years; it is not the gut-wrenching pain that it once was, but it is a dull ache that never goes away. It becomes normal for a parent to have this pain just below the surface. It does not mean that we don't laugh and know joy and experience incredible happiness. It does not mean we are thinking of our loss every minute of our lives. It does mean that we are always aware of what we are missing without our child in our life.

I am so grateful this week for everyone who has remembered Lily to me. It is one of the worst thoughts of a grieving parent: that people will forget. Because that, to us, is unimaginable.

Leah Cameron
TCF Minneapolis, MN

Letter from a Grandma's Heart



Dear Aaron,
I'm writing you to tell you Grandma loves you
And I'm missing you today.
I know that you can't read these words
But somehow that's okay,
Because the postman can't deliver what
I'm feeling anyway.
I'm sorry that we didn't have more time;

We barely got to say hello before we said goodbye.
But it was that day in May a miracle came true,
A Grandma's love was born that day and
The miracle was YOU.
Don't worry, I'll do the best I can
To help Mommy and Daddy through
The rough times they'll both have.
I know you see their sadness and
It hurts to see their pain.
But time will wash away their tears 'til only love remains.
In closing, I just want to say I'll see your smile
In every child that passes through my day,
And when each day has ended
And twilight turns to night,
I'll look above and feel your love
For your star shines twice as bright.

Roslyn Hurley in memory of Aaron Farrier
TCF Madison Area Chapter

Sibling Support Meeting

16 and older

Same date/time as our Chapter meeting

Facilitated by a
bereaved sibling

A New Self

Mourning a child is a journey that changes you. The grief diminishes gradually, reappearing on anniversaries, holidays, and all kinds of occasions that might have been significant, had your child lived. These flashbacks have been called "shadow grief." You may feel them for the rest of your life. But you will also feel pleasure in living again - as unlikely as that may sound. "One day it just happened," Elisa Glatz reported. "Instead of waking up and saying that my child was dead, I looked at a blue sky and I actually thought that it looked like a pretty day. I started to whistle and sing again and I even laughed. I felt guilty for laughing.

I had read somewhere that there comes a time when 'grief softens.' It didn't go away but it was not the harsh, cold feeling it started out to be." Eventually, the agony subsides. Parents become less obsessed with the death. They begin to feel energetic, to take an interest in other areas, to feel pleasure and purpose in living. But they are changed. "I am a different person now - as completely after his death as I was after his birth," states Californian, Deborah Ryan, whose son was killed by a drunk driver, "I think much of my personal anguish is the birth struggle of that new person."

The new self is shaped by grief. People who have experienced a loss so immense, a crisis so major in its proportions, become larger, more empathetic people. They grow. Their values change. They change their priorities. They learn to appreciate the present. "My son taught me a lesson, and that lesson is that life is good. We should live it to the fullest, making every second count," said Wayne Montgomery of South Carolina, whose sixteen-year-old son, Richard, died of leukemia. "Not only did he teach me how to live, he taught me how to die. Still, the greatest lesson of all is that you don't know how much you love someone until they are not with you anymore." To live, to die, to experience the full sweep of love - that is a compelling gift for a child to leave a parent.

Bereaved parents feel weakened by a loss they had never imagined. Paradoxically, that grief can also make them stronger. "Once people survive this insult to their lives, this deadly wound, they can't sweat the small stuff. They're more direct. They know they have a right to be treated with respect. They believe in their own dignity. They become more forceful," states therapist Susan FaberBrook. "In a strange way," said Malibu realtor Paul Grisanti after his baby died, "this has made me more powerful." That's because once you survive the death of a child, you feel you can survive anything.

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The Compassionate Friends

Minneapolis Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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