



The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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48660 Pontiac Trail
#930808
Wixom, MI 48393
(877) 969-0010

National TCF Website:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:
www.tcftopeka.org

April ~ May ~ June 2021
Editor: Susan Chan
3448 S.W. Mission Ave.
Topeka, KS 66614-3629

APRIL MEETING

Monday, April 26, 2021
Most Pur Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th Street, Topeka, KS
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Healing Tears - We will talk about the role of crying in our grief journey. Why and where do we cry? What are the emotional triggers that bring on our tears? Does crying make us feel better or worse? How does crying affect us physically? We will explore some of the myths about crying, and members are free to share how crying or not crying has influenced how they have grieved the death of their child, grandchild or sibling. Tears are sacred and tissues will be available.

MAY MEETING

Monday, May 24, 2021
Most Pur Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th Street, Topeka, KS
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Know Me, Know My Child - This is an opportunity for all chapter members to talk about their children. All are encouraged to bring a picture, poem, song, favorite toy, piece of clothing, etc. and share it with the group as they talk about their beloved child. We feel it is important to not only get to know each other, but to know who our children were, that they lived and made an impact and a difference. While tears may flow at this program, it offers bereaved parents a chance to do what they need most--remember and talk about their child in an atmosphere of caring and acceptance.

JUNE MEETING

Monday, June 28, 2021
Most Pur Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th Street, Topeka, KS
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Out of These Ashes - In his song, "Beauty Will Rise," singer/songwriter and bereaved father, Steven Curtis Chapman wrote of his daughter, Maria Sue's death, "Out of these ashes beauty will rise and we will dance among the ruins, We will see it with our own eyes." The death of our children is among the most traumatic life experiences that will befall us. Though we will always wish that it had never happened, is it possible to see beauty rising out of the ashes of this devastating experience?... new friendships made, old relationships mended, visions seen, gifts given us in those final moments. This meeting offers us the opportunity to talk about the possibilities.

Meetings are always held on the fourth Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. Listen to radio & TV for cancellations due to severe weather conditions. Always check the Topeka TCF Chapter website (www.tcftopeka.org) under "Meetings" for latest information.

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purposes are to promote and aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experience following the death of a child of any age, from any cause; and to foster the physical and emotional health of all bereaved parents, grandparents and surviving siblings.

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TCF Mission Statement: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

We Need Not Walk Alone

We Would Like to Thank the Following for Sponsoring this Edition of the Newsletter

*Bob & Kayla Dieball in loving memory of their
daughter Callea Mae Breiner who was born on May 29th*

*Mark & Debi Harvey in loving memory of their son
Nathan Harvey who died on April 10th*

*Ann Hermreck in loving memory of her son
Mitchell A. Hermrick who died on May 12th*

*Greg & Liz Hudec in loving memory of their son
Zachary James Hudec who was born on May 8th*

*Margaret Kramar in loving memory of her son
Spenser Thomas Good who died on April 30th*

*Elma Luthye (Dale) in memory of their daughter
Vicki Rae Luthye Lee who died on June 19th*

*Eric & Veronica Naill in loving memory of his daughter
Madison Rae Naill who was born on June 17th*

*Lori Neddermeyer in loving memory of her daughter
Madison Rae "Maddie" Naill who was born on June 17th*

*Mike & Valerie Self in loving memory of their son
Nathaniel "Nate" Self who was born on April 21st*

*Bill & Diana Sowers in loving memory of their daughter
Rachel Diana Sowers who died on May 17th*

*Damon & Collene Tucker in loving memory of their
daughter Brittany Nicole Tucker who was born on April 30th*



Are You Moving?

If you move, please let us know your new address so you can continue to receive this newsletter. It costs the Chapter 71 cents every time a newsletter is returned by the Post Office with an outdated address. Please send address changes to: Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may email address changes to chanx2@cox.net. We appreciate your cooperation as this will save the Chapter money which can be better spent on bereavement outreach. If, for any reason, you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list, please drop me a note or email and I will take your name off the list. If you have chosen the e-newsletter option, please keep me aware of any email address changes.

A Special and Important Message to Our New Compassionate Friends

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first Compassionate Friends meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared at meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return. We would like to let you know that these feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel".

Please give us at least **three** tries before you decide whether or not the meetings are for you. You will find a network of caring and support which will help you as you travel your grief journey, and most assuredly, you will find hope along the way. We truly care about you and want to make certain that no bereaved parent ever needs to walk this path alone.

---Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

Additional Support Group Resources

HEALs - Healing after loss of suicide offers support to all survivors affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide. Meetings are at 6:30-8:00 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. Pozez Center (north side of Stormont Vail). Contact Information: Sandy Reams 785-249-3792 or email TopekaHeals@gmail.com

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Group - Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 6-8 p.m. at the Pozez Education Center. The group, which has regular meetings to share information and experiences, also has a blog for members that offers communication, resources and support. If you are interested in learning more about the blog, please email lrosen@stormontvail.org. For information call (785) 354-5225.

From Victims to Survivors - Support group for families who have had a loved one murdered. The group meets the fourth or last Wednesday of each month at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4775 S.W. 21st. For more information, call Bill Lucero at 232-5958 or see <http://fromvictimstosurvivors.com>.

"In grief, sometimes there is a fear that starting to feel 'better' means forgetting or letting go.

The reality is that feeling 'better' often allows us to access our memories without fearing their pain will be too much. We can talk about our loved ones more often and with more people with less fear of being overwhelmed by tears.

Feeling 'better' in grief can actually open up more space for us to remember and hold on"

whatsyourgrief.com
[@whatsyourgrief](https://www.instagram.com/whatsyourgrief)



Love Gifts

**Your Love Gifts Help Spread
the Message of Hope & Healing ~ Won't You Help Today?**

What is a Love Gift? A Love Gift is a gift of money (or books, etc.) to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child, grandchild or sibling who has died, but it may be from individuals who wish to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanks that their children are alive, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help. The Compassionate Friends charges *no individual dues* or fees and depends on such Love Gifts to meet the Chapter's expenses, including the printing and mailing of this newsletter. **When you make a donation, make sure to check to see if your employer may have a "matching gifts" program** as this could double the amount of your donation. If you are not sure whether your company has such a program, check with your Personnel Department. This month we thank the following:

- ♥ *Don & Susan Arnold in loving memory of their son Matthew Arnold who died on June 11th*
- ♥ *Bob & Kayla Dieball in loving memory of their daughter Callea May Breiner who was born on May 29th*
- ♥ *Richard & Carla Gilbert in loving memory of their son Richard Gilbert who died on April 10th*
- ♥ *Mark & Debi Harvey in loving memory of their son Nathan Harvey who died on April 10th*
- ♥ *Ann Hermreck in loving memory of her son Mitchell A. Hermreck who died on May 12th*
- ♥ *Margaret Kramar in loving memory of her son Spenser Thomas Good who died on April 30th*
- ♥ *Gary & Linda Ramey in loving memory of their daughter Kiley Ramey who was born on February 28th*
- ♥ *Bill & Diana Sowers in loving memory of their daughter Rachel Diana Sowers who died on May 17th*
- ♥ *Terry & Kathy Watson in loving memory of their son Taylor William Clay Watson who was born on April 12th*

Your gifts enable us to print this newsletter and reach out to newly bereaved families. Donations are our only source of income and are **tax deductible**. If you would like to sponsor a newsletter, the cost is \$30.00. If we have more than one sponsor, we recognize all of them. If you wish to send a Love Gift, any amount is appreciated. It is whatever you feel you can give. Donations of books that you have found helpful to the Topeka Chapter Library are also greatly appreciated, and it is a nice way to remember your child or other loved one. If you would like to send a Love Gift or a Newsletter Sponsorship, you may do so by sending it to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. For Newsletter Sponsorships, please indicate which issue you wish to sponsor (Jan/Feb/March, April/May/June, July/August/September, October/November/December). Makes checks payable to "TCF".

Dillions Community Rewards Program Helps Fund Chapter Expenses - A REMINDER

- Have you signed up for the Dillions Community Rewards Program yet? If not, we encourage you to do so as it really helps to bring income into our Chapter to help meet expenses. The more participants we have, the more income we can generate. I encourage you to go to www.dillions.com/community-rewards and click on "Register" at the top of the page. When you enroll you will be asked to designate which charity your wish to support. **The Topeka Compassionate Friends Chapter NPO number is TC248.** Once you have done so and have a Dillions Shopper's Card, every time you make a purchase at Dillions a portion of your total will be donated to the Topeka TCF Chapter. Participating in this program **costs you nothing** and **does not affect your fuel points** for gasoline purchases. If you need assistance in setting up your account, call toll-free at 1-800-576-4377 and select Option 3.



Our Thanks to: Midland Care Connection for giving us a mailbox and Most Pure Heart of Mary Church for allowing us to meet at their facility. A special Thank You to ProPrint for helping to underwrite the printing cost of this newsletter.

TCF National Office e-mail:
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Compassionate Friends web address:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter web and e-mail addresses:
www.tcftopeka.org tcftopeka@gmail.com

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4931 WEST 6TH ST., STE 104
LAWRENCE, KS 66049
785.842.3610

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785.272.0070

And We Remember . . .

Because of the potential for the hurtful crime of identity theft, TCF Chapter Newsletters will now only publish the date of a child's birth or death without listing the year of the event. This is a directive from TCF National to protect all TCF members. Due to space constraints, only those families who remain current on our newsletter mailing database will be included in the We Remember section.

APRIL ~

Terry Edward Burns, son of Kenneth and Eleanor Burns, and brother of Kathy Kaesewurm, who died on April 15th

Teresa Jenkins Carson, daughter of Phillip and Louise Jenkins, who was born on April 7th

Carly Kathleen Cornelison, daughter of Corie Green, who was born on April 17th

Tyler Craft, son of Tom and Mary Sue Craft, who was born on April 30th

Michael Ray Donoho, son of Tammy Collins and Dennis Donoho; and stepson of Edward Collins and Debbie Donoho, who died on April 11th

Jeff Fitzgibbons, son of Bill and Jean Fitzgibbons, who died on April 8th

Ryan Flanagan, son of Dennis Flanagan, who was born on April 24th

Richard Brian Gilbert, son of Rick and Carla Gilbert, who died on April 10th

Spenser Thomas Good, son of Margaret Kramar, who died on April 30th

Nathan Harvey, son of Mark and Debi Harvey; brother of Rachel, Amanda and Caleb Harvey; grandson of Velata Tibbs, who died on April 10th

Tara Kelly, daughter of Carrie Kelly, who was born on April 20th

Morgan Kottman, daughter of Christine Kottman, who was born on April 22nd

Tabith Krystofosky, sister of Darrell "Bo" Cremer, Jr., who was born on April 11th

Dennis Montgomery, grandson of Janet Hamilton, who was born in April.

Morgan Myers, daughter of Alta and Rocky Myers, who died on April 3rd

Kyle Neidigh, son of Rosemary Robledo, who was born on April 21st

Eric Alan Palmberg, son of Jim and Doris Palmberg, who was born on April 14th

Evan Michael Schuetz, son of Tom and Debbie Schuetz, who died on April 12th

Nathaniel "Nate" Self, son of Mike and Valerie Self, who was born on April 21st

Sydney Diane Tate, daughter of Jeff and Misty Tate, who was born on April 30th

Brittany Nicole Tucker, daughter of Damon and Collene Tucker, who was born on April 30th

Taylor William Clay Watson, son of Terry and Kathy Watson, who was born on April 12th

Christopher Wempe, son of Dan and JoAnn Wempe, who died on May 12th

MAY ~

Diane Joy Bandstra, daughter of Bert and Elaine Bandstra, who was born on May 24th

Derek G. Bodeman, son of Becky S. Bodeman, who died on May 6th

Callea Breiner, daughter of Bob and Kayla Dieball, who was born on May 29th

Dan Evans, brother of Drew Evans, born in April and died on May 21st

Claire Elise Fisher, daughter of Debra Fisher, who was born on May 15th

Randy Flanagan, son of Dennis Flanagan, who was born on May 14th

Anthony James Forshee, son of Darren and Gloria Forshee, who died on May 15th

Carter James Friess, son of Jennifer Friess, who died on May 19th

Mitchell Hermreck, son of Dennis and Ann Hermreck; brother of Shelby and Raegan, who died on May 12th

Marshall Hille, son of Paula Ackerman, who died on May 16th

Nason John Hobelman, son of Dee Hobelman, who died on May 7th

Zachary James Hudec, son of Greg and Liz Hudec, who was born on May 8th

Gabriel Kidd, son of Julie Kidd, who was born on May 3rd

Michael "Mike" Dean Kidney, son of Forrest and Susan Kidney, who died on May 2nd

Andrew Garrett Lindeen, grandson of Mary J. Lindeen, who was born on May 8th

Rachel Diana Sowers, daughter of Bill and Diana Sowers, who died on May 17th

Chad Williams, son of Clayton and Sharon Williams, who was born on May 30th

JUNE ~

Matthew Wayne Arnold, son of Don and Susan Arnold, who died on June 11th

Teresa Jenkins Carson, daughter of Phillip and Louise Jenkins, who died on June 17th

Kale Cauthon, son of Denise Cauthon; brother of Josh and Cam, who was born on June 14th

Patrick Cummings, son of Carol Cummings, who died on June 27th

Jeff Darting, son of Gerry and Judy Darting and brother of Sarah Escobar and Jenny Darting, who was born on June 26th

Michael Donoho, son of Dennis and Tammy Donoho Collins and stepson to Ed Collins and Debbie Donoho, who was born on June 24th

Randy Flanagan, son of Dennis Flanagan, who died on June 10th

Jeremy Scott Goehl, son of Danny and Kim Goehl, who died on June 17th

Spencer Michael Haynes, son of Shelly Frederick-Haynes, who was born on June 17th

McKenzie Lucille Hinck, daughter of Lonnie and Kimberly Hinck, who died on June 28th

Jonathan Kaspar, son of Jeffrey and Susan Kaspar, sister of Jen Kaspar who died on June 4th

Joel Andrew Knight, son of Jim and Gloria Knight, born on June 24th

Richard L. "Rick" Linder, Jr., son of Richard and Pat Linder, born on June 26th

Vicki Rae (Luthye) Lee, daughter of Elma and the late Dale Luthye, who died on June 19th

Clay Meyer, son of Jim and Linda Meyer, who died on June 27th

Madison "Maddie" Rae Naill, daughter of Lori Neddermeyer and Eric Naill; step-daughter of Mark Neddermeyer; sister of Jesse and Allie Naill; step-sister of Cale and Braden Neddermeyer; and granddaughter of Bruce and Ginny Miller and Allan and Marge Neddermeyer, born on June 17th

Tracie Nelson, daughter of Shari Brandenburg, who died on June 7th

Janet Pace, daughter of Barbara Hale, sister of Carla Gilbert and Sara Wallo, and mother of Shauna Andersen died on June 10th

Jeremy Joseph Pechanee, son of Pamela Pechanee, who was born on June 13th

Aurora Mae Philippi, daughter of Chris and Trista Philippi, born and died June 17th

Alexis "Lexie" Diane Salmon, granddaughter of Candy Morgan and Robin Heuer, who died on June 5th.

Nicholas Swanson, son of Candi Kuipers; brother of Tayla and Jaythan, who was born on June 19th

Donald (Donnie) Warren, son of Nancy McCune, who died on June 28th

*(Use the form below to submit your listing if you have not already done so. Once you have submitted your listing, you **do not** have to do so every year as long as you remain active on our mailing list. Your child's name and dates will remain on the We Remember database unless you request their removal or choose to discontinue receiving this newsletter.)*

And We Remember - If you wish your child, grandchild or sibling included in this section, please fill out the form below and return to: Susan Chsn, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may also email to chanx2@cox.net< We do not automatically list your information just because you are receiving this newsletter. We only list information for those requesting it. **Please type or print clearly.**

Child's Name _____

Son __ Daughter __ Grandson __ Granddaughter __ Brother __ Sister __

Date of Birth _____

Date of Death _____

Father _____

Mother _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Note: Please list address and phone #. You will only be contacted if there is a question about your listing.

Is this a change of address for you? (please circle) YES NO

SIGHING IN GRIEF

*By Greg Adams, Program Coordinator,
Center for Good Mourning*

Sigh

Years ago, I took a course about leading adult grief support groups. In the handouts was a list of ways that grief is expressed emotionally, cognitively, physically, etc. In the list for physical aspects of grief, "sighing" was listed, and it stood out to me as, at that time, I would not have thought of increased "sighing" as part of our natural grieving response. In the past month or so since my dad's unexpected hospitalization and death, I will vouch for sighing as part of grief. It has become one of my body's favorite pastimes.

Sigh

What is this all about - this sighing as part of grief? We sigh for lots of different reasons and in many different situations. There is the contented sigh at the end of the day or when relaxing. The "life is good" sigh. There is the sigh of relief that can come in a few varieties such as "thank goodness that is over" and "thank goodness that (bad thing) didn't happen." There is also the sigh that comes with disappointment, frustration or exasperation. The kind of situation where in emails we may actually write, "Heavy sigh," in response to a particular or general wrongness in the world. Connected to this kind of sigh is the sigh of resignation - this is all there is, the best we're gonna get, no need asking for more as no more will be provided. Submissive to the realities present, subdued, resigned, beaten. Sighs of sadness, of sorrow, sighs "too deep for words."

Sigh

There is a part of us that resists in life. When trials come, when we are challenged or when something or someone valuable to us is threatened, we resist. We push back and fight. We're not going gentle into that good night, we're not going down without swinging, we have not yet begun to fight. This fight response is often a good one and we need it. It's adaptive and helps us to not just survive a crisis but perhaps even thrive afterwards. Advice sometimes given to people with cancer is to not let the cancer take anything that it doesn't have to take - don't give it one thing more, unless you choose to let go of something that in the end is not worth the effort. Resistance is, thankfully, everywhere, for without it there would be more pain and suffering in the world and these are already in plenteous supply. Resistance is needed and many, if not most, times adaptive. But what about when resistance is futile?

Sigh

We've all been there and we will be there again. No one gets out of life alive (dammit) despite our prayers and protests. Death can be delayed but ultimately not avoided, not on this side of the veil, at least. We get that in concept and then we have to also get that in practice.

Sigh

There is a point to protest, push-back and resistance. Without it, we don't know our limits and we may live an unnecessarily small life when there is potential for more, sometimes much more. Yet some realities are just that, all too real and not in the change category, and with only so much energy at our disposal to go around, there are some fights that do us no good in the end. Singer/songwriter Lucinda Williams has a whole song devoted to the idea, "It's over, but I can't let it go." Part of us knows that it's over, and that part of us sighs. And then we realize it again.

Sigh

And if we ever start to forget it...or doubt...or wish...

Sigh

Sighing has been recently studied, and the idea found is that sighing works as a reset to our respiration. Sighing keeps us from getting stuck in a fixed pattern of breathing. It makes us, in an unexpected, perhaps paradoxical way, feel better.

Sigh

Perhaps this is true. Doesn't matter in what way because the body has its own wisdom and a mind, so to speak, of its own. We grieve and we sigh. We hope for more, wish for better, settle for what we have... and sigh. Sighing is part of getting used to what we'd rather not. Part of the wisdom of accepting what we can't change. Part of living into a new world not of our own choosing. Part of life, especially in grief world.

Heavy, heavy sigh.

About the Author: Greg Adams, LCSW, ACSW, CT is a clinical social worker and director of the Center for Good Mourning and PalCare at Arkansas Children's Hospital. The Center for Good Mourning is a grief support and outreach program, and PalCare is a pediatric palliative care program. Greg is the author of Lessons from Lions: Using Children's Media to Teach about Grief and Mourning, which is a user's guide and CD-rom using a popular children's movie to help children learn and talk about death and grief. More information about the Center for Good Mourning and Lessons from Lions can be found at www.goodmourningcenter.org. Greg is married and has two children, a fourteen-year-old daughter and a nine-year-old son. Please feel free to contact Greg by email at adamsjg@archildrens.org.

*Reprinter with permission from **Grief Digest**, Centering Corporation,
Omaha, Nebraska, 866-218-0101.*

SPRING'S TEARS

When the sun's sharp brilliance echoes in the luminescent blue
A grim, oppressive darkness stabs my aching heart anew.
Its golden glow upon my face, the warmth of winter's sun
Holds the promise of renewal when the icy months are done.

It is this vow of nature's of resurgence in the spring
That bows my head, and breaks my heart; unlocks my suffering.
For you will miss again the beauty of this time of year
The growing warmth, the sunny days when life will reappear.

For nature has no power over death that holds you still,
And though I know, I still resent spring's early daffodil.
Oh, would that I could speak to Mother Nature face to face!
To beg she work her magic on your lonely resting place.

Why can't it be YOUR rebirth when the gray, cold days are done?
Why mightn't YOU not live again to see spring's fresh new dawn
and feel the warmth of sunshine
relish in the greening earth...
to open arms, embracing life
why can't it be YOUR birth?

You were so young, your life so new when death crept in the door,
And in my grief, beloved child, I'll ask forever more
The reason why the earth's renewed when spring comes 'round each year
Yet in your grave you're silent still,
and I, condemned,
am here.

~ Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, NY
In Memory of Tracey



One Moment in Time

As bereaved parents, we have a line of demarcation in our lives. This line is like no other. Other people define their lives by that one big career step, move or degree. But in other people's lives, things are different. We are not like other people.

We experienced a clearly defined moment in time when everything changed. The tectonic plates of our lives shifted at one moment on one date of one year. Nothing will ever be the same. We definitively mark the time before and after our child died. Life was different before our child died. It was easy; it was filled with promises of tomorrow, accomplishments, setbacks, goals set and achieved and happiness that abounds in the natural order of life. But our basic assumptions were shattered and our world turned inside out at that one moment in time when our child died.

Can we ever feel as optimistic about life as we did before that moment in time? Will we ever again believe that one day we will feel balanced, optimistic and serene?

We certainly can, and most parents certainly do. As you read the articles in this month's newsletter about the journey through grief, consider the gentle optimism that presents itself in these parents' words. Each of these parents has walked this lonely road. Each has come through the darkest, rockiest valley into

a gauzy sort of light which gradually crystallized into a true sunshine as time moved forward. How did they do it?

Insight is offered in these parents' stories. We must do our grief work, face our demons and stand them down. We must talk with others, set limits on what we will tolerate, and hold our line. We must seek counseling, attend seminars, attend TCF meetings or other offerings that give us the support of parents who have lost a child or help us in acquiring skills to cope with our pain and loss.

We must take grief breaks in the beginning and for the first year or two. We must take care of ourselves physically, mentally, and emotionally.

But most of all we must keep our child with us as we complete our life's journey. How we choose to complete our journey is unique. The common denominator that all of us share is the need to find a precious flicker of hope which we can nurture and coax to a radiant glow. We all find it in different ways and at different times on our grief journey. But, rest assured, we all find it. I call it "my little light."

One day you will feel the burden lifting. You will laugh about things your child said or did. That moment will gently envelop you. There is hope. Let your little light glimmer and then glow.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, Katy, TX TCF Chapter

My Guilt List Has No End

By Gary Roe

Guilt is not our friend, yet he comes visiting often. At times, it seems there is no end to the things we wonder about and can feel guilty for.

From the Grieving Heart:

I felt nauseated this morning. I don't have a stomach bug. I'm missing you.

Yes, it's that bad. Intense. Penetrating.

I've done some thinking about guilt. I'm honestly shocked at how prevalent it is. Now that I'm looking for it, I see it everywhere.

I said things I shouldn't have. I didn't say things I should have. I know I hurt you, on more than one occasion.

I could have done so much more good for you. I could have expressed my love and care more.

I could have. I should have. If only I hadn't. If only I had. I wish. What if.

The guilt list has no end. How can I make these things right? Is that possible?

I get it. Guilt is not my friend, but he is very real right now. How do I deal with this?

My guilt list goes on and on and on

When someone departs, we naturally replay our relationship with them. We look back and review what was said and not said, done and not done. Wounds from the past surface.

Once loss strikes, our hearts are left to grapple with regrets, missed opportunities, and crushed hopes. Some plans and dreams have been shattered.

We want to take responsibility for what we did and said. We want to clear things up and make things right somehow. Our souls squirm under the pressure of unresolved issues and unfinished relational business. This is natural and common. Many find it helpful to write a letter to their loved one, expressing their love and their regrets. Asking forgiveness is important and healthy. Though we get no response, confessions like these are good for the soul. If we don't want to write it out, we can speak it. Some set up an empty chair and imagine their loved one there. We can ask their forgiveness and express our love.

Forgiving ourselves can be hard. Our hearts want to hang on. For some reason, we feel that letting go of guilt means walking away and leaving our loved one behind. On the contrary, forgiving ourselves can free us to grieve and express our love more authentically.

Now is the time to begin to forgive ourselves. Our heart will thank us.

Affirmation:

I will ask forgiveness and also forgive myself, so I can be free to love you and grieve well.

(About the author: Gary Roe is an author, speaker, and chaplain with Hospice Brazos Valley. He is the author of the award-winning bestsellers *Shattered: Surviving the Loss of a Child*, *Please Be Patient, I'm Grieving*, *HEARTBROKEN: Healing from the Loss of a Spouse*, and *Surviving the Holidays without You* and the co-author (with New York Times Bestseller Cecil Murphey) of *Saying Goodbye: Facing the Loss of a Loved One*. The article above was adapted from the newly released . Visit him at www.garyroe.com) Reprinted from What's My Grief (www.whatsmygrief.com)

How To Access To Compassionate Friends On-Line Support Chat Groups

To access the on-line support system go to compassionatefriends.org or use key word "Compassionate Friends". Click on Find Support then click On-Line Communities then click on Get OnLine Support. You will need to register for the chat rooms.

How To Access To Compassionate Friends Facebook Groups

For the national TCF Facebook page go to Facebook and enter Compassionate Friends USA.

For individual groups within Facebook, please go to compassionatefriends.org or use key word "Compassionate Friends". Click on Find Support then click On-Line Communities then click on View Groups or click on Resources then click on 24/7 Private Facebook Groups. The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. If you are waiting approval, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

Accessing Brochures/E-Newsletter

To access various brochures on dealing with various aspects of grief go to compassionatefriends.org or use key word "Compassionate Friends." Click on Resources then click Brochures Available. You can also register for the national e-newsletter at this site.

Helping a Father Through Father's Day

Father's Day has become a traditional holiday celebrated by many with gifts, cards, family gatherings, and perhaps even a special dinner out just for daddy. Stores begin advertising for Father's Day weeks in advance of the actual holiday. The scenes in advertisements and cards always depict a loving father with a child snuggled close to that special man called daddy.

Many fathers, however, have experienced the devastation of losing a child, and there seems to be an almost non-existent recognition of the fact that fathers suffer from feelings of lost dreams, loneliness, failure, and loss of identity when a child has died. Very rarely are comments of support made to the father in a family when a child has died. For some reason, our society seems to be more in tune to the feelings of the pain a mother experiences during child loss. Fathers are somehow expected to be stronger emotionally, and they are expected to heal much sooner.

What can be done to show support on Father's Day to a father who has experienced the deep pain of losing a child? Probably the most appreciated gesture of support would be to acknowledge the fact that the father is still a father even though his child is no longer living on this earth. Refer to him as a father, and express your genuine sorrow for his loss. Fathers who have lost a child as early as miscarriage should certainly be included among the group of grieving fathers. Often, fathers of miscarried babies are never given any recognition of being a father.

Finding a Father's Day card specifically for fathers who have lost a child can be next to impossible. If you cannot find a card with an appropriate verse, choose a blank card and write your own message from the heart. "Sharing in your sorrow this Father's Day" or "Blessings to you this Father's Day as God watches over your heavenly angel" will show a tremendous amount of compassion and support to a father who is grieving the loss of a child on Father's Day.

Recognize the fact that fathers go through emotional upheavals during the grief of child loss. Fathers grieve differently than mothers, so they might not want a lot of special treatment on Father's Day. Men are generally less apt to talk about their feelings of hurt and loss than women, but those feelings are still there and need to be recognized. Father's Day without a child can be just as emotionally heartbreaking for a father as Mother's Day is for a mother without her child. We need to be sensitive to the needs of fathers, too!

Special holidays stir up many different emotions for fathers, and Father's Day is a particularly difficult holiday to go through following the loss of a child. With help and support from family and friends, a father can move forward in his grief. By letting a father know that he has not been forgotten on Father's Day, you will validate his identity as a father, and you will allow him the special privilege of once again being called that most cherished name of all—daddy

Finally, find some way to validate the fact that a father is still a father even though his child is not living. Fathers are by nature "fixers" and the loss of a child is one loss that cannot be fixed. This fact is often very hard for a man to accept. By giving a card and a personal word on Father's Day, you will help validate to the father that he is still honored among that special group of men called fathers on Father's Day. Validation of fatherhood on Father's Day is one more step forward in this process we call grief.

~ Clara Hinton | Jun 08, 2003-Brief Encounters Online Newsletter-
www.briefencounters.org

This House and I

I think this house and I shall grow old
together and fall down around one another.

How can I paint the walls when his breath
has coated them?

How can I wash the door frames when the
smudges of his fingerprints surely are still
there?

How can I patch the hole I kicked in the
wall in the weeks after he died?

How can I clean the carpets that still hold
billions of his skin cells, his DNA?

How can I throw out the old, broken chair
that he sat and slept in?

How can I clear the air that sometimes still
carries his scent?

How can I ever fix the broken hearts of his
mother, his sisters and I?

How long must I wait?

~ Jack McPeck
TCF of Spokane, WA
In Memory of my son
Zachary Ian McPeck

Mother's Day Revisited

Many of us in TCF do not look forward to Mother's Day. On this holiday, when the whole nation is celebrating the joys of parenthood, grieving parents often feel a special anguish.

Mother's Day this year looms as a particularly difficult milestone for me, Sunday, May 10, 1998, is not only Mother's Day but also the second anniversary of the death of my ten-year-old son, Jacob. Because this day of private sadness also happens to be a day of public celebration, I decided that I should start thinking early about the occasion. I engaged in a little research about the holiday and learned a story that I think is worth sharing.

Mother's Day was the creation of a woman named Anna Jarvis in the early years of this century. Anna, who never married and never had children of her own, devoted herself to establishing a national Mother's Day as a way of honoring her beloved mother, who died on May 9, 1905. In Anna's view, her mother deserved a memorial because she had lived selflessly and endured considerable suffering - seven of her eleven children had died in early childhood. According to historians, Anna's mother mourned the deaths of her children throughout her life.

Anna insisted that the holiday always fall on a Sunday so that it would retain its spiritual moorings. Because of her efforts, President Woodrow Wilson finally proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Although Anna couldn't prevent the new holiday from quickly becoming a marketing phenomenon, she did try. Speaking out against "the mire of commercialization" that threatened to engulf Mother's Day, Anna attempted to preserve her creation as a true "holy day," a time for solemn reflection and prayer.

Mother's Day, then, was borne of a daughter's grief and love. More importantly, it was intended as a tribute to a bereaved mother - a brave woman who lost multiple children but who managed to live with an abiding kindness and generosity toward others. I like knowing this background, and my attitude towards Mother's Day has been colored by the knowledge. The holiday now makes me think of the common sorrow that links all bereaved parents. I feel a bond with Anna's mother that stretches over time and space. In a broader sense, the woman for whom the holiday was founded reminds me of people I've met at TCF who have continued to live productive, meaningful lives in the face of unthinkable loss.

Finally, Mother's Day in its origins symbolizes both the joy and the vulnerability inherent in parenthood. Anna's mother knew all too well that from the moment a child is born, hope and the possibility of tragedy go hand in hand. She understood the fragility of life.

Enriched by its own history, Mother's Day is easier for me to tolerate. The coincidence of dates this year - Mother's Day and the anniversary of my son's death - is not as jarring as it once seemed. Although the commercial images of the modern Mother's Day still make me wince, I can turn off the television and envision the kind of day that Anna Jarvis had in mind: a time for quiet reflection and the sharing of cherished memories.

*~ Barbara Atwood
In memory of Jacob
TCF, Tucson, Arizona*

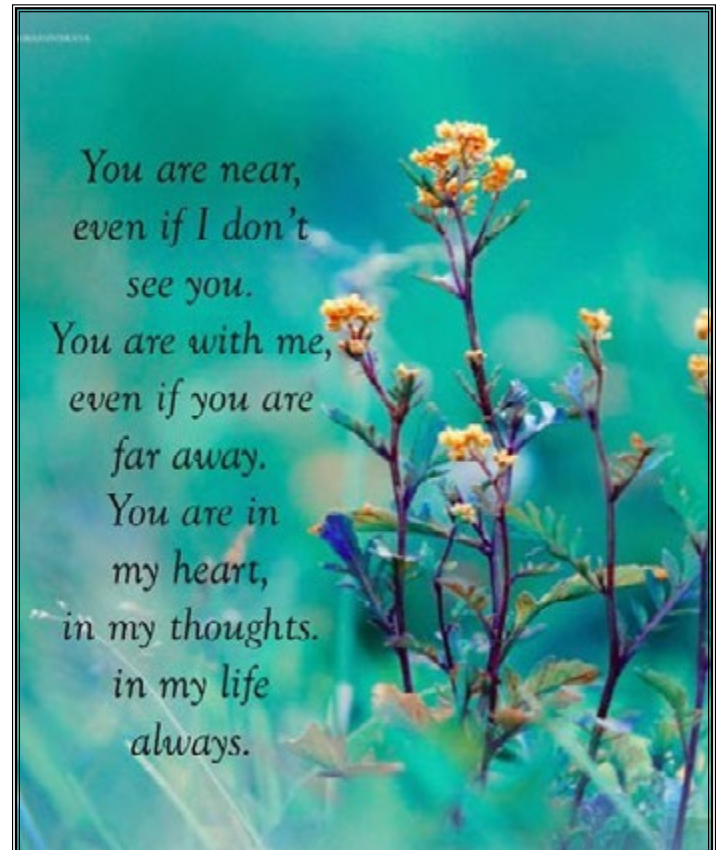
Mother's Day Again

It is Mother's Day again.
The day that my first born son became an angel.
Time for remembering Mothers
Time to remember their love for their children
For me it is a reminder of the day you became an angel
And a piece of my heart went with you
Yes it is Mother's Day again.

It is Mother's Day again.
Time for me to put on my happy face
Time to celebrate me
Time to enjoy my daughter
Tell her how much I love her
Also time for me to remember
My beautiful son who has gone too soon
Pray he knows how much I love him
Yes it is Mother's Day again.

It is Mother's Day again
I will remember the good times with Kevin
I will remember his smiles
I will remember his hugs
I will remember his firsts
but I will remember most of all
His love for me, his sister and his daddy.
So yes it is Mother's Day again.

*~ Kathie Kelly
TCF Fredericksburg, VA
In Memory of my son Kevin*



What Might Have Been ... What Is

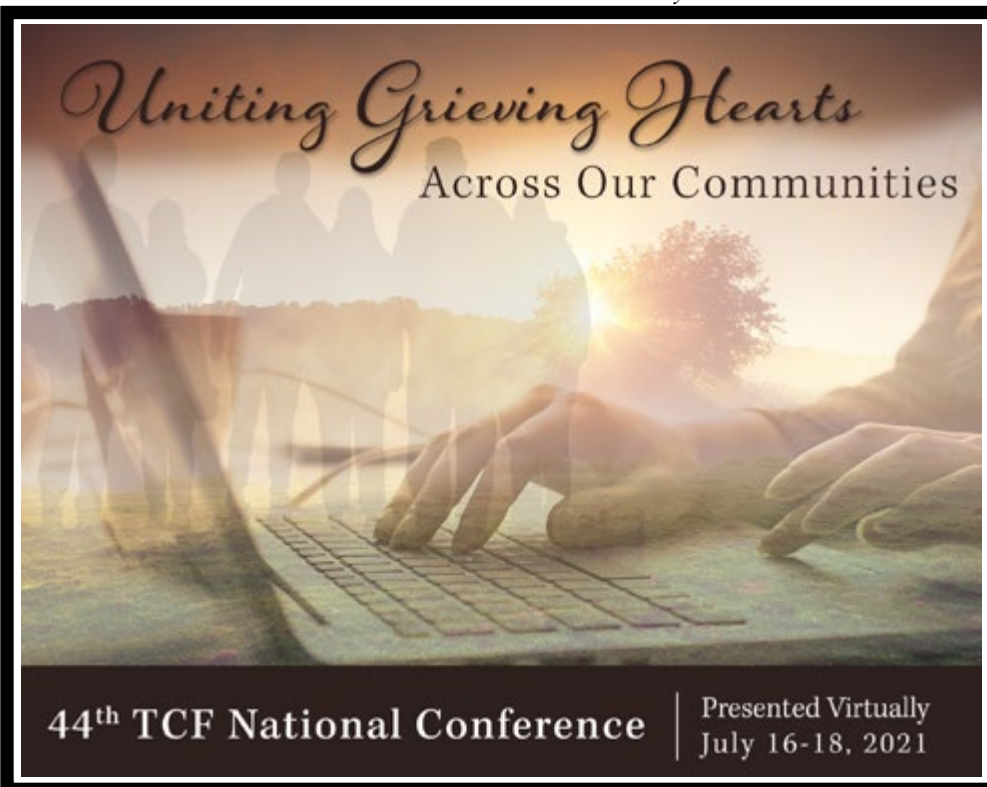
I want what might have been...
And I want what is.
I want the child I do not have,
And I want the child that has come after.
I cannot choose
One or the other,
My heart wants both.
What might have been,
A sturdy lad,
Baseball bats,
Football helmets,
Squiggly worms on hooks
Dirt and mud and
Burps and booms.
What is now,
A charming girl,
Raggedy Anne,
Stuffed bears,
Curls and ribbons on hair
Tea and cookies and
Squeals and giggles.
How can I choose
From two blessings,
One gone too soon,
One here by a miracle?
I cannot ...
But if I could...
I would want both ...
What might have been ...
And what is.

~ Lisa Sculley, In Memory of Joey Sculley
And with love to Leslie Sculley

A Name for My Pain

I have given a name to my pain—
it's called "Longing."
I long for what was,
and what might have been
I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.
I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.
I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.
I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons too.
I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.
Will they?

~ June Williams-Muecke
TCF Houston West, TX



Uniting Grieving Hearts
Across Our Communities

44th TCF National Conference | Presented Virtually
July 16-18, 2021

Save the Date! TCF's 44th National Conference will be presented *virtually* July 16-18, 2021. Although we would love to be together in person, we can still connect, support, and gather as a community through our virtual event. More details about TCF's three-day conference are coming soon, including number of sessions, registration prices, and earlybird prices and dates. Check for more information in the coming months on the National TCF website: www.compassionatefriends.org Look under "News & Events"

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MADDIE RAE NAILL



June 2003, Age 7



June 17, 2011, Age 15

June 2009, Age 13

June 2000, Age 4



Maddie, we all miss your beautiful smile. Not a day goes by where we don't wish we would be celebrating every day with you. Special days, such as your birthday are especially difficult.

Love, Mom & Mark, Dad, Allie, Jesse, Cale, Braden, Grams and Gramps, Lisa, Lexi and all of your friends!

The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter, c/o Midland Hospice Care, Inc.
200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, KS 66606-2800

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings.

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TCF 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.