



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Ocean County Chapter

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF OCEAN COUNTY
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(CHAPTER LEADER NOTES)

This month's enclosed brochure is entitled "When a Brother or Sister Dies."
The April issue will have the brochure "Caring for the Surviving Children"

I have really appreciated everyone's willingness to participate and share at our monthly meetings. I hope these meetings can help each of us in our journey to find some semblance of peace, as we try to make sense of a senseless situation. We are a self-help support group and our strength comes from our ability to both talk and listen. Thanks to Michele Moore for bringing the dessert for the January meeting.

MEETING DATES

Date: Our next meeting is Tuesday, March 2, 2010 (7:30PM) (Meetings the first Tuesday of each month at the Children's Memorial Garden, Winding River Park-North End (See directions below)

DIRECTIONS TO MONTHLY MEETING, WINDING RIVER PARK, TOMS RIVER

The north entrance to the park is off Oak Ridge Parkway at the intersection with Whitesville Road. From the intersection of Routes 9 and 571 (at the Pathmark/Home Depot shopping center) go west on 571 and make immediate left onto Oak Ridge Pkwy. Go to first light (skating rink will be on your left) and make left onto Whitesville Rd. Make the first right turn and follow the road to the parking lot at the end. Building will be on your left and garden on the right. If you are going 571 East, make right onto 527 South/Whitesville Rd. and park area is just past intersection of Whitesville Rd/Oak Ridge Pkwy. Make a right and follow road to the end. If you are coming from the Parkway drive to exit 82A for Route 37 West and drive to the 2d traffic signal. Turn right onto Oak Ridge Parkway and go 1 mile, the park entrance will be on the right. Make right on Whitesville Rd. and first right into park. Follow road to the end. Do not turn into the entrance for Winding River Park on Route 37, you cannot drive through to the garden site.

[TCF National Conference](#)



"Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope" is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference which will be held in Arlington Virginia July 2-4, 2010. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City promising a beautiful venue for the 33rd TCF National Conference. Independence Day will not only feature our Walk to Remember, but will include a world-class display of fireworks over the National Mall, visible from Arlington.

Reserve your accommodations on-line at [Hyatt Regency Crystal City](#). Room rates are \$129 for single or double occupancy, \$154 for triple and \$179 for quad. These are specially negotiated rates available only to those attending the national conference. For those wishing to make reservations by telephone, please call 1-800-233-1234 and specify you are with The Compassionate Friends.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED, March 2010

This month we are remembering these children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments of silence to remember their day with their parents. A phone call or note would be so kind. None of us ever forget those very special days and messages that say "I care" do help us get through them.

Child's Name	"birth" dates
William Thomas Adami	March 7, 1958
Darrell Glenn Adams	March 4, 1978
Julian Allen	March 17, 1967
Drew Evan Basaman	March 22, 1988
Jennifer Boehle	March 16, 1990
Anthony Brindisi	March 30, 1967
Angela Mrie Browne	March 24, 1971
Jon Byron	March 30, 1996
Donald Cawley	March 17, 1966
Brittany Cena	March 31, 1992
Julie Ann Clakeley	March 11, 1986
Kimberly Clark	March 31, 1957
Sara Elizabeth Dubinin	March 1, 1988
Marianne Pino English	March 11, 1959
Raymond Fryson	March 25, 1952
Robert Gellatly, Jr.	March 1, 1973
Spencer Peersen Giersch	March 26, 2002
George C. Gillespie	March 16, 1956
Michael J. Goodwin, Jr.	March 13, 1981
Michael Hager	March 2, 1967
Adam Hankins	March 6, 2003
Walter Hewitt	March 31, 1964
Tiffany Jamison	March 22 1975
Randy Scott Lynnworth	March 19, 1969
Charles McCarthy	March 18, 1961
Christine Newnom	March 12, 1972
Megan Nicole O'Shaugnessy	March 24, 1977
Dominic Procaccomm	March 4, 2005
Valerie Roma	March 6, 1973
Jeffrey Rothman	March 2, 1981
Jamie Schoenleber	March 9, 1984
Kyle William Schovanec	March 23, 1983
Kate Shea	March 3, 1973
Philip Anastasius Smyth	March 28, 1998
Stacy Noel Sobieski	March 18, 1982
Stephen Spinelli	March 29, 1967
Eric Sternberg	March 31, 1970
John Stone	March 28, 1947
Kevin Terry	March 9, 1981
Ricky Waehler	March 30, 1982
Josh Weidner	March 5, 1988
Caitlyn Renee White	March 14, 2001
John P. Wroblewski	March 15, 1989

Child's Name	"passing" dates
William Thomas Adami	March 12, 1987
Tom Baykowski, Jr.	March 30, 1996
Gavin Michael Carter	March 4, 2002
Brittany Cena	March 18, 2008
Melanie Cooney	March 11, 1977
Stuart Lee Dinerstein	March 31, 1982
Phyllis Eider	March 24, 2001
Augie Ernesto	March 19, 2004
Michelle Evans	March 16, 2000
Tommy Fischer	March 21, 1993
Spencer Peersen Giersch	March 26, 2002
Janette Giordano	March 13, 1997
Christina Lynn Golembiewski	March 31, 1993
David Gosser	March 10, 2002
Bill Harrington, Jr.	March 30, 1982
Brendan Hennicke	March 14, 1976
Lucky-Joe Jackson	March 12, 1982
Kodi Jamison	March 23, 2009
Allyson Joyce	March 25, 2008
Joseph Juliano	March 20, 1998
Tabitha Koutouzis	March 15, 2004
Michael LaPiere	March 16, 2004
Michael LaVolpe	March 28, 1999
Frank Mara	March 17, 2003
Michael Anthony Marvel	March 14, 2007
Megan Mazzitelle	March 14, 2001
Clifford McKennan	March 20, 1966
Derek Meglis	March 17, 1995
Jennifer Lynn Murphy	March 29, 2006
Robet J. Porto	March 14, 2006
Dominic Procaccomm	March 4, 2005
John Rak	March 18, 2003
Joey Rogers	March 4, 2007
Valerie Roma	March 23, 1990
Jeffrey Rothman	March 14, 2001
Carrie Ann Russo	March 2, 1996
Craig Salzlein	March 20, 1999
Gerald Charles Schade	March 16, 2004
Kevin A. Schemel	March 31, 2002
Robert Schildknecht	March 7, 2001
Kyle William Schovanec	March 4, 2004
Andrew Shearer	March 13, 1994
Eric Shibla	March 4, 1998
Joseph Snack	March 9, 1995
Kevin Snack	March 17, 1997
Michael Snyder	March 23, 1990
Joseph Spitaletto	March 22, 2005
Scot Erich Sunkimat	March 19, 2007
Richard Tello	March 8, 2005
Colleen L. Thatcher	March 3, 2008
Miguel Angel Torres	March 29, 2009
Joe Tremarco	March 29, 2007
Matthew Paul Troike	March 8, 2005
Scott Walensky	March 15, 1995
Scott Wickel	March 13, 1004

Contact the chapter to have your child included in our listing. Your child's name will appear in the months of their birth and their death.

LOVE GIFTS

A love gift is a tax-deductible donation given in memory of a child that died. Because of these gifts we are able to continue reaching out to bereaved parents. Please try to send your gifts to the chapter by the meeting date of the month prior to the month you wish it to appear. Love gifts can be sent to Compassionate Friends at PO Box 485 in Toms River, New Jersey 08754.

Special thanks to the Julianos for their love gift in "loving memory of Joseph from Mom and Dad."

When a Brother or Sister Dies

"I was just an average teenager. I had my friends and school activities. My family was just my family. Then the worst nightmare imaginable happened. My sister died."

Jennifer, age 17

In a world suddenly gone crazy, how can you keep your balance? How can you cope with something that is shattering to you as well as to those adults most important to you?

This brochure is meant to offer some direction and choices in order to help you find your way in a world that perhaps seems unfair and unpredictable.

The emotions you are experiencing may be the same as or completely different than those of other family members.

Please remember:

Your grief is yours, not theirs.

Your grief is different because of the unique relationship you had with your brother or sister.

Your way of grieving is just as important, however you choose to express it, as long as it is not destructive.

Remember that before this sad experience, there may have been times when you felt jittery, hyper, or depressed when you were nervous or worried about different situations. Grieving can be very much like those times, but it may take longer to work through your feelings of loss and hurt.

You may experience:

Sleep disturbances;

Tiredness or restlessness;

Anger toward yourself, other people, God, even the one who died;

Fear for your safety and the safety of those you care about;

Feelings of rejection from parents who are distracted, irritable, or inattentive;

Trouble paying attention and remembering;

Mood swings between feeling very good and very bad;

Guilt about what you did or did not do for your brother or sister, for enjoying yourself, and even for just surviving.

You may feel emotions like those listed above at different times, maybe even long after your brother or sister's death. It can be frightening to suddenly think about such things. But other young people, just like you, have had a brother or sister die. They struggled through feelings very much like yours. They have survived, and so can you.

“But I feel so strange sometimes. I can't talk to my folks. I just keep my feelings to myself so I won't upset them anymore. They're so overprotective now. They probably wouldn't let me out of their sight if they knew how I felt. Mostly I just want to get away with my friends, but they aren't the same anymore either. Sometimes they pity me. I hate feeling so mixed-up.” **Bill, age 16**

It is hard to talk about emotions, especially to parents. If you are concerned about upsetting either your mother or your father and feel your friends won't understand, seek out a sympathetic listener (relative, teacher, counselor, minister, or another bereaved brother or sister). It may surprise you how much they can help you through this ordeal.

You are faced with a situation for which you have had little or no preparation. At an age when just growing up can be a struggle, this experience may make you feel like a little kid again. Don't be ashamed! Even adults need to hug and be hugged and cared for when they are hurting.

Sometimes you might think you have to fill that empty place left in your family. You don't have to be just like your sister or brother. We are all unique and have good points that are worthwhile.

It's okay:

To cry and feel depressed. You've lost a great deal. If the feelings get too scary or overwhelming, find a caring friend (no matter what age) to talk it out.

It's okay:

To want to copy some of your brother's or sister's habits and interests, but be yourself, too.

It's okay:

To live "in the past" for a while. This is one way to keep alive the memory of your brother or sister. However, you have a life, too—one that should be lived to the fullest.

It's okay:

To have fun and enjoy life, to laugh again.

It's okay:

To forgive yourself for the fights, arguments, and mean things that you said or did to your brother or sister.

It's okay:

To go on living.

But it is NOT okay to ease your pain and hurt by:

- Using drugs or alcohol. It will take longer to accept the hurt. These can only hide the pain, not heal it.
- Acting out your frustration with reckless driving or skipping school.
- Doing things out of anger to hurt others because you hurt so much yourself.
- Experimenting with sex just to feel close to someone.
- Protecting your parents by not letting them know what is bothering you.
- Being the scapegoat or bad guy so you'll appear tough.
- Discontinuing the things that once meant so much to you.

You may find that even normal day-to-day activities are tiring; grieving takes a lot of energy. Try to avoid making drastic changes in your life during this difficult time.

Commit yourself to getting through the emotional and physical work of grieving—of saying goodbye to your brother or sister. Other young people have found writing in a journal or diary, prayer, poetry, sports, music, and art as positive outlets for their feelings.

Also, share your grief experiences—if you can—with other bereaved siblings. Their stories of how they coped can give you choices to consider and hope for your own future.

You and your family are changed by all the sadness you have experienced. The strain each of you feels is common and usually decreases with time. Each family member has his own timetable for coming to terms with his feelings. Be patient with each other and these very individual needs.

Tragedies as well as successes, faced daily, can strengthen you for tomorrow. Allow the emotional bond you once had with your brother or sister to have a positive effect on your future.

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**HOW TO ACCESS
OTHER SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION**

To access a information from more than 30 helpful support groups that deal with all kinds of grief go <http://www.oceantcf.com> click on NJ Chapters/Links and scroll down to Other Support Group Information.

Another way to access more support groups can be found by going to the National Compassionate Friends website at <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> Go to resources and then links.

**HOW TO ACCESS TO COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
ON-LINE SUPPORT CHAT GROUPS**

To access the on-line support system go to <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> Or use Key word "Compassionate Friends. Click on Resources then click On-Line Support and then click on Schedule & Entrance for On-Line Support. (A schedule of upcoming "rooms" for various discussions will come up. Please note all rooms are moderated.)

RADIO SHOW ARCHIVES

To access past radio shows go to <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> click on Resources then click Radio Show Archives.

ACCESSING BROCHURES

To access brochures go to <http://www.compassionatefriends.org> click on Resources

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR LIBRARY

Please note there is a complete selection of brochures, books and other kinds of literature dealing with grief that is available in our Chapter Library. The Library is in the same building in which our once-a-month Tuesday meetings are held (building is in the rear of Winding River Park-opposite the Compassionate Friend Memorial Garden.

SHARING POEMS AND THOUGHTS

We encourage you to share your poems and thoughts. We would like to include them in future newsletters and use them in a Chapter book. They can be sent to Compassionate Friends at PO Box 485, Toms River, NJ 08754 or they can be emailed to friends.ocean@yahoo.com

Finding Spring Again

It is the end of February, which means we are nearing the end of what has often been a brutal winter. While gazing at the mountains of snow piled high in my front yard and the foot-long icicles hanging from my roof, it is hard to imagine that spring will ever come. We have the bone and treacherous roads that we have cautiously traveled. The days have been long and dark and often free of sunlight. No matter how long you have been a native of the Upper Midwest, I know we all will be glad when it comes to an end.

However, as I described these thoughts about winter, I felt as if I was describing the days of my early grief. At that point, I did not believe that a day would ever come when I would thaw from the chill that had overtaken my body and mind. The bleakness of my existence during those early months after Nina died is almost frightening to remember; it is so difficult to even conceive of that much pain. I was anesthetized from some of its cruelty by the protective blanket of numbness that blessedly shielded me from the gale force of such overpowering sorrow. How could I ever feel spring in my heart again?

Spring had always been my favorite season. The air had a certain freshness to it that I would drink in. Simply put, it always made me feel happy and light of heart. Spring was our reward for surviving the freezing winter months that preceded it. It brought a smile to my face and a bounce to my step.

However, it was the spring of the year where my heart was irretrievably broken. It was during this exquisite season of warm, lilac-scented breezes and sun-kissed mornings where my sweet daughter Nina's life would end.

I wondered if my thoughts about spring would never be the same. Rather than anticipate with gladness the coming of spring, I dreaded it with the knowledge that it contained the anniversary of her death. The smell of the air and the look to the sky that I once found exhilarating now brought me back to my darkest day. I know that anyone, who has lost a loved one to death, no matter the season understands.

Will spring come again to your life? In the almost six years since Nina died, has it come to mine? Looking back at my description of the winter of "my early grief", I know that I have come a long way from the time of desolation. I have found especially after the first two years, that with each subsequent spring, I have rediscovered some of the pleasure I used to feel. I have learned that just because I have found things to feel joyful about again; it doesn't mean I am dishonoring my daughter's memory. I now take her along with me in my mind and my heart. I try to retrieve memories of the dandelion bouquets she so carefully gathered and presented to me, the rides to the park in the Radio Flyer, our talks while sunning on the deck, and, of course, shopping for spring clothes! Her favorite pastime! I will always feel tenseness, apprehension and sadness as May 11th draws near, but I no longer hold it against spring.

It is a slow, difficult journey this grief pathway we travel. It is as treacherous as the roads we maneuvered following winter storms, never knowing when we will hit an icy patch on the road to be thrown into a tailspin. Yet, we must travel it if we are to find any measure of peace and healing.

Please be patient with yourself as you are working hard to survive this winter in your heart. Trust that spring, though a much different one than the one we knew before our beloved child died, will come again.

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy Seelhuetter, TCF/St. Paul, Minnesota

The Compassionate Friends is for Sharing

Many people may think that meetings of The Compassionate Friends consist of bereaved people who sit and cry most of the evening, but that is certainly a misconception. It is normal to shed tears as we talk about our child's death, and we would expect a newly bereaved person to cry. We understand that completely. But we don't just sit and cry. Would you believe that most of the time we spend in our sharing group circle we may enjoy hearing others' stories about their children, or even sharing our own?

Our meetings are usually about our memories, our questions and also telling what has helped us to cope with it all. We all have ideas that we share with others in the hope that they may reach a point of "good memories" instead of bad memories of the child's death.

A support group should be very comforting and welcoming to those who attend and should always have non-judgmental members. We are less concerned at how the child died (even though we do care) and we are more concerned that we be there for the parents, siblings or grandparents who need us. They have a desire to talk and share about their loved one. We want to let them lean on us in their time of pain, just as we had others before us who let us lean on them. It does come full circle

By Jackie Wesley

TCF, East Central Indiana and Miami-Whitewater Chapters

Still Here Without You

I'll search far and wide
for a better tomorrow.

Yet, the more I look,
the less I seem to know.

'Cause I am still here without you.

Just wish I had the time,
time to say good-bye.

I can't seem to change that,
no matter how hard I try.

'Cause I am still here without you.

So I'll pick up the pieces
and carry on with your name.

But the more I move forward,
the more things stay the same.

'Cause I am still here without you.

I will love you and
you will always be in my heart.
And though we are not together,
we will never be far apart.

Even though, I am still here without you.

By David Rothman

Words

When grief is new
you need not find a reason
however good and brave
to temper your despair.
When grief is new
the heart accepts no answer
however wise and kind
To ease your mourning.
When grief is new
your life can only know
disintegration,
overwhelming pain..
My friend, try to believe
what other griever learned:
you will not always hurt
as you hurt now;
time will restore
the soundness of your mind.
(All other words are shadow on the wind
when grief is new)
By Sascha Wagner

Love's Lasting Touch

Don't weep for me when I'm gone,
Because I'll always be there.
My spirit will exist in all the earth,
In the water, trees, and air.
You'll hear me say, "I love you",
In the whisper of a breeze.
You'll know that I'm beside you,
With the rustling of the leaves.
You'll feel my arms caress you,
In the warmth of each sunrise.
The moon will be my goodnight kiss,
The stars my watchful eyes.
Your life will be my legacy,
Your memories my epitaph.
These ties will bind us together,
Till we meet on heaven's path.
I'll not ever desert you,
We'll never be far apart.
I'll live within you always,
Nestled deep inside your heart.
Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
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In Loving Memory of My Angels...
Michelle, Jerry & Danny

One In Heart

We are all one in the same,
missing you with hearts profound.
But just as lilies grow in the ground,
so do the sweet memories around.

Always with you in your pains
when you're low and the agony stains
Though I often wish for a magic trick
remembering you helps sooth the prick.

For I know how strong you are,
my single bright and shining star.
I promise to one day hold you again,
forever and always my best friend.

Le Ana

MY IMMORTAL



***“I’VE BEEN ALONE,
ALL ALONE WHEN YOU CRIED
I’D WIPE AWAY ALL OF YOUR TEARS
WHEN YOU’D SCREAM
I’D FIGHT AWAY
ALL OF YOUR FEARS
I HELD YOUR HAND
THROUGH ALL OF THESE YEARS
BUT YOU STILL HAVE...ALL OF ME.”
BY EVANESCENCE***

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS 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.