



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS
of Green Bay**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A Quarterly Newsletter

by and for Bereaved Parents

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023

Our 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.



The Many Firsts plus the Milestones

When a child passes and new parents start attending our monthly TCF meetings, we discuss the many firsts that will happen in the first year of their child's passing. These are, first birthday, first holidays, like Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, first day of school if your child was still in school, etc. But do we ever think of the many milestones that will eventually happen. We have hit or surpassed many of these milestones already. Our daughters, Melissa and Emily have been gone more than a decade now, almost two decades. They have now been gone longer than they lived with us here on earth. Other milestones for us, is that they have both reached the age of Mickey and myself when we were married. I have also surpassed the ages of my father and mother when they were born. I have even lived longer than my mother and both of Mickey's parents. About the only milestone I have left is for Emily to reach my age, the year she was born. I was 35 then and Emily just hit her 33rd birthday. I was 33 years old when Melissa was born.

It makes for interesting reflections when I think about how much I miss having them with us. Even though it has been 18 years now, Mickey and I still think of the first day of school because Melissa would have been entering her senior year and Emily her sophomore year of high school. Maybe it is because they will always be 17 and 14 years old in our eyes. For me thinking of these milestones brings both sad and happy memories of their lives with us. So the next time you are thinking about your child or children no longer with us, see how many milestones you have reached and reflect on them and all the wonderful memories you have shared with your child or children.

In Peaceful Sadness, Melissa and Emily's Mom and Dad
Mickey and Steve

The Green Bay Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

meets the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.
at First United Methodist Church, 501 Howe Street, Green Bay.
(Enter the parking lot off Monroe at Doty)

For further information contact:

Main Number: 920-370-3858

Sue DeLong, Remembering our Children

Mike Nieft, Steering Committee

Mickey Schmeisser, Chapter Leader/Newsletter Editor

Steve Schmeisser, Treasurer

Sue Van Straten, Remembering our Children

Carol Wautlet, Resource Coordinator

E-mail: compassionatefriendsgb@gmail.com

Website: compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

Monthly Support Group

Tuesday, July 18, 2023 6 p.m.

Healthy Ways To Cope When Grieving

Tuesday, August 15, 2023 6 p.m.

Things People Say - How To Respond

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 6 p.m.

Sharing Our Children

THE DEPTHS OF GRIEF

Sally Migliaccio
Newsletter Editor, TCF Babylon, NY



We are all bereaved parents, or bereaved family members. We live with the pain of loss each day, every day. We are veterans of a most unholy pain, rising each day to begin again the struggle to survive, the fight to make sense of a world that - for us - has become senseless.

Now our ranks have sadly swelled.

On the eleventh day of September many thousands of innocent people perished. The killing was as indiscriminate as it was impersonal; husbands, wives, daughters, sons, brothers, and sisters died. Each life lost on that day represents, as we know all too well, a forthcoming struggle of the survivors to go on in a newly-painful world that will make little sense.

As the relentless news poured in on that black day my sorrow grew exponentially. Grief and horror mushroomed - demanding to be expressed. Tears fell as they had not in a number of years. Inside of me, the raw pain of grief blossomed anew. "What's going on?" I asked myself. "Why this overwhelming reaction? This isn't the first tragedy you've been witness to since the death of your little girl!" My pain seemed disproportionate, yet I continued to feel raw and weepy. I was unable to hinder the tides of emotion that swept over me that day, and all the days that have followed. Eventually I began to realize I was closely relating on two levels to the thousands who - without warning - had lost those most precious to them. The devastation that occurred in New York had happened in the place my heart called home, so on that level this was a personal tragedy. And as a grieving parent, I

cringed at the unimaginable agony of those left behind -- the weeks, months and years of anguished days and sleepless nights that lay in store for those frantic with fear on this horrendous day. I suspected that each of them was convinced that this was the most devastating day of their lives, and while I would not dispute that, I knew they were innocently unaware of the battles to come -- the nightmares that lay in wait in the days and weeks ahead.

The tears I could not control were also for the innumerable acts of selflessness seen so many times throughout this horror. People put themselves at risk to help others; the injured lent a willing hand of support to those whose need seemed greater. As I watched this on television I was again so deeply moved. It seems our strongest bonds can be forged during the worst times in our lives. This lesson is one I learned first-hand when my own tragedy struck, and my anguish led me to The Compassionate Friends. There other grieving parents held out their hands to me, and it was there I found the unwavering support that helped me survive my pain.

Now I could only hope each of these survivors would find a safe place to voice their grief.

So many have been so cruelly thrust into our world. We are here, hands outstretched, for those who need us.

About two months after my son Max died, I attended my first TCF meeting. At first it was hard listening to other parents stories because I was in so much pain myself. But as I continued to attend, the meetings helped me realize I wasn't alone and there was help and healing there. These TCF parents shared of themselves and gave me "hope" that I could survive the death of my beautiful boy.

*Gail Lafferty, Max Christopher's Mom
Livonia Chapter, Livonia, Michigan*



Reopening of School and No Child

Don Hackett
TCF Kingston, MA
In Memory of my son, Olin



Summer ends, and across our nation, from the middle of August to the week after Labor Day, schools open for another year. For those parents surviving a child of school age, be that from nursery school to college or university, this can be as trying a time as the holidays.

School buses travel again the busy highways of our cities and the quiet lanes of our countryside. Anxious parents stand with children about to make the first ride to school. Gaggles of youngsters play at countless stops across our land. America's most precious and costly activity is renewed. The children are off to school.

I remember well the silences of the September mornings of those first years. The bus no longer stopped at our home. It simply drove casually by, the people within never realizing it once carried the focus of my love, the repository of my dreams. The drone of its wheels marked anew the mind-numbing dullness of my fragmented senses as it moved its way down the tree lined lane once alive with my son's comings and goings.

It was always possible to avoid "back to school" sales. Seeing young people and their weary parents gather school supplies and clothing was just too much in those earliest years. Somehow, the perfect notebook, the brilliant sweater, the odd-shaped erasers were simply unendurable. The stream of vehicles heading for Cape Cod for that final Labor Day weekend, the last family outing to end the summer, was another scene to avoid. It was a ritual from which we seemed excluded. Could we still be a family without him?

Those years are gone now. Having returned to education, I now have "back to school" buying to do myself. I see the buses arrive to unload their treasured passengers, no longer feeling the emptiness of a bus that drives on, barren of hopes and dreams. But I do and will forever remember the pain of those unhappy years and sometimes I reflect on the many parents who now feel as I did.

If you are such a parent, if you mourn a child who leaves a school desk somewhere unfilled, I promise that you are not alone in that pain. But even though you are not alone, you know that you are forever marked, that the death of your child or children has altered you in some basic manner.

Perhaps time and much grief work remain before your spirit can yield up the agony and permit a new self to emerge.

That time and work was necessary for me, as it actually is for all of us. For me, grief resolution finally recalled me to my original work. I teach. I no longer administer or direct. The need for that fled before bereavement's assault.

I teach math, science, and social studies to sixth grade children, ages 11 to 12 over the course of a year. In wondrous ways they have restored love to my living. There is nothing of an intellectual character with enough value to equal that, so I have given them the love and caring that was mine, evoked by and for Olin. Thus do Olin's gifts live on, called forth and given new lift through the innocent and selfless love of schoolchildren.

All who walk this road realize this is not substitution. Such is not possible. But it does reflect qualities of successful reinvestment, something each of us sorely needs.

Today as schools prepare for another year, I look forward to a new group of children. But cautions arise within as well, the legacy of that time over 12 years ago, when the world came to a sudden halt, when the laughter of lifetimes ceased, when dreams evaporated with a morning mist.

For those of us who dare live and love again, for those fortunate enough to have found a reinvestment encouraging the same, there is always risk. After all, tragedy can strike again. Our present or past pain grants no immunity. Students, the children within the school, invited me, albeit unknowingly, to take that risk again, although certainly not at the rich and deep level of father and son. Nevertheless, it feels right, and though I will never again know the depth of love which belonged to Olin and me, I welcome the chance to live once more on its margins.

So schools, which were once just another manifestation of hurt, have helped me to restore purpose and balance to daily living. There is surely such a reinvestment awaiting all of us, but we must seek the circumstances and create the opportunities for it to occur. I pray that all of us who have not yet had such good fortune may soon do so. All of our children would want this for us as well. With that thought in mind, it is indeed worth striving for that dimension in life once more.

Remembering our Children

During the three months that each newsletter covers, we include your child's birthday and the anniversary of your child's death — if we know those dates. Based upon TCF National policy, we will not print the year of your child's birth or death.

BIRTHDAYS

Kristin Metsa (daughter of Bethany Metsa)	7/1	Luke Watzka (son of Rita & Marty Watzka)	8/17
Madeline Wotachek (daughter of Brandon & Michelle Wotachek)	7/5	Kira Smith (daughter of Tara Smith)	8/18
Megan Short (daughter of Norb & Mary Short)	7/6	Doug Cole (son of Don & Karol Cole)	8/19
Alex Olmstead (son of Lisa Olmstead)	7/8	Wendy Jacques (daughter of Sally Martin)	8/19
Riviera Konen (daughter of Jennifer Konen)	7/9	Dalon Calkins (son of Kate Calkins)	8/21
Eric Schalow (son of Lorrie Shafer)	7/12	Lily Froelich (daughter of Tony & Stephanie Froelich)	8/23
Austin Reeck (son of Ann Rieckmann)	7/13	Gabriela Jacques (granddaughter of Pat Wojcik)	8/23
Gary Glebke (son of Joyce Glebke)	7/19	Bruce T Blaser Jr (son of Bruce & Paige Blaser)	8/24
Bryan VanderKelen (son of Bob & Debi Lepak)	7/19	Robby Rohr (son of Carol Wautlet)	8/25
Evan DeWan (son of Matthew & Christine DeWan)	7/20	Taylor Budysz (daughter of Krysta Budysz)	8/26
Eloise "Ella" Kasprzak (daughter of Eddie & Kimberly Kasprzak)	7/22	Kymberly Koskiniem (daughter of Trudie Koskiniem)	8/26
Ella Smetana (daughter of Frank Smetana)	7/22	Andrew Steiner (son of Nicole Steiner)	8/28
Jason Ziemann (son of Diane Strick)	7/22	Jessica Hoffman (daughter of Jodi Hoffman)	8/29
Heather Sigl (daughter of Greg & Joyce Sigl)	7/25	Timothy Metoxen (son of Florence Petri)	8/30
Eric Rasmussen (son of Karen Rasmussen)	7/26	Nicholas Resch (son of Lynn & Steve Marcks)	8/30
Joseph Derge (son of Randy & Ann Derge)	7/27	Chad Schaefer (son of David & Miriam Schaefer)	8/31
Austin Robert Bush (son of Terry & Nan Bush)	7/30	Benjamin Lynch (son of Patrick & Paula Lynch)	9/3
Keaton Sirianni (son of Jason & Lindsey Sirianni)	8/2	Christy Stackhouse (daughter of Frank Stackhouse)	9/3
Nick Argall (son of Joyce Argall)	8/4	Ross Ambrosius (son of Melissa & Rob Ambrosius)	9/5
Sarah Lesperance (daughter of Maria Smith)	8/4	Eric Barlament (son of Jim Barlament & Penny Maraccini)	9/5
Jeff Skenadore (son of Jude Skenadore)	8/4	Kory Kuran (son of Carol Pomrenke)	9/5
Makayla Lego (niece of Christine Newtols)	8/5	Adam Schultz (son of Stan & Deb Schultz)	9/5
Olivia DeMeuse (daughter of Cheryl DeMeuse)	8/8	Matthew Kiefer (son of Mary Jo Hempel)	9/8
Todd Konop (son of Tom & Dorothy Konop)	8/8	Jenah VanGroll (daughter of James & JoAnn VanGroll)	9/11
Ken Johnson (son of Kathy Johnson)	8/11	Wendy Johnson (daughter of Tom & Debbie Johnson)	9/12
Tara Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	8/12	Michael Schermerhorn (son of Jayne Schermerhorn)	9/12
Grant Lardo (son of Jenny & Tim Cornell)	8/15	Mike Wos (son of George & Jane Wos)	9/12

Patton Prunty (son of Edward Prunty)	9/13	Jack McDonough (son of Carrie Harrison)	9/22
Jackson Rukamp (son of Bob & Missy Rukamp)	9/13	Jessica VanStraten (daughter of Sue VanStraten & Randy Merryfield)	9/22
Megan Mae Vincent (daughter of Mark & Connie Risling)	9/13	Christy Stackhouse (daughter of Frank Stackhouse)	9/23
Melissa Schmeisser (daughter of Steve & Mickey Schmeisser)	9/14	Andy Bell (son of Patrick & Debbie Bell)	9/24
Christopher Grahn (son of Tim Grahn)	9/15	Troy Tousey (son of Tim & Vicki Tousey)	9/24
Craig Jacobs (son of John & Cathy Jacobs)	9/16	Amaris Soletski (daughter of Amy Soletski)	9/26
Susan Nickel (daughter of Mike & Judy Parins)	9/18	Aaron Lison (son of Adele Coopmans)	9/28
Troy Jacques (son of Sally Martin)	9/19		
Greg Corbeill (son of Sylvia Corbeill)	9/22		

ANNIVERSARIES

Charlotte Taugher (daughter of Angie Taugher)	7/1	Heather Sigl (daughter of Greg & Joyce Sigl)	7/25
Chase Lasecki (son of Steven & Linda Lasecki)	7/2	Eloise "Ella" Kasprzak (daughter of Eddie & Kimberly Kasprzak)	7/27
Jacob Kowalski (grandson of Jessica Fehlberg)	7/3	Greg Corbeill (son of Sylvia Corbeill)	7/29
Megan Short (daughter of Norb & Mary Short)	7/3	Travis Stelzer (son of Don & Pam Stelzer)	7/29
Dane Cole (son of Don & Karol Cole)	7/5	Alex Wesner (son of Jenny Wesner)	7/31
Jillian Faymonville (daughter of Louise Faymonville)	7/5	Amber Mastey (daughter of Brett & Amanda Mastey)	8/1
Lily Froelich (daughter of Tony & Stephanie Froelich)	7/7	Alison Johnson (daughter of Lon & Carolyn Johnson)	8/2
Van Jarchow (son of Mike & Dixie Jarchow)	7/7	Justin Plate (son of Mark & Grace Plate)	8/2
Grant Lardo (son of Jenny & Tim Cornell)	7/7	Brad Cox (son of Robert Cox)	8/3
Sam Compton (son of Mark Compton, and Todd & Sandra Scheffen)	7/8	Eric Rasmussen (son of Karen Rasmussen)	8/5
Kevin Kazik (son of Charlie Kazik & Sally Kazik)	7/11	Stephen Charneski (son of Roberta Charneski)	8/6
Tyffany Stevens (daughter of Lynn Pigeon)	7/11	Anne Johanski (daughter of Judy & Bob Johanski)	8/7
Christopher Grahn (son of Tim Grahn)	7/19	Austin Lindberg (son of Todd & Sandy Lindberg)	8/7
Debi Schultz (daughter of Barbara Fitzpatrick)	7/19	Brian LaViolette (son of Doug & Renee LaViolette)	8/8
Roberta Glebke (daughter of Joyce Glebke)	7/20	Luke Stempa (son of Gerri & Steve Stempa)	8/8
Lucas Shallow (son of Robert Shallow)	7/20	Matthew Shukoski (son of Darlene Vanhorn)	8/9
Susan Nickel (daughter of Mike & Judy Parins)	7/21	Jeremy DeMille (son of Marysue Gerondale)	8/11
Steven L Vosters (son of Patti & Marvin Vosters)	7/21	Samantha LaCount (daughter of Dale & Linda LaCount)	8/14
Megan Mae Vincent (daughter of Mark & Connie Risling)	7/24	Mike Wos (son of George & Jane Wos)	8/14

Maria Cambray (daughter of Jack & Gerry Cambray)	8/16	Keaton Sirianni (son of Jason & Lindsey Sirianni)	8/31
Nick Baugnet (son of DeeDee & Joan Baugnet)	8/17	Evan DeWan (son of Matthew & Christine DeWan)	9/1
Lane Harris (son of Susan Harris)	8/17	Colton Steinhorst (son of Tara Steinhorst)	9/3
Ben Delain (son of Peter & Becky Delain)	8/18	Kandy Kostka (daughter of William & Sally Kostka)	9/4
Molly Klika Zarnoth (daughter of Bob & Barb Klika)	8/18	Kristin Metsa (daughter of Bethany Metsa)	9/7
Patrice True (daughter of Wendy Hunter)	8/19	Josh Kimes (son of Susan Kimes)	9/8
Jimmy Wanner Jr. (son of Pam & Keith Blondeim)	8/20	Tara Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	9/8
Kelley Calkins (son of Kate Calkins)	8/21	Jason Vogels (son of Pam Vogels)	9/10
Andrea Eve Wirth (daughter of Thomas & Angela)	8/21	Corey Jonet (son of Lisa & Dan Jonet)	9/11
Greg Lindbloom (son of Ginger Lindbloom)	8/22	Eric Schalow (son of Lorrie Shafer)	9/11
Jessica VanStraten (daughter of Sue VanStraten & Randy Merryfield)	8/22	Jack Natzke (son of Jason & Renee Natzke)	9/15
Kali Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	8/25	Austin Robert Bush (son of Terry & Nan Bush)	9/17
Jessica Hoffman (daughter of Jodi Hoffman)	8/26	Matthew Skenadore (son of Jude Skenadore)	9/21
Kymerly Koskiniem (daughter of Trudie Koskiniem)	8/26	Cam Wendt (son of Lon Wendt)	9/22
Sarah Lesperance (daughter of Maria Smith)	8/28	Craig St. John (son of Debra St. John)	9/25
Tammie Gustman (daughter of Victoria Fifield and Marvin Gustman)	8/31	Stephanie Corbeill (daughter of Sylvia Corbeill)	9/27
Prisha Janice Laabs (daughter of David & Shamla Laabs)	8/31	Troy Milan (son of Pam Milan)	9/28
Jackson Rukamp (son of Bob & Missy Rukamp)	8/31	Nick Hietpas (son of Bruce & Diane Hietpas)	9/30

ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS, & MISC.

Calendar of Events 2023:

July 18: Healthy Ways To Cope When Grieving

August 15: Things People Say - How To Respond

September 19: Sharing Our Children

September 30: October Fest, Appleton, WI

December 10: Worldwide Candle Lighting

Please Visit Our Website:

www.compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

All sorts of goodies are included:

- *Past Newsletters
- *Calendar of Events
- *Articles
- *Online Donations

Do you want to Share??

Do you want to share a picture and/or a story of your child? Would you like to write an article about how you're feeling? If you would like to submit a post for our newsletter, we would love to hear from you. We only ask that you remember copyright when submitting.

For My Compassionate Friends

Marilyn Rollins
TCF Lake/Porter Counties, IN

You Did Not Die

Shari Swirsky
TCF Toronto, Ontario Canada

You live in the beautiful wind that blows.
You live in the sound of birds that crow.
You live in the sun that shines so bright.
You live in the peaceful dark at night.
You live in a star I see in the sky.
You live in ocean waves that come in with the tide.
You live in the smell of flowers and grass.
You live in the summer that goes so fast.
You live in my heart that hurts so much.

You did not die, we only lost touch.

How is it that I know you?
How'd you get into my life?
Sometimes when I look at you,
It cuts me like a knife.
I do not want to know you,
I don't want to cross that line.
Let's both go back into the past,
When everything was fine.
You've held me and you've hugged me,
And dried a tear or two,
Yet, you're practically a stranger,
Why do you do the things you do?
Of course, I know the reason,
We are in this Club we're in,
And why we hold on to each other
Like we are long-lost kin.
For us to know each other,
We had to lose a kid,
I wish I'd never met you,
But, I'm so thankful that I did.



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of Green Bay
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



PO Box 211
Green Bay, WI 54305

We need not walk alone!

Our monthly
support group
meets next on:

Tuesday,
July 18, 2023
at 6:00 p.m.

at First United
Methodist Church,
off Monroe at Doty.
Call 920-370-3858
for information.



Love gifts were recently given by:

Ken and Mary Gehm, in memory of Jared Gehm
Dave and Bobbi Kozloski, in memory of Craig Kozloski
Todd and Sandy Scheffen, in memory of Sam Compton
United Way of Brown County, in memory of all our children
Pam Vogels, in memory of Jason Vogels