

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

A Quarterly Newsletter
 by and for Bereaved Parents
 January/February/March 2024

**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.



Reflections on our 2023 Candle Lighting Ceremony

I am writing this the morning after our Candle Lighting Ceremony on Sunday, December 10th. This was the 27th annual ceremony for TCF. In looking at the 2024 calendar, next year will be the earliest that this ceremony can be held. It is always on the 2nd Sunday of December. You can mark your calendar for the 8th of December. We will probably hold it again at 1 pm at the First United Methodist Church.

I counted 16 pictures on the tables this year. While I consider this a nice turnout it was less than 2022. In 2022, we printed 50 programs and ran out so this year we printed 60 programs and had about half of them leftover. As families came up with their pictures and candles to light, I noted that only about 4 families in attendance were bereaved more than 10 years. Most were bereaved 5 years or less and for many it was there first or second year. As always this ceremony is very emotional and can be very draining for even of us that are long-term bereaved like Mickey and myself. This was our 19th Candle Lighting for Melissa and Emily. I can tell you it does not get easier. By the time Mickey and I arrived back home, I remarked that we had been gone almost 4 hours even though the ceremony only lasted 45 minutes. There was set-up time and the social afterwards. Plus on the trip home, we stopped at the cemetery to visit Melissa and Emily's gravesite.

I also noted that for some families in attendance this is the only time we see them during the year. Over the years some of those in attendance have either moved from the area or have also passed away and are now with their child(ren). In fact Mickey and I discussed that if we were not involved with the Chapter or in planning the ceremony, would we even attend it or would we just light a candle and do a remembrance for them at home. We honestly could not answer that question on what we would do in the future. I do remember some families that we met at past candle lighting ceremonies do not attend anymore. But that doesn't mean that they have stopped grieving for their loved ones. Perhaps they choose to celebrate in their own way. I also know of a couple of people who had family conflicts and could not attend the ceremony. Unfortunately sometimes as people say, life gets in the way of us wanting to do something.

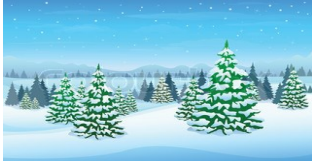
So as we enter another new year, 2024, we hope you had a peaceful holiday season and cherish the memories of you loved ones, gone to soon.

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
 E-mail: compassionatefriendsgb@gmail.com
 Website: compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

Monthly Support Group	
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 6 p.m.	
	How to Deal with the Winter Blues
Tuesday, February 20, 2024 6 p.m.	
	Tackling Tough Hurdles
Tuesday, March 19, 2024 6 p.m.	
	Guilt vs Regret - What is the Difference



The New Year: A Time of Hope
 Annette Mennen Baldwin
 In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
 TCF, Katy TX



Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and

our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories...sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.



Valentine's in Heaven
 Marilyn Rollins
 TCF Lake-Porter, IN
 For All Our Children



Are there Valentines in Heaven?
 Are there Red Hearts everywhere?
 Do they line the golden streets,
 Or is that very rare?
 I wish that I could send you one,
 Right through Heaven's Gate,
 To say how much we miss you,

On this special date.
 I'd like to send a Candy Heart,
 That is printed, "I Luv U,"
 And maybe you would whisper back,
 "I know, I Luv U too."

The Sounds of Silence

Mel Winer
In Memory of my son Andy



The sounds of silence are everywhere—it is the silent pain of the loss of our son Andy, it is the silence of our home because one of our children is gone, and it is the silence of the sudden quiet that comes over people when we mention Andy.

We have become both better and worse in the six years since Andy died of cancer at the age of 22. We are better because we are able to get on with our lives and even enjoy ourselves occasionally. We have gotten worse because, as the years go by, we feel his loss more deeply.

We feel his loss every time we participate in a celebration marking some milestone of our friends and relatives or their children. We feel the loss because any celebrations of our own will always be incomplete—one person will always be absent and not there to celebrate with us or to enjoy his own milestones. The pain of his absence is always present at these events.

When Andy died, the pain of his loss was a sharp acute screaming pain that tore a hole inside of us. Now, the pain is a silent quiet steady pain. The hole is still inside us, covered by a scar, but it is still there. It doesn't scream out loud any more but instead just remains as a quiet steady and never-ending ache and sadness—a silent pain.

The silence of our home is a different kind of quiet. By now, if Andy had lived, he probably would have been out on his own. We would have been "empty nesters" anyway. But, when a home becomes empty because of the death of a child, it is a different kind of empty nest. Our daughter Lesley is married

and out on her own, the way it should be. But, Andy is gone for a different reason.

So, the silence of our empty nest is not the silence of knowing we raised two children and now they are both out leading their own lives. Instead it is the silence of a home that is empty because one child is gone forever—of having to deal with the reality that phone calls only come from one child, not two; that only one child stops by for a visit, not two; that one child is forever gone from the nest. There is a silence in our home that often seems to pervade every space. It is a sad silence, not the temporary quiet of a happy home.

And then, there is the silence of relatives and friends when we talk about Andy—not about his death but about the things he did while alive. It is as if Andy has become a forbidden topic because he died, as if his death wiped out the 22 years he did live. It occurs when a relative whispers that our son died when someone asked how old he was—like his life and what happened to him was a big secret. It occurs when people suddenly get a funny look on their faces and don't know what to say next when you mention something about Andy. It occurs when you get the feeling that people want to avoid you because you remind them of a horror that could happen to anyone. It is a silence that reminds you that your emotions and feelings are different from that of others and that you will always have to live with the sounds of silence resulting from your son's death.

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. ~ Albert Schweitzer

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

Marisa Nelson (daughter of Amy Nelson)	1/01	Matthew Dulak (son of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	2/03
Alex Wolf (son of Keith Wolf)	1/02	Adam Federwitz (son of Gary & Mary Federwitz)	2/03
Aliina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	1/03	Mike Smith (son of Dave Smith)	2/04
Allison Fields (daughter of Leanne Fields)	1/04	Jesse Hettmann (son of Linda Hettmann)	2/05
Ben Garot (son of Keith Garot)	1/07	Caitlin Van Duyse (daughter of Brenda Van Duyse)	2/06
Megan Kelley (daughter of Bev Kelley-Miller)	1/09	Lily Boettcher (daughter of Melissa Mielke)	2/09
Kandy Kostka (daughter of William & Sally Kostka)	1/09	Julie Sarah Smits (daughter of Jeane Smits)	2/10
Mathew Odea (son of Nan Odea & Greg Warcham)	1/09	Brett Buhr (son of Tim & Michele Buhr)	2/11
Alex Neiman (son of Angel Neiman)	1/13	Jason Peck (son of Marianne Peck)	2/11
Corey Calaway (son of Paul & Nancy Calaway)	1/14	Kelby Bagneski (daughter of Bill & Kelly Bagneski)	2/12
April Erickson (daughter of Darla Nooyen)	1/14	Sam Compton (son of Mark Compton and Todd & Sandra Scheffen)	2/13
Travis Christenson (son of Cheryl Oettinger)	1/17	Ricky Lambert (son of Maria Lambert)	2/14
Justin Banaszynski (son of Donna Baranczyk)	1/21	Katie Culhane (daughter of Kevin & Muffy Culhane)	2/15
Jason Banaszynski (son of Donna Baranczyk)	1/21	Ryan Jozwiak (son of Lenee & Eddie Jozwiak)	2/15
Dustin Wilkinson (son of Dave & Donna Wilkinson)	1/21	Aislinn Shimon (daughter of Dave & Patricia Novak)	2/16
Christian Warzniak (son of Tara Hein)	1/22	Samantha LaCount (daughter of Dale & Linda LaCount)	2/22
Brian LaViolette (son of Doug & Renee LaViolette)	1/23	Nick Hietpas (son of Bruce & Diane Hietpas)	2/23
Joseph Wesolowski (son of Jennifer Heller)	1/25	Raina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	2/26
Roberta Jean Glebke (daughter of Joyce Glebke)	1/26	Brad Cox (son of Robert Cox)	2/27
Lawson Aerts (son of Dennis & Teressa Aerts)	1/28	Karen Mary Schley (daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)	2/27
Dylan Krings (son of Jason & Joleen Krings)	1/28	Lucas Shallow (son of Robert Shallow)	2/27
Austin Lindberg (son of Todd & Sandy Lindberg)	1/28	David Staude (son of Irv & Bev Michaud)	3/01
Maliyah Monacelli (granddaughter of Brenda Hendries)	1/29	Matthew Blazek (son of Bill & Betty Blazek)	3/03
Doug Kwiatkowski (son of Dave & Theresa Kwiatkowski)	1/30	Samantha DeLong (daughter of Joe & Sue DeLong)	3/03
Amy Laedke (daughter of Fred & Debra Laedtke)	2/02	Mark Louis Starr (son of Ruth (Patti) Schmidt)	3/04
Jeff Baenen (son of Susan Otradovec)	2/03	Colton John Margotto (grandson of Deb Dobson)	3/05
Ryan Brunner (son of Bill & Sue Brunner)	2/03	Molly Klika Zarnoth (daughter of Bob & Barb Klika)	3/06

Kelley Calkins (daughter of Kate Calkins)	3/11	Allison Hunt Bush (daughter of Terry & Nan Bush)	3/23
Kevin Keane (son of Mike Keane)	3/12	Cam Wendt (son of Lon Wendt)	3/24
Heather Fuller (daughter of Leslie Tagge)	3/14	Tami (Sam) Cornelius (daughter of Brenda Cornelius)	3/25
Anne Johanski (daughter of Judy Johanski)	3/16	Mike Quinette (son of Carol Quinette)	3/26
Beau Baxter (son of Laura Martens)	3/17	Steven L Vosters (son of Marvin & Patti Vosters)	3/26
Taylor Nieft (daughter of Michael & Dawn Nieft)	3/18	Lane Harris (son of Susan Harris)	3/27
Kali Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	3/20	Heidi Lessmiller (daughter of David Lessmiller)	3/29
Ella Cumicek (daughter of Chris & Rhonda Cumicek)	3/21	Andrew (Andy) Short (son of Barbara Short)	3/29
Parker Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21	Mark Malueg (son of Sue Malueg)	3/31
Shawn Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21		

ANNIVERSARIES

Matthew Daley (son of Mary Daley)	1/03	John Charniak (son of Maynard & Jeanette Charniak)	1/24
Aliina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	1/03	Carson Murfield (son of Matthew & Christy Murfield)	1/24
Skylar Beattie (daughter of Krystle Cooley)	1/05	Troy Jacques (son of Sally Martin)	1/26
Matthew Dulak (son of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	1/08	Heidi Lessmiller (daughter of David Lessmiller)	1/26
Mark Shafer (son of Bruce & Pat Shafer)	1/10	Chad Olson (son of Brenda Olson)	1/26
Christy Stackhouse (daughter of Frank Stackhouse)	1/10	Madeline Wotachek (daughter of Brandon & Michelle Wotachek)	1/26
Ben Garot (son of Keith Garot)	1/11	James Capelle (son of Tammy Capelle)	1/29
Jesse Hettmann (son of Linda Hettmann)	1/11	Matthew Arnold (son of Bob & Carrie Arnold)	1/31
Chad Schaefer (son of David & Miriam Schaefer)	1/11	Mark Louis Starr (son of Ruth (Patti) Schmidt)	2/01
Ian Seymour (son of Paul & Diane Seymour)	1/12	Zander Varga Schenzel (grandson of Nancy Varga)	2/02
Craig Kozloski (son of David & Bobbie Kozloski)	1/14	Andrew Steiner (son of Nicole Steiner)	2/02
Robby Rohr (son of Carol Wautlet)	1/16	Steve Price (son of Steve & Jennifer Price)	2/03
Shawnie Silas-Grode (daughter of Pauline Silas)	1/18	Amanda Dulak (daughter of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	2/04
Matthew Murphy (son of Kathleen Murphy)	1/21	Chris Krueger (son of Cheryl Krueger)	2/05
Joshua Webster (son of Julie Denny)	1/21	Dylan Krings (son of Jason & Joleen Krings)	2/08
Elias Gonzales (son of Maria Gonzales)	1/22	Corey Calaway (son of Paul & Nancy Calaway)	2/09
Alex Neiman (son of Angel Neiman)	1/22	Karson Fenlon (son of Jennifer Neshek)	2/09
Alex Olmsted (son of Lisa Olmsted)	1/22	Allen O'Harrow (son of Cal & Lois O'Harrow)	2/09
Nick Argall (Joyce Argall)	1/23	Jeff Baenen (son of Susan Otradovec)	2/12

Nathan Crowe (son of Tom Crowe & Lisa Hanneman)	2/13	Brandon Groh (son of Cathy Groh)	3/11
Chad Seitzer (son of Fred & Sandi Seitzer)	2/13	Jason Ziemann (son of Diane Strick)	3/12
Lawson Aerts (son of Dennis & Teressa Aerts)	2/16	Elizabeth Turek Bigley (daughter of Albert & Mary Turek)	3/13
Maliyah Monacelli (granddaughter of Brenda Hendries)	2/16	Beau Baxter (son of Laura Martens)	3/17
Derek Waterman (son of Patricia Waterman)	2/16	Josh Gilson (son of Ron & Cindy Gilson)	3/17
Ella Cumicek (daughter of Chris & Rhonda Cumicek)	2/18	Amaris Soletski (daughter of Amy Soletski)	3/18
Nathan Axelrod (son of Johanna Axelrod)	2/19	Rebekah Puzen (daughter of Larry Puzen & Carol Schroeder-Puzen)	3/19
Patrick Meyer (son of Dan & Anne Meyer)	2/19	Julie Sarah Smits (daughter of Jeane Smits)	3/20
Federico Abarca (son of Concepcion Melgar)	2/22	Bryan VanderKelen (son of Bob & Debi Lepak)	3/20
Brett Buhr (son of Tim & Michele Buhr)	2/22	Ricky Lambert (son of Maria Lambert)	3/21
Matthew Odea (son of Nan Odea & Greg Warcham)	2/25	Parker Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21
Shane Hopfensperger (son of Mike & Joann Hopfensperger)	2/28	Shawn Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21
Jason Peck (son of Marianne Peck)	2/28	Peyton Haller (son of Paul & Angela Haller)	3/24
Christian Warzniak (son of Tara Hein)	2/29	Tayler Nieft (daughter of Michael & Dawn Nieft)	3/24
Tom Manning (son of Peggy Manning)	3/01	Hunter Vincent (son of Steven & Dawn Vincent)	3/24
Matthew Blazek (son of Bill & Betty Blazek)	3/03	Luke Watzka (son of Marty & Rita Watzka)	3/24
Matt Hanson (son of Dean & Mary Hanson)	3/03	Randy Blezek (son of Bill & Betty Blazek)	3/25
Colton John Margotto (grandson of Deb Dobson)	3/05	John Aulik (son of Germaine Aulik)	3/26
Chayse Michael Wilcox (grandson of Todd & Melanie Wilcox)	3/06	Dustin Wilkinson (son of Dave & Donna Wilkinson)	3/29
Todd Reigner (son of Arthur & Barbara Reigner)	3/08		



ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS, & MISC.

Calendar of Events 2024:

January 16: How to Deal with the Winter Blues

February 20: Tackling Tough Hurdles

March 19: Guilt vs Regret - What is the Difference

Please Visit Our Website:

www.compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

All sorts of goodies are included:

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

July 12, 2024 @ 8:00 am - July 14, 2024 @ 1:00 pm

47TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

New Orleans, LA



Please note:
If area schools are closed,
due to inclement weather, we will cancel
our scheduled meeting

Love gifts were recently given by:

Don & Karol Cole, in memory of Dane, Doug & Dustin Cole
Joe & Alice Evers, in memory of Jacqueline Evers
Ken and Mary Gehm, in memory of Jared Gehm
Mike & Joann Hopfensperger, in memory of Shane Hopfensperger
Tom & Dorothy Konop, in memory of Todd Konop
Dan and Myra Krhin Freshly Squeezed, in memory of all our children
Network For Good, in memory of all our children
Todd and Sandy Scheffen, in memory of Sam Compton
Sue Van Straten, in memory of Jessica Van Straten
Carol Wautlet, in memory of Robby Rohr



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS
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,
January 16, 2024
at 6:00 p.m.

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

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.