



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS
of Northeastern WI
Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

A Quarterly Newsletter

by and for Bereaved Parents

January/February/March 2026

The Northeastern WI Chapter of TCF
meets the third Tuesday of each month at
6 p.m. at

**OneWay Christian Church
2071 9th St.
Green Bay, WI 54304**

For further information contact:
Main Number: 920-370-3858

- ◆ **Sue DeLong**, Remembering our Children
- ◆ **Joleen Krings**, Facebook Administrator /Steering Committee
- ◆ **Mike Nieft**, Meeting Facilitator/ Steering Committee
- ◆ **Carol Pomrenke**, Remembering our Children
- ◆ **Mickey Schmeisser**, Chapter Leader
- ◆ **Steve Schmeisser**, Treasurer
- ◆ **Kim Skar**, Newsletter Editor

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WE ARE SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS BUT GLAD TO CONNECT

Welcome usually means we are happy to meet, unfortunately in this instance, it means you are with us because you have lost a child, grandchild or sibling, a very sad time in your life. Having said that, we're glad that you found the courage to read this newsletter and/or join us at a meeting. We hope you find understanding and comfort with this group. We strive to help each other work through our grief in our own way, no matter how long the process may take. We encourage you to read this newsletter and attend our next meeting. Give us a chance to help! We hope that by exchanging information, sharing feelings, tears and compassion, we can help you move through this painful journey, towards hope and peace. There are no fees or dues required to participate in this organization just Understanding & Compassion.

I hope you all made it through the holidays in however way you chose to celebrate or not celebrate, maybe you took a walk, maybe you took quiet time for yourself, maybe it was sitting quietly thinking about your child or remembering them with family and friends, whatever you needed to do to get through this stressful season. Self-care is important and my wish is that you found some comfort and maybe even a little peace.

As a reminder, I invite you to participate in **Sharing our Children**. This is an opportunity for all of us to get to know your loved one a bit more. You can share anything you would like to about your child and if you wish, include a picture.

If you would like to contribute, please send over a paragraph or two about your child and include a photo. You can send them to me, Kim Skar, at wkskar@gmail.com.

If you haven't joined us at a meeting in awhile, please know you are always welcome.

Until We see you again.
You are Always in our hearts,
Amanda's Mom and Dad,
Kim and Wayne Skar



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.



Monthly Support Group

Bring along a photo of your child.

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 6 p.m.

Open Forum Discussion

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 6 p.m.

Open Forum Discussion

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 6 p.m.

Open Forum Discussion

Reflections on a New Year

Paula Stasiunas Schultz
In Memory of Melissa and Jeff



We begin a new year, one that many of us enter with reluctance. After all, it means another year away from our child and another year to be lived without the physical presence of the one we have lost. Apprehensive about any new challenges that we may be called upon to face in our broken condition, we call out, "Wait, I'm not ready yet!"

The death of our child changed the course of our life; nothing will be the same again. But it also has shaped us into who we are today. And it will continue to do so as we learn to incorporate this loss into who we are to become.

Have you found that you have already begun to live differently? Compassion toward others is more profound. Trivial things are no longer important. Appreciation for life, and those in our lives, is paramount. We're living the same life—differently.

Tragedies, disappointments, and heartaches combine with beauty, love, and joy to fashion our life. These are all a part of life, and our challenge is to incorporate them into our

world. The difference that our child's life has had upon the world continues through us.

So, rather than being fearful of the challenges that lie ahead, perhaps a better question to consider at this time might be: What opportunities will present themselves in the coming year to honor this loss that is already a part of our life? Our child has become more integrally entwined into our being than ever before. We bring him or her to every situation that we encounter. How can we make that situation better because of this bond?

The start of a new calendar year is a good time to remember that we are in the midst of life. It is not perfect. Nor is it one that we might have chosen. But, our struggles do not put life "on hold." Rather they are a part of life itself! Our life is ours to make the most of, with many gifts that we can share with others. There is no better time than the present to gather up the pieces and recognize the uniqueness that we each call "me"—a uniqueness made more wonderful because of our child's presence in the life we choose to live.

Author biography, 2002: Paula and her husband Bob live in Chicago, Illinois., where Paula serves as co-editor of the South Suburban Chapter newsletter. Their son, Jeff Schultz, is currently a student at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Their daughter, Melissa Schultz Cleaves, and her husband, Jeff Cleaves, had been married seven weeks when they died in a car accident on Thanksgiving weekend, 1999.

THE UNSPOKEN TRUTH ABOUT GRIEF BY RONALD ROSS

I lost my child at the young age of 34. The loss of a child is like no other. Unfortunately, it is a loss that is often misunderstood by many. Here is what I've learned within two years of grief, trekking through the unimaginable. I believe most bereaved mothers and fathers will experience many of these feelings.

A photograph of a landscape at sunrise or sunset. The sky is filled with warm, orange and yellow hues, transitioning into a cooler blue. In the foreground, there is a field with a single, small tree standing out against the horizon.

Remembering the Initial Shock

You will never forget the finite details of the day you learned of your child's death. The sequence of events is etched permanently in your mind. You will remember where you were, the time of day, and the following trauma. There is no way around it. Years may pass by, and you will still remember

that horrible day. You will remember the trembling, the loss of control, and the long-term sadness. It has become a part of your history and part of your soul.

Only 5 Minutes

Remembering that day, you may also experience the strongest desire to have five more minutes with your child. You will have this longing and heartbreak wish to see your child again to tell them how much you love them and how proud you are as a caring and compassionate mother or father. The ache in your heart stays with you with these thoughts. You think of everything you want to express, enjoy one more hug, and hear your child's voice. Being unable to see, touch, or hear your deceased child is agonizing. A bereaved parent would give up anything to have that five minutes with their child just one more time.

(continued on page 3)



Learning the Total Value of Appreciating Blessings

My priorities changed. Many things that were important to me no longer are. Material things do not matter. You begin to feel more sorrow than ever for less fortunate people. You want to help in many ways. You begin to see beauty in things you never noticed, "Take it all in," and appreciate the simplest things in life. When you lose your child, your world changes; counting my blessings helped me move forward when it seemed impossible to survive the day. If you focus on all the blessings in your life, you realize you are fortunate in many ways. When you pick up the pieces from losing your child, you can get past the uncontrollable emotions and feel alive again with your child's shadow on your shoulders.

Greater Compassion for Others

You learn more about unspeakable compassion and giving when presented with deep sorrow. Though you will grieve your loved one's death forever and then some, it does not mean your life will lack happiness and joy. Quite the contrary— after I survived acute grief, and it took me a long time to get there, I now live from a deeper place. As a result, my attempts to care are more profound and effortless. Grief enhances your senses and awareness of many things. You learn to cherish those times when there are small amounts of joy. You claw your way from the depths of unimaginable pain, suffering, and sorrow, again and again— when the joy comes, however— it is a joy to embrace. When a gift or an act of kindness came my way, I became emotional and thankful because there is nothing – and I mean absolutely nothing – I take for granted now. Living life in this way will give you peace.

You will Grieve for a Lifetime, but LOVE Never Dies

There is no "moving on" or "getting over it." You have to manage it and work through the pain. There is no bow, fix, or solution to this heartache. You do not know how long you will grieve. There is no glue for your broken heart, no medicine for the pain, and no going back in time. You ache as you breathe and love your child with all your heart and soul. The bereaved parent wishes that people could understand that grief lasts forever because love endures forever; the loss of a child is not one finite event; it is a continuous loss that unfolds minute by minute throughout a lifetime. A bereaved parent will miss every birthday, holiday, milestone, and life's success to be shared. Some weddings will never be; a mother and father's pride and excitement seeing their child grow and flourish are gone – an entire generation of people are irrevocably altered. Missing the future is why grief lasts forever. The ripple effect lasts forever. The bleeding only slows but never stops. You move forward with an injured heart.

The Light Brightens; You Survive and Flourish

You become a new person. You realize that you can survive anything. Big things that used to cause significant stress now become small things. Small things that used to irritate you become nonexistent. Everything has changed. You carry your love for your child everywhere. You feel bonded and realize that your child would want you to live joyfully even though your child is no longer with you. The aching pain in your chest, high anxiety, and uncontrollable emotions subside, and you feel you have made it. You made it through, and now you start living each day like it may be your last—no more judging, anger, or worries about what people may think of you. You now move forward with more resolve, strength, and compassion than you imagined. Yes, if you are a bereaved parent, you can make it when you never thought you could. We are all unique now, and you move forward with pride and compassion for others.



The pain of losing a child is only compounded by the crushing weight of knowing you must live the rest of your life without them. In author Ronald Ross' debut, "No Greater Pain," he speaks to parents everywhere who have suffered the devastating grief of losing a child. Ron shares his vulnerable feelings about losing his daughter, and desires to help others who have suffered a similar significant loss through his personal experience, readings, and research. **Reprinted from <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/blog/the-unspoken-truth-about-grief/>**

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	Amy Laedke (daughter of Fred & Debra Laedtke)	2/02
Alex Wolf (son of Keith Wolf)	1/02	Jeff Baenen (son of Susan Otradovec)	2/03
Aliina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	1/03	Ryan Brunner (son of Bill & Sue Brunner)	2/03
Allison Fields (daughter of Leanne Fields)	1/04	Matthew Dulak (son of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	2/03
Ben Garot (son of Keith Garot)	1/07	Adam Federwitz (son of Gary & Mary Federwitz)	2/03
Megan Kelley (daughter of Bev Kelley-Miller)	1/09	Mike Smith (son of Dave Smith)	2/04
Kandy Kostka (daughter of William & Sally Kostka)	1/09	Jesse Hettmann (son of Linda Hettmann)	2/05
Mathew Odea (son of Nan Odea & Greg Warcham)	1/09	Caitlin Van Duyse (daughter of Brenda Van Duyse)	2/06
Eric Glass (Son of Linda Glass)	1/13	Julie Sarah Smits (daughter of Jeane Smits)	2/10
Alex Neiman (son of Angel Neiman)	1/13	Brett Buhr (son of Tim & Michele Buhr)	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
Joshua Hedtke (Son of Debra Lupien)	1/19	Katie Culhane (daughter of Kevin & Muffy Culhane)	2/15
Justin Banaszynski (son of Donna Baranczyk)	1/21	Ryan Jozwiak (son of Lenee & Eddie Jozwiak)	2/15
Jason Banaszynski (son of Donna Baranczyk)	1/21	Aislinn Shimon (daughter of Dave & Patricia Novak)	2/16
Dustin Wilkinson (son of Dave & Donna Wilkinson)	1/21	Samantha LaCount (daughter of Dale & Linda LaCount)	2/22
Christian Warzniak (son of Tara Hein)	1/22	Nick Hietpas (son of Bruce & Diane Hietpas)	2/23
Brian LaViolette (son of Doug & Renee LaViolette)	1/23	Raina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	2/26
Joseph Wesolowski (son of Jennifer Heller)	1/25	Brad Cox (son of Robert Cox)	2/27
Roberta Jean Glebke (daughter of Joyce Glebke)	1/26	Karen Mary Schley (daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)	2/27
Lawson Aerts (son of Dennis & Teressa Aerts)	1/28	Lucas Shallow (son of Robert Shallow)	2/27
Dylan Krings (son of Jason & Joleen Krings)	1/28	David Staude (son of Irv & Bev Michaud)	3/01
Austin Lindberg (son of Todd & Sandy Lindberg)	1/28	Samantha DeLong (daughter of Joe & Sue DeLong)	3/03
Maliyah Monacelli (granddaughter of Brenda Hendries)	1/29	Mark Louis Starr (son of Ruth (Patti) Schmidt)	3/04
Doug Kwiatkowski (son of Dave & Theresa Kwiatkowski)	1/30	Colton John Margotto (grandson of Deb Dobson)	3/05
Nevaeh Cadman (Daughter of Angel Young & Matthew Cadman)	2/01	Molly Klika Zarnoth (daughter of Bob & Barb Klika)	3/06

Kevin Keane (son of Mike Keane)	3/12	Allison Hunt Bush (daughter of Terry & Nan Bush)	3/23
Heather Fuller (daughter of Leslie Tagge)	3/14	Cam Wendt (son of Lon Wendt)	3/24
Connor Carlson (son of Rhonda Carlson)	3/16	Tami (Sam) Cornelius (daughter of Brenda Cornelius)	3/25
Anne Johanski (daughter of Judy Johanski)	3/16	Steven L Vosters (son of Marvin & Patti Vosters)	3/26
Beau Baxter (son of Laura Martens)	3/17	Lane Harris (son of Susan Harris)	3/27
Tayler Nieft (daughter of Michael & Dawn Nieft)	3/18	Heidi Lessmiller (daughter of David Lessmiller)	3/29
Kali Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	3/20	Andrew (Andy) Short (son of Barbara Short)	3/29
Ella Cumicek (daughter of Chris & Rhonda Cumicek)	3/21	Mark Malueg (son of Sue Malueg)	3/31
Parker Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21		
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
Joseph Stetson (Son of Sherry Stetson)	1/04	Troy Jacques (son of Sally Martin)	1/26
Skylar Beattie (daughter of Krystle Cooley)	1/05	Heidi Lessmiller (daughter of David Lessmiller)	1/26
Matthew Dulak (son of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	1/08	Chad Olson (son of Brenda Olson)	1/26
Mark Shafer (son of Bruce & Pat Shafer)	1/10	Madeline Wotachek (daughter of Brandon & Michelle Wotachek)	1/26
Christy Stackhouse (daughter of Frank Stackhouse)	1/10	James Capelle (son of Tammy Capelle)	1/29
Ben Garot (son of Keith Garot)	1/11	Matthew Arnold (son of Bob & Carrie Arnold)	1/31
Jesse Hettmann (son of Linda Hettmann)	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	Dylan Krings (son of Jason & Joleen Krings)	2/08
Joshua Webster (son of Julie Denny)	1/21	Corey Calaway (son of Paul & Nancy Calaway)	2/09
Elias Gonzales (son of Maria Gonzales)	1/22	Karson Fenlon (son of Jennifer Neshek)	2/09
Alex Neiman (son of Angel Neiman)	1/22	Allen O'Harrow (son of Cal & Lois O'Harrow)	2/09
Alex Olmsted (son of Lisa Olmsted)	1/22	Jeff Baenen (son of Susan Otradovec)	2/12
Nick Argall (Son of Joyce Argall)	1/23	Nathan Crowe (son of Tom Crowe & Lisa Hanneman)	2/13

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

Wintersong



Season of lights, season of love and peace
 Season of shadow, season of memories,
 Season of warmth and joy, season of secret tears:

Give us the courage to laugh again
 Give us the vision to hope again
 Give us the power to love again -



For all our new seasons
 And all our new years
 -From the poems Sasha Wagner

ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS, & MISC.

Meeting Dates 2026:

January 20: Open Forum Discussion
February 17: Open Forum Discussion
March 17: Open Forum Discussion

You are welcome to bring a photo of your loved one.

Save The Date

49th National Conference

Fri - Sun, July 3rd—July 5th

Baltimore, MD



Helpful Resources

www.compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

All sorts of goodies are included:
*Past Newsletters
*Calendar of Events
*Articles
*Online Donations

We Need Not Walk Alone Magazine

The Compassionate Friends National website contains a magazine that is jam packed with information and articles. You can view the magazine online or you can print any and all of the pages.

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/we-need-not-walk-alone-magazine/>



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



Love gifts were recently given by:



Barb Fitzpatrick in memory of Debi Schultz
Ken and Mary Gehm, in memory of Jared Gehm
Joyce E Glebke, in Memory of Roberta and Gary
Mike and Joann Hopfensperger in memory of Shane Hopfensperger
Dan and Myra Krhin, Freshly Squeezed, in memory of all our children
Tom and Dorothy Konop, in memory of Todd Konop
Todd and Sandy Scheffen, in memory of Sam Compton
Wayne & Kim Skar, in memory of Amanda Rose Skar
Pamela Vogels, in memory of Jason Vogels
Carol Wautlet, in Memory of Robby Rohr



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS
of Northeast Wisconsin
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 20, 2026
at 6:00 p.m.**

OneWay Christian Church
2071 9th St.
Green Bay, WI 54304

Call 920-370-3858
for information.



SEASONED GRIEF

There used to be a point to summing up a year just past not as a personal accomplishment but as a reflection. Leaving previous hurts behind was welcomed and the sensible thing to do. I thought I was getting wiser as I was getting older.

With new years clean and full of possibilities, becoming another person seemed simple, another chance at getting it right, like a redemption, being forgiven for having blundered or been found wanting.

But death changed everything, without permission. Resolutions, made sincerely and broken quickly, offended my need to hold on to the past, to rewind life, fast backwards, so I could capture what I had lost. Still, time went on, regardless of my pleas. And when exhaustion set in, as eventually it must, I understood there would be another future, not the one I thought I had the right to expect but one where I dared carry hope in my heart again.



Eva Lager
TCF Perth, Western Australia
From **We Need Not Walk Alone**, Spring 1999 Issue