



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

A Quarterly Newsletter

by and for Bereaved Parents

July/August/September 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 Niefert**, Meeting Facilitator/Steering Committee
- ♦ **Carol Pomrenke**, Remembering our Children
- ♦ **Mickey Schmeisser**, Chapter Leader
- ♦ **Steve Schmeisser**, Treasurer

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



Monthly Support Group
Bring along a photo of your child.

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 6 p.m.

Let's talk about what's on your mind.
Open Forum Discussion,

Tuesday, August 18, 2026 6 p.m.

Let's talk about what's on your mind.
Open Forum Discussion,

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 6 p.m.

Let's talk about what's on your mind.
Open Forum Discussion,

I've gone ahead of you.
Not because I wanted to—but because I had no choice.

Up here, I've claimed a spot with your name on it.
It's yours, no one else's.
I'm holding it just for you.
Waiting.

I want you to know there's more than this.
More than the pain that keeps you up at night.
More than the emptiness that follows you through the day.

This isn't the end.
Not for me.
Not for you.

So live while you can.
Say yes, to the big scary stuff.
Love the people I can't love for myself anymore.

And when you've given everything you have down there
-you'll find me here.

In the place I saved.

And it will feel like you were never apart from me at all.

Poem written by: Aimee Suyko—Of In their Footsteps.



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

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.

Just Let Me Be Sad

Maria Kubitz
TCF Contra Costa County, CA
In Memory of my daughter, Margareta



We live in a world where – if you have the means – pain and suffering are to be avoided at all costs. We are always looking for the next “quick fix” to alleviate discomfort with the least amount of effort required. In many cases, this means treating the symptoms while ignoring the root cause of the problem. In the United States, we live in a society so uncomfortable with emotional pain that when someone dies, society expects the outward mourning period to end once the funeral is over. When the bereaved do not cooperate with these prescribed time tables, they are often accused of “wallowing” in their grief. They are indignantly told to “move on” and “get over it.” Do these statements mean prolonged outward grief is a sign of weakness? Maybe self-pity? Perhaps it means they think the bereaved secretly enjoy the pain, and the attention it brings? For those of us who have lost someone dear to us, we know that it could not be further from the truth. If we could, we would give ANYTHING to not feel this pain. The hidden meaning behind these statements is that our outward projection of sadness is an unwelcome reminder of all the negative emotions they’ve managed to stuff deep inside until the pain went away. I see it kind of like “out of sight, out of mind.”

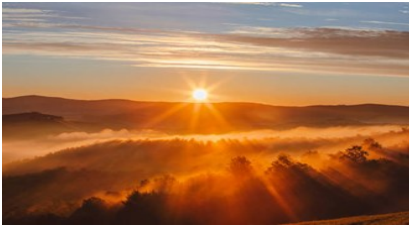
So which is healthier? To bury the pain, only to have it lie dormant until some tragedy unearths it again – but this time stronger and *more* painful? Or to acknowledge that there is no quick fix to alleviate the overwhelming pain of losing someone you have built your life – and in some cases, your identity – around? I would equate the first option to following the latest fad diet to lose weight quickly without exercising or changing your eating habits. Maybe you’ll pop some appetite suppressing pills and lose weight in the short term, but the chances of you keeping the weight off are slim, and the reality is that the next time you try to lose weight, it will likely be harder than the time before.

The second option would mean facing the harsh reality that transforming your body to a stable, healthy weight requires permanently changing your eating habits and amount of regular exercise. It probably

even requires you to readjust your expectations of what your ideal body should look like (sadly, most of us will never look like supermodels or pro athletes). In other words, the second option is **HARD WORK**, but it has the greatest likelihood of becoming a permanent reality.

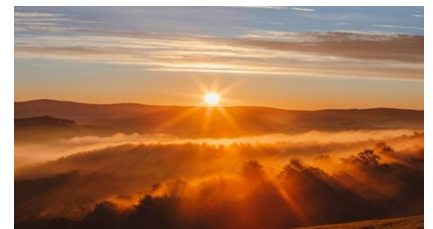
But if I’m being honest here, I have to admit that given the opportunity, I would have gladly chosen to bury the overwhelming pain when my daughter died. Suppressing pain and emotions is what I had done my whole life until that point. The fact is that the pain of losing someone I loved **MORE** than my own life was too much to bury. I reluctantly – and resentfully – took on more pain than I could bear. I did so because I had no other choice.

For the first time in my life, I learned how to slowly take small steps with that unbearable load on my back. I learned that by sharing my story and my pain with others – whether it was support groups, counseling, or with other bereaved individuals – the load was reduced, even if it was only a very slight amount each time. By reducing the load over months and then years, it became easier to carry. I have since come to understand that the load will never fully go away, but I have learned how to balance it with the rest of my life. And as time goes on, the balance will become easier still. That is not to say that occasionally, the load won’t suddenly feel nearly as heavy as it did when my grief was new. And when it does, I’ll remember how to go back to taking small, careful steps until it feels lighter again. To all those who cringe in discomfort when they see me experiencing outward emotional pain, I say this: just let me be sad. My intention is not to make you feel uncomfortable. I don’t expect - or want - you to follow in my footsteps. But I do expect you to respect the path I have been forced to take on my journey through life. I truly hope you never have to carry this load yourself.



Summer Memories

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX



Summertime is a happy time for most people in this country: vacations, holidays, family reunions, relaxed days at the pool, evenings in the backyard talking with family and friends, the smell of a fresh rain, the long days, the cooling nights, fresh mown grass and flowers that bloom profusely.

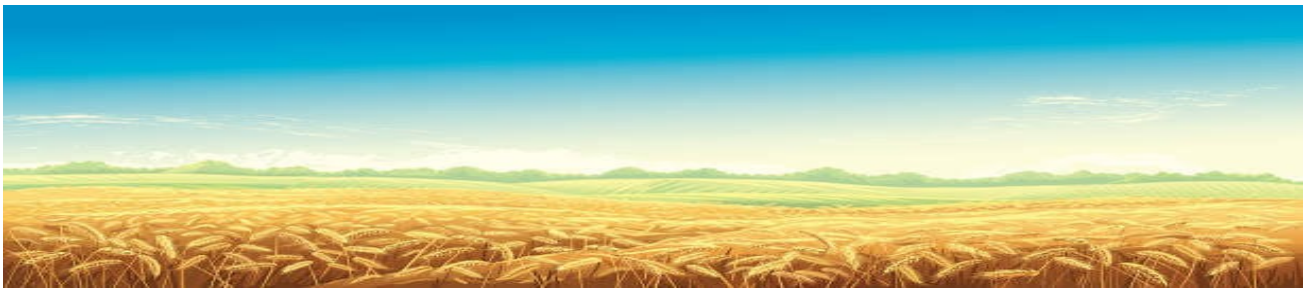
Despite Houston's heat, summer has become a treasured time for me. My son was a child of summer. Born in May, he loved the summer sun on his face and the wind in his hair as he first rode a tricycle, then a bicycle, then drove a car. Those were wonderful times for him. The summer solstice on June 21 was a favorite day for us both. Since the summer solstice is the longest day of the year, Todd particularly loved to watch the sunrise and sunset. I found myself doing that again this year. As I looked at the sun directly overhead at noon (1:00 pm DST), I made the comment that this is the one perfectly balanced day of the year. Later as I watched a beautiful solstice sunset, I remarked to my husband about the light...the gorgeous light. I was seeing Todd in that light. He was laughing, chasing lightening bugs, running and spinning and turning, filled with the joy of summer. He was happy.

I listened to the neighbors' children playing, and I thought about all the wonderful summer days I had spent with my son. I am thankful that I had that time.

I am thankful that my child was a son of summer. He found much joy in nature, in the outdoors, in activities that took him out of the ordinary and into the sublime.

That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of the loss of our child to death. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience. We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent-child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child. There is no way to measure the depth, width or volume of a parent's love. It exceeds every other human relationship. Yes, we miss them terribly. We weep silently into our pillows at night. We light candles, take flowers to the cemetery, wear their favorite colors, treasure pictures of our children and keep them forever in our hearts. This is a big part of life for every bereaved parent.

Somehow, on the summer solstice, I felt my child's presence in the light of the day and the beautiful rose color of the solstice sunset. I could hear his voice, see his smile and feel his emotions. Peace slips into our hearts in extraordinary ways.



An important way to cope with grief is having an outlet, be it interpersonal, be it artistic, that will allow you to not have to contain your grief, but will give you an opportunity to express it, to externalize it to some degree.

~ R. Benyamin Cirlin, Grief counselor ~

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	Grant Lardo (son of Jenny & Tim Cornell)	8/15
Madeline Wotachek (daughter of Brandon & Michelle Wotachek)	7/5	Luke Watzka (son of Rita & Marty Watzka)	8/17
Megan Short (daughter of Norb & Mary Short)	7/6	Kira Smith (daughter of Tara Smith)	8/18
Alex Olmstead (son of Lisa Olmstead)	7/8	Wendy Jacques (daughter of Sally Martin)	8/19
Riviera Konen (daughter of Jennifer Konen)	7/9	Nicolas Leon (son of Jesus & Catherine Leon)	8/21
Eric Schalow (son of Lorrie Shafer)	7/12	Lisa Becker-Fortuna (daughter of Denise Van Zeeland)	8/23
Austin Reeck (son of Ann Rieckmann)	7/13	Lily Froelich (daughter of Tony & Stephanie Froelich)	8/23
Joseph Stetson (son of Sherry Stetson)	7/15	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
Nicki Laus (daughter of Diane Yonke)	7/22	Andrew Steiner (son of Nicole Steiner)	8/28
Ella Smetana (daughter of Frank Smetana)	7/22	Jessica Hoffman (daughter of Jodi Hoffman)	8/29
Jason Ziemann (son of Diane Strick)	7/22	Timothy Metoxen (son of Florence Petri)	8/30
Heather Sigl (daughter of Greg & Joyce Sigl)	7/25	Nicholas Resch (son of Lynn & Steve Marcks)	8/30
Eric Rasmussen (son of Karen Rasmussen)	7/26	Ross Ambrosius (son of Melissa & Rob Ambrosius)	9/5
Joseph Derge (son of Randy & Ann Derge)	7/27	Eric Barlament (son of Jim Barlament & Penny Maraccini)	9/5
Austin Robert Bush (son of Terry & Nan Bush)	7/30	Kory Kuran (son of Carol Pomrenke)	9/5
Keaton Sirianni (son of Jason & Lindsey Sirianni)	8/2	Adam Schultz (son of Stan & Deb Schultz)	9/5
Nick Argall (son of Joyce Argall)	8/4	Matthew Kiefer (son of Mary Jo Hempel)	9/8
Sarah Lesperance (daughter of Maria Smith)	8/4	Wendy Johnson (daughter of Tom & Debbie Johnson)	9/12
Jeff Skenadore (son of Jude Skenadore)	8/4	Michael Schermerhorn (son of Jayne Schermerhorn)	9/12
Makayla Lego (niece of Christine Newtols)	8/5	Mike Vos (son of George & Jane Vos)	9/12
Olivia DeMeuse (daughter of Cheryl DeMeuse)	8/8	Patton Prunty (son of Patty Lynn Prunty)	9/13
Todd Konop (son of Tom & Dorothy Konop)	8/8	Melissa Schmeisser (daughter of Steve & Mickey Schmeisser)	9/14
Tara Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	8/12	Christopher Grahn (son of Tim Grahn)	9/15

Craig Jacobs (son of John & Cathy Jacobs)	9/16	Andy Bell (son of Patrick & Debbie Bell)	9/24
Susan Nickel (daughter of Mike & Judy Parins)	9/18	Troy Tousey (son of Tim & Vicki Tousey)	9/24
Troy Jacques (son of Sally Martin)	9/19	Amaris Soletski (daughter of Amy Soletski)	9/26
Greg Corbeill (son of Sylvia Corbeill)	9/22	Aaron Lison (son of Adele Coopmans)	9/28
Jack McDonough (son of Carrie Harrison)	9/22		
Jessica VanStraten (daughter of Sue VanStraten & Randy Merryfield)	9/22		
Christy Stackhouse (daughter of Frank Stackhouse)	9/23		

ANNIVERSARIES

Chase Lasecki (son of Steven & Linda Lasecki)	7/2	Travis Stelzer (son of Don & Pam Stelzer)	7/29
Jacob Kowalski (grandson of Jessica Fehlberg)	7/3	Amber Mastey (daughter of Brett & Amanda Mastey)	8/1
Megan Short (daughter of Norb & Mary Short)	7/3	Justin Plate (son of Mark & Grace Plate)	8/2
Jillian Faymonville (daughter of Louise Faymonville)	7/5	Brad Cox (son of Robert Cox)	8/3
Lily Froelich (daughter of Tony & Stephanie Froelich)	7/7	Eric Rasmussen (son of Karen Rasmussen)	8/5
Van Jarchow (son of Mike & Dixie Jarchow)	7/7	Stephen Charneski (son of Roberta Charneski)	8/6
Grant Lardo (son of Jenny & Tim Cornell)	7/7	Anne Johanski (daughter of Judy & Bob Johanski)	8/7
Sam Compton (son of Mark Compton, and Todd & Sandra Scheffen)	7/8	Austin Lindberg (son of Todd & Sandy Lindberg)	8/7
Kevin Kazik (son of Charlie Kazik & Sally Kazik)	7/11	Brian LaViolette (son of Doug & Renee LaViolette)	8/8
Tyffany Stevens (daughter of Lynn Pigeon)	7/11	Luke Stempa (son of Gerri & Steve Stempa)	8/8
Christopher Grahm (son of Tim Grahm)	7/19	Matthew Shukoski (son of Darlene Vanhorn)	8/9
Debi Schultz (daughter of Barbara Fitzpatrick)	7/19	Jeremy DeMille (son of Marysue Gerondale)	8/11
Roberta Glebke (daughter of Joyce Glebke)	7/20	Arianna Stevens (daughter of Lindsay Powless)	8/11
Lucas Shallow (son of Robert Shallow)	7/20	Samantha LaCount (daughter of Dale & Linda LaCount)	8/14
Susan Nickel (daughter of Mike & Judy Parins)	7/21	Mike Vos (son of George & Jane Vos)	8/14
Steven L Vosters (son of Patti & Marvin Vosters)	7/21	Maria Cambray (daughter of Jack & Gerry Cambray)	8/16
Heather Sigl (daughter of Greg & Joyce Sigl)	7/25	Nick Bagnat (son of DeeDee & Joe Bagnat)	8/17
Eloise "Ella" Kasprzak (daughter of Eddie & Kimberly Kasprzak)	7/27	Lane Harris (son of Susan Harris)	8/17
Greg Corbeill (son of Sylvia Corbeill)	7/29	Ben Delain (son of Peter & Becky Delain)	8/18

Molly Klika Zarnoth (daughter of Bob & Barb Klika)	8/18	Kandy Kostka (daughter of William & Sally Kostka)	9/4
Jimmy Wanner Jr. (son of Pam & Keith Blondeim)	8/20	Kristin Metsa (daughter of Bethany Metsa)	9/7
Nicolas Leon (son of Jesus & Catherine Leon)	8/21	Tara Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	9/8
Andrea Eve Wirth (daughter of Thomas & Angela Wirth)	8/21	Jason Vogels (son of Pam Vogels)	9/10
Greg Lindbloom (son of Ginger Lindbloom)	8/22	Corey Jonet (son of Lisa & Dan Jonet)	9/11
Jessica VanStraten (daughter of Sue VanStraten & Randy Merryfield)	8/22	Eric Schalow (son of Lorrie Shafer)	9/11
Leo Fulmer (son of Evonna Krause)	8/24	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
Kymberly Koskiniem (daughter of Trudie Koskiniem)	8/26	Cam Wendt (son of Lon Wendt)	9/22
Sarah Lesperance (daughter of Maria Smith)	8/28	Joshua Hedtke (son of Debra Lupien)	9/23
Tammie Gustman (daughter of Victoria Fifield and Marvin Gustman)	8/31	Craig St. John (son of Debra St. John)	9/25
Jackson Rukamp (son of Bob & Missy Rukamp)	8/31	Stephanie Corbeill (daughter of Sylvia Corbeill)	9/27
Keaton Sirianni (son of Jason & Lindsey Sirianni)	8/31	Troy Milan (son of Pam Milan)	9/28
Evan DeWan (son of Matthew & Christine DeWan)	9/1	Nick Hietpas (son of Bruce & Diane Hietpas)	9/30
Colton Steinhorst (son of Tara Steinhorst)	9/3		
Nicki Laus (daughter of Diane Yonke)	9/3		



You don't heal from the loss of a loved one because time passes; You heal because of what you do with the time.

~ Carol Crandall ~

ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS, & MISC.

Calendar of Events 2026:

July 21: Open Forum Discussion

August 18: Open Forum Discussion

September 15: Open Forum Discussion

September 25: October Fest, Appleton, WI

December 13: Worldwide Candle Lighting

TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held this year on Sunday, December 13, 2026. This is a very special and moving event, when bereaved families join together from around the world in memory of all children gone too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

More information on our chapter's event to follow in next newsletter.

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 or all of the pages.

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

Find us on Facebook

The Compassionate Friends of Northeastern WI



Sharing Our Children

Would you like to share your child? You can share anything you would like to about your child and if you wish, include a picture, so we can all meet them. 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.

We only ask that you remember copyright when submitting.



Love gifts were recently given by:



Ken and Mary Gehm, in memory of Jared Gehm
Joyce Glebke, in memory of Gary & Roberta Glebke
Mike and Dawn Nieft, in memory of Taylor Nieft
Todd and Sandy Scheffen, in memory of Sam Compton



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of Northeast Wisconsin
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

PO Box 211
Green Bay, WI 54305



Our monthly
support group meets
next on:

Tuesday,
July 21, 2026
at 6:00 p.m.

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

Call 920-370-3858 for
information.

We need not walk alone!

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.

Everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped..