



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS-CHAPTER 2358

CO-LEADERS: Susan Fletcher, Scott Higgins
& Lesa Hartranft
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WEBSITE: WWW.CHARLOTTETCF.ORG

*Facebook Page: Compassionate Friends of
Charlotte, NC*

MONTHLY MEETING

Meeting place: St. Matthew Catholic Church, 8015 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, NC - Room 234-235

Meeting Time: 3rd Tuesday of Each Month at 7:00 pm
Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, our meetings are now being held virtually by way of Zoom. Meetings will still be the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00. Members can look for a Zoom invitation the week prior.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

TCF Monthly Meeting: Tuesday Nov. 17th at 7:00. Please check your email for a Zoom invitation.

Dec. 13, 2020 - TCF International Candle Lighting Memorial Service. This year our candle lighting event will be held virtually. Plans are in the making and you will receive an update soon.

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Regional Coordinators for NC: Donna & Ralph Goodrich

Phone Number: 980-938-4589

E-mail: iluvu2lauren@gmail.com

NATIONAL OFFICE

The Compassionate Friends
(877-969-0010)

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www.compassionatefriends.org

online private closed facebook pages:

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/>

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TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!!

We congratulate you on having the courage to walk through our door for the first time. Please give our meetings at least 3 tries before deciding if they are right for you. We hope, with the resources available through TCF, you will find the right person or the right words to help you. You Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends.

TO OUR SEASONED MEMBERS:

We need your encouragement and support. TCF continues because of YOU. You give hope to the newly bereaved - hope that they too can eventually find joy in life again. Please attend when you feel you are able to reach out to another bereaved parent, grandparent or sibling.

Did you know that TCF Charlotte has its own Facebook page? Just search in facebook groups for - Compassionate Friends of Charlotte, NC

LIKE our Facebook page and please post any article, quote or personal musings that you feel may help another member. All information for meetings and special events will be listed on our facebook page.

**PLEASE VISIT US ON OUR
WEBPAGE!!**

WWW.CHARLOTTETCF.ORG

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF TCF CHARLOTTE STEERING COMMITTEE?

We need your help. Volunteering to be on our Steering Committee is a wonderful way to give back to the organization that helped you when you were starting your grief journey, and what better way to keep your child, grandchild or sibling's memory alive? Contact any of the leaders at our meetings if you would like more information. We need YOUR help to ensure our Chapter is as successful as possible in helping others. This is YOUR Chapter - help us make it a welcoming and caring place for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings to come to for help.

Our Chapter survives by donations only. There are costs associated with the Chapter, i.e., supplies, books, refreshments, food and supplies for our annual events, and our fee for our website. PLEASE help support our Chapter!!! Please consider donating to your Chapter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling on their special days or during the holidays. What better thing to do in their memory than to pay it forward for the help you have received from TCF.

You can also help you chapter by being a Steering Committee Member. Just contact one of our chapter leaders. We have lots of different areas that we need help in.

***We want to thank Connie & John Tobey for their donation
in Loving Memory of their Grandson
Zachary Tobey.***

TO OUR MEMBERS

Please Mail All Donations to Our TCF Charlotte Treasurer At The
Following Address:
Carolyn Patton
5902 Rimerton Drive
Charlotte, NC 28226-8227

If there are any errors in dates or names in our listing of our children's, grandchildren's or sibling's, please let me know. We are trying to get our database as accurate as possible. Many of our loved ones names do not have a last name listed. In these cases, we assume it is the same as the parent, grandparent or sibling who is listed as a member in our database. If this is incorrect, please let me know. There are many names that do not have a birth date or a death date listed. We know this can be very difficult to list, especially in the early days of grief. If you feel like adding those dates, just email them to me at: fletcher1mom@gmail.com
We are only human so we do make mistakes but I have tried to be as accurate as I possibly can. Thank you for understanding.

**REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS -
NOVEMBER 2020**

Justin Ferdinand 11/25
Michelle DiBernardini 11/19
Tim Boyer 11/22
Nolan Brantley 11/18
Colleen Louise Brooks 11/15
Dylan Burke Hahn 11/24
Eric Carlson 11/19
Trenton James Scott 11/15
John Cory Foil 11/9
Josselyn Giebeler 11/4
Caitlin Taylor Patton 11/14
Diana Phillipi 11/19
Ian Christian Lampkin 11/27
Christopher Lloyd 11/22
Michael Mahoney 11/23
Cory Flynt 11/29
Ryan Monfeli 11/15
Kyle Bodord 11/10
James O'Keefe 11/6
Justin Zuk 11/25
Matthew Lee Puckett 11/2
Hannah Quinton 11/11
Tim Roddey 11/14

Sadie Schuster 11/14
Loren Silva 11/9
Bill Twaddell 11/30
William Twitty 11/21

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS -
NOVEMBER

Stephan Bennish 11/28
Michael Rodas 11/12
Brian Countermanchie 11/9
Lauren Ehele 11/30
John Cory Foil 11/9
Madelynn Golbach 11/2
David Haney 11/24
Garrett Howison 11/21
Matthew Jackson 11/3
Ian Lampkin 11/27
Chad Langdon 11/27
Anthony McLain 11/12
Jeanna Norton 11/3
Billy Patton 11/11
Kiara Pearse 11/14
Jameel Pearse 11/14
Matthew Lee Puckett 11/16
Michael Schexnayder 11/9
Amaani Shah 11/14
Gregg Moore 11/8
Shamar Sheats 11/15
Jeremy Sprague 11/30
Bill Twaddell 11/17

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS -
DECEMBER 2020

Ayanna Addison 12/8
Lewis Addison 12/8
Christopher Brown 12/9
Nicholas Daniel 12/4
Creed Campbell 12/3
Thaddeus Cash 12/10
Luna Eve Hobbs 12/20
Tommy Horton 12/23
Isaiah Pinkney 12/31
Brian Michael Kirchner 12/3
Chad Langdon 12/22
Hannah Strickland 12/6
Michael McKinley 12/23
Lance Ferguson 12/21
Kelsey Morris 12/4
Eric Lemarier 12/12
Adam Mashburn 12/22
Jason Christopher 12/7
Silje Rowell 12/27
Heath Graves 12/28
Nicholas Simonette 12/15
Matthew Wright 12/30
Billy Trahey 12/25
Greg Vitiello 12/5
Jason Walters 12/10
Denis Anthony Giacobbe 12/31
Angela Harper 12/15
Lindsay Jerdo 12/16
Jonathan Holt Whitlow 12/26
Amanda Jean Ziegler 12/28

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS -
DECEMBER

Cory Abernathy 12/1

John Joseph Gabriel, Jr. 12/12
Vincent Chandler Edmond 12/13
Jennifer Eanes 12/12
Jasmine Anderson 12/16
Christopher Hall 12/25
Luna Eve Hobbs 12/20
Ashley Hurte 12/22
Jeremy Jenkins 12/7
Jasmine D. Thar 12/23
Ryan Monfeli 12/30
Ayriel Moore 12/6
Brian David Palmer 12/4
Tim Roddey 12/31
Sadie Schuster 12/7
Nicholas Simonette 12/29
Chris Taylor 12/10
Kekoa Teonkina 12/17
Lindsay Jerdo 12/24
Jason Lucas Armstrong 12/25
Jamaal Miller 12/14

HEART CONNECTIONS – GRIEF AND LOSS IN A PANDEMIC

Posted on September 24th, 2020

As we move toward the end of September, it's hard to believe that we have been experiencing life in a pandemic for over six months. Grief and loss are pervasive on multiple levels in our nation and in the world as we observe this half-year marker in time.

Some members of our TCF community have had a loved one die directly as a result of COVID-19. Others have experienced the death of a child, sibling or grandchild from other reasons during this restricted time. Many have experienced renewed pain from a devastating loss that is being

particularly triggered by current events. Grief has been compounded due to the additional losses of jobs, finances, health, social interaction, safety, and security. For bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents, some painfully familiar feelings have resurfaced such as anger, sorrow, shock, denial, helplessness, worry, and intense anxiety.

When we can't control outside events, what can we do to deal with the uncertainty and grief? There are many daily activities and actions that can make a difference in how we take care of ourselves and our families in order to manage through this time.

- Volunteer – Helping someone else is one of the best ways to help yourself. TCF is a wonderful avenue to support others who are grieving, and seeking additional ways to volunteer outside of TCF can expand that further.
- Community – Find community whether through a neighborhood group, an association, extended family, online interactive groups like Facebook or chat groups, or a book club. Most of these groups have ways to meet virtually, outside, or with social distancing at this time.
- Physical Movement – Walk, exercise, do yoga or chair yoga, stretch, or play active, outdoor games with your children. This is more important than ever for the many adults who are working from home and children who are attending school virtually from home.
- Gratitude – Spend a few minutes every day to identify, write down, or share 5 to 10 things that you are grateful for today. There are more things to be grateful for than we often realize, and this practice re-frames your energy and the way you perceive your day.
- Connection – Reach out and call people more often. No advanced technology is required for this, and fewer outside activities mean there is more opportunity for many of us to talk to people who we haven't spoken with in a while.
- Nature – Get fresh air whether by walking or just taking a break to sit outside. Play with your pets outside for additional fun, love, and emotional support.
- Faith, Spirituality, Mindfulness – Renew, deepen, or seek comfort in your faith or spirituality if this is part of your belief system. If non-faith approaches are what support you best, nurture those including

meditation and practicing mindfulness. Seek out and talk to others who share your beliefs and perspectives.

Spend time each day engaging in a few of these activities. It can be hard to motivate ourselves when we are more isolated at home, so prioritize them and post reminder notes to do them if needed. Basic care like adequate sleep, fresh air, a relaxing bath, nutritious foods, plenty of water, peaceful music, and quiet moments help us manage through grief and isolation. If your grief is aided by keeping busy, try a new skill or hobby, cook a new meal, do a puzzle, or pick up a new book.

As the weariness of the pandemic sets in further, just like the weariness we experience over time with deep grief, focus on one day at a time. Invest in yourself and in your family in simple ways that you may not have had time for before. Believe that there is something beyond this time in our lives that we cannot yet see that can be good again in a different way.

Shari O'Loughlin

First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful
fills my heart with dread.
They'll all be feigning gladness,
not a word about her said.

These heavy shrouds of blackness
enveloping my soul,
pervasive, throat-catching,
writhe in me, and coil.

I must, I must acknowledge,
just express her name,
so all sitting at the table,
know I'm thankful that she came.

Though she's gone from us forever
and we mourn to see her face,
not one minute of her living,
would her death ever replace.

So I stop the cheerful gathering,
though my voice quivers, quakes,
make a toast to all her living.
That small tribute's all it takes.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from *Stars in the Deepest – After the Death of a Child*

Lights of Love

Can you see our candles
Burning in the night?
Lights of love we send you
Rays of purest white

Children we remember
Though missing from our sight
In honor and remembrance
We light candles in the night

All across the big blue marble
Spinning out in space
Can you see the candles burning
From this human place?

Oh, angels gone before us
Who taught us perfect love
This night the world lights candles
That you may see them from above

Tonight the globe is lit by love
Of those who know great sorrow,
But as we remember our yesterdays
Let's light one candle for tomorrow

We will not forget,
And every year in deep December
On Earth we will light candles
As.....we remember

Jacqueline Brown
TCF Peace Valley, PA

Grief and Holidays:What the Be-
reaved Need From Friends and Fam-
ily



*I know it is hard. I know you don't truly understand how I feel. You can't. **It wasn't your child.***

*I know I may look and act like I'm "**better**". I know that you would love for things to be like they were: **BEFORE.** But they aren't.*

***I know my grief interferes with your plans.** I know it is uncomfortable to make changes in traditions we have observed for years. *But I can't help it. I didn't ask for this to be my life.**

*I know that every year I seem to need something different. I know that's confusing and may be frustrating. **But I'm working this out as I go.** I didn't get a "how to" manual when I buried my son. **It's new for me every year too.***

So I'm trying to make it easier on all of us.

I'm trying to be brave and think ahead and offer up what I can to help you understand.

*I'm not asking you to stuff your feelings. **But I am asking you to weigh your disappointment in things being different against my unfathomable sorrow in burying my child.***

And this is what I need from YOU:

Acknowledge my loss. It doesn't matter if it has been a few months, a few years or even decades-every single time the whole family gets together, the hole where my child **SHOULD** be is highlighted. ***Other people may have moved on, and I am stronger now than I was, but the missing is as hard today as it was the day he left.*** *I need you to acknowledge that even if you don't understand it.*

Be flexible. Every day is different for me. And even if we did a certain thing last year, it may not be something I want to repeat. *Life circumstances continue to evolve*-living children grow and marry, grandchildren make their appearance, health issues may emerge and change physical capabilities-life keeps on regardless of loss. So this year is **DIFFERENT** than last year. ***For everyone.*** *If we all embrace flexibility, there's less opportunity for breakage.* Rubber bounces. Glass shatters. **I don't want my loss to be the central focus, but it's a huge part of my experience and I can't ignore it.** *Help me, please.*

Give me space. Grant space in the larger picture-don't make showing up to every family event a "*mandatory option*". Understand that even with planning and the best intentions, I may wake up and realize that **I. just. can't. do. it.** *Or I may come, but leave early.* And grant space in the details-if I walk out of a room, ***let me go.*** It may be helpful for one person to check on me after a few minutes but *don't send the calvary to drag me back.* ***I don't always want to detract from a gathering and I may need to cry, or gather myself, or just sit silently remembering my son.***

Give me time. Time by itself does not heal anything. *But time is a critical component of healing.* If this is the first holiday season after loss, don't pressure me with artificial deadlines about what I want to do or whether or not I'm going to participate in this or that. ***And even if it's not the first season, I still need time.*** It will be the third set of holidays after my son's departure and *I'm still feeling my way in the dark.* Don't force me to decide if I can't. Just go on with your plans. ***If I can join in, I will. If I can't, then I won't.*** That's the best I can do. *It's how I have to live every single day right now.*

Grant mercy. I will mess up. I will say things in the passion of loss that I regret. ***Overlook it.*** Don't lash out or hit back. My emotional tank is so empty sometimes that it's a wonder I can still feel anything. *I am truly trying.* ***Grant mercy.***

Extend grace. Grace is lavishing love on the unlovely. Forgiving when someone doesn't ask for it. Doing something for someone and not expecting anything in return. ***Step up and step out in faith that loving me will help me heal.*** *Even when you can't see that it makes a difference.* ***Don't stop. Don't withdraw.***

Know that this is not what I would have chosen.

Child loss happened TO me.

It is out of my control.

And the calendar pages keep turning. Every holiday season means another year gone without the companionship of the child I miss.

I want to continue to embrace life, to enjoy my loved ones, to make new memories. *But I need your help to make it happen.*

Don't abandon me now.

From: thelifeididntchoose.com

HEALING AFTER LOSS- DECEMBER

By Marcel Proust

Taken from Daily Meditation for Working Through Grief

At this season of the year-so filled with memories and, for most people, family occasions- sometimes our grief seems almost unbearable. And grief is often especially sharp around holiday occasions.

But after a while we begin to savor the recall of those gathered times when we were all together, when the tenor of the days was festive and mutually cherishing. If our loved one had a particular role in the rituals of this season, we who take over that role may feel a special bond with the one who is gone.

So memory "nourishes the heart," eases the sharp edges of grief, and, whether or not we speak of it to one another, spreads its arms to comfort and to gather us as one family in the great human stream of life.

A Letter from a New Editor.

Hello Friends,

This is my first issue of the TCF newsletter, a task I recently took over for Donna Goodrich who has faithfully completed the job for the past few years. I have terrible keyboarding skills and I am “technically challenged” so I am not sure I’m the best person for the job, but I will give it my best. I have been involved with TCF since 2011 when I lost my 27-year-old son, Michael to suicide. I don’t have to tell any of you how devastating this experience is and this group has been a lifeline. I co-lead this chapter with three wonderful people; Lesa Hartranft, Scott Higgins and Courtney Langdon (our sibling coordinator) and we are amply and richly supported by our regional coordinators, Donna and Ralph Goodrich. I agreed to a co-leadership role in Oct. 2018. Two weeks later my spouse of 38 years passed away and I was rendered useless for months. In July 2019 I attended the National Conference in Philadelphia for the 1st time and I came home feeling somewhat restored and vowed to take a more active part in the chapter. A month later I broke my back in a boating accident was knocked totally out of commission for nearly 4 months. I returned to work in November to a job I had always loved and scrambled to “catch-up”. Fast forward to March 2020 and the Covid pandemic. My elementary school was closed and, overnight, I had to toss my 30 years of experience out the window and become a virtual tele-practice provider. It was stressful, time consuming, anxiety provoking and thankless to the point that it was impacting my mental and physical health. Once again, I was useless and detached from my chapter. However, I retired in July and I am now relaxed and living a stress-free life. Now I have the time, energy and mental fortitude to take on this new task. I hope in some small way it will make up for all the time I was a non-contributing member. Many thanks to Donna Goodrich for teaching me the newsletter “tricks of the trade” and helping me with this first issue.

Until January.....

Respectfully,

Susan Cassidy Fletcher