



Jan- Feb 2022

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS-CHAPTER 2358

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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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

A Change in Plans: Our January and February meetings will be virtual via Zoom. The current surge in Covid cases is alarming and any gathering in large numbers is risky and cause for concern. It is with an abundance of caution and concern that we feel this is our safest way to meet. We will return to "in-person" meetings as soon as the Covid positive rates decline to an acceptable level. Please watch your email for a Zoom invitation for a virtual TCF meeting on Jan.18.2022

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Regional Coordinators for NC: Donna & Ralph Goodrich

Phone Number: 980-938-4589

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NATIONAL OFFICE

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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 your 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.

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

TO OUR MEMBERS

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 - JANUARY

Gabriel Jordon Arethas 1/24
Will Blottman 1/25
Michael Rodas 1/5
Frank Chen 1/20
Dennis Darrell 1/10
Stacy Glickman 1/19
Cynthia Boza 1/24
Ryan Hartranft 1/12
Sergio Huerta 1/11
Matthew Jackson 1/2
Adyson Faith Mendicino 1/24
Jeanna Norton 1/28
Raymond Pierce 1/13
Anthony John Pijerov 1/5
Steven Vaughn Ray 1/27
Daniel Joseph Schrieber 1/10
Ryan Scott 1/16
Corey Smith 1/16
Joseph Matranga 1/6
Aubrey Wiger 1/1982
Robert Wylie 1/29
Kristin Stinson 1/11
Breondra R. Newman 1/5

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS -
JANUARY

Jeremiah Bellard 1/27
Edward Stephens 1/6
Trenton James Scott 1/31
Tess Crespi 1/20
Sammie Crespi 1/20
Adam Dixon 1/30
Cynthia Boza 1/14
Lauren Marshall 1/30
Karson Whitesell 1/23
Ryan Hartranft 1/15
Tommy Horton 1/21
Diana Phillipi 1/20
Isaiah Pinkney 1/13
Debra Kern 1/25
Gevaughnti Lawson 1/5
Jacki Grinstead 1/11
Mason Crist Heller 1/15
Scott Lee 1/9
Kristin Stinson 1/11
Paul McGrath 1/22
Michael McKinley 1/9
Bobby O'Shea 1/7
Michael Ragone 1/17
Amanda Lee Stanley 1/22
Phillip Templeton 1/15
Christopher John Thorne 1/25
Matthew Wright 1/28
Joseph Matrenga 1/8
Denis Anthony Giacobbe 1/18
Robert Wylie 1/18

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS -

FEBRUARY

El Barnhill 2/18
Laura Barrowman 2/26
Stephen Benish 2/3
Chet DeMilio 2/10
Brian Courtemanchie 2/3
Jessica Cudd 2/22
Ben Huff 2/21
Karson Whitesell 2/18
Jordi Bone 2/8
Jacob Preston Penrow 2/24
Jeramiah Karriker 2/17
Rickey Buchanan 2/25
Natalie Rose Ruiz 2/1
Jonah L. Gray 2/18
Austin McRee 2/16
Chaylan Tucker 2/7
Jaqueline Nicholson 2/13
David Patton 2/25
Jameel Pearse 2/28
Adam Powalski 2/4
Ben Huff 2/21
Kirsten Ashley Whicker 2/21
Phillip Templeton 2/12
Chris Taylor 2/23
Zachary Michael Tobey 2/4
Laura McDermott 2/10

REMEMBERING THESE CHILDREN ON THEIR ANGEL DAYS - FEBRUARY

Sam Wallace 2/22
Jack Hicks 2/24
Brad Alyard 2/9
Laura Barrowman 2/28
Frank Chen 2/11

Kevin Goodnight 2/17
Brendan Cullen 2/24
Bobby Dowling 2/28
Mike Goepp 2/11
Christopher Cullen 2/8
Brady Hopkins 2/1
Sean McCormick 2/17
Russell Kershaw 2/28
Jeannie Liebertz 2/12
Missy Minor 1/26
Natalie Rose Ruiz 2/1
Jason Lubeznik 2/16
Corey S. Flint 2/2
Richard McPeck 2/8
Aiden Miller 2/25
Stephanie Midkiff 2/3
James O'Keefe 2/19
David Patton 2/25
Adam Mashburn 2/24
Kirsten Ashley Whicker 2/7
Christina Rupp 2/12
Robert Paul Alexy 2/25
"Danny" Gary Scott 2/24
Allie Brown 2/21
Jason Smart 2/17
Keeghan Drake McCormick 2/22
Martha Charlotte VonDietman 2/26

Resolutions

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now,

there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

Have a happier New Year!

Pat Akery
TCF, Medford, OR

LOST POTENTIAL

Last year I attended a workshop presented by a specialist in grief named Dr. Cable. Dr. Cable said many important things about the grief process, but as a bereaved parent one thing stuck in my mind.

He said that if you ask a bereaved person to describe his deceased mother, he will say, "Oh, she was so sweet. She always wore flowered dresses and loved to bake cookies." But, if you ask a bereaved parent to describe her deceased child, she will say, "Oh, he would be five this year and just starting kindergarten," or, "She would be twenty-two this year and graduating from college."

You see, we bereaved parents grieve the lost potential of our children. Our children don't stop growing in our minds. We grieve again and anew each year as our child would have been a different age.

Chris Anderson
TCF, Walla Walla, Washington

Mourning Is My Mode

Today I realized that I have become a shell of the person I once was. What would my child think of this? I am alone, my only child is gone, yet I know he would not be pleased with the way I have isolated myself, wrapped in invisible crepe, sheltered by a mental wall. This is not the mom he knew. I am someone different now.

What am I to do with this? I feel like a lonely, mourning swan, swimming endlessly from shore to shore. I have no direction, I want no direction, I just keep moving with no purpose. I must get a grip on myself.

I know my motions must take on some meaning. I look to others for help. Yet I realize that if I do not reach out and help myself, I will crash on the rocks with the raging tide.

I decide I will add one new thing, one new event, one new person or one new writing to each day. I will reach out to others. I will force myself to move slowly back into life.

I will spend some time with my family. I will enjoy their children. I will mentor a child. I will start putting my thoughts into a written form.

I begin to do these things. I feel better. I attend another meeting of the parents who have lost their children. I feel as if I do belong here. It has been four months since my son died. I am overwhelmed.

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

My Adult Son's Death Has Changed My Life

When someone we love dies...we are changed. When that someone is our child...we are changed forever, deeply, no matter how old they were. Letting go is not a possibility. Everything in my being was geared to hold on, to protect and to be aware of his life. It didn't matter that he was an adult, twice the size of me. Past, present and future collapsed into a series of nows. This event shook me to my core. I have lost parts of myself. How can this happen? Where did he go? Where did I go? What were his last moments like? Did he feel pain? Did he suffer? Was my mom who passed a year prior there to greet him? How could I have prevented this? What should we have known?

In the months after his death, feelings of failure, vulnerability, depression, remorse, profound grief, guilt on top of a first hand experience of the meaning of the word bereft. Feeling bereft was/is physical for me. The word so accurately expressed my flattened energy.

Fortunately for me, I hadn't completely lost my spirituality. I lost my belief in God but I still held a belief that we are more than our physical bodies. This belief helped me to try to be open to connecting with him or open to the possibility that

he might be able to give me a sign or some indication that he was nearby. I believed early on that if it took any focus or intention for a spirit to make contact, Richard would at least try to make himself be known. He had a strong presence in life. When he walked into a room, people noticed. He was upbeat and deeply calm at the same time. He loved life.

While my belief about the non physical was open, my heart was so badly wounded by his sudden death that all I could do was to call out his name and plead, "Richard, Richard, Richard, how could this happen to you?" I begged for an answer, "Richard, how am I going to survive this?" These phrases poured out from the longing in my heart. I continued this way for a year, several times a day.

Everything in my world had changed. I moved to Southern California from New York to live close to him. These were to be the good years in my life and in his. Lots of outdoor activities, cookouts, hanging out, bike rides, hikes, paddle boarding and the gym. Those activities were just the "normal" weekend fare. Lots of talk of boats, excursions and opportunities to share life and celebrate the life of his baby girl. Our lives had not been easy when he was young. now the future looked really bright.

My hope stopped when he died. The resounding emptiness was deafening. Our family is spread out but mostly located in the Chicagoland area. I wouldn't have survived without them, close friends and wonderful neighbors where we lived three blocks from each other here on Balboa Island.

With Richard's guidance, I believe, I chose measures to help myself to continue with some of the goals that he and I shared, like becoming part of the community, getting involved and trying to make a contribution. Each choice that I made to move through an obstacle, or my own resistance, I heard Richard's voice beside me encouraging me, like he did back in Chicago when I achieved my second masters degree in 2005 to become a psychotherapist. He was always in my corner.

Now my journey includes widening my circle of trust. I'm choosing to live life instead of living a small life. Each of the obstacles have given me a choice...either move through it or acquiesce. Movement always feels like choosing life. Acquiescing to obstacles/resistance feels like defeat. I can't take anymore defeat. Richard's death was literally my worst nightmare. So in some ways my current fears are nothing compared to the one that just happened...out of the blue, suddenly, and shockingly.

Well-meaning people make assumptions about each other's lives. I'm choosing not to focus on being offended. I'm choosing to believe that people are generally

well-meaning, even if their comments sound ignorant or unconscious. People have the impression that I'm strong and that I'm getting over this or that new people have filled the void in my heart, that horrible, empty void. That is just not so. I'm unique to this journey, as is every other parent who has lost a child. There's no script except the one that we write.

I'm choosing to stay focused on the 'miracle' of feeling Richard's presence in my heart on a daily basis. Feeling connected to him helps me. During his life, he would never have been in favor of my checking out or living a small life. I know that ultimately choosing to live is my decision but I have to say that many times it's because I know what he would say or do. You could say that I continue for him. He has sparked a new determination in me to create an expanded version of myself. I have nothing to loose.

I'm clearing out the clutter of previous struggles, attitudes and perceptions that aren't useful to me any longer. I feel leadership growing out of my broken heart. People are entering my life and I am saying 'yes' instead of 'no' or worse, 'I don't know". I am beginning to get glimpses of how my life is evolving completely differently than I expected when I moved here. It's like my energy is clearing by the methods I have used to take care of myself in the past year and a half. I am finding a strong connection to Richard in my heart that I feared would go away but now I know will never die. I am not afraid to die and welcome the moment that I see and embrace him again. It doesn't matter what form he is in, I will recognize him.



[BASIA MOSINSKI](#)

Basia Mosinski, MA, MFA is an online Grief/Hope/Wellness Specialist. Basia was a Keynote Speaker at The Compassionate Friends 2018 National Conference. In 1993, Basia's stepson Logan died in a head-on train collision in the midwest where she and her family lived. Within two years, her marriage broke apart and more losses compounded. Logan's death took her on a journey through pain to inner healing and growth. Along the way, she participated in The Phoenix Project a 12-week intensive process for healing grief and loss. She not only participated in the process she later became a ritual elder of The Phoenix Project, working with Dr Jack Miller. In December of 2001 Dr Miller invited her and several other practitioners to give a weekend of healing to families impacted by 9/11 in New York. Basia was so moved by that work that when she returned to Chicago, she enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she was teaching to gain a second masters' degree in Art Therapy. When she graduated in 2005, she relocated to NY where she became the Assistant Director of Mental Health at Gay Men's Health Crisis while maintaining a thriving private practice, sharing office space with Dr. Heidi Horsley. In 2014, Basia moved to Southern California to live close to her only child, her grown son, Richard, his wife and her granddaughter. 9 months later, Richard died suddenly from a pulmonary embolism on a flight from Chicago to Orange County. In addition to helping others on their journey of healing, Basia is helping herself through the shock of what has happened by using what she has learned along the way and through

writing a book about her process and the ways that she and her family are coping with the loss of Richard through texting, photos and 'sightings'. Basia is the Executive Director of Only-Love.org. and chapter leader of The Compassionate Friends_Newport Beach

What the Loss of a Child Does to Parents, Psychologically and Biologically

Though parents mourning the death of a child experience classic psychological, biological, and social grief responses, there are unique challenges.

By [Joshua A. Krisch](#)

Updated Dec 04 2021, 4:26 AM

Psychological Impacts: How the Trauma of Losing a Child Harms the Psyche

The impacts of this tragedy are not solely biological. Interestingly, however, very few studies have delved into the nightmare of the death of a child. Most of the research on the psychological re“While there have been significant advances in

our scientific understanding of grief, we have a long way to go,” MacCullum says.

That’s not to say we are without literature. One 2015 study of 2,512 bereaved adults (many of whom were mourning the loss of a child) found little or no evidence of depression in 68 percent of those surveyed shortly after the tragedy. About 11 percent initially suffered from depression but improved; roughly 7 percent had symptoms of depression before the loss, which continued unabated. For 13 percent of the bereaved, chronic grief and clinical depression kicked in only after their lives were turned upside-down. (If those numbers seem low, it’s worth remembering that it is entirely possible to be deeply sad without being depressed.) Unfortunately, the research suggests that psychological damage was done by a child’s death often does not heal over time. A 2008 study found that even 18 years after losing a child, bereaved parents reported “more depressive symptoms, poorer well-being, and more health problems and were more likely to have experienced a depressive episode and marital disruption.” While some parents did improve, “recovery from grief... was unrelated to the amount of time since the death.” “The first year after losing a younger child, a parent is at an increased risk for suicide and everything from major depression to complicated grief,” Saltz says. Complicated grief differs from expected, normal grief, in that “there are more intense symptoms, alternating with seemingly no symptoms — a numbness — which potentially impairs their ability to function.”

“A parent who grieves without any type of serious complications, such as suicidal thoughts or self-harm behaviors, would be the best-case scenario,” says Kirsten Fuller, a physician and clinical writer for the Center of Discovery treatment centers. “Worst-case scenarios would be experiencing suicidal tendencies, psychosis, or developing a mental health disorder or an eating disorder.”

Biological Impacts: How the Death of a Child Changes a Parent’s Body

In 2018, Frank Infurna and colleagues examined the general health and physical functioning of 461 parents who had lost children over the course of 13 years. “We did see some decline, followed by a general bounce-back, or recovery, over time,” Infurna, who studies resilience to major stressors at Arizona State University, told *Fatherly*. Physical functioning was focused on one’s ability to complete various everyday tasks, and “we didn’t see much change in this,” Infurna says. But when he reviewed bereaved parents’ self-reports — whether they felt they got sick often, or whether they expected their health to improve or decline — he found poorer perceptions of health.

As with all major grief responses, the trauma of losing a child can kick off physical symptoms, including stomach pains, muscle cramps, headaches, and even irritable bowel

syndrome. A handful of studies have found more tenuous links between unresolved grief and immune disorders, cancer, and long-term genetic changes at the cellular level.

One surprising impact, often seen among parents mourning the loss of a child, is known as the broken-heart syndrome — a condition that presents oddly like a textbook heart attack. Symptoms include “crushing chest, pain, ST-segment elevation on electrocardiography, and elevated cardiac enzyme markers on lab results,” Fuller says, citing her previously written work on the subject. “As a reaction to emotional or physical stress, the body’s natural response is to release catecholamines, also known as stress hormones, that temporarily stun the heart muscle.”

Chronic stress can even impact how the brain functions, as long-term exposure to the stress hormone cortisol has been linked to the death of brain cells. And in a cruel twist of neurobiology, the regions of the brain responsible for grief processing, such as the posterior cingulate cortex, frontal cortex, and cerebellum, are also involved in regulating appetite and sleep. This may explain why grieving parents develop eating and sleeping disorders in the aftermath of the loss.

“There are many, many studies that have looked at the ongoing health effects of high levels of chronic stress,” says Gail Saltz, a psychiatrist at the NY Presbyterian Hospital Weill-Cornell School of Medicine. “And when you look at lists of stressful life events, this is at the top.”

Not, How Did He Die, But How Did He Live?

Not, how did he die, but how did he live?

Not, what did he gain, but what did he
give?

These are the units to measure the worth
Of a man as a man, regardless of his birth.

Nor what was his church, nor what was
his creed?

But had he befriended those really in
need?

Was he ever ready, with words of good
cheer,

To bring back a smile, to banish a tear?

Not what did the sketch in the newspaper
say,

But how many were sorry when he
passed away?

Hello Friends,

As we welcome in a new year, I want to applaud all of you. You did it! You survived the holidays without your child/grandchild/sibling. It wasn't easy! It was painful, tearful and stressful, but you did it! Grief is hard work. You are commended for doing that hard "grief" work and I hope you continue to make strides in your grief journey through 2022.

Warmly,

Susan

Michael's mom