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**The Compassionate Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies  
Oscoda Area Chapter

The Compassionate Friends of  
Oscoda Area  
4087 Forest Rd.  
Oscoda, MI 48750  
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## Issue 84 January/February 2026

### Monthly Meetings

*2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month*  
*Sacred Heart Church Family Center*  
*5300 N US 23*  
*Oscoda, MI 48750*  
*Meeting time 7:00 pm*

**If Oscoda Area Schools is closed due to weather our meeting is canceled.**

**January 13 @ 7 pm**  
**February 10 @ 7 -m**

**You need not walk alone!**

### Chapter Leadership

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Chapter  
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Email: [tcfoscoda@gmail.com](mailto:tcfoscoda@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org)  
FB The Compassionate Friends

### Oscoda Area

Co-Leaders: Fran Ommani  
Charlie Negro  
Secretary: Charlie Negro  
Treasurer: Jane Negro & PR  
Outreach: Tracey Toppa  
Director: Vicky Stadler

### REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Gail Lafferty 734-306-3930  
Kathy Rambo 734-748-2514



**"You Need Not Walk  
Alone!"**

## The New Year: A Time of Hope

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.

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

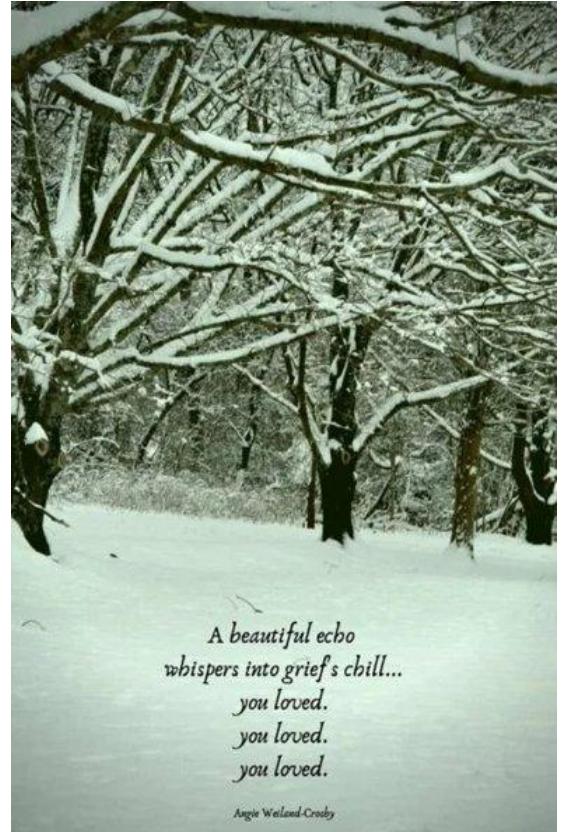
## THE SIBLING CORNER

*This corner is dedicated to siblings together adjusting to grief through encouragement & sharing*

### A Letter for My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near? Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always. Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eye.

~Robin Holemon  
~TCF Tuscaloosa, AL



*A beautiful echo  
whispers into grief's chill...  
you loved.  
you loved.  
you loved.*

*Angie Weland-Crosby*

### Embracing Winter's Quiet

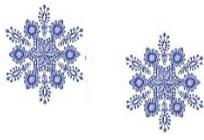
Though winter doesn't soften the pain of loss, it offers a unique space for reflection, rest, and introspection. Just as nature takes a rest to prepare for new growth, this season can allow you time to process your grief, honor your loved one's memory, and find new ways to heal. In this season of cold and quiet, be gentle with yourself. Your grief, like the winter, will shift and evolve, and with time, you may find that the stillness, though challenging, brings some peace.

Grief and winter are both powerful forces, each capable of evoking deep emotion. Together, they provide the space to pause, to feel, and to heal. Though the season may seem bleak, it can also be a time to reflect on what has been and what lies ahead. Be kind to yourself, and remember that even in the coldest, darkest months, there is room for warmth, growth, and renewal.

May you find comfort in the quiet, peace in the stillness, and hope in the promise of new seasons to come.

*Angela Hospice offers resources that can support you in your grief journey.*





***“Forever In Our Hearts”***  
 Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings  
***Loved and Missed***



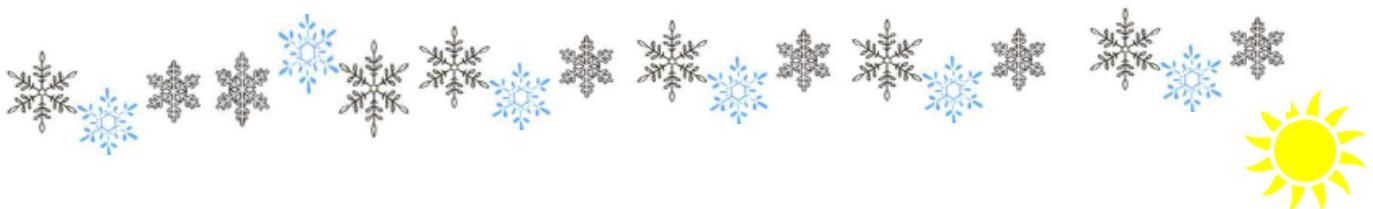
 <b>Birthday</b>		 <b>Remembered</b>	
<b>January</b> Derek Toppa	<b>January</b> Jake Katzenberger	<b>January</b> Tony Calabrese	<b>January</b> Katie Kirkpatrick
			
<b>February</b> Ashley Scott	<b>February</b> Jerry Brunk	<b>January</b> Tommy Draper	<b>January</b> Audree Ball
			
<b>February</b> Donovan Newcome	<i>Grief is like a snowflake... ...no two are the same. ~AI</i>	<b>January</b> Armani Kelly	<b>January</b> Daniel Cleary
			
<i>“Death ends a life, not a relationship.” — Mitch Albom</i>	<i>“Grief is another name for Love.” — Jennifer Williamson</i>	<i>“Snowflakes remind us that every storm brings with it beauty and wonder.” — Liam Foster</i>	<b>February</b> Casey Witney
			

## New Year's Resolutions for the Bereaved

This year I resolve to:

1. Not put a time limit on my grief. Loving someone means loving them for my lifetime whether they are physically present or not.
2. Tell their stories, the happy and the sad they will live on through me.
3. Teach others that they cannot "make" me cry, tears are only an external expression of how I am feeling all the time.
4. Understanding that crying or otherwise expressing my pain is healthy and normal. 'Doing well" means expressing my feelings.
5. Understand that others will not understand my pain and it isn't fair to expect them to do anything but listen.
6. Recognize that asking for help from those that love us is really a gift that we give to them.
7. Help others, reaching out to others in pain will help me to heal.
8. Do something nice for myself every day,
9. Know that if today I cannot do everything that needs to be done, tomorrow is another chance to get it done.
10. Cry when I need to, laugh when I can and to not feel guilty about either one.
11. Let go, bit by bit, of the guilt, regret and anger that can be so damaging.
12. Take a risk and let others into my life and heart.
13. Take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual health.
14. Reinvest in life a little bit each day...

Wishing you a peaceful New Year's! ~Tanya Lord



### Grief

Grief: is sometimes silent, like snowflakes falling on a dark winter's night..., but never peaceful or serene or pretty like the pure white snow. When grief is silent, the tears seem to turn to ice, like the snowflakes, before they reach our eyes.

Grief: is sometimes raging, like a monstrous thunderstorm with all its fury and lots of lighting striking our hearts at every angle. When grief is raging, the tears come in torrents, like the rain, and flood our soul.

Grief: whether it be silent or raging...Hurts. ~Verne Smith



### Winter Sun

And then it happens, from a bitter sky,  
A timid sun strides to his silent battle  
Against the gray and hostile universe.  
It changes ice to roses, sky to song.  
And then it happens that your heart recalls  
Some distant joy, gladness from the past.  
A slender light, then larger, braver, until  
Your mind returns to hope and peace.  
Let memories be beauty i fe,  
Like song and roses in the un.  
~Wintersun



### Grief is like a snowflake...

sometimes it comes one flake  
at a time;  
other times it comes like a  
blizzard.  
It melts away,  
but it always comes back.  
Just as each snowflake is  
unique,  
each person experiences grief  
in their own unique way.

- Julia Cook



## **Grief in the New Year: 6 Mindful Ways to Cope With Loss**

*This is an exert from a blog from Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT at <https://heatherstang.com/manage-grief-in-the-new-year/>*

When we experience the death of someone we love, it seems that the days go by slow, but the weeks and months fly by. Does that make sense to anyone else? Is it that way for you, too? How can it possibly already be the first week of January? It's a new year, same grief.

I used to anticipate this time of the year. It gave me the opportunity for renewal; a time to reevaluate habits, revise goals—to reflect on the past and make adjustments and tweaks. To start a new calendar or journal with fresh pages, all clean of negativity or suffering...This hard journey you and I find ourselves on might not lean in that direction so much anymore. Just muddling through is sometimes all we are capable of doing. Forget plans, fresh calendars, dreams and goals!

What I have experienced in the last few years is yet another layer of sorrow—one to add to that long list we read about in articles and books by the “experts.” My dear one isn’t here. Another year gone. His precious, meaningful life, cut short from the amazing experiences life can hold. Another year I won’t gain a daughter in law, or grandchildren. All quite selfish reasons, aren’t they? Normal and expected, but selfish, to an extent.

So, will you join me this season, push past the pain, and reach forward to hope and possibilities again?

The following article contains several ideas and points to help us find our way back to some semblance of normalcy—peace—maybe even joy!

Grief in the New Year is never easy. I have been writing about New Year’s grief for more than a decade, and every year I see the same pattern. As the calendar turns, more people reach out looking for reassurance, understanding, and a way to steady themselves. I share this so you know you are not alone.

Whether your loved one died recently or many years ago, the New Year often brings a renewed sense of longing. The passage of time can feel painfully visible. Even if your grief has softened, this transition can stir emotions you were not expecting.

Strong reactions are normal. Anxiety often increases as meaningful dates approach. Many people feel torn between wanting a difficult year to end and not wanting to move further away from the person they lost.

If you are feeling this way, nothing is wrong with you.

Sometimes the most helpful thing is simply naming what is happening. Grief is responding to change. The New Year is a powerful marker of change.

The rest of her article covers the [6 Mindful Ways to Cope with Loss](#).

1. Choose Self-Compassion Over Self-Improvement
2. Create a Kind Inner Response to “Happy New Year”
3. Remember You Are Not Leaving Your Loved One Behind
4. Use Your Calendar as a Tool for Support
5. Steady Your Mind with Simple Mindfulness
6. Seek Compassionate Community



*My hope is not that your grief disappears in the year ahead. My hope is that your suffering eases, even a little, and that you feel supported as you learn how to live alongside loss.*

*After many years of grief work, I have seen this again and again. People do not get over grief, but they do learn how to carry it with more steadiness, meaning, and care.*

*My grieving heart honors yours.*

*“What we have once enjoyed deeply we can never lose.  
All that we love deeply becomes part of us” Helen Keller*



## This Month of February, I Wish You Love

This is the month that a whole day is dedicated to love. In our sorrow, let us not forget that one emotion which, above all else, can comfort and console us.

Let us think of the things we love:

1. Our child/grandchild/sibling-whom we love-still love and always will love-here in our hearts as long as we live.
2. Our families-hurting like us-lonely-needing each other-needing us.
3. Our true friends-listening-trying to help-wanting to lighten our load, but not knowing how-not always understanding, but there,
4. Our memories-of wonderful times gone by-some that make us laugh-some that make us cry-but all part of the fabric of our lives and of our love for each other.
5. Our quiet times-to get away by ourselves and think-to read-to note again the world around us-to let peace enter.
6. Our Compassionate Friends-who are there-who know-who understand when others do not.

“Love makes the world go “round” and when our world comes to a sudden, grinding, heart-shattering stop, love is the glue that keeps us from falling off.

~Fran MacArthur

~TCF Southern, MD

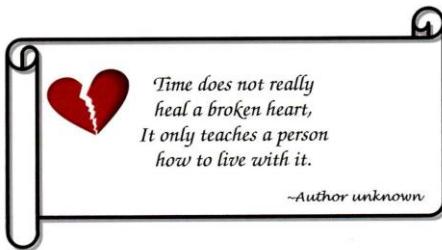


### The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first; nor will we be the last to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now, right now, it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending. Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears.

Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life. A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed. The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

~Nancy Green TCF  
Livonia, MI



### Love

A million times we've missed you,  
a million times we've cried  
if love could have saved you,  
You never would have died.  
Things we feel most deeply  
are the hardest things to say.

Our deepest one,  
we have loved you  
in a very special way.  
~Author Unknown

