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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 68 November/December 2022

### 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.**

**November 8<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm**

**Worldwide Candle Lighting December 11 @6:45**

**December 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm**

*You need not walk alone!*

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### CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Chapter  
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750  
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The Compassionate Friends Oscoda Area

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

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### REGIONAL COORDINATORS

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



### A Solitary Journal

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows how great the hurt is. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

*~Helen Steiner Rice*



### I'm Thankful

I'm thankful this Thanksgiving  
that my grief is not so new.  
Last year it was so painful to  
think of losing you.  
Death can't claim my love for you  
though we are far apart.  
Sweet memories will always be  
engraved upon my heart.  
Time can never bring you back  
but it can help me be  
thankful for the years of joy  
you brought our family.  
To all the parents with grief so new  
I share your loss and sorrow.  
I pray you find with faith and time  
the blessing of each tomorrow.

*~Charlotte Irick  
TCF Idaho Falls, ID*



## Autumn Tears

By Penny Young

We look back on September and we realize that somehow, we made it through those dreaded first days of school. Whether it was the anticipation or the actual days that were the worst, we survived. We used our faith, our support systems or just plain hard work and made it over yet another hurdle. We watched small children heading for their first day of kindergarten, listened to excited teenagers talk of high school and heard stories of children leaving home to attend post-secondary school. Somehow, we rode the waves of grief and found ourselves ashore again.

As the waves subside, new ones will build as we head into the holidays that speak of, and to, children. Halloween came and went, and for some, painful memories. Thanksgiving arrives to exemplify family, togetherness, and Christmas looms ahead. These special days are forever reminders of our loss—the costumes we'll never see, the empty chair at turkey dinner, the fun and magic we'll never share with someone we love. Forever reminders that our child has died.

To survive when these events and anniversary days come around let's find time to think of the good memories we have—the announcement of our long awaited pregnancy at Thanksgiving dinner, the look of excitement on our son's first Halloween night, the vision of our daughter helping prepare the turkey dinner. These holidays will always be reminders that our child died. Let us also make them reminders that our child lived! They left us memories more precious than any others to hold and celebrate!

*Penny Young is a member of TCF Powell River in British Columbia  
This article is shared through the We Need Not Walk Alone Magazine Fall 2022  
The Compassionate Friends pg 28. For more Fall articles check it out at  
<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/autumn-2022/>*



## COMING UNWRAPPED

We wrap ourselves for the holidays much like the presents we give. The brightly colored paper hides what's within. When people look at us they only see the outside.

We promise ourselves we will not come unwrapped. We'll make it through the family celebrations, the church services, and the big occasion. The paper and the ribbon will remain intact.

But it is the small thing that manages to untie the bow. The little insignificant moment, the Christmas parade, the search for the tree, the discovered ornament, the special carol, the memory and the paper gets wrenched off. The true Christmas present shows itself. The inevitable tide of feelings bursts out of the artificially decorated façade. The emotions pour out. The intense anger wells up. The tears shed and the holidays come. These are as sure as the tides of the sea and the march of time.

Only a compassionate friend, a bereaved parent, knows of what I speak. Yet the answer isn't in fighting or in denying these feelings. We have paid the price. We have the right to grieve. The resolution of our grief is the grieving. Our hope for all who read this letter is that you will make it through the holidays. We cannot make the aching go away, but know there are others who suffer with you. We have made it, and together will continue on.

~Hank Hewett TCF Scranton, PA2



*"Forever In Our Hearts"  
Our Children/Siblings Remembered*

Birthdays 		Remembrances 	
<p><b>November</b> Michael Wright</p> 	<p><b>November</b> Steve Valentine</p> 	<p><b>November</b> Aaron Dean</p> 	<p><b>November</b> Ronald Lewis</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Ronald Lewis</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Everything about the holidays feels harder when someone you love is missing. But if they could see the effort you're making they'd be really proud.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">all-greatquotes.com</p>	<p><b>December</b> John Pavlat</p> 	<p><b>December</b> Blake VanSnapson</p> 

*"As we journey through these painful experiences of living, we must never forget that we have an amazing resilience and capacity to survive. Just as whole forests burn to the ground and eventually grow anew, just as spring follows winter, so it is nature's way through it all, whatever we suffer, we can keep on growing. It takes courage to believe we can survive, that we will grow. It takes courage, too, to live now and not postpone living until some vague tomorrow."*

*~Judy Tatelbaum,  
The Courage to Grieve*



*The seasons around us are changing  
just as the seasons of grief change.  
Be kind and patient with  
yourself and others.*

*~K. Cantrell  
TCF Frankfort, KY*



# THE SIBLING CORNER

## Hanging Up the Holiday Blues

By-Scott Mastley

posted November 24, 2009 *Open to Hope*

I believe, maybe because it helps me heal, that my brother would want me to enjoy the holidays. His car accident was in December almost 15 years ago, and that December date catches up with me each year. I start to hide from the world around mid-November. I want to sleep more. I blink back tears watching sappy commercials. I don't feel like working or working out at the gym.

It happens right on cue every year, but it took me several years to realize it. I just thought it was holiday stress. Now I recognize it right away and know that I'm subconsciously dreading the December 5th angel date. The depression rolls in as if on cue.

When I didn't realize the cause of the depression, I let it roll over me and tried to keep it to myself. I didn't want to be a complainer. I thought about Chris every day, so I didn't see how this time of year was different.

Now I know it's going to happen, know why it's happening, and I've told my family about it. My wife knows that December can be a little crazy. It took me years to get excited about Christmas again after Chris's accident, but now I love it like I did before. It's the only time of year that I actually enjoy going to the mall.

Believing that Chris would want me to enjoy the holidays helped tremendously. I'm still going to cry when I see a sappy commercial, because the emotions are running high this time of year, but I'm also going to appreciate the holiday atmosphere.

In the early years I tried distraction (go to the movies), escape (travel to another town), and denial (pretend everything is OK). Distraction and escape were helpful at the time, but denial never worked.

Now I focus on my family. When I see the hole that is Chris's absence, I look at other families. That's why I enjoy the mall at Christmas. It's packed with families, panicked parents and excited kids. I love to think that they are not burdened by anything as heavy as a lost sibling or child. They're just getting ready for another great Christmas. It helps me get ready for my own.



### Food Drive

St. Vincent DePaul & F.I.S.H. of Oscoda collect food for families during the holidays.

During this season of giving we invite TCF to join with them and donate non-perishable food items. You may bring them in during our November, December meetings or the Candle Lighting to help them with their efforts.

"Like snowflakes, my Christmas memories gather and dance — each beautiful, unique, and gone too soon."  
— Deborah Whipp

cake



## Hands

“Grandma, how do you cope with pain?”

“With your hands, honey. If you do it with your mind instead of

relieving the pain, it toughens even harder.”

“With your hands grandma?”

“Yes, our hands are the antennae of our soul. If you move them; knitting, cooking, painting, playing or sinking them into the grounds, you send care signs to the deepest part of you and your soul lights up because you’re paying attention to it. Then signs of pain will no longer be necessary.”

“Hands are really that important?”

Yes my daughter. Think of babies: they start to know the world through the touch of their hands. If you look at the hands of old people, they tell you more about their life than any body part. Everything that is done by hand is said to be done with the heart. Because it’s really like this: hands and heart are connected. Masseurs know well: when they touch someone with their hands, they create a deep connection. It is precisely from this connection that healing comes. Think of lovers: when they touch their hands, they make love in a more sublime way.”

“My hands grandma...how long I haven’t use them like this!”

“Move them, my love. Begin to create with them and everything within you will begin to move. The pain will not pass away. And instead what you do with them will become the most beautiful masterpiece and it won’t hurt anymore. Because you have been able to transform its essence.”

~Elena Bernabe

<https://eileenadler.com/blog/grandma-how-do-you-deal-with-pain-by-elena-barnabe>

May 2021

## The Christmas Tears



I will gather with the family, Christmas Day is finally here. But I will reserve a moment of time to shed my Christmas Tears.

This special moment is just for us, a mother or dad and her son/daughter. I’ll laugh and cry about times gone by and all the things we’ve done.

As I sing our Christmas carols, I’ll open the gift you made for me.

This gift is more precious than gold itself. It’s the gift of your memory.

As I sift through the layers of tissue that are in this gift of mine,

It takes me back to a Christmas past, to a brighter and happier time.

I’ll relive all the Christmases that we had for twenty-two year, knowing that there will be no more.

But you have bestowed a second gift that starts things all anew.

A granddaughter to mend the hole in my heart, that was left by losing you.

I trust these precious gifts of yours will sustain me through the years,

And maybe there will be a Christmas day

With no Christmas tears.

~Linda Mcintuff

TCF Southern Maryland



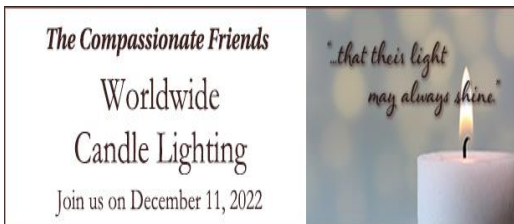
**8<sup>th</sup> Annual Worldwide  
Candle Lighting  
December 11 @ 6:45 PM**

We are very happy to inform you that we will once again be holding our annual Candle Lighting. It will be Sacred Heart Family Center in Oscoda.

This will be Sunday December 11 beginning at 6:45 so that candles can all be lit by 7:00 pm.

This very touching evening includes poems, lighting candles and refreshments. We will also have a table with pictures of our children, grandchildren and siblings.

*"Their light may always shine"*



**Ornamental Memories**

Ornaments brightly decorate the Christmas tree.  
Some delicate, some sturdy, some old, some new.

Different shapes and sizes,  
Crystal, glass, wood or ceramic,  
Ornaments dangle on the branches,  
Catching colors from a window, or a candle,  
Or a twinkling light.



The old ornaments bring back memories of Christmases  
gone by,

The new ornaments represent hope & promises for the future.

And when the holidays are over,

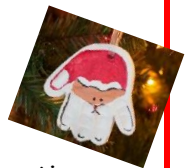
The ornaments safely wrapped & packed away in their boxes  
till next holiday season,



We still recall the priceless ornaments

That are our precious memories.

Some funny, some happy, some sad,



Times of celebrations birthdays, holidays and vacations.

They glow and sparkle in our minds, catching the light of our  
memory

From hearing a favorite song, or seeing a familiar sight.

We never pack away these ornamental memories,

We recall them fondly and often, they are cherished  
& treasured.

We recall them fondly and often, they are cherished &  
treasured.

They brightly and forever decorated our family tree

Throughout all seasons of our life.

*~Meg Avery*

*In Loving Remembrance Especially at Christmas of our son*

*James*



**I will Light Candles This Christmas**

I will light candles this Christmas.

Candles of joy despite of all sadness.

Candles of hope where despair keeps  
watch.

Candles of courage for fears ever  
present.

Candles of peace for tempest tossed days

Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.

Candles of love to inspiring all my  
living.

Candles that will burn all year long.

