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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
989-254-5888
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Issue 65 May/June 2022

Monthly Meetings

2nd 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.

May 10th @ 7 pm

June 14th @ 7 pm

Butterfly Release

June 26th @ 1 pm

You need not walk alone!

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

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

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



Mother's Day...Father's Day... Proms...Graduations...

By Fox Valley TCF, Aurora, Illinois

Spring comes...and with it comes the uneasy awareness of difficult days ahead. For those who are still going through all the "firsts" without your child, we share with you some special ways other parents have coped and managed. For those who are further in their grief, we share these because we all know how difficult these days can be.

Mother's Day...Father's Day... graduations, vacations,, these are special family times which often catch us unaware and bring unexpected tears and painful memories of young lives cut short. It does get better, or should we say different! And you can make these special days better with some planning and with encouragement from those who have already been there. Whatever the "special day" that lies ahead for your family, try to focus on doing something meaningful and tangible in remembrance of your child. Share as a family thoughts and suggestions about planting a tree or starting a rose garden, donating a book to the library or school, putting flowers on the altar, lighting a special candle or taking the long talked--of vacation. Tears and moments of sadness are okay, for they are expressions of love.

Remember:

- Take one day at a time.
- Keep things simple by playing down the holidays and special days, while they are so painful.
- Change your routine from past years.
- Make plans to be "busy" during at least part of the day (go out to lunch or to a movie, or visit friends).
- Give your older children some "space." They not only feel your extreme sadness at these times; they also have their own feelings to deal with.

The anticipation is often worse than the day itself!

Releasing Your Emotional Pain Is A Necessity

By Psychotherapist Barton Goldsmith

Anyone in the mental health field will tell you that if you repress your pain long enough, it will show up in other ways and areas of your life. Repressing your pain will also hamper your ability to function the way you'd like, and people who know you will notice. It may also temporarily turn you into a jerk or a hot mess.

We all understand what it's like to get overwhelmed, especially after the past two years of living through a pandemic. It's been a difficult time, making every loss and hurt that much harder to process, so sometimes we just hold it all in, and not always on a conscious level.

Like I said, repressing your pain manifests in other ways and places, like in your dreams or your behaviors or even your ability to just focus on a television show. Pain takes over, so your normal routines and even your tried and true defense mechanisms no longer work. Maybe you can sleep for a few hours, but the pain comes back as soon as you wake up.

So what can you do?

The pain won't go away on its own---ignoring it won't help---so the only choice you really have is to deal with it. And you have a lot of choices as to how to deal with it. I suggest trying a little bit of everything to see what works best. Here are some options. Pick the methods that work for you and interchange them when necessary.

Let yourself cry. Therapists will tell you that this normal human action is one of the most healing things you can do to release your inner pain. So when you feel tears come up, just let them out, as long as you are in an appropriate setting. It may be helpful to have a friend with you or on the other end of the phone. That being said, some people prefer and get more out of crying alone.

Share your pain. Even if you are a private person, sharing your pain is something that will make your journey to healing easier. When someone is there to validate and comfort you---when that awful feeling comes over your entire body---a hand on your shoulder or a warm embrace can be a godsend. If you don't have anyone, seek out the help of a licensed counselor.

Find ways to release on your own. You have to do some work on your own to release the pain and make what you're going through as easy as possible. Journaling helps me, as does visualization. You may prefer prayer or long walks. It doesn't matter what methods you pick as long as they relieve some of the pressure.

Remember that the world is still turning. Yes, life will go on and nothing is permanent. It's helpful to remember that this pain is a passing phase and that you will get to the next level in your life. This is how growth works. We are always better in numerous ways after we have healed our emotional pain.

One thing we humans have in common is that we each feel emotional pain at times for various reasons. Under certain circumstances, our emotional pain can be bonding, and perhaps showing mutual understanding is really the most healing thing we can do for each other. Putting yourself in another person's shoes is a type of therapy, and it will connect you with that person and yourself in ways that you never imagined.

~Psychotherapist Barton Goldsmith can be reached at Twitter at @BartonGoldsmith, or email him at Barton@barton-goldsmith.com

Supporting Grieving Siblings: What You Should Know and How You Can Help

By Colleen Shannon, LICSW, Associate Program Director – Youth & Community Outreach,
and Emily Carson Dashawetz, MFA, Former Communications & Marketing Coordinator



Siblings are often among our first friends, rivals, and connections. They teach us and we teach them. Together we learn how to share, how to fight, and how to navigate the complexities of our families and the larger world. They play a pivotal role in our lives. They share our history; they often share our hopes for the future.

It is no wonder that when a sibling dies, the surviving sibling or siblings are left to navigate a world that is forever changed. Their lives change, and often, so do their identities. It is no exaggeration to say that, when a sibling dies, a grieving sibling asks in many different ways, “Who am I without

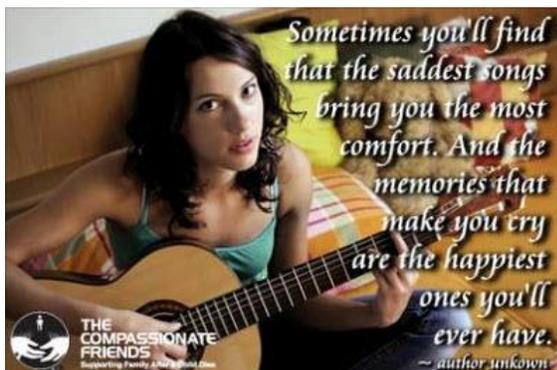
my brother or sister?”

Our siblings are the people who are supposed to be with us for the long haul. We expect them at the breakfast table, kicking our feet when mom or dad aren’t looking. We plan for them to be at milestone events, like our birthdays, weddings, and graduations. They are the people with whom we were supposed to confide in, roll our eyes with when our parents are being ridiculous, and cry with when our family is struggling. When a sibling dies, all of these moments die with them. The loss of what could have been, and what we hoped would have been, can sting as deeply as the loss of our sibling’s life.

Ways to help support a grieving sibling

- Honor the surviving sibling’s relationship with the person who died. It may feel more natural to ask a surviving sibling about how his or her parents are doing, or even to ask an older sibling how another younger sibling in the family is coping with the death. However, taking time to ask a surviving sibling how he or she are doing is an important step in showing your support. Even if they don’t respond, that’s okay. Asking them how they are can be an important validation that it’s okay to grieve, too, even while their parents are also grieving.
- Say the name of the person who died. Honoring the person who died by naming them, especially on holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays can be very important for the surviving sibling. In addition to grieving the relationship and shared history as siblings, it’s important for the surviving sibling to feel comfortable grieving the person.
- Make time just for them. Make a concerted effort to do things with the surviving sibling that he or she enjoys. You might also spend time together doing activities that the person who died loved to do in order to honor them, or find ways to incorporate new rituals that honor the person who died into regular activities. It’s important to share time with the surviving sibling or siblings and let them know, implicitly or explicitly, that their feelings about the death and grief are welcomed whenever they are ready to share them.

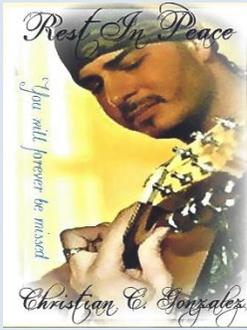
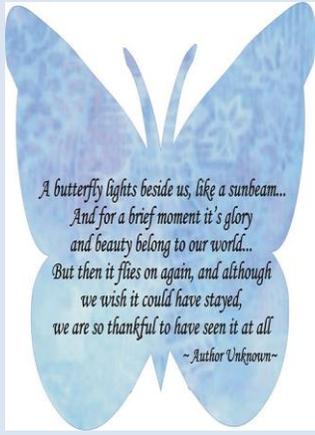
Understand that this grief will be a lifelong process. Our culture’s instinct to put a time limit on the grief process can fall particularly hard on grieving siblings. When a sibling dies, there might be extra internal or external pressure to “move on” or “get over it.” Remember: there is no time frame. Grief is a process, not a final destination. You are the expert of your own grief, and there is no one “right” way to grieve.





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



Birthdays 		Remembrances 	
<p>May Katie Kirkpatrick</p> 	<p>June Elise Schenk</p> 	<p>May Mark Negro</p> 	<p>May Steve Valentine</p> 
<p>June Christian Gonzalez</p> 	<p>June Tommy Draper</p> 	<p>June Aaron Gonzales</p> 	 <p><i>A butterfly flits beside us, like a sunbeam... And for a brief moment it's glory and beauty belong to our world... But then it flies on again, and although we wish it could have stayed, we are so thankful to have seen it at all ~ Author Unknown ~</i></p>
<p>June Bradley Hilberg</p> 	<p>June Mark Negro</p> 	<p><i>Forever in our hearts</i></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*

Memory Garden @ Mark's Park

The Memory Garden @ Mark's Park is a perennial flower garden nurtured, maintained and supported by community volunteers and the Compassionate Friends of Oscoda Area. The Memory Garden is intended to be a place to enjoy nature and revisit positive memories of our children, grandchildren and siblings who died too soon.



In addition to the garden, we have a memory brick area.

Individual bricks may be purchased, engraved with the name of your child, grandchild, or sibling and placed in the designated area of the park. Proceeds from this project will be used to support TCF activities as well as to maintain and expand the Memory Garden @ Mark's Park.

We can only allow one brick per child, grandchild or sibling that has died in order to keep the area open for future bricks.

To order a Memory Brick, please mark which size brick, complete the form and return it to.....

_____ 4 x 8 bricks \$35.00 with up to 3 lines of text with 13 characters per line.

_____ 8 x 8 bricks \$55.00 with up to 5 lines of text with 13 characters per line.

Name _____ Date: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Make checks payable to: TCF of Oscoda Area

Return completed form to: TCF Oscoda Area
4087 Forest Rd.
Oscoda, MI 48750

For more information please contact us at tcfoscodagmail.com

Please use grid below, allowing one space per character—a character is each letter, number, and/or space used.



The Compassionate Friends of Oscoda Area 8th Annual Butterfly Release

Sunday June 26, 2022

1:00 pm

Sacred Heart Church Lawn

(located 5300 N HWY US 23, Oscoda, MI)

This event is an opportunity for families, as well as extended family and friends, to come together to remember children who have been taken too soon.

RSVP by Wednesday June 15th

by emailing your name, number of attendees and name of loved one to tcfoscodagmail.com

If you wish to make a donation you can do that the day of the release. You can also send a check made out to TCF of Oscoda Area to
TCF of Oscoda Area, 4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750

A special time of refreshments and visiting will follow the release of butterflies.
Bring a picture of your child, grandchild or sibling for the sharing table.

Please join us in this celebration of life!

For more information check us out at www.tcf-oscoda.org and on

