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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 73 September/October 2023

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.

September 12th @ 7 pm

October 10th @ 7pm

You need not walk alone!

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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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

We Need Each Other

Many living things need each other to survive. If you have ever seen a Colorado aspen tree, you may have noticed that it does not grow alone. Aspens are found in cluster, or groves. The reason is that the aspen sends up new shoots from the roots. In a small grove, all the trees may actually be connected by their roots.

Giant California redwood trees may tower 300 feet into the sky. It would seem that they would require extremely deep roots to anchor them against strong winds. But we're told that their roots are actually quite shallow- in order to capture as much surface water as possible. And they spread in all directions, intertwining with other redwoods. Locked together in this way, all trees support each other in wind and storms. Like the aspen, they never stand alone. They need each other to survive.

People, too, are connected by a system of roots. We are born to family and learn to make friends. We are not meant to survive long without others. And like the redwood, we need to hold one another up. When pounded by the sometimes vicious storms of life, we need others to support and sustain us.

Have you been going it alone? Maybe it's time to let someone else help hold you up for awhile. Or perhaps someone needs to hang on to you.



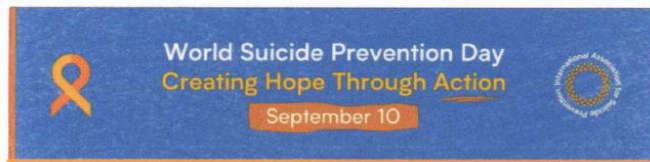
~From the book, "The Riches of the Heart"
~By Steve Goodier
~Special permission to reprint granted to TCF by the author



Grandparents Day September 10, 2023

Grandparents Day is for grieving grandparents, too. Losing a grandchild can be one of the most painful experience a parent can go through, as grandparent's grief is twofold. First, they can mourn the loss of the grandchild themselves and the loss of their relationship.

Second, they feel the pain of seeing their adult child grieve. The loss of a child for a parent can be devastating, and as a result, a grandparent's two-layered grief can be deeply upsetting as well.



World Suicide Prevention Day
Creating Hope Through Action
September 10

Please light a candle near a window at 8PM on 9/10/23 to show your support for suicide prevention, to remember a lost loved one, and for survivors of suicide.

"There is no suffering greater than that which drives people to suicide; Suicide defines the moment in which mental pain exceeds the human capacity to bear it. It represents the abandonment of hope."

~John T. Maltzberger, MD
Past President of the American Ass. Of Suicidology



September Monarchs

Time between summer and winter.

*Time under changing skies.
Muted and heavy with foresight, or
endless blue, smiling at butterflies.*

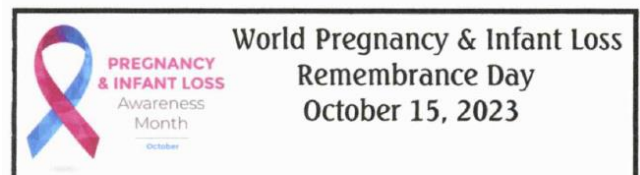
Time between summer and winter.

*Time between laughter and tear.
Harvest of beauty remembered,
and voices (where are you?) to hear.*

Time between summer and winter.

*Thoughtful and painful and wise.
Muted and heavy with losing, but also
smiling at butterflies.*

Sascha

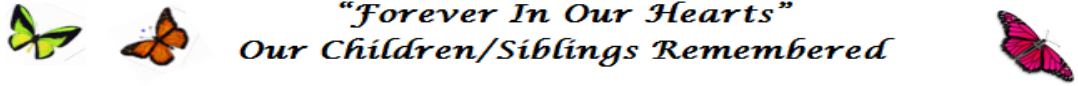



World Pregnancy & Infant Loss Remembrance Day
October 15, 2023

PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS
Awareness Month
October

In 1988, President Reagan declared October as the month to recognize the unique grief of bereaved parents in an effort to demonstrate support to the many families who have suffered such a tragic loss of a child to stillbirth, miscarriage, SIDS or any other cause at any point during pregnancy or infancy.

Please light a candle at 7pm local time to honor all babies gone too soon. Keep your candle lit for at least one hour to create a continuous "wave of light" across all time zones.



"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Siblings Remembered

Birthdays 		Remembrances 	
<p style="text-align: center;">September Drew Preston</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October Audree Ball</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">September Andrew Carroll</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">September Kyra Goodman Swiatek</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">October Amanda Grace Wilkinson</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October Samuel Martin</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October Jerry Brunk</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October April White</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">October Daniel Cleary</p> 		<p style="text-align: center;">Memories You are gone but thank you for all these soft, sweet things you have left behind, in my home, in my head, in my heart.... Nikita Gill</p>	

Memories

Memories are flowers growing in the heart
 Flowers picked on happy days
 That time arranges in bouquets
 To warm the heart in tender ways
 By feelings they impart.
 Memories are pictures taken through the years,
 Pictures of a smiling face.
 A happy time, a favorite place...
 These pleasures time cannot erase.
 They are kept as souvenirs.
 ~Laura Rogers
 TCF Northfield, N





Bittersweet Memories

One of the most precious things to a parent who has lost a child is the memories. Without them, it would be as if their child never was. Without them, it is so bittersweet that it can make a parent laugh and cry, rejoice and anguish, touch the sweetness to the lips and taste the salt from the tears.

Memories keep the heart from crushing under the weight of sorrow. They give a parent the chance to be with their child again. They can walk through their memories like they were a movie. When the memories are so vivid, you can almost feel them. It is so bittersweet when the reality comes and you realize it is just a memory, a thought, and you are reminded of what you have lost.

If you asked a parent if they would give up the memories so they did not have to feel the pain of knowing their child is gone, they would tell you no. As painful as it may be, not having the memories or feeling their presence is just as unbearable as losing them.

There is no happy place to go to, but here is a place to be with your child. You know before you step into that realm that it will be painful, but you know that it will be joyful too.

So as we let the memories take us to a time that our child was safe with us, just rest a while until it is time to go and the next time try not to think of what is gone but what is still in your heart and will always be.

~Vickie VanAntwerp

TCF, "We Need Not Walk Alone" Vol. 34. No 1/2



A SIBLING'S FEELINGS

The pain of a sibling is so real we sometimes hide it deep inside of ourselves. As we watch our parents hurting we see the pain in their eyes. We are also hurting not only for the loss of our brother or sister but also for our own parents. We need to reach out to each other to let each other know we are hurting inside. Our lives have all changed

forever. I know they lost a son but I lost my younger brother I loved, and as siblings we share a special bond that will never have any more for he no longer lives...my brother, my friend. I will always miss you and I will never forget you for you will always live in my heart, and I have wonderful memories no one can ever take away from me. In my heart you will stay, love you forever.

~Marie Porreca / TCF Rockland County, NY

It's Bittersweet at Halloween

--a portion of this story

It has been many years since my daughter passed. Halloween doesn't bother me, but we all know that the next day we turn the calendar, and November is here with the holidays around the corner. These are hard times whether you are newly bereaved parent or lived a number of years since your child died. We need not walk alone, but reach out to each other. One of the greatest blessings to me now is the gift of memory. I cherish the happy memories of my child in all the seasons of the year.



~Cindy Holt

~TCF Jamestown, NY

THE ETERNAL LANDSCAPE

“whether our children lived, a heartbeat or 100 years they were loved”

When poets look at life, fall is the perfect season to reflect middle age and approaching death. After 40 years of teaching English, the four-season metaphor is pretty hard wired into my subconscious; but after 12 years as a bereaved parent fall reflects a different view. To the newly bereaved death is a horror, bringing pain and loss into every daily activity. The loss of a child causes logic to explode, shatters dreams and hopes, crushes plans, destroys security. The world no longer makes sense. We cry for relief, wanting yesterday back, needing that child-like faith in life, ourselves, the universe. With time we realize that all who are born must also die. Death is the price we pay for this life. Our debt to death cannot be avoided but we can move beyond pain and fear. Whether our children lived a heartbeat or 100 years they were loved. Because they were loved they changed the world, making life better, richer, fuller. Instead of loss, fall leaves, gently falling to the ground, remind me that life is beautiful. Everything is as it should be. Death does not win. Life and love continue to flourish. Matt and I walk hand in hand, part of the eternal landscape.



Keith Swett, Seymour, WI TCF



HEART CONNECTIONS – DAILY ACTIONS TO SUPPORT GRIEF

Posted on August 29th, 2023 <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/blog>

By Shari O’Laughlin

Grief is felt and experienced differently depending on the time frame since the death of your child, sibling, or grandchild. It’s common to feel overwhelmed and hopeless at any time, but especially when the loss is more recent. When those painful waves hit, you can take small steps to better support those moments. Some of the immediate things that help shift your feelings include moving your body, adjusting your environment, being in nature, and connecting with someone.

Taking a walk or practicing yoga moves your body in a way that aids the physical effects of grief. The combination of moving your physical body and changing your breathing affects your thinking and can gently shift current painful thoughts. Spending moments in nature similarly shifts your energy. Taking 20 minutes to tend a garden, water shrubs or flowers, or feel snowflakes fall on your face in the winter, helps to soothe you when you’re feeling significant distress. Then it’s easier to move forward with your day.

If a pet or animal is part of your life, spending some calm moments with them can comfort you when you’re in pain. Hugging a dog or cat, touching their soft fur, listening to their heartbeat and soft breathing, and sharing gentle space with them has a calming effect. These small actions quiet your nervous system in ways that human interaction sometimes may not. Taking a few minutes to play with a pet also shifts your distress and can bring a needed smile.

Reaching out to talk with a comforting and supportive loved one when feeling low reinforces your human connectedness. You don’t need to seek answers or have deep conversations. Hearing the life and vitality in someone else’s voice helps as a surrogate for the life energy you may be struggling to feel. Feeling the warm voice of a friend or enjoying the belly laugh of a toddler can help lift you in that moment.

The grief and sorrow you feel are directly related to the deep and profound love you have for your child, brother, sister, or grandchild who has died. While you can’t erase those moments of sorrow, small actions can nudge you forward when you can’t find your way. You can give yourself these small steps of care at any time and ask for help from those you love to remind you to practice these whenever they are needed.





A Season of Many Feelings

Fall is a season of many feelings.

Autumn is here once again, as it comes every year.
And with the leaves, my falling tears.

This time of year is the hardest of all.

My heart is still breaking, once again it is fall.
Memories once so vivid seem to fade.
My time with you seems some other age.
This season reminds me of grief and of pain.
But yet teaches hope and joy once again.

For the trees are still living beneath the gray bark.
And you, my sweet child,
Are alive in in my heart!

Cindy Schake
TCF, Butler, PA



Wearing a Mask



Halloween is a great time to pretend to be someone else. You can be mean and nasty even though you're usually a pretty nice person, or you can be scary when you usually are the one that gets scared. You can be strong and powerful, beautiful or mysterious or famous. You can pretend to be anything on Halloween.

It isn't fun, though, to try to always wear a mask. Sometimes, for a person who is grieving, it seems like you need to always pretend to be your old happy self. Your friends and others may want you to forget about your loss and go on as if nothing much has changed. But it is really hard to mask your true feelings all the time. It is much better for you if you can "take off your mask" and just be yourself sometimes. If you let your feelings out, then you are being honest with yourself and others. By taking off your mask and revealing your true self, you will be a much more REAL person. It's better to save masks for Halloween.

*From Inside Fernside Newsletter
A Center for Grieving Children
TCF St Paul MN August/ September/October 2013*

LOOKING AHEAD....

The Compassionate Friends
Worldwide Candle Lighting
Join us on December 10, 2023



*"...that their light
may always shine."*