

NATIONAL OFFICE  
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.  
PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696



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

The Compassionate Friends of  
Oscoda Area  
4087 Forest Rd.  
Oscoda, MI 48750  
989-254-5888

Toll Free  
1-877-969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Email: [tcfoscodagmail.com](mailto:tcfoscodagmail.com)  
[www.tcf-oscodagmail.com](http://www.tcf-oscodagmail.com)

YEAR 3

## 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER 2016 NEWSLETTER

No. 26



### Monthly Meetings:

#### Third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm

Oscoda Baptist Church Multipurpose Lounge, 5589 N US 23, Oscoda, MI 48750  
(any questions about meetings or location, please call 989-254-5888—not the church)



*The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.*

#### CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Co-Leader - Fran Whitney  
Co-Leader/Secretary – Charlie Negro  
Treasurer – Jane Negro  
Outreach – Tracey Toppa  
Hospitality – Art Toppa



*Forever In Our Hearts*

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Area Chapter  
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750  
Phone: 989-254-5888  
Email: [tcfoscodagmail.com](mailto:tcfoscodagmail.com)  
Web: [www.tcf-oscodagmail.com](http://www.tcf-oscodagmail.com)



The Compassionate Friends/Oscoda Area

#### REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Virginia (Nena) Herrick 734-765-84 01  
Gail Lafferty 734-748-2514  
Kathy Rambo 734-306-3930

#### LOOKING AHEAD:

July 19

#### 10 Ways to Honor a Loved One

Help the grieving process and keep beautiful memories alive with some thoughtful tributes to your child. Simple design gestures can help you establish a way to remember your child in your home.

August 16

#### Siblings Share

Siblings will have a chance to talk to other siblings and share with each other.

September 10 **Memory Walk**

Please join us in our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Walk to Remember which is being held on Saturday September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.

September 20 **Natural Ways to Reduce Stress**

Everyone experiences stress at some time in their life, from bad things as well as good. Financial woes, divorce, illness, or the death of a loved one can be very stressful. Getting married or starting a new job can be too. But how you deal with stress can make all the difference in your health and happiness.



# THE SIBING CORNER

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



## **Siblings Talk and Share: August 16 at 7:00 pm**

Having a sibling die creates a chain reaction in a family. The emotions you are experiencing or experienced, may be the same as or completely different from those of other family members. Often siblings do not get a chance to share their feelings or don't feel comfortable sharing them with their parents or other family members who have not been through the same experience.

Our August 16 meeting will include a separate, informal get together for siblings providing them an opportunity to share. listen. and/or talk.

*"When you close your eyes and remember, don't forget that your sibling rests yet in you, in your heart and in your thoughts, in everything you do. They will never leave you alone. You have a listener at your beck and call. What a gift!" - from a Sibling*

### **Summertime**

With summer comes more time for relaxation and more time for get-togethers with family and friends. After our son died it left a void in all those family activities and lots of time for thoughts of summers gone by—vacations, 4<sup>th</sup> of July's, Bible schools, camps, baseball games, swimming lessons, skiing at the lake, and many other memories.

It still seems important for us to participate in those same activities because on each occasion some memory is stirred of a time when our son was a part of these activities that made summer such a special time for us. At first those memories made us so sad, but now when we remember what he did or said in certain situations, our hearts are a little lighter and even sometimes a little smile appears on our faces.

These memories are what we have left and they are so very precious. Summers are a good time to relax and remember our happy times together.

By Carol Linch, TCF LaGrange, GA

### **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. With 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, touch them, and kiss them, It is so bittersweet when the reality comes and realize it is just a memory, a thought and you are reminded of what you have lost.

If you ask 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 will 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 there 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 Van Antwerp, TCF, Brevard, NC



*“Forever In Our Hearts”  
Our Children/Siblings Remembered*



<i>July Birthdays</i>			
	<p align="center"><b>Casey May Whitney</b> Daughter of Frances Whitney Sister of Chelsea Monnier &amp; Clyde Whitney</p>		<p align="center"><b>Andrew Carroll</b> Son of Sharon &amp; Steve Koenitzer Brother of Katrina Dean &amp; Jerry Carroll</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Brayden</b> Son of Lauren Murphy Brother of Shana, Lily, Christian, Devin, Brandon &amp; Savannah</p>	<p align="center"><i>Birthdays are given special recognition at our monthly meetings. During your child's birthday month, you are invited to bring a photo or something to display. You can also bring a favorite snack.</i></p>	
<i>September Birthdays</i>			
	<p align="center"><b>Brandon</b> Son of Lauren Murphy Brother of Shana, Lily, Christian, Devin, Savannah &amp; Brayden</p>		
<i>July Remembrance</i>			
	<p align="center"><b>Bradley Hilberg</b> Son of Vicky Weichel Brother of Derrick Hilberg, Jordan &amp; Lucas Weichel</p>		<p align="center"><b>Brayden</b> Son of Lauren Murphy Brother of Shana, Lily, Christian, Devin, Brandon &amp; Savannah</p>
<i>August Remembrance</i>			
	<p align="center"><b>Christian Gonzales</b> Son of Dan &amp; Denise Gonzales</p>		<p align="center"><b>Elise Schenk</b> Daughter of Bernie Schenk Sister of Bernard &amp; Victoria Schenk</p>
<i>September Remembrance</i>			
	<p align="center"><b>Andrew Carroll</b> Son of Sharon &amp; Steve Koenitzer Brother of Katrina Dean &amp; Jerry Carroll</p>		<p align="center"><b>Brandon</b> Son of Lauren Murphy Brother of Shana, Lily, Christian, Devin, Savannah &amp; Brayden</p>
<p align="center"><i>So that their lives may always shine, our children are remembered. And because we all need a little extra support on the anniversary of our child's death, our special thoughts go out to these families.</i></p>			





## 2016 Butterfly Release

Over 72 pained lady butterflies were released into Lakewood Shores subdivision in Oscoda at our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Butterfly Release. The event started with some information about the butterflies and then everyone present released their individual butterflies. Families were given some poems to read as they released their butterflies. It was a beautiful day as everyone celebrated the lives of all the children, grandchildren and siblings taken too soon. More pictures are on line at [www.tcf-oscod.org](http://www.tcf-oscod.org) on the 2016 Butterfly Release page.

A huge thank you goes to all who made a “love” contribution. Those dollars will help us continue to fund our Community Events: Memory Walk, Worldwide Candle Lighting and Butterfly Release.

Thanks also for the yummy snacks go to Kevin & Peggy James, Art & Tracey Toppa and Wyatt & Dalton Negro.



### Catching Butterflies

It often hurt to come upon reminders of my son  
Tho' often since I lost him I would search around for  
one,

This always brought on sadness and the tears that I  
would shed,

Were caused by names or faces, all things that I would  
dread.

But then I came upon a man who'd lost his son  
I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't even shun.  
But rather he would treasure and I said I wondered why  
He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies."

This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more  
And learned that he took all of them and carefully  
would store

All of the reminders I chose to push away  
He would tuck deep down inside his heart each and  
every day.

Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard  
Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard  
For now instead I see these times as opportunities  
To see my son awakened in these new fresh memories.

Dottie Williams~TCF, Pittsburgh PA

## THE WAKE-UP CALL: HER BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING

The bride (my daughter's best friend) was radiant; the groom nervous but excited, the flower girl and ring bearer adorable; the parents' shedding tears; the weather near perfect...by all appearances, it looked like the ideal wedding; all was progressing smoothly, things were coming together as planned.

Not a thing looked out of place...to most everyone present; that is, to everyone but me, the mother of a forever 15 year old brunette with a dazzling, braces-laden smile. I tried desperately to hide my quivering lip, ignore the lump in my throat and knot in my stomach, yet lost that battle to choking sobs and a flood of tears that streamed down my face relentlessly. I watched the bridesmaids as they proceeded down the aisle, longing to see the face of my daughter, Nina, who should have been physically present, if her life were not cut short by a drunk driver. Instead, she was relegated to a small mention at the back of the program along with the couple's grandparents: "Here with us in spirit..."

I weathered the reception until it came time for the wedding party to take the dance floor. They all had a particular dance and a song that apparently was their group of friend's "special thing." They participated in this dance and song with obvious delight. As I watched, I realized that this was something Nina, who had died eight years earlier, had never been a part of—it was as if a hand had reached down and plucked her out of the loop. At that very moment I have never felt so profoundly Nina's nonexistence in the lives of her high school friends.

The few years following Nina's death, her friends (while they were still high school students) were still closely connected to her. However, since then they have graduated from college, now many have married or are on the career track. Some even have children of their own. A lot of time and distance and events had taken place in that time frame.

And all of it without Nina's physical presence; to them now a distance memory. After a night of insomnia and much self-analysis, I came to some conclusions that I hope will help those of you who may find yourself in a similar situation someday.

The wedding really became a wake-up call for me; a lot of realizations became clear. Though other bereaved parents seemed to understand that this would be the outcome and had forewarned me, I was blind to it. They seemed to grasp the inevitable; that though Nina was paramount in my thoughts, no one else could possibly be able to think of her with the same magnitude as I did. In my desperation that she not be forgotten, I seemed to delude myself into believing that should be the case for everyone. For bereaved parents, one of our greatest fears is that our children will be forgotten. But after this wedding and the opinions voiced by others who know, I think this needs to be amended. That though we, as their parents, remember our children in much more visible and personal ways, ( such as memorial gardens, scholarships, remembrance services, balloon releases, photo buttons and pictures here, there and everywhere, and speak of them freely, with laughter and tears), that others may do their remembering in much more subtle and private ways. That though we do not always see it outwardly, as we might prefer, they remember internally, by carrying our loved ones' memory more quietly in their hearts.

Life marches on. We are glad (and maybe even a little envious) that our children's friends are happy in love or successful and would want nothing else for them. But when all is said and done, even with our most valiant efforts at managing the milestones that our children may not have been able to experience, like graduations, marriages, grandchildren, and more—all of those major happenings we will never experience with our children—no matter the amount of time that goes

by, their absence hurts. We love them and always will. How could it not be painful?

I don't write this to sadden anyone; I tell you of my experience so that if this happens to you somewhere in your grief journey you might be able to see it in a different light. I know that I will try to remember this when I don't hear from her friends for a long time (or maybe not at all). But when I go to her grave site and see a bouquet of

her favorite flowers (daisies) I know were left by her best friend, or a note written in the journal I leave there written by a classmate that I never even met, that they haven't forgotten; that Nina had an impact on their lives and that they continue to and always will remember...but their own way.

With gentle thoughts,  
Cathy Seehuetter/TCF St. Paul, MN  
Written in Summer, 2004

## GRIEF RESOURCES

The Compassionate Friends:

[https://www.compassionatefriends.org/Find\\_Support/Online-Community/Online\\_Support.aspx](https://www.compassionatefriends.org/Find_Support/Online-Community/Online_Support.aspx)

Open to Hope: [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)

Closed Facebook Groups:

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of closed Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. A private message will be sent prior to approval. Please reply to the message so we can confirm your request. Please be sure to check your mailbox marked "Message Requests" if you do not receive one in your main mailbox.

You may need to look under message requests that have been filtered by Facebook. Finding filtered message requests on a desktop browser: <https://www.facebook.com/messages/other>

To access filtered message requests on a mobile browser:

<https://m.facebook.com/messages/?folder=other>

TCF online Chat Groups:

[www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online\\_support.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_support.aspx)

### THANKS FOR THE SNACKS!

May: Bernie Schenk in Memory of his daughter Elise

June: Jane & Charlie in Memory of their son Mark

July: Fran Whitney in Memory of her daughter Casey

August: Tracey & Art Toppa in Memory of their son Derek



## Library News....

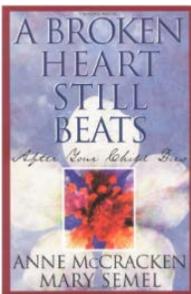
We have many great books in our library and are always on the lookout for new material. If you have any suggestions, please let Charlie or Fran know as we are always adding to our collection. If you have a book from our library and are finished, please return it so it can be circulated again to another family.

If you would like to keep the book, please let us know the title of the book, so we can order a replacement.

Donations for new books are always appreciated and are a great way to honor our loved one on a birthday or anniversary.

To check out our books just click on the link...

[Lending Library for TCF-Oscoda](#)



### **A Broken Heart Still Beats: After You Child Dies** by Anne McCracken

How two grieving mothers found inspiration and comfort. This is a compilation of poetry, fiction and essays about the pain, stages of grief, and the coping and healing process that follows the death of one's child.

### FINDING HOPE



Some find hope in butterflies, and some in children's smiles.  
Some find hope in photographs, and some in walking miles.

Some find hope in quietness and solitary reflection.

Some find hope in helping others and sharing friendly affection.

Some find hope in holding tight to all the old traditions.

Some find hope in the creation of a special new variation.

Some find hope in family gathered, some in cherished friends.

Some find hope in seeking God, feeling peace in worship again.

Beyond the sad and beyond the past,  
beyond the ache that lasts and lasts,  
there is a path that winds its way  
into your future and a hopeful day.

~ Karen Pope

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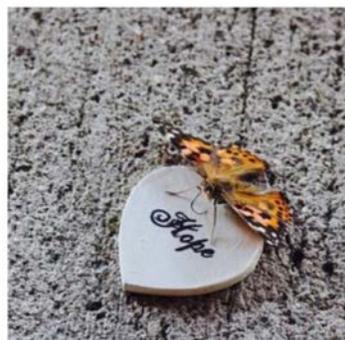
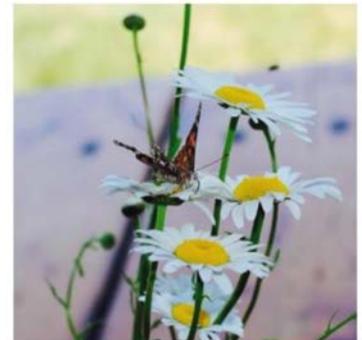
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The Compassionate Friends  
Of Oscoda Area 2440

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amazonsmile



Grief is like... Weeding a flower garden in the summer. You have to do it over and over again until the season changes.

~TCF pensacola FL

SAVE THE DATE!

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual



Saturday September 10th

10:00 am

Furtaw Field (Paul Bunyan) Oscoda

We will be starting the walk at the Paul Bunyan Statue in downtown Oscoda, walking down Lake Street to the public beach and returning.

Whether someone walks the full length to the beach or a couple hundred feet is not important, what is important is that we have taken this time to join with family and friends who care that an important person, a child, is missing from our lives.

We will have pictures along the route of our children, siblings, and grandchildren taken too soon.

This Walk is open to anyone who would like to walk in memory of their children, siblings and grandchildren.

*More information will follow!*