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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 71 May/April 2023

### 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.**

**May 9<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm**

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

**June 25<sup>th</sup> Butterfly Release @ 1pm**

***You need not walk alone!***

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### CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Chapter  
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750

Phone: 989-254-5888

Email: [tcfoscoda@gmail.com](mailto:tcfoscoda@gmail.com)

Web: [www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org)



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



### The Far Side of the Rainbow

We have shared our tears and our sorrow,  
We have given encouragement to each other,  
Give hope for a brighter tomorrow,  
We share the title of grieving mother.

Some of us have lost older daughters or sons,  
Who we watched grow over the years,  
Some have lost their babies their lives begun,  
But no matter their age, we cry the same tears.

We understand each other's pain,  
The bond we share is very strong,  
With each other there is no need to explain,  
The path we walk is hard and long.

Our children brought us together,  
They didn't want us on this journey alone,  
They knew we needed each other,  
To survive the pain of them being gone.

So take my hand my friend,  
We may stumble and fall along the way,  
But we'll get up and try again,  
Because together we can make it day be day.

We give each other hope,  
We'll create a place where we belong,  
Together we will find ways to cope,  
Because we are Angel Moms together, we are strong!

*~Judi Walker*



*"Mother and Child"  
Painting by Clare Szalay  
November 13, 2018*

## Somewhere It Is Spring

By Darci Sims

It is spring in some places now. And in some places, it will be winter for another couple of weeks. Somewhere the tulips are beginning to push through the soft earth and somewhere the birds are returning to sing. Somewhere the air is warmer, the breezes gentler, the land begins to awaken from a frozen sleep. The trees are beginning to bud and even the air smells fresh and clean. Somewhere windows are open and the sound of the vacuum can be heard, marking the beginning of spring cleaning... a ritual that was given to us long before our forefathers set sail for a new world. Somewhere the last holiday decoration is being packed away (those holiday diehards!) and somewhere a lawn mower is being readied for a new season. As spring approaches, we begin to shed our overcoats and stand in front of the mirror... examining the body for the extra lumps we've accumulated during the hibernation season. We lace up our jobbing shoes and make our way to the sidewalks, high school tracks and to the gym, eager to strip away the added inches that came because it was dark and gloomy, and food seemed to soothe and comfort during the dark days of winter. Somewhere someone is planning a wedding, a graduation, a family reunion. Vacation brochures begin to appear and plans are discussed in anticipation of summer.

Spring is the reawakening season... the great wake up call for the earth. Somewhere, someone is answering that get up call... greeting the new season with vim, vigor, and vitality. There are smiles and renewed energy and hope seems to simply float on the softened air. Somewhere... all of that is occurring, but not within me. It's still snowing inside my being. It's still winter inside here and there aren't any tulips about to burst open in my spirit. I've still got my snow boots on and the sun hasn't quite made it to my world. It's still winter inside me... I wonder if spring will ever come.

Oh, there have been moments of spring in the past. Wonderful, warm fleeting moments; moments when I "forgot" about the pain, the emptiness, the despair, the grief. Moments when the world was right side up and the music made me dance. But they were only moments and I'm waiting for spring to arrive in me.

Hope... the major ingredient in spring, seems to elude my grasp. Just when I think there might be some hope, a memory comes creeping across my soul and its winter again in my heart. It's this lack of hope that seems especially cruel during springtime. I thought this winter inside me would end and I was looking forward to a more peaceful time in my life. I thought we would settle down, plant a garden and live our life filled with memories and



the opportunity to make new ones. HA! I thought grief would end at some point. The books all say it will... everyone else looks like their grief has subsided... how come spring missed us?!

A season without hope is the ultimate in despair and I've spent too many such seasons. Where does hope go and how do I get it back?

Hope is that elusive something that keeps us moving, even in the dark. We are only powerless when we have no hope, no vision, no faith in our own abilities. We may be helpless at times. We may question the arrival of spring, but we are only truly powerless when we have no hope, no dreams...

Don't lose hope! Search for it! Fight for it! Demand its return. Hope changes as we do and it can be so disguised that we may not recognize it, but it can be found — in the moments of our memories. We probably won't ever have totally happy lives again... We probably didn't have that kind of life anyway; we just thought we did.

Don't let death rob you of the moments of joy still to be remembered and found. Don't let grief rob you of those spring places where love and joy live forever in the heart. Somewhere it is spring... Deal with the anger, the guilt, the depression as it comes and then let it go as you can... so there is room for joy to come again. Let hope come in... it's spring.

*Editor's Note: We honor Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS who died suddenly in February of 2014. Darcie was a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist. She was an author of many books on grief and bereavement including "Why Are the Casseroles Always Tuna?", "Footsteps Through the Valley" and "If I Could Just See Hope."*

**6 March 2023/Beyond Surviving, Inspirations**

Source: <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/blog/somewhere-its-spring/>



An excerpt from *Lean into Spring* by Jennifer Stern, LISW  
[www.trasformativegrief.com](http://www.trasformativegrief.com)

Lean into Spring. Go outside each day and write one sound in nature you hear. One new flower or growth you see. Add this to this list daily. At the end of one week reflect on this experience. Were you able to find some comfort (and maybe even hope) noticing leaves on branches once barren, lying dormant under the weight of ice and snow? Nature provides a model for grieving, healing and resilience. Nature teaches us that there is a season for everything.



## SIBLING LOSS

Author: [Heidi Horsley](#) 9/21/2012  
an excerpt from an article from *Open to Hope*

In the United States today, there is a natural, assumed order to the deaths we will experience in our lives. We believe that our grandparents will die first, then our parents, then our brothers and sisters, and then our children. However, that is not how it happens for thousands of people each year, and that is not how it happened for me. When my brother Scott and cousin Matthew were just 17 years old they died together in a fiery car accident. In a sense, our siblings are parallel travelers in life; we have a shared history. We expect this to be the longest relationship we will ever have. Our siblings are part of our past and part of our present. We expect to grow old with them, and it's devastating to lose them before their time.



People ask, "Do you have closure?" I remind them that closure is for bank accounts, not love accounts. I really don't even understand the concept of closure. Growing up with a brother made me the person I am today; if he had never been in my life I would be a very different person. We never get over the person that died. What we get over is the intense pain. When our sibling dies, we lose the relationship we once had but we don't sever those bonds. We continue to have a relationship. My brother continues to be an important part of my life, and he always will be.

The majority of siblings in the United States today will spend 80-100% of their lifetimes with each other in some capacity. Our siblings serve as our protectors, confidants, rivals, and role models. Growing up we spend 33% of our time with our siblings...more time than we spend with parents, friends, or teachers. So it is ironic that bereaved siblings are often the forgotten ones in the aftermath of death.

The reality is that we don't forget, move on, or find closure, but rather we honor, remember, and incorporate our deceased family members into our lives in a new way. In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive in your mind and heart is an important part of your healing journey. Thankfully, our deceased loved ones are a continuing presence in our lives and always will be.







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



**Birthdays**



**Remembrances**



**May**  
Katie Kirkpatrick



**May**  
John Pavlat



**May**  
Mark Negro



**May**  
Steve Valentine



**June**  
Elise Schenk



**June**  
Christian Gonzales



**June**  
Aaron Gonzales



**June**  
Tommy Draper



**June**  
Bradley Hilberg



**June**  
Mark Negro



*The butterfly counts  
not months but  
moments and has  
time enough.  
~Rabindranath  
Tagore~*

## MOTHERS DAY AND GRADUATION

After my daughter Kyra died on November 14 of 2004, one of my first thoughts was I am no longer a mother, because Kyra was my only child. It didn't take me long to realize that that was not true; I am and always will be Kyra's mom. As I have walked my grief journey, I have found myself referring to grief as labor. It then came to me that for me, losing Kyra was like giving birth in reverse. I experienced intense emotional and physical pain that I wondered if I could endure, similar to the physical pain of labor, only in grief it lasts for weeks, months and years. It took my breath away, brought me to my knees and often I found myself crying out in anguish and anger, like childbirth. It has been over a year and a half since Kyra died and I have felt a break in the pain. It has started back up recently due to graduation, but I know it will ease some after May. Some women experience false labor leading up to the birth of their child. I think that those intense pains that come from out of nowhere and last only a short time is something that I will forever experience. I now realize that in letting go of her death, I can embrace and carry her spirit with me always. So, I liken grief to giving birth in reverse.

I go from Mother's Day to Graduation, because Kyra would have graduated from High School at the end of May. Graduation was something I knew would be hard for me to endure without her here, alive and being part of the celebration. I thought about what Kyra graduating would mean to me and it didn't take me long to come up with, it was going to be my day to celebrate. Kyra was an intelligent child with a low attention span, a need to talk, and lower than I would have liked motivation. It was a frustration that her teachers and I shared. So, homework time was a challenge and I used motivational charts, rewards and even punishment. But I quickly found that you can't force someone to be motivated and went back to encouraging. I knew that she would come around and become motivated and I started seeing it her Junior year the year she died. I thought that graduation would be the reward for all the long nights and constantly trying to encourage and motivate. Well, it's not to be and I had to decide how will I endure graduation. I began to think about all she is missing. I believe in Heaven, so I don't believe she is missing any joy or good times, because I believe she is now experiencing indescribable joy and unimaginable good times. The reality of what she is missing is, she is missing misery, pain, frustration, disappointment, a broken heart, grief, hopelessness, and agony. And I am missing her incredible, joy and zest for life, her strong faith, beautiful smile and her wonderful heart.

As I close, I remember when I was pregnant with Kyra, I took two helpings of food because I said I'm eating for two. Now I will try my best to live life to the fullest and be all that I can because now I'm living for two. Just as her living made me want to be a better person, her dying will make me a better person if I allow it, because I now carry her with me. I will strive to do and see life the way she would have if she could have stayed here longer.

Julie Short

TCF Southeastern IL

In Memory of my daughter, Kyra



### *Mother's Day May 14, 2023*



#### **Like The Butterfly**

It fluttered above my head  
Weightless in the soft breeze.  
I reached up my hand  
It lit on my finger.

Waving glistening wings gently.  
It looked at me for timeless moments.  
I smiled, reaching deep and  
Finding all those cherished memories.  
As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,  
I knew we had said hello once more.

*~Leslie Lanford  
TCF North Platte, NE*



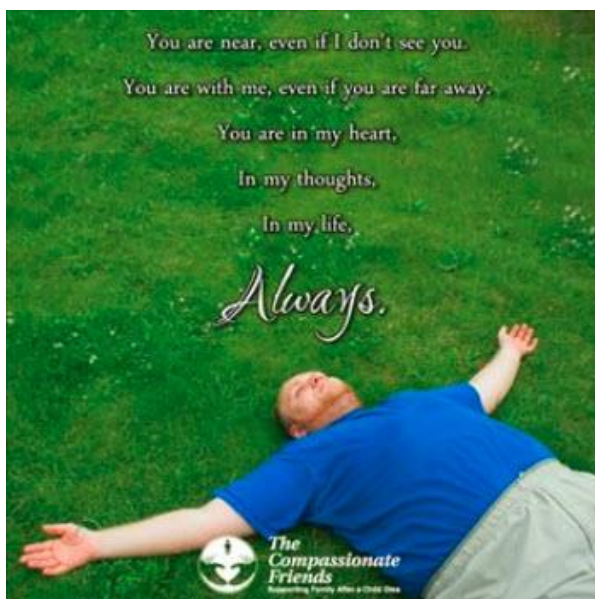
## “Father’s Day Was Never the Right Name”

Several times during my adult life, I’ve wondered why someone would come up with an idea for a holiday to honor dads and then call it “Father’s Day”. I know what I would have named it, had I been asked, and it would not have been Father’s Day. Now you may wonder why I would really care at all. Most of us who have lost children through death would probably just as soon have this holiday vanish from the calendar—eliminated forever, gone, kaput. Yet, there is something about a holiday that we used to enjoy and celebrate with, and because of our children, that makes us want to relive that time in our lives.

The problem that I have with this particular holiday is that I cannot remember, before they died, either of my children even once calling me “Father”. Oh, they might have said something like, “Happy Father’s Day” (when prompted by their mom). But otherwise, I can recall only one name they ever called me—and it was “Daddy”.

Thinking back, what was the first word your child said? If my memory is correct, with each of my children it was “Daddy” or some form thereof. I can guarantee you not one of them said anything that even slightly resembled “Father” as their first word.

I have to admit, I have a special fondness for the word “Daddy.” My wife has often told me “Any man can be a father; it takes someone very special to be a “Daddy”. My father was one of those special people who earned the right to be called “Daddy”. When I was in junior high and some of my classmates were using less than flattering names for their fathers, I was still calling mine, “Daddy”. He was a



great guy and I like to think he had a real hand in the way I ended up raising my children.

When I think back about the life before my daughter and son died, I can recall many, many hours doing the things with them that only a “Daddy” would do. I remember their love for raspberries and how I would venture out into the mosquito infested “back forty” to pick them, each time wishing I had remembered to change from shorts to long pants. Also, still vivid are the memories of our visits to the Duck Farm where they would feed the geese and the ducks. Many hot summer days I’d find myself volunteering to walk them down our street to our daughter’s elementary school playground. We’d zoom down the slide and then climb the monkey bars (I got pretty good at it, too; better than I ever was in school). We’d always end up playing hide and seek. I wonder if they ever figured out how I always thought to look inside those big tires (where else could they have hidden?). And finally on our way off the playground we’d stop for one last moment at the swing set; just so they might see if this time I really *could* swing high enough to way over the top. On the way home, we’d always stop at the little stream that ran under the road, look for minnows in the clear water, and then skip a few stones towards the lily pads. My son’s attempts always had that same distinct sound—kerplunk. As we neared our home, we’d race through the front yard toward the screen door to see who was fastest. Somehow, I always ended up last, was in back of my daughter and right behind the little guy. And then they would spin around, laughing and giggling and I’d hear those wonderful words, “We love you, Daddy!”

Yes, I think they definitely misnamed this holiday. Many of my special friends from TCF would probably agree with me. You see, I’ve grown to know their children as they’ve shared the joy filled times they spent together—whether it was measured in minutes or decades. And every one of these daddies deserves to be remembered on this special holiday. So...”**HAPPY DADDY’S DAY!**”

~Wayne Loder, TCF Lakes Area (Michigan)  
“Daddy” of Stephanie and Stephen

**Father’s Day June 18, 2023**



## The Compassionate Friends of Oscoda Area 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Release

**Sunday June 25, 2023**  
**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.

Painted Lady Butterflies must be reserved in plenty of time for ordering. Please

**RSVP by Wednesday June 14th**

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

[tcfoscoda@gmail.com](mailto:tcfoscoda@gmail.com)

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



**Please come and join us in this celebration of life!**  
For more information check us out at [www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org) and on

