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The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies
Oscoda Area Chapter

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The Compassionate Friends of
Oscoda Area
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The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much had changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this place with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-express fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories...sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF Katy, TX

MONTHLY MEETING

2nd Tuesday of the Month
Sacred Heart Church Family Center
5300 N US 23
Oscoda, MI 48750

Meeting time: 7:00 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 9:
The New Year
February 13:
To be determined
Watch Facebook for topic

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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The Compassionate Friends/Oscoda
Area

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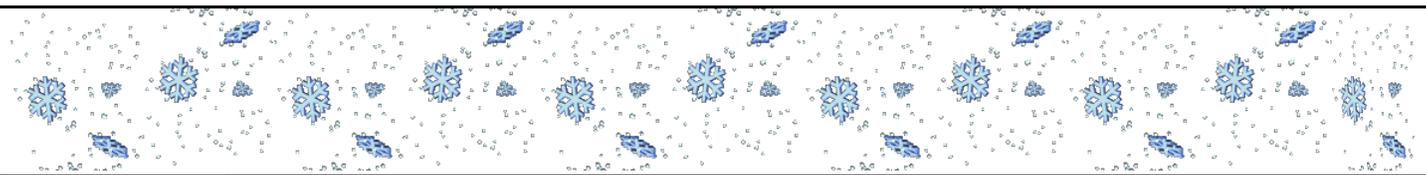
THE SIBING CORNER

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

“You Need Not Walk Alone”

Tuesday was the fourth anniversary of Danielle’s death. I was on a plane after about 4 hours of sleep and in meetings all day in Arizona. Her memory would grab at my chest when walking to my room or taking a phone call but I couldn’t let myself go. Thank God for exhaustion! I was able to spend the weekend in Florida, not to memorialize her but as often happens when I am near the sea, I was able to hold her in my mind and heart and I was able to swim with her as I do everywhere I go in the world. As you probably know, we scattered my sister’s ashes into the ocean near where we played as children. No matter where I travel to, I feel her close to me when I put my feet into a stream, a lake, a waterfall but mostly – when I am near the ocean. I have danced with her in Spain off the southern coast, I have cried with her in Italy and have run alongside of her in New Jersey as she meanders next to my running trail...I am able to dance with her and laugh with her and fill myself with her as her memory is embodied in the waters I love. I am looking forward to seeing her in China and alongside me as I run my marathon near the coast. As time goes on, it hurts differently but heals more to let the water tickle my toes. Like she was in life, she is at times stormy or cold and others she is bright and glistening...rambling...at other times she is warm and soothing. The morning we were supposed to leave Florida, I walked out onto the beach to say hello to her and about 15 feet off shore, three dolphins played and I laughed out loud at their antics ...knowing she was a part of that spirit and that moment was between us. I picked up a shell to hold the memory. I continue to make memories, even though she is gone. I miss her.

This beautiful story was written by Diedre Paterno Pai of Boulder, CO and emailed to her friend, who is a bereaved sibling herself



Windows

The breath of winter
painted fragile stars
on all the windows
of my quiet house.

And there I found
your face,
more fragile even
than the season’s art
a wonder to my eyes.

How can it be
that winter paints
such secret things
in white and silver sheen
for those who cry alone
at frosted windows?





Living With A Broken Heart

I spend some time each day wondering
How different my life might be.
Why so many people that I love
Are no longer here with me.

Mothers, Fathers, a sister, then our son
Wonderful friends, beloved pets, always another one.
I know where there is love, there will also be pain.
The sadness will continue until we're together again

When the phone rang that particular morning,
I was sure it was a call from Heaven
The ashes of my best friend, Gabby, were ready.
It was Valentine's Day. (The time was 11:11.)

The loss of each one has left its mark.
Their legacy is what they gave to those they left below.
"It's not what you take when you leave this world,
It's what you leave behind when you go."

How many more breaths will I be allowed to take
Before it's my time to leave this world?
How many breaks can one heart take
Before it doesn't beat anymore?

Tom Murphy,
TCF Greater Cincinnati East Chapter, OH
In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy



The truth is, that hole in your heart
shaped exactly the size and shape of your child
WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY.

But the *love* that oozes from it has
more power to change the world
than anything I've ever known.

Angela Miller



The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first; nor will we be the last to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now, right now, it is **OUR HEARTS** that are freshly wounded and **OUR HEARTS** in need of mending. Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears.

Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life. A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed. The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

~Nancy Green TCF,
Livonia, MI



*Those we love we
never lose,
For always,
they will be,
Loved, remembered,
treasured,
Always in our memory.*



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



Birthdays



Remembrances



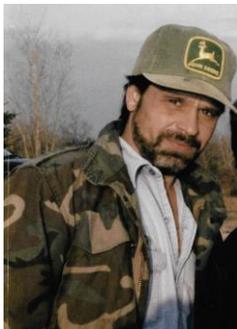
January
Derek Toppa



February
Ashley Scott



February
Jerry Brunk



January
Tony Calabrese



January
Katie Kirkpatrick



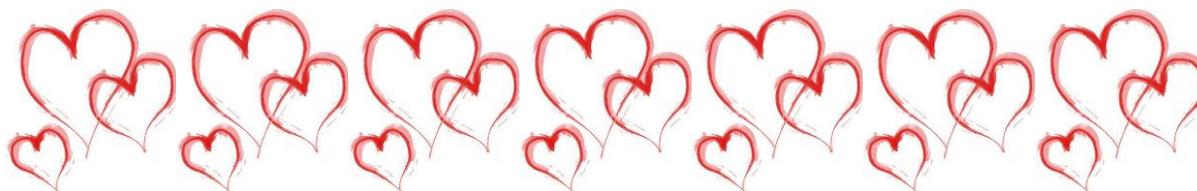
January
Tommy Draper



February
Casey May Whitney



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.



Lending Library

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](#)

iGive is an amazingly simple, no cost to you, donation platform. Check it out at

<https://igive.com/TheCompassionateFriendsofOscodaArea>



Check out the over 1,000 on-line stores that when you shop donate money to TCF

<https://www.igive.com/html/merchantlist2.cfm>

**For more information
about us—check out
our updated website
www.tcf-oscoda.org**

Support

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Of Oscoda Area 2440**

When you shop at smile.amazon.com

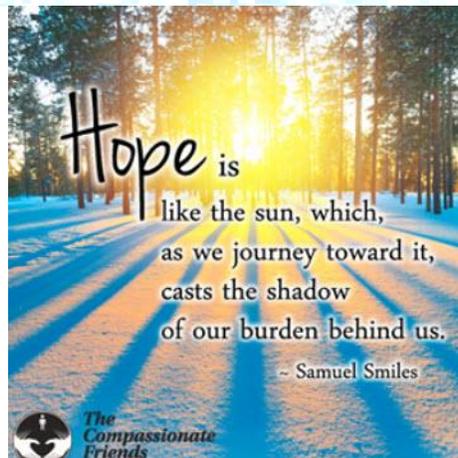
Amazon donates

Go to: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/35-2493920>

The image shows the Amazon Smile logo, which features the word "amazon" in its signature font with a curved arrow underneath it, followed by the word "smile" in a simple, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a solid orange background.

facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/thecompassionatefriends.oscoda/>



31 MESSAGES OF HOPE

Check these video clips from The Compassionate Friends out at

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/31-messages-hope/>