

NATIONAL OFFICE
The Compassionate Friends
48660 Pontiac #930808
Wixom, MI 48393
Toll Free
1/877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org
email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org



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
Email: tcfoscodagmail.com

Issue 87 July/August 2026

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.

July 14 @ 7 pm
August 11 @ 7 pm

Chapter Leadership

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Chapter
4087 Forest Rd.
Oscoda, 45750
Phone: 989-254-5888
Email: tcfoscodagmail.com
Web: www.tcf-oscoda.org
FB The Compassionate Friends

Oscoda Area

Co-Leaders: Fran Ommani
Charlie Negro
Secretary: Charlie Negro
Treasurer: Jane Negro & PR
Outreach: Tracey Toppa
Director: Vicky Stadler

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

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



"You Need Not Walk Alone!"



July is National Bereaved Parents Awareness Month.

I don't really know how I feel about that though.
Grief awareness is needed but honestly, it feels a little hollow.
Maybe because being a bereaved parent goes so much deeper than any awareness month can touch. It's felt every second.
Every breath.
It lives behind every smile, laugh, or conversation we'll ever have.
July used to be our favorite month, filled with so much fun, like: boating, hiking, amusement parks, water parks, camping, late-night movies. Now... it's the month we hold our breath through and try to survive. When you lose someone, you always try to sidestep the everyday reminders.
But when your loss happened on a national holiday like the 4th of July, there's no sidestepping.
You're bombarded at every turn with reminders, you can hear the fireworks from inside your home.
And here in Utah, we have the 24th of July too, it's our state holiday. Which means even more parades, more fireworks.
It's like the second 4th of July.
The fireworks are unbearable for me now. With PTSD, every bang sends my body back into trauma. So, I have to get away.

July is Bereaved Parents Month

Not everyone knows.
But every bereaved parent does.

We remember every single day.
Not just in July.
Not just on birthdays.
Not just when the world feels kind enough ask.

SAY THEIR NAME.
Share their story.
Honor their light.



Because death may take a life —
but it can't take a parents love.

So, this year, I'm taking Seth (Mark & the older boys can't make it) to Fort Myers, Captiva/Sanibel Island in Florida. We've never been, but it would be a dream spot for Macie. She loved shelling so much, she would spend hours combing for the prettiest shells.

So, this year, Seth and I will lean into what Macie loved, and away from what breaks us.

We'll search for the shells she would've picked if she were with us.

Crossing our fingers we might find some shark teeth too. [Maciememorymoments](#) [Instagram](#)

Grieving on the 4th of July

[Families of Child Loss](#)

Written By [Elizabeth Leon](#)

When my children were little, I loved buying them matching Fourth of July outfits from Old Navy. Mom, Dad, and all the littles in cute little red, white, and blue t-shirts or a onesie for the youngest. We had a blissful ten years of picture-perfect Independence Day fireworks on the lawn by the lighthouse before death and divorce.

There is no escaping the weight of grief and sorrow after the death of your child, but on those special days – the ones built around tradition and ritual and family – grief is heavier and harder. Holiday grief is complicated and contradictory. We want to celebrate and remember, and then we don't. Proceeding with familiar celebrations brings the comfort of fond memories but often leaves us aching that there will be no more. I have spent years feeling my chest tighten when another family walks by in their coordinated 4th of July outfits. Once my son died, I stopped buying them since we would never all wear the same thing again.



Holiday celebrations easily provoke jealousy or resentment at families who still have the luxury of having all their children here on earth and don't have to carry the crushing weight of grief. Hot dogs and fireworks are a lot more fun that way. When we are surrounded by an entire country who has the day off for family and festivities, it is easy to feel alone, invisible, or misunderstood.

If you are grieving on the 4th of July, we see you.

We notice that you bravely accepted the BBQ invitation that you didn't want to go to and your sister-in-law is still pregnant & no one recalls that 19 months ago your child died. We are with you when you have to hide in the bathroom to cry or leave before the fireworks because you just can't bring yourself to lie there on the blanket looking up at the colors when your child can't see them too. We know what it is like to watch the rockets launch into the sky and wish you too could soar into the night beyond the veil to where our loved one's rest with God.

Wherever you are in your grief today, we invite you to:

1: Think it Through. *What does July 4th bring up in your body, heart, and spirit? Are there particular memories associated with this holiday and your child that are hard? Are there traditions that are important to continue in your child's memory or rituals that would feel good to let go? Do you long for distraction or more time to linger with your thoughts and feelings?*

2. Make Space for Grief. *Traditions and rituals can take up a lot of time. Try to make space to take care of yourself and your broken heart. Can you bring a red, white, and blue pinwheel to the cemetery or light sparklers at the grave? Maybe you can play a special song and allow yourself to remember the special memories with your child on the 4th of July? Is there a special dessert or meal that will bring comfort?*

3: Practice Radical Acceptance. *Whatever you feel, whatever you need is just right. You don't have to make excuses or give explanations. Try not to make your grief worse by judging your feelings. "So, this is what grief looks like today." Know that we are here with you as you remember and mourn your child this day and every day.*



"Forever In Our Hearts"
Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings
Loved and Missed



Birthday		Remembered	
July Antonio Raona 	July Casey May Whitney 	July Bradley Hilberg 	August Antonio Raona 
July Andrew Carol 	August Kyra Goodman Switek 	August Jake Katzenberg 	August Elise Schank 
August Tyler Lewis 	August Angelo Stell 	August Amanda Wilkinson 	August Dohnovan Newcome 
	Always say the child's name out loud when talking to a bereaved parent.		August Dustin Clayton 
			August Christian Gonzalez 

Summertime, Vacation Time, Family Time

I'll bet you never dreamed that there would ever be a time in your life when you would not welcome vacation from work...and the day-to-day hassles of routine living. It's probably a shocker to you that the slow pace of summer, cookouts, softball games, etc., are now a nightmare. Everywhere we go, there are kids out of school enjoying their leisure time, and our bodies jolt as we search for our own absent child who enjoyed this time of the year with a passion!

Surrounded by summer fun, a bereaved parent needs only look around and there are painful memories at every corner. When we are faced with all the living, loving happy families with their children, the anger boils within and we feel very cheated.

And this year we are afraid to go back to the beach cottage we've visited every year, or to the favorite mountain retreat where we laid around for a week and relaxed, or the amusement park where the kids had to ride every ride and see every attraction, no matter what the temperature was. Yes, fear of our memories, fear of too much time to think, fear of too many kids, fear of bursting inside from our pain... all of these feelings are part of the first few years of summer vacations for bereaved parents.

It's been nine years now for me, and I need to tell you that it will get easier, but I found that for the first few years I needed to consciously change some of my routines in order to deal with my fears. I could not visit the same places we had visited when Todd was with us. We tried new experiences in new places with new people.

That isn't to say there weren't sometimes; however, the faster paced vacations worked better for us. I could not allow myself too much time to think. I enjoy those weekends away now, but for the first few summers I had to dig in the yard, repaint lawn furniture, rearrange the garage, and the multitude of busy projects we'd been putting off for the lack of time. That was a better vacation for me than forcing myself to go somewhere and feel miserable.

You've read it a hundred different times, you have to find your own way and your own peace, leave yourself room to escape if it becomes necessary. If you can find any enjoyment and relaxation, relish it...you deserve it, and it does not mean you don't care. It simply means you are healing. Now I walk down the beach and enjoy the solitude, or laugh when I see a toddler, or listen to the joy of kids laughing, and it warms my heart. Yes I miss him, but I know he enjoyed every minute of this season, and I know that's what he'd want for me...and thank God, I can do it once more!

~Linda T. TCF, York, PA

*Wherever this summer takes you,
may your journey with grief be such that you find healing in tears with friends,
in the quiet of nature, and the beauty of sunrises and rainbows."*

~Pat Pinch, TCF Winnipeg, Canada



National Bereaved Parents Day: Within the month, **July 3rd** is recognized globally to specifically unite parents and break the silence around infant, child, and adult child loss.

*"People will tell you to 'move on.'
Instead, think of your life as 'moving forward,'
WITH your loved one beside you in spirit and
in your heart. It's unthinkable to move on
without them. They are forever with you,
closer than you know."*

~Ashley Davis Bush

*"It isn't for the moment you are struck
You need courage,
But for the long uphill climb back to
Sanity and faith and security."
Anne Morrow Linbergh*

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Yesterday:

You were here and I took it for granted that you would always be here. Telling you I loved you and was proud of you seemed unimportant. There would be time for that when we were older—when we fought less and talked more.

Today:

I know that time will never come, and I will never have the chance to say things face-to-face. So I write them and think them and hope you know I mean them now and have always felt them.

Tomorrow:

Each day the pain and regrets of things left unsaid get easier to deal with. I have begun to realize that you knew how I felt because you felt the same way. And as more tomorrows turn into yesterdays, I will find peace in that knowledge. Someday, somewhere, we will meet again, and I will have my chance then.

*~Shannon Odessa Stiener
TCF Lowel, IN*

THE SIBING CORNER

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

Summer can be incredibly isolating when grieving a sibling. While others are distracted by vacations and warm weather activities, surviving siblings are often left

Navigating quiet time, reminders of their loss, and a lack of routine.

Navigating sibling loss during the summer requires finding a balance between honoring your grief and finding healthy ways to cope.

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE short nature walks; journaling; time to look at old photos

SEEK TIME TO CONNECT: connect with others and share similar experiences; summer camps tailored to your age and grief.

READ SHORT STORIES: you're not alone: it can be comforting:

PRIORITIZE SELF CARE: physical health; regular rest

FIND A CREATIVE OR MEMORIAL OUTLET: channel your emotions into a creative project--writing, painting or memorial garden-to keep your sibling's memory active
~AI and JAN

The Butterflies Were Flying

The 12th annual Butterfly Release was Sunday June 28. We released over 100 Butterflies with the 100 people in attendance. Young children and older adults all enjoyed the nice day and watching our Butterflies slowly wake up and fly away.

To Our Children as We Celebrate Their Lives

We still miss you every day.
We still miss you even as time softens the pain.

As new memories are made, we will always miss you.
As we smile and laugh, we will always miss you.

We treasure the moments,
Days or years we had with you,
As well as the memories you left behind.
These butterflies remind us of home and new life
And we will treasure this moment with family and friends.

Today as we release our butterflies
We are sending our love to you
As we celebrate your life
And the time you were here with us.

Even if it was just a little while.

By Sascha Wagner



More pictures and information will be on our website soon, check it out at
<https://www.tcf-oscoda.org>