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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 62 November/December 2021

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.

November 9th @ 7 pm

Worldwide Candle Lighting December 12 @ 6:45

December 14th @ 7 pm

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

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Handling the Holidays

The Holiday season can be a time when the PAST and the PRESENT collide. We try to recapture what we once had or blot out bad memories. We try to ignore the empty chair. It is a time of short days and longer nights, or icy winds, cold hands and empty hearts.

While most of the world seems to be addressing holiday greeting cards and planning holiday menus, the bereaved are struggling with other concerns: How long does grief last? Will the holidays always be THIS AWFUL? How many stockings do we hang? What do we do with the empty place at the table? What is there to be thankful for THIS year? There must be light SOMEWHERE! No matter how shattered your life, how fragmented your dreams there must be hope somewhere! Our loved ones have DIED. We did not lose them or the love we share. Practice thinking and then saying, "My loved one died," not, "I lost me loved one." Our loved ones are still and always will be part of us. WE cannot lose their love. Sometimes, especially in the early months and even years of grief, all we can remember is the pain and horribleness of our loved one's death. Pain seems to overshadow everything.

At first, all I could remember were the awful things. I kept track of all the things I didn't have any more and made mental lists of the things I would never know or experience. Joy had been buried one afternoon in late fall and there was to be no light for us...ever again. But as I LIVED through those memories, I discovered that the pain of this darkness could change its intensity and its depth. Slowly, gently, as I allowed them to, those painful memories faded and were replaced, in time, with memories of HIS smile, his LIFE DAYS not his DEATH DAYS. I began to remember that my loved one LIVED...not just that he DIED! His LIGHT HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO OUR HAPPINESS AND ONCE I ACKNOWLEDGED THE DARKNESS, THE LIGHT COULD BEGIN TO PEEK THROUGH!

So, in this season of little light...BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF. Know that hardly anyone is as happy as you think they might be. We all have our hurts to bear. Do what you can this season and let it be enough.

<http://www.griefinc.com/griefinc/default.htm>
www.tcfchicago.org

Meeting Topics:

November 9th @ 7 pm

Please joins us for discussion and projects. If you would like to paint a luminary for the Candle Lighting, please bring a clean jar to decorate. Painting not your thing, we will have a couple of other activities to keep your hands busy while we talk.

Worldwide Candle Lighting @ 6:45 pm

December 14th @ 7pm

Bring your child's favorite snack to share and we will make ornaments representing your child.



*Gifts our loved ones have given us
can't be measured by the years
they lived.*

*These gifts are measured by the
love we shared with them.*

~Pat Loder

Acts of Kindness

Is it possible, on the cobbled path of grieving, to one day imagine that you will feel strong enough to hold your grief and reach out to others in need? If you had asked me this question a decade ago after the death of my fourteen-year-old daughter Elizabeth from a rare bone cancer, I would have said no. How could I possibly carry the heavy weight of grief and be strong enough to help others who are suffering or needing help on their life's journey?

And yet, there were moments when I saw a mother pushing a teenager in a wheelchair, and my instinct was to help them by holding open the doors to a store so they could get in easily, or when a bald child and his father walked by and I gave them my biggest smile trying to brighten their day.

In time, when my grief lessened its debilitating grip, I thought about how I could help parents and their children who are hospitalized. I returned to the children's hospital where Elizabeth received her treatments to lead a journal writing program for parents, caregivers, and adolescent patients. From personal experience and from many research studies that I read, I learned that writing in a journal for even fifteen minutes a day can lead to improved wellbeing.

Now, I bring journals to the children's hospital floors and speak with parents and teenage children about how writing can help to reduce stress, honor grief, and celebrate victories. I've received overwhelmingly positive responses to this program. And, the writing program has expanded into the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and the Pediatric Oncology Radiation clinic, with nurses, social workers, and spiritual care providers leading the journal writing program in these areas.

I believe that the instinct to help others is within each and every one of us. Many who are bereaved choose a cause to support like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Alex's Lemonade Stands to raise money for children's cancer, or bereaved parents whose child has died from a drug overdose talking with other parents about the opioid epidemic.

And by offering our kindness to others, we are not only honoring our loved one who has died, but we are helping ourselves too. Studies have shown that acts of kindness can:

- improve emotional wellbeing;
- reduce the levels of the stress hormone cortisol;
- reduce loneliness by the connection to others;
- help decrease anxiety and depression;
- lower blood pressure; and
- boost optimism and self-esteem.



Our lives have been forever changed by the loss of a loved person, but we have ways to honor who we have loved and help ourselves along our life's journey.

Grief Digest

Faith Fuller Wilcox October 12th 2021

<https://centering.org/grief-digest-articles/acts-of-kindness/>

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

			
Birthdays		Remembrances	
November Michael Wright 	November Steve Valentine 	November Aaron Dean 	November Ronald Lewis  Ronald Lewis
	<div style="border: 2px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px;"> <p><i>By love they are remembered. and in memory they live.</i></p> <p><i>~unknown</i></p> </div>		

Today I am Thankful

Today I am thankful for tears
 Though an ocean I have cried
 They speak of our connection
 Reminding me that love has not died

Today I am thankful for the memories
 They brighten the road of grief
 They remind me of love shared
 And provide a small relief

Today I am thankful for love
 Felt strongly in my soul
 Love continues living forever
 Keeping us safe and whole



Today I am thankful for friends
 Those who didn't walk away
 They saw my broken heart
 And chose to sit and stay

Today I am thankful for time
 For the moments that were too few
 Through the tears that are shed
 Today I am thankful for you

~Tanya Lord

www.TheGriefToolBox.com

TCF We Need Not Walk Alone Autumn/Winter 2014

7th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting

Sunday December 12th is the International Worldwide Candle Lighting. Families all around the world light a candle at 7pm as a remembrance of their loved one taken too soon. We will be at Mark's Park on River Road (1/2 block west of US 23) in Oscoda. This very touching evening includes music, poems, reading names of loved ones and lighting candles. We know that the holiday season is an extremely difficult time of year for families grieving the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling. This candle lighting ceremony is a symbolic way of showing the love we continue to carry for our children, even though they are no longer with us physically. This is a very moving celebration of all children who have died. If you can't be with us, be sure to light a candle at home so that... "their light may always shine"

The Compassionate Friends
Worldwide
Candle Lighting
Join us on December 12, 2021

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



At The Holidays, We Hope



For those of you for whom this is your first holiday with the empty chair at the Thanksgiving table, we know that it is a particularly difficult day for you, and all of us who have been through that first major holiday understand your sadness and will keep you close in our hearts during this holiday season. For those of you who have been through the first one and are in what I feel still the early years of this grief journey, we know how exhausting it is to try to put on a mask in order to make others feel comfortable. Here is hoping that you will be able to feel however you may feel today, and that your family and friends will be understanding and compassionate and allow you to have those emotions, whatever they may be. For those of us farther down the road of our grief journey, we know that no matter the years that have passed since our child, grandchild, sibling or other precious one has been gone, though the years may soften our grief, we still ache for their presence and miss them with all our being.

And, above all, I truly hope that family and friends will speak their names, thereby giving you the gift of allowing you to remember - with them - the one you miss so much. Though gone from this earth, they are loved and present in our life every day and will forever be.

~Cathy Seehuetter TCF St. Paul, MN

Prescription for Healing:

*Share a memory with an
understanding friend.*

~Sascha Wagner

Peace at Christmas

The greatest gift between you and the one you are now missing can never be worn out, weathered, exchanged or returned. For you gave each other something that can never be taken from you—a treasure of memories—and now they hurt to think of them. Fond, beautiful memories made in love. What if they had never been made at all? How much worse to have lived without them. No, you take those memories, reminisce over them, let them hurt. They'll probably always hurt; but it does get less. They will become more valuable with time, as will the fondness you hold for those holiday memories you have made.

Give yourself a gift this holiday season—Peace—as much as you possibly can. Then share it with those you love. No one can ever take away the good times you have experienced. ...Remember the needs of others and be aware that your greatest happiness may come in doing something for someone else, for, isn't that the true meaning of Christmas?

~TCF Albuquerque, NM



Gifts of the New Year

Faith that, in spite of the pain of today, I can and will learn to go on, one step at a time, one day at a time, learning to once again truly enjoy the little (and bigger) things that come my way.

Patience when I'm having a bad day, when I seem to take two steps backward and only one forward in learning to cope with the death of my child.

Laughter, which someone said is the best medicine. I believe laughter is a positive source of healing. When I feel good laughing at some silly little thing that comes along, I know another little part of me has healed.

Time: If nothing else, the new year offers the gift of time—time to heal, to learn to cope, to put some wholeness back into lives that seem hopelessly broken.

Won't you join me opening these gifts? You see, they aren't just mine to receive; they are gifts to be shared by all. You need only reach out and accept them. Each of these gifts can help us go on with our lives.

May the new year bring you all these gifts and many blessings, but most especially, may you receive the gift of peace.

~Audry Cain
TCF, Western New York



Grief is LAUGHTER
Grief is TEARS
Grief is MEMORIES
Grief is SILENCE
Grief is TIMELESS
Grief is SHARING STORIES
Grief is HELPING OTHERS
Grief is LIVING WITH LOSS
Grief is LOVE THAT NEVER DIES

~Alan Pedersen
angelsacrosstheusa.org

As you do your holiday shopping please remember us!
This all helps with our meetings and community events.
Thank you!



Support
The Compassionate Friends
of Oscoda Area 2440.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com,
Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)



You can shop & give at the
same time!

Help The Compassionate
Friends of Oscoda





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

**The Compassionate Friends of Oscoda Area
7th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting**



**Sunday December 12, 2021
6:45-7:15 pm**

**Outside at Mark's Park on River Road
(1/2 block west of US 23)
Oscoda, MI**

This event is an opportunity for families, as well as extended family and friends to come together to honor the memories of children, siblings and grandchildren who left too soon.

A short program will include music, poems, reading names of loved ones and lighting candles.

To be sure the name of your loved one is included please send the name(s) to tcfoscada@gmail.com by December 10th.

For more information check out

