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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
989-254-5888
Email: tcfoscodagmail.com

DD Issue 70 March/April 2023

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.

March 14th @ 7 pm
April 11th @ 7 pm

You need not walk alone!

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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

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REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Gail Lafferty
734-748-2514

Kathy Rambo
734-306-3930



Like Springtime

Like springtime, let me unfold and grow fresh and anew from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me.

Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter of grief.

Life has dared to go on around me and, as I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I readjust my focus to include healing

and growth as possibly in my future.

Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief, but may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss.

~Reprinted from

Bereaved Parents/USA Newsletter, A Journey Together, www.bereavementparentsusa.org



From the Ashes of Grief

In the early morning fog of a spring day
The sunlight drifts slowly across the lake
Lifting the dark shadows of night.
The honking geese frolic in the early morning rays
of sunshine
While the birds sing of promises yet to come.
Through the dark clouds of grief,
Slivers of sunlight filter down.
The pain and fear residing in my heart
Is starting to give way
To the hope of finding joy once again in my life.
The warmth of the sun flows through my body
And I now feel and see flickers of that joy.
It is but a fleeting moment in my thoughts.
But it fills me with the hope of perhaps
Finding peace once again.
The forever tears cleanse my heart and my pain.
They pave the way for love and laughter once again
in my life.
My heart will forever be empty from the loss of
my precious child.
But the sparkling sunlight spreads light around that
hole in my heart.
Gentle healing is beginning, springing anew from
the ashes of grief.

~Lana Golembeski

Reprinted from TCF National Magazine
"We Need Not Walk Alone" Spring/Summer 2015



Easter & Passover Seasons

The Easter and Passover seasons are upon us. They are special family times that make it more obvious that one is missing. Some parents are struggling with what they believe anymore. The pretty new dresses and hats don't seem to matter as much as they did.

There are more important things on our minds now.

We are facing the renewal of life all around us—and yet the missing child's life is not renewable. We hurt because life is going on and his or hers is not.

These are normal reactions for some when grief is fresh, for the changing of seasons is a poignant time for many. Those of us who have had the necessary time with to convey to those who have not that it won't always be this painful. When your grief softens (and it will), so will many of the hurtful responses. Get out in the sunshine, go for a walk, smell the fragrance of the flowers and allow the warmth of the season to permeate your being. It just may make your day a little lighter, and a lighter day is worth trying for.

~Excerpt from *Spring Has Sprung*

By Mary Cleckley

Reprinted from: *A Journey Together*
Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org



In the lilt of Irish
laughter you
can hear the
angels sing





WHO AM I NOW?

Who am I now that my sibling has died? I have asked myself that question many times over the last four years. When I think of my brother, Sean, I think of how things used to be. I also think of all the things he will miss. For example, my husband or my children will never know Sean. Sean will never have children. There are just so many things that he will miss. I began to question who I was about a month after Sean died. He and I shared a great love of music. When I think of music, I think of Sean. At first, every song I heard made me cry. After a while, though, I began to try to find a deeper meaning in the songs. I know that a lot of teenagers and young adults identify important times in their lives by music. I am one of those people. Now, I am trying to figure out what place the music has in my life. After Sean died, music took on a new meaning for me. The music I sing and listen to is my special connection to my brother. The song "Because You Love Me" by Celine Dion was especially powerful for me. I came to realize that, through simply loving and supporting me, my brother had helped to shape the person who I was becoming and who I wanted to become. I have realized now that my life's direction has taken a slight detour. I have had to reroute my image of myself.

When I hear music, I see my brother, and I hope that will never change. When I saw myself, in the past, I saw Sean by my side. That picture has now been altered. The biggest part of the question, "Who am I now?" is also am I still a sister?" The answer to that is a simple yes! Sean will always be my brother and I will be his sister. Forever. Peace until next time.

~Traci Morlock BP / USA, St. Louis

Transition in Grief

It is good to speak of our children, to recall the wonderful memories of their lives. It is good to honor our children with ritual, ceremony, prayer, and thanksgiving for the gift that will always be our child. It is good to celebrate the life of our child, to cherish our time with them.

It is also wise to acknowledge that by honoring our child in these ways, we are doing our grief work. This work also involves pushing, pulling, and dragging ourselves through the purgatorial fog that transcends our every thought after our child dies. The grief is overwhelming; the process of grief work is demanding, punishing, and often harsh. Either we stay in one place, "stuck" in our grief, or we reach out and help ourselves. There are no other choices.

The loss of our child to death is the most traumatic event of our adult lives. We have lost the future, and we have lost an immense piece of ourselves when our child died. We must work to rebuild ourselves. Rebuild ourselves for a new life; a life without our child sharing this physical plane with us.

But as we share our child with others, speak of the life that no longer is, celebrate that life in ritual, ceremony, and memories shared, we are doing our grief work. At first it is difficult. The throat swells, the breathing is shallow, and the words are so difficult to find. But we pursue, for we do not want the memory of our child to be erased.

We carry our child forward into the future; we see the world for two now. We cherish this new journey that we take for our child and ourselves. This effort is our child's legacy. Our child will live as long as we live...through our words, actions, thoughts, memories, and memorial efforts.

And as we do these things that are good, we find the burden lifts ever so slightly. Days, weeks, months, and then years pass. At some point we realize that we, too, have transitioned. Our subconscious mind has accepted the worst that life can give, and we have emerged as different people cherishing the goodness that is always our precious child.

~Annette Mennen Baldwin

TCF Katy, TX

In Memory of her son, Todd Mennen



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



Birthdays 		Remembrances 	
<p>March Tony Calabrese</p> 	<p>March Aaron Gonzalez</p> 	<p>March Nathan Kirkpatrick</p> 	<p>March Angelo Edward Still</p> 
<p>March Nathan Kirkpatrick</p> 	<p>April Calvin Vallette</p> 	<p>March Ashley Scott</p> 	<p>April Michael Wright</p> 
<p>April April White</p> 	<p>April Aaron Dean</p> 	<p>April Derek Toppa</p> 	<p>April Samuel Martin</p> 
<p>April Blake VanSnepton</p> 			

Powerful, Powerful Words from Lexi Behrndt

www.scribblesandcrumbs.com



A Boy and His Kite

He kept adding more spools of string to make it higher. A woman walked by and said, "You have that kite flying high." And the boy agreed. The woman left and went about her business. On her way back, she looked up toward the kite and said, "I do not see your kite." The boy agreed. She asked, "Then why don't you let go of it?" The boy answered, "I can't. I can still feel it tugging." This is the plight of bereaved parents.

TCF~ Richmond, VA

"Their story is not over. We carry them. But listen here: your story, my story, our stories are not over either. No matter how much you wished you could have stopped breathing when the breath left their lungs, no matter how hopeless your life seems, no matter how deep down in the pit anxiety or depression or PTSD have taken you. No matter how weak, how small, how fragile you may feel: you are not. You are fierce. You have been given a sacred task, and you are the person for the job. Your story is far, far, far from over. Few people in this world meet someone who so intricately and radically changes their lives simply by entering it. Few people have their lives split into such a powerful before and after. And while it may be so easy to look at our before and afters through the lens of deep pain and sorrow, you have been given a sacred gift: to know a love so pure, so raw, that it extends across worlds, through time, and death cannot ever touch it. You've been given a sacred gift, a second chance, and invitation to never be the same from this point forward simply because they existed, you were chosen to be theirs, and you are tied together, eternally, your love a force greater than life itself. You are theirs; they are yours, for eternity. Press on."

Grandparents Grief: A Double-Edged Sword

The death of your grandchild is like a double-edged sword. You grieve for the death of a child whom you cherished; a child whom you had hopes and dreams for. But you also grieve the death of your own child, the baby's mother or father. For the child's parents died with the child. Not physically, but figuratively. Your own flesh and blood, the person whom you once knew your child to be, will never be again. Your child has been transformed in a moment of time into a new person. An overwhelming grief has touched their lives. It is a time of confusion, anger and frustration for many grandparents.

Offer your unconditional love and support. Go to support group meetings with your child and go to a grandparent's group for yourselves. Remember your grandchild on special occasions such as his or her birthday/death day, Christmas, and Easter. Send your child a Mother's Day or Father's Day card reminding them that they are still the parents of the precious child, always loved but now lost. Share their pain with them, even years later. It will surely create an even deeper bond of love, appreciation and fortitude withstanding the passing of time and circumstances.



*~In Peace and Memory of our Beloved Children-
Joanne Cacciatore*

*Have you discovered the secret -?-
often what makes you cry
can also make you smile...*

~Sascha Wagner



Hope

Hope is a robin singing
On a rainy day;
He knows the sun will shine again
Though the skies may now be gray.
Like the robin let us be.
Meet trouble with a smile;
And soon the sun will shine for us
In just a little while.

~Beverly J. Anderson

In the Spring Time of Your Grief

Spring has fragile beginnings; a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun. Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change.

The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves. A promise is released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season; change is in the air.

What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we can experience in the springtime of our grief. There begins to be a growing radiance. The radiance is not just around us; it is within us. A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive. Life is changing and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and the present. The songs of the birds invite us to join them in celebration of new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a song we composed through the heartache of loss.

Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning. Hearing laughter and discovering it is coming from within ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun. Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not just focus on what is missing.

We will know when we have made that decision. Something buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force; it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance, no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us.

If spring has already crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But, if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it and it will be yours to experience around you and in you!

~Judi Fischer, Cleveland, Ohio

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