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

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ISSUE 43 JULY/AUGUST 2019

SUMMER

by Pat O'Donnell

posted June 20th, 2019 TCF

Summer in Michigan can warm the heart and heat the body. There are soft silky nights spent viewing dots of light in the heavens. Beaches, barbecues, baseball, family reunions, fireworks, carnivals and cool drinks make the summer a special time of the year for a Midwesterner eager to shed winter's coat. School's out while vacations blend together for happy times. Even blue skies push the gray away in the peninsula state begging us to view, if not experience, the outdoors.

Someone is not there in their normal place and the season of the year will never change that fact. Determination to make "things" better is a laudable, though often quite challenging goal. Having a good time between spring and fall may be a difficult task when a good day may be a notable achievement. The simple act of attempting to have fun may be a simple, innocent act of honoring our child's memory. Every month seems to bring specific special thoughts and those fun times may bring along some unwanted baggage of sad moments that will never go away, but they will become more manageable, more easily carried.

It seems that if we keep busy sometimes "things" get better even if it's only for a little while. An idle mind is the devil's workshop is another one of those phrases that seem to finally have some meaning for the bereaved. Find something, anything, to occupy the mind and the heart will most likely follow, if only briefly. If there is no time to think then there is no time for heartache, and this fragile formula may work on occasion to soothe the soul, providing rare relief from the staggering, stunning, seemingly endless pain.

Other times it is just too overwhelming, too exhausting to keep one step ahead of the darkness that reality has inflicted. We are transported back to when "things" were different, normal, better, so briefly we let go of hope and that is ok, it happens. The fight for survival is not easy but it is possible. The struggle may be measured by where we have been, how far we have come, as well as where we are. Congratulate yourself for making it this far. We may share many similarities, but no one knows your hard road better than you.

I think that our son Brian is having the best summer of all. That is what I choose to think, choose to know, choose to feel. So when I close my eyes tonight I will remember fireworks and sparklers of the past, the amusement parks yet to be visited. The happy faces of yesterday's memories will visit while dreaming of the hugs of tomorrow in that most beautiful perfect summer, that someday forever summer, together.

In 2000, Pat O'Donnell and his wife, Janet, were devastated by the tragic death of their 18 year old son, Brian in an automobile accident. They credit their local chapter of TCF for helping them rediscover hope in their lives. Pat eventually served as a chapter leader and served as a member of the national TCF Board of Directors. Janet and Pat served as co-chairpersons for the 2006 TCF National Conference in Dearborn, MI. They have one other son, Andy. Since Pat's brother Billy passed away in 1972, he suffered the loss of his brothers, Jim and Tim.

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

July 9th:

"Dog Days of Summer"

August 13th:

The Story of Sea Glass

September 10th:

Dealing with Grief Constructively

September 14th:

Walk to Remember

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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The Compassionate Friends Oscoda

Area 

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“You Need Not Walk Alone”

THE SIBLING CORNER

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

Siblings Speak Out

Siblings see if you relate to any of the following statements:

- Our relationship with our dead brother or sister was different from the relationship we had with our parents. We do not grieve the same as our parents.
- We know our sibling was not perfect. We know that he/she did things that were wrong. Please do not make an “angel” out of her or place him on a pedestal.
- Just because siblings are not grieving or speaking openly doesn’t mean that they aren’t grieving in private. Often we talk with our friends or other adults.
- We need to know we are loved as much as our brother or sister who died. Sometimes we wonder if we would be missed as much.

This is from *Siblings Speak Out* <http://bereavedparentsusa.org/>

A SIBLING'S FEELINGS

The pain of a sibling is so real we sometimes hide it deep inside of ourselves. As we watch our parents hurting we see the pain in their eyes. We are also hurting not only for the loss of our brother or sister but also for our own parents. We need to reach out to each other to let each other know we are hurting inside. Our lives have all changed forever. I know they lost a son but I lost my younger brother I loved, and as siblings we share a special bond that will never have any more for he no longer lives...my brother, my friend. I will always miss you and I will never forget you for you will always live in my heart, and I have wonderful memories no one can ever take away from me. In my heart you will stay, love you forever.

~Marie Porreca / TCF Rockland County, NY

The Boat



When we lose our children we begin a journey. It starts on a stream and each one of us gets into a boat. At first, the river is too fast and unfamiliar. We have no strength to put in the oars, but gradually we learn to row. Sometimes the current is too strong and we drift downstream again.

Along the way there are rapids, torrents, and storms we all must overcome and continue on our journey. At times, it seems so hard—others pass us; we watch as gain strength and give us the courage to go on. We can look back and see others just getting in the boat and help them too, always there is some to help us now. We are never alone in our river of tears.

And some day, when we’ve rowed and rowed, we will reach dock and there will be our children to greet us. They will help us ashore and tell us they knew we could do it. We owe it to our children to be the best people we can.

They always knew we were. They had the most wonderful parents. We are left here to show them we are. So keep rowing on that river of life, someone is always there with you.

Samantha Adams, Australia
In loving memory of her son, James
www.bereavedparentsusa.org



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



Birthdays



Remembrances



July

Casey May Whitney



July

Andrew Carrol



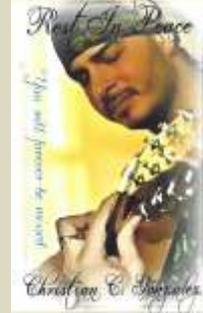
July

Bradley Hilberg



August

Christian Gonzales



August

Kyra Janell Goodman
Sawiatek



August

Angelo Stell



August

Elise Schenk



August

Amanda Wilkinson



August

Drew Preston



August

Calvin Vallette



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.



BUTTERFLY MESSAGES TO OUR LOVED ONES

Our 6th Annual Butterfly Release was held on Sunday June 30th at Sacred Heart Family Center and Lawn in Oscoda. Eighty plus friends and families came to honor and remember our children taken too soon.

The weather this year was great, which made for lively butterflies and great conversations between guests. It was a celebration of life for the names on the Memory Table along with pictures of our children, grandchildren, siblings and loved ones.



*A Symbol of Hope.....
A butterfly lights beside us like a sunbeam.
And for a brief moment
its glory and beauty belong to our world.*

*But then it flies on again,
And though we wish it could have stayed.
We feel so
lucky to have seen it.*





Save the Date
Saturday September 14th

Summertime and the Living is Easy

The lazy, hazy days of summer....

What does summertime bring to your mind? I think of the beach with waves softly washing ashore. Walking along with the sand between my toes, finding "treasure" along the shoreline. The sound of the water is calming. The sun is warm on my face.

Life seems good.

And then I realize that being at the beach is forever changed for me. The memories of items past at the beach with my family came flooding back... Lots of good memories.

I stare at the water and think...the water is like my grief. Sometimes it seems wild and black with rage and almost impossible to manage. Riptides, currents and storm surges.

Sometimes it's like rough waves hitting the shore, continually pounding. And sometimes the waves are smaller and are enjoyable to play in. Then sometimes it is unusually calm and I can wade in and let the cool water surround me.

So now I go to the beach to remember. And let the sun warm my heart. Let the wound of the waves calm my soul. And get sand between my toes.

*Carol Tomaszewski, Annapolic Chapter, BP.USA
Reprinted from July 2011 DC/Northern Virginia Chapters
Newsletter*

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Image

A breath of summertime
Drifts from the rising sun,
Comes from beyond the trees,
Hums at your window~

A breath of summertime
Smiles at your dusty face,
Weaves into cloud and light
Visions remembered ~

A breath of summertime
Touches your secret tears
Brushes the tears away~
(but not the image)

*~Sasha Wagner
From "For You From Sascha"*



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

Support

**The Compassionate Friends
Of Oscoda Area 2440**

When you shop at smile.amazon.com
Amazon donates

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

2019 TCF Oscoda Area Calendar of Events

2nd Tuesday of each month 7:00 pm @ Sacred Heart Church Family Center, Oscoda, MI

- July 9 Dog Days of Summer / Grief
Grief can be worse than the hottest days of summer, come on suddenly, cause lethargy and make us mad. How are the dog days of summer and our grief journey similar?
- August 13 The Story of Sea Glass
- September 10 Dealing with Grief Constructively
Realize how destructive grief can be and hear some suggestions that others have found to deal with their grief constructively.
- September 14 10:00 am Walk to Remember - Community Activity Memory Garden**
- October 8 The Storm
This activity will compare the grief journey to that of a boat trying to make progress in a storm.
- November 12 Candle Making activity
We will make candles to share with attendees of the WW Candle Lighting
- December 8 6:45 pm World Wide Candle Lighting – Community Activity**
- December 10 Celebrate our CHILDREN / Bring your child's favorite snack to share with the group
An informal gathering of sharing and celebrating our children.

Check out our website www.tcf-oscoda.org facebook <https://www.facebook.com/thecompassionatefriends.oscoda/>

