

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: tcfoscoda@gmail.com

Issue 81 March/April 2025

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 11th @ 7 pm

April 8th @ 7 pm

May 13 @ 7 pm

You need not walk alone!

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Chapter
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750
Phone: 989-254-5888
Email: tcfoscoda@gmail.com
Web: www.tcf-oscoda.org



The Compassionate Friends Oscoda Area

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

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Gail Lafferty
734-306-3930

Kathy Rambo
734-748-2514



GRIEF IN SPRING?

Written by John Pete on 3/23/201

If Spring makes you feel better and to feel new hope, that is a good, positive and nurturing thing. But it may not be true for everyone, and no one should feel they have to hide their true feelings. It is perfectly normal to experience new heightened grief and/or grief-related anxiety in Spring, just as it is in other seasons of the year. Although warmer, sunnier months can be nurturing and inspire new hopefulness, grief does not suddenly go away just because seasons change.

Spring generally brings a sudden flurry of change and things begin to move faster all around us. There is rebirth and renewal in nature as flowers and trees bloom and everything turns green again, and people quickly begin to flock to their favorite warm-weather activities.

Try to take time to sit down, make some plans that can nurture you and help you cope with your losses and grief. A helpful way to respond to one's anxiousness about spring and summer is to remind yourself that YOU are in control and that the warmer months offer unique opportunities for nurturing activities such as travel, planting gardens, nature walks, photography, family gatherings, stargazing, and many other things. And if it helps, take comfort in the belief that your precious loved ones are with you wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

Reprinted from Open to Hope



A New Season A New Way of Coping

Spring is the season of shifting, sorting and cleaning house. Spring brings it a sense of renewal, a sense of wanting to lighten the load, clear the air and simplify living. It's a time to clear away the baggage of winter's grief and to shed the overcoat that seemed to shelter us from the pain. Spring is the time when we get a new sense about the cycles of life. When tulips bloom, trees bud and the garden begins to awaken, there comes a change in perspective. We may be able to see things in a new light, with new vision, with a clarity that can only be borne in the fires of loss. We will never go back to being who we were, but we can establish a new sense of self as we work through our grief. We can create a "new normal" as we learn to adapt to the changing demands of grief. We can get through this time of sorrow, but we will not get over it. We simply learn to look at things differently in the early light of spring. The death of a loved one teaches us to embrace the moments of our life rather than waste them in search of tomorrow. Grief is a thief, stealing away energy and time, and I no longer want to be a victim of anything.

There is so little time in life, when you really think about it. I no longer want to waste any of it. Sometimes I forget and I get caught up in all the "little stuff," like schedules, and chore lists and meetings and appointments. Then I need to step back, take a breath and slow myself down. Then, and only then, can I begin to hear the new rhythms of whoever I am becoming. I am forever changed because someone touched my life. I want to remember that - always!

The lessons of our losses cannot be ignored nor negated. They simply are too expensive. I no longer want to count what I have lost. I want to acknowledge the blessings of the springs that I did spend with my loved one. I do not want to cloud the joy of our life together with a long list of things that I didn't say, things I didn't do, things I didn't mean.

The line between the living and the dead is so thin that it is not visible, but it separates those who are moving forward and those who are standing still in grief and regret. I will no longer live my life so that I am building up a bank of regrets that will have to be paid at the end of a loved one's life.

The time to say I love you is now. The time to settle the argument is now. The time to give a hug, a kiss, a handshake, an encouragement is now. The time is now, and now I want to take the time. Funny how that works. When you have too little time, it seems an impossible task to grab more. When you have too much, it seems an impossible task to spend it. The time to live is now. Live your life in celebration and gratitude of those who have so lovingly shared their life with you. Cherish those moments you spent together and live your new life now with a renewed commitment to living as fully as possible. It is acknowledging and living the pain that brings forth the energy and strength to allow hope and healing to return. No matter where you are, no matter what memories you carry with you, may love be what you remember the most.



*~Darcie Sims
reprinted permission granted by Bereavement Magazine*

March

March is a season of "renewal". Let your darken souls feel the warmth of new life and each tree, and each bud breaks through the once frozen earth of winter. Let the "renewal" begin in your life. Your frozen heart can begin to live and feel again. Open it up to the warmth of your family and your friends and feel the love and yes, life that you though died with your child.
















*~Nancey Cassell
Mammoth, NJ TCF*



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



 Birthday		Remembered 	
March Tony Calabrese 	March Aaron Gonzalez 	March Ashley Scott 	March Nathan Kirkpatrick 
March Nathan Kirkpatrick 	March Donald James Sheppard II 	March Angelo Stell 	March Ashley Scott 
April Calvin Vallette 	April April White 	April Samuel Martin 	April Derrick Toppa 
April Aaron Dean 	April Blake VanSnepton 	April Michael Wright 	<p><i>Missing them in every memory and every moment. Feeling their love every day, all the time.</i></p> <p><i>Hallmark</i></p>



Garden and Grief

Do you remember when I told you how I love wild violets? I love them when their little purple faces first peek up out of the ground soon after the crocuses have thrust their heads up. Crocuses emerge in their amazing way, right up through snow, surprising us with nearly forgotten promise of color to come.

Then the season progresses and we move later into spring. Miniature roses in hues of coral, orange and yellow bloom in abundance on my balcony. The azaleas have almost finished their glorious displays of fuchsia, pink, and wedding gown white. We are planting summer annuals — celosia, salvia, zinnias, marigolds, and impatiens.

Still the cool weather permits the pansies to hold their own, even as heat-loving perennials begin to emerge. Pansies, with their cheerful, friendly, diverse faces – each individual contributes to a multihued palette of irrepressible color.



And as we put order into our patchwork garden, I begin to see why the violets, their blooms spent, seem like little intruders in the scheme of things. For a short time, they are sprightly heralds of the rebirth of the Earth in springtime. Later in the season they consist of heart shaped raggedy green patches popping up erratically around the lawn and garden. Wild violets are free and hard to uproot, yet their time of flowering in the garden is fairly brief. Thus, it is with most spring flowers, thus their value, their heartbreakingly short-lived significance.

Planting and tending our gardens is one way we may become co-creators with the Universe, stewards of beauty and delight. Gardening encourages us to live in a state of awe and reverence. Despite the drudgery of tilling soil and pulling weeds, gardening becomes a sacred act.



In commemoration of my daughter Heather's birthday in November, I bought some pansies. Now pansies, I have to tell you, are cousins to the wild violets. They share a common family name in the botanical classification system: *Violaceae*. *Viola*, *wittrockiana*, is the horticultural name of the cultivated pansy; *Viola*, *papilionacea*, is its weedy and wilder relative.

The pansies I planted in little pots in memory of Heather were apricot, orange, and yellow, also palest sunrise pink with an occasional splash of deep purple. I set the pots on the railing of the kitchen deck where their cheerful faces greeted me every day. Proud and sturdy, their delicate appearance of fragility contradicted resilience for withstanding winter's blasts of frost, sleet, snow, or wind. Joyous in the bright calm cold solstice air, these little potted flowers were a birthday present given to Heather and right back to me.



Gardening has taught me that death is a natural process, a natural transition, perhaps a mere breath from one form of life into the next. This lesson has been a great gift to me. Nothing can stop the seasons from rolling around and around each and every year.

Year after year in autumn, we plant pansies to brighten the landscape through winter and into spring. Unlike the wild violets, they need sowing and nurturance. Like the wild violets, they possess the sturdy ability to withstand harsh winter weather. Their little upturned faces peeping through blankets of snow remind us that Life prevails. Until I developed an appreciation for gardening as a balm for grieving, I did not understand the desire of many gardeners to eradicate the violets as mere weeds. Common little violets are lovely when they bloom in the spring. But as the weather warms, their delicate blossoms fade, leaving persistent colonies of vegetation that spread with abandon. Their dense, fibrous root system enables them to encroach upon the flowerbeds sown and cultivated with design.

You see, there's a tension in the gardening process. Do I let nature take its course or do I impose my own landscaping ideas? Do I turn the garden over to God, or do I demonstrate stewardship by helping Mother Nature tidy up?



Similarly, I am trying to balance the tension between grief for my dead family and gratitude for my new life. It is a tough balancing act, because the grief continues to reassert itself into the present time. In the fresh comeliness of their blooms, the violets are a joy. But as leftovers, the rampant weedy patches simply threaten the aesthetics of the garden. Rooting them out, I make way for pattern and design.

And I've learned to give grief its due, but then to root out the chaos of overwhelming mourning. Sadness will never be gone from my heart, just as I will never eradicate the root system of the wild violets in my lawn and garden. I know they'll return next year, and I know I'll welcome them. But when they are no longer pretty, I'll dispense with them. So it is that I will dispense with weeping out of season and get on with authentic composition of the remainder of my life.

I had one daughter born during the time of the pansies' reign in the autumn garden, and I had another daughter born during the spring, when the wild violets have reasserted their fearless tenacious little selves through the thawing earth. Heather was born in the fall of the year, and for her I planted the pansies. Holly, four and a half years younger, came along in May, when the wild violets sprout and bloom of their own accord.

In May, on the anniversary of Holly's birthday and to commemorate her life, I placed arrangements of colorful flowers on the altar at our church. From my garden, I gathered snapdragons – mostly yellow, but a few reds and pinks – white spirea, and red Jupiter's beard. From the florist, I bought purple liatris, tiny green mums, and some white baby's breath. From these various stems I crafted two symmetrical bouquets to honor the memory of one of my dead daughters.



True to the ordered cycle of life's processes, the pansies as well as the bouquets of spring flowers are dead now. Sadly, my girls too are dead, and I will always miss them terribly. Sometimes my grief sticks in my throat and threatens to choke me.

Other times I feel the girls are still with me, playful gossamer sprites tickled to see their mother creating a new life.



That is the tension – between the losing and the gaining, the giving up and the receiving, the weeding out and the nurturing. Finally, between florid sentimentality and the authentic work of crafting a well-tended life.

Embrace the tension. Rejoice in it, for it gives you a full and rich life.

~Terry Jones-Brady 2011

~<https://www.opentohope.com/gardens-and-grief/>

Powerful, powerful words from Lexi Behrnt

“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.”

www.scribblesandcrumbs.com

SPRING THAWS THE WOUNDED HEART

The first spring came too soon. Why did daffodils show sunny faces around the gravestone?

Why did warm breezes blow clouds away; my world, a gray dismal one had no room for this season.

Now years later the blossoms of love, hope and healing have broken through grounds of utter despair.

Warmed by memories of you, I join the daffodils bringing my own smile.



*~Alice J. Wisler
~Inspired by the life of
David Paul Wisler*

Take a Moment to Breathe

Be kind to yourself
Respect your body
Engage with others|
Allow emotions to ebb and flow
Take life one minute at a time
Honor your loved one
Examine your expectations

“Letting go of the pain doesn’t mean letting go of the love”

~unknown



April Reflections Spring-Easter-Passover

Spring means new growth, flowers, green grass, butterflies, budding trees. And with this comes hope for the future.

Easter reminds us of a life hereafter and the children’s laughter fills our hope. As they engage in Easter egg hunts and Easter bunnies.

Passover remembers the ones no longer with us—and as we mourn their loss we understand that the life of the dead is now the memory of the living.

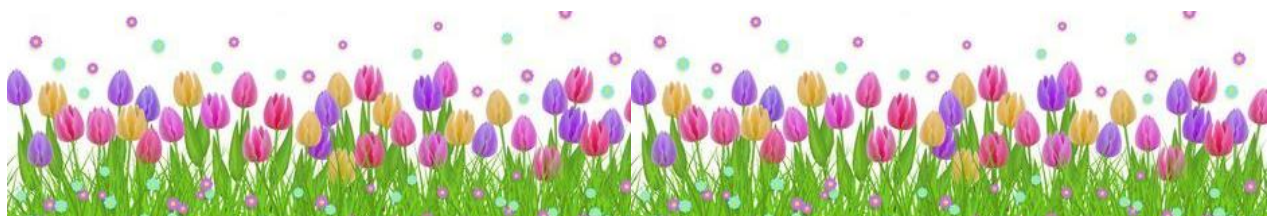
Lent often brings up talk about “giving up things”—I would prefer to hear people say what they are doing for others for Lent. Forgiveness could be a start, followed by love. Add also patience, understanding and friendship. It’s better to be less critical of others and more loving instead.

Priorities can change. One of our bereaved parents observed how her priorities have changed since the death of her child. She used to find it important to shop for material things. She now feels time spent with children is more important. She told us about the recent day; as she was about to leave the house for her grandson wanted to show her something, but she said she didn’t have time right then. After a moment, she reconsidered and said, sure she had time...

How many of us forget it only takes a few minutes or a smile, to make someone else’s day. Bereaved parents know more than anyone we might not get a second chance. So tonight, when we turn out the light and reflect on the day, I hope we all can say “this was a good day not only for me but for the kindness I showed to others”

~Othell Heaney

~TCF Brandywine Hundred, Delaware



The Compassionate Friends Private Facebook Groups

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/private-facebook-groups/>

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. Please note, all three questions need to be answered in order to be approved. If you are on a phone or tablet, you will need to scroll down before hitting "submit." If you are still waiting approval after three days, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

Loss of a Child by Age

[TCF – Loss of a Child \(child of any age\)](#)

[TCF – Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth](#)

[TCF – Infant and Toddler Loss](#)

[TCF – Loss of a Child 4 -12 Years Old](#)

[TCF – Loss of a Child 13-19 Years Old](#)

[TCF – Loss of an Adult Child](#)

Loss of a Sibling

[TCF – Sibs \(for bereaved siblings\)](#)

[TCF – Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)

LOSS OF A STEPCHILD

[TCF – Loss of a Stepchild](#)

Causes or circumstances around the loss

[TCF – Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)

[TCF – Loss to Suicide](#)

[TCF – Loss to Homicide](#)

[TCF – Loss to Domestic Violence](#)

[TCF – Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver](#)

[TCF – Loss to Cancer](#)

[TCF – Sudden Death](#)

[TCF – Loss Due to Drowning](#)

[TCF – Loss to COVID-19 and Other Infectious Diseases](#)

[TCF – Loss to Mental Illness](#)

[TCF – Loss to Long-term Illness](#)

[TCF – Loss After Withdrawing Life Support](#)

Family Circumstances

[TCF – Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children](#)

[TCF – Grieving the Loss of a Child as a Single Parent](#)

[TCF – Loss of an LGBTQ+ Child](#)

[TCF – Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a Child](#)

[TCF – Multiple Losses](#)

[TCF – Daughterless Mothers](#)

[TCF – Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren](#)

[TCF – Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation](#)

[Issues](#)

[TCF – Loss of a Child with Special Needs](#)

[TCF – Loss of a Medically Complex Child](#)

Special Interest

[TCF – Inclusion and Diversity](#)

[TCF – Grieving with Faith and Hope](#)

[TCF – Secular Support](#)

[TCF – Reading Your Way Through Grief](#)

[TCF – Crafty Corner](#)

[TCF – Finding Hope for Parents Through TCF SIBS](#)

Men's Grief

[TCF – Men in Grief](#)

Treasures

In this the first day
when you can bear to remember
how you smiled together,
that day in spring,
that morning in the rain?

Are you discovering
how many gifts of comfort
he left behind,
this child who died
to soon?

His life is gone,
but he endows your time
from this day forward,
with all the faithful treasures
of remembrance.

