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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
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www.compassionatefriends.org
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Issue 72 July/August 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.

May 9th @ 7 pm

June 13th @ 7 pm

June 25th Butterfly Release @ 1pm

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

REGIONAL COORDINATORS



Gail Lafferty
 734-748-2514

Kathy Rambo
 734-306-3930

Summer

On the beach, cool breezes blow across the water, but the sun's rays feel warm upon my face. The lake laps gently at the shore. I see one golden-haired lad with shovel and pail filling the moat around his carefully constructed sandcastle. I remember another golden-haired boy of years long past, wearing his bright red swimsuit, busy at his task and oblivious to all around him. Carefully, patiently, he fills and empties his pail again and again, molding and shaping the sand until he has it just right, until his perfect castle is completed. He runs to me, eyes aglow with pride, his dimpled smile stretched from ear to ear.

He dances around me, "Mommy, come see! It's finished! It's perfect!" We stand and admire it together. One bucket of sand turned upside down, a tiny trench encircling it. To us, it is a perfect castle. But then it happens. A wave, much bigger than the rest, washed away his labor of love. His green eyes fill, his lip quivers momentarily and then he squares his shoulders and announces, "Oh well, I'll begin again tomorrow."

And now recalling that other sunny summer day, my own eyes brimming with tears, my own lip quivers until I remember that I, too, can square my shoulders and "begin again tomorrow."



~Betty Steens
 TCF Baltimore,
 MD



When Is The Right Time?

Emily Graham—author &
grief coach

www.afterchildloss.com

Last night I walked this booster seat up to my trash can, took a deep breath, and placed it in.

It took every ounce of me not to go back for it. The walk back down my driveway was me telling myself, “It’s OK. It’s not a big deal. Leave it there. It’s OK.” And it is...but it also isn’t.

You see this booster seat has been in the back of my pantry for years. The other day I cleaned out and decided it was time to let it go.

It belonged to my son. Ever since he died, it’s been a slow process of letting to. Not of him! But of some of his stuff. I used to keep everything! We are talking about old toothbrushes, school papers, baby toys he hadn’t played with in 5 years, ChapStick he used, trash he touched.

This is what we do. We preserve every single thing that connects us to our memories of them and reminds us they were real. Last night I decided to let go. Not of everything...just this one thing. Because we do this in baby steps...when we are ready.

I have learned over the last 7 years that I don’t need his stuff to stay connected, Though, I still give myself a pep talk. But I know it will be OK. I have photos of it. Photos of him using it. I know my memories are locked in my head. The item isn’t useful anymore (not in good shape). Plus, if he was alive, I would have tossed it years ago!! It wouldn’t have been important enough to keep it if he lived. So why keep it now?!

I know I could really work myself up about it, but I’m not doing that. I know it’s OK. I stand by my decision, even if it feels weirdly hard. I don’t need this stuff to stay connected to him.

But I also know: Keeping it would have been OK, too. That in no way means we are stuck or can’t move forward. Getting rid of it isn’t some process we have to get through. It doesn’t help me move forward, mean I’m “over it”, or demonstrate healing.

It just means only we know how to do this...or when we’re ready. Their stuff, keeping it or not, is a personal decision. One with no bearing on anything else. **Don’t let anyone make that decision for you.**

Take Me To Where The Watermelon Grows

Take me to where the watermelon grows,
stretched out over years ago

Take me to where the memories live, and sorrow
never casts its shadow

Show me the grass where laughter thrives where
little boys and girls dance

Take me to those rich fields of yesterday
ripe with the memories

...basking in sunlight,
waiting for me to smile
as I remember my child.

~Alice J. Wisler



The Tide Recedes

*The tide recedes
But leaves behind
Bright seashells on the sand.
The sun goes down,
But gentle warmth
Still lingers on the land.
The music stops,
And yet it echoes on
In sweet refrains...
For every joy that passes,
Something beautiful remains.*

~Author Unknown





How To Grieve and Cope With Losing A Sibling

By Brad Milne

7/2022

Regardless of whether you're dealing with the death of a sibling in adulthood or childhood, losing them can bring up a wide range of emotions. On top of the grief associated with the death of your brother or sister, you might be experiencing other complex feelings, such as regret for not mending your relationship sooner or guilt over not preventing their death.

While grief can come in all shapes and forms, it's important to find ways to handle and process this heartbreak. Below are just a few tips for helping you cope with your loss.

Give Yourself Time And Space To Grieve

Many people wonder, how do you get over the death of a sibling? The unfortunate truth is that you may never fully recover after losing a sibling. It's possible that you will always hold some sadness in your heart, but that's not to say you won't eventually heal and find a sense of peace.

While mourning the loss of your brother or sister, you may go through the stages of grief as you work toward acceptance. During this time, allow yourself to feel — it's okay to be angry and upset. Give way to your emotions and let them run their course.

It's also important to let yourself process this grief on your own time. Don't feel like you need to hurry up and feel better. Allow yourself all the time and space you need to cope with the loss of your sibling.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

<https://www.betterplaceforests.com/blog/grief-and-loss/how-to-grieve-and-cope-with-losing-a-sibling/>



Butterfly Release 2023



We had a beautiful day for our Butterfly Release in June. We had more attendance this year than we have in the past. What an enjoyable time we had sharing and loving those in our families that are not longer here. To see pictures check out our website at this link.

<https://www.tcf-oscoda.org/community-events>



You can also get a glimpse of last year's Worldwide Candle Lighting. This year's will be December 10, 2023 at 7pm.

"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 rainbow." ~Pat Pinch, Winnipeg



"Forever In Our Hearts"
Our Children/Siblings Remembered

Birthdays 	Remembrances 		
<p style="text-align: center;">July Antonio Raona</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">July Andrew Caroll</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">July Bradley Hilberg</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">August Calvin Vallette</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">July Casey May Whitney</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">August Kyra Janell Goodman Swiatek</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">August Elise Schenk</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">August Christian Gonzalez</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">August Angelo Edward Still</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>When a parent remembers with all their heart, The child will forever remain. ~Larry Warren TCF, N Georgia</i></p>		<p style="text-align: center;">August Antonio Raona</p> 
		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Little by little, we let go of loss... but never of love. ♡</i></p>	
		<p style="text-align: center;">August Andrew Preston</p> 	

“You Can’t Direct the Wind, But You Can Adjust the Sails.”

I saw the above quote on a poster in our church, and it occurred to me that “grief work” is just that—adjusting the sails. When a child dies, our lives are changed forever. The wind changes direction.

When the direction of our life is so tragically changed, we have two choices. We can deal with our grief and adjust our sails, or we can deny our grief and drift helplessly and hopelessly out to sea.

In the beginning stages of grief, we merely “reef our sail” and go with the tide. That is not a bad idea. At that time, we are in a state of shock and not capable of sound decisions. We need quite a bit of time to ride out the storm. But when the initial storm of intense pain begins to subside, we need to adjust our sails for our own survival.



You, and only you, can make the decisions regarding the rest of your life. You may find fulfillment in reaching out to help others or becoming more active in your church, temple or community. Maybe you’ll want to take as big a step as getting a job or returning to school. Perhaps you will make only subtle changes in your priorities. But if you have made the decision to have a direction instead of drifting, get started now! You may have several false starts before you are really on course again. That’s OK. Don’t give up! The healing is in the trying. If you don’t give up eventually, you’ll once again have “smooth sailing”.

*~Marge Frankenberg
TCF Arlington Heights, IL*

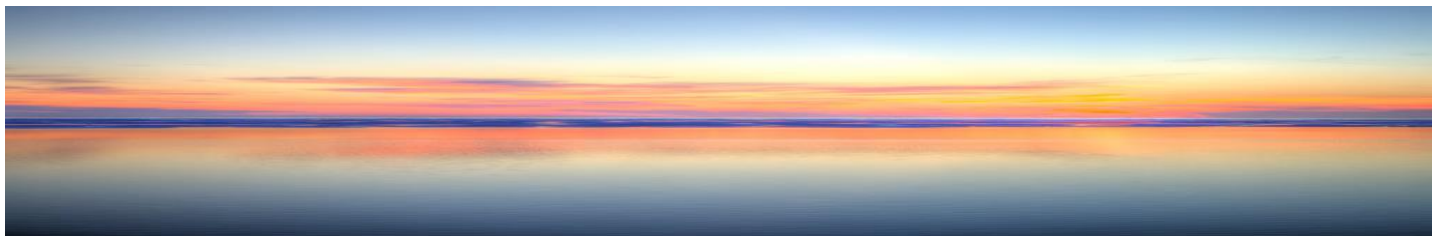
The Compassionate Friends Is for Sharing

Many people think that meetings of the Compassionate Friends consist of bereaved people who sit and cry most of the evening, but that is certainly a misconception. It is normal to shed tears as we talk about our child’s death, and we would expect a newly bereaved person to cry. Would you believe that most of the time we spend in our sharing group circle we may enjoy hearing others’ stories about their children, or even sharing our own? Our meetings are usually about our memories, our questions and also telling what has helped us to cope with it all. We all have ideas that we share with others in the hope that they may reach a point of “good memories” instead of bad memories of the child’s death.



A support group should be very comforting and welcoming to those who attend and should always have non-judgmental members. We are less concerned at how the child died (even though we do care) and we are more concerned that we be there for the parents, siblings, or grandparents who need us. We want to let them lean on us in their time of pain, just as we had others before us who let us lean on them. It does come full circle.

*~Jackiel Wesley
TCF, East Central Indiana & Miami Whitewater*





*The Compassionate Friends
Memory Garden @ Mark's Park*

The Memory Garden @ Mark's Park is a perennial flower garden nurtured, maintained and supported by community volunteers and the Compassionate Friends of Oscoda Area. The Memory Garden is intended to be a place to enjoy nature and revisit positive memories of our children, grandchildren and siblings who died too soon.



In addition to the garden, we have a memory brick area.

Individual bricks may be purchased, engraved with the name of your child, grandchild, or sibling and placed in the designated area of the park. Proceeds from this project will be used to support TCF activities as well as to maintain and expand the Memory Garden @ Mark's Park.

We can only allow one brick per child, grandchild or sibling that has died in order to keep the area open for future bricks.

To order a Memory Brick, please mark which size brick, complete the form and return it to.....

____ 4 x 8 bricks \$35.00 with up to 3 lines of text with 13 characters per line.

____ 8 x 8 bricks \$55.00 with up to 5 lines of text with 13 characters per line.

Name _____ Date: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____



Payment can be made through QR Code or
Make checks payable to: TCF of Oscoda Area

Return completed form to: TCF Oscoda Area or email tcfoscodagmail.com
4087 Forest Rd.
Oscoda, MI 48750

For more information please contact us at tcfoscodagmail.com

Please use grid below, allowing one space per character—a character is each letter, number, and/or space used.
