

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: tcfoscodagmail.com

Issue 78 September/October 2024

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.**

September 10th @ 7 pm

October 8th @ 7pm

You need not walk alone!

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Chapter
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750
Phone: 989-254-5888
Email: tcfoscodagmail.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 COORDINATORS



Gail Lafferty
734-748-2514

Kathy Rambo
734-306-3930

A Season of Many Feelings

Fall is a season of many feelings.
Autumn is here once again, as it comes every year.
And with the leaves, my falling tears.
This time of year, is the hardest of all...
My heart is still breaking, once again it is fall.
Memories once so vivid are seeming to fade.
My time spent with you seems some other age.
This season reminds me of grief and of pain,
But yet teaches hope and of joy once again.
For the trees are still living beneath their gray bark.
And you, my sweet child,
Are alive in my heart!

*~By Cindy Schake
~TCF, Butler, PA*



September Monarchs

Time between summer and winter
Time under changing skies -
muted and heavy with foresight,
or endless blue, smiling at butterflies.

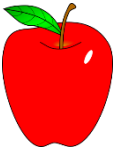
Time between summer and winter.
Time between laughter and tear -
harvest of beauty remembered
and voices (where are you?) to hear.

Time between summer and winter,
thoughtful and painful and wise -
muted and heavy with losing
but smiling at butterflies.



*~Sascha Wagner
From the book: "For You From Sascha"*

SCHOOL DAYS

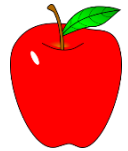


Some of you will have read or heard this before but one of the most stressful times for some bereaved parents is the opening of school. All the ads on TV and in the newspaper are of kids—with new clothes, lunch boxes, and school supplies—all reminding us that someone from our life will be missing this year. Whether your child died as an infant, during school age, or after they graduated will determine whether your pain will come from memories or unfulfilled longings, or perhaps both. Maybe you wish you could go back to the days when everything seemed simple, and you sent your child off to school in new clothes and everything was okay.

Maybe your school-aged child died recently and with children on the streets again headed for school, you see one who, from the back, looks just like yours. I used to hold my breath until I could see their faces. Or perhaps you are the only one who remembers that there should be one more child turning five and starting kindergarten, knowing that it should be your year to outfit your “baby,” meet their first “real” teacher, and watch them start turning into a “big kid.” Undoubtedly, you will have friends talking about “losing their baby” and will wish that you had this opportunity and that they will never know what it is like to truly lose theirs.

Whichever your pain, it’s real and may be easier to deal with if you think about it and talk about it with someone who understands. The day I am writing this would have been my son’s 25th birthday. I wonder if he would have a child getting ready to start school this year.

For some, the pain is knowing that because of your child’s death, they are more distant from his or her children, and they think about those grandchildren at this time of year.



For all of us, we remember our children, we cherish their memory, and we somehow, live on.

~TCF Central Arkansas Chapter



Grandparents Day Sunday September 8, 2024

The official song of National Grandparents Day is “A Song for Grandma And Grandpa” by Johnny Prill. The official flower for the day is the “forget-me-not” flower.

In our involvement in the grief over the death of our child, we fail to realize that grandparents also grieve. Although not in the same way we do, they do grieve. Their grief is two-sided, one for the child who is dear to them and the other for their own child who is suffering. Just as the parent does, the grandparent loses his future. One of the joys of grandparenthood is the knowledge that through grandchildren they achieve immortality. It is expected that their name will be carried on through them. At the death of their grandchild, that branch of their family tree is cut off. What should have been will not be. In the cases of an only child, there will be no future generation. Just as for the parents, the family of the grandparent will never be complete again. They, too, feel the empty place at family gatherings. We bereaved parents must consider the needs of grandparents and at the same time be open and honest with them about our needs. We must let them know how they can help us, but at the same time, we must be aware that they, too, need help. Mutual sharing of feelings between bereaved parents and grandparents will be helpful to both in the recovery process. The sharing not only of painful feelings but also happy memories of the child with grandparents can be helpful for both and it can also create a deeper relationship in the family.

~Margaret Gerner, TCF, St. Louis, MO

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcflossofagrandchild> Grandparents-closed FB page



Grief It's What's on TV

Grief Digest July 24, 2024

By Carole Trottere

This is the complete article that we talked a little about in our discussion at our August meeting. We thought you might want to read the full article.

I don't want to talk about it.

That's the way grief and loss were handled back on TV in the 1970s with shows like *The Brady Bunch* or *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*. What did we really know about Mike Brady's first wife? In the show's first episode, viewers learned that she passed away, and there is a brief conversation between the father and his youngest son about keeping a photo of mom. Meanwhile, the absence of Carol Brady's first husband remained a mystery. Little Eddie in *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*, the family bounces back rather quickly as well. No grieving, tears, discussion or memories of those dead parents around the house.

In recent years, that paradigm has changed, with popular series like *Shrinking*, *This is Us*, *The Bear* and *Afterlife* tackling grief; a recent theater production titled *Sorry for Your Loss* focusing on the loss of a child; and even a podcast hosted by Anderson Cooper called *All There Is*, that includes talking and crying openly about grief.

"Grief is the one universal experience that we will all have," says Michael Cruz Kayne, comedian and author of the play *Sorry for Your Loss*, about the death of his infant son. The play manages to be both heartbreaking and funny, much like real life, as he shares the myriad emotions that follow tragic loss.

An article published by the University of Cambridge estimates that for every death, nine people are affected on average by grief. COVID caused a silent epidemic of grief. Right on COVID's heels, the fentanyl epidemic has created a whole new legion of grievers as well. A recent survey by the nonprofit Rand Corporation found that more than 40% of American adults know someone who died from an overdose.

So basically, the old "I don't want to talk about it," has become something we all seem to be talking about, because we want and even need to talk about it to get through life. If *The Brady Bunch* were rebooted today, the kids might be speaking to a grief counselor and Mike and Carol would have at least one photo of their deceased spouses around the house.

In Apple TV's *Shrinking*, co-written, produced and starring Jason Segel, as a therapist grieving his wife's death and trying to understand his daughter's grief process, viewers watch a very realistic experience of grief unfold.

"More shows are starting to tackle the complexity, the anger and the lashing out that comes with grief," said Litsa Williams, co-founder, along with Eleanor Haley, MS, of the online grief community *What's Your Grief?* "They aren't just sitting at home crying. Everybody in *Shrinking*, for example, is grieving different things, and it's a comedy. In just a half hour they do it all brilliantly."

In a 2023 Vanity Fair interview about his show *Shrinking*, Segel said he was pitched the idea for a show about a grieving therapist by co-writers Bill Lawrence and Brett Goldstein.

"He (Lawrence) and Brett pitched me this idea about a shrink who was grieving himself and basically going through a nervous breakdown while he continued to practice therapy. There would be this kind of even mix of big comedy and set comedy pieces, but also real pathos and we were gonna handle the grieving as honestly as possible. That seemed like this really tasty mix of everything I was looking for."

Netflix's *Afterlife* takes the audience on a messy emotional ride with recent widower Tony, played by Ricky Gervais (who also wrote and directed). Laid low to the point of considering suicide in the early stages of his grief, Tony is kept going by the simple task of feeding and caring for his dog. And surprise. Tony doesn't "get over it" or "move on" by episode two.

His grief journey *is* the show. He is sad and cranky and depressed for the whole season. It's raw and real and grief counselor Sharon Greaney-Watt of Babylon thinks it's great.

"*Afterlife* speaks to the importance of connection as human beings, especially in such grief," she said. "The comfort that his dog provides, and this connection was his reason to initially keep living. I think the show speaks to the process of integrating and managing one's grief, to be able to ultimately carry the grief as one moves forward."

One of the most poignant speeches that Gervais gives in season two of *Afterlife* speaks to the sad realization that every griever eventually discovers--they are forever changed and there's no going back.

Gervais' character says: "People think I'm sort of okay like I'm getting on with it. I'm snarky now and again and that this is a lapse but it's not. This is me all the time now. Everything else is the front. I'm not well, but I remember what it was like to be normal, so I do an impression of that. But this is what I really am, and I want to be normal again."

Kim Roots, managing editor of TVLine, a website devoted to all things TV, agrees that grief has come out in the open. And that TV series have come a long way since Carol and Mike Brady's former spouses just disappeared with little explanation.

"I do feel that now it's a little bit more out in the open and used a bit more as a thread throughout a show's run," she said. She noted that nine-time Emmy-Award winning *show*, *Six Feet Under*, forged an early path for TV in the 2000s in its use of grief as a plot thread throughout the show. Written and directed by Alan Ball, the show centered around the Fisher Family and their family-run funeral home. The characters not only confronted death and grief daily, but they also struggled with their own grief after the sudden death of their father. The show blazed a trail by portraying real grief in all its untidy reality, a cocktail of anger, love, guilt, pain and loss. But *Six Feet Under* was alone at the time.

While Roots doesn't claim to know exactly why the "grief plot thread" is more popular these days, she agrees that it seems easier to talk about feelings now than maybe it was 30 or 40 years ago.

"Maybe we've all had a little bit more therapy and we take a little bit more comfort in talking about these hard things in public," she added.

Or maybe cable and, more recently, streaming have spurred an evolution towards more high-quality TV, without censors, that's aimed at an audience willing to talk about almost anything. With cultural energy being directed at TV, the door is now open for massive changes on how everything is covered, from gays to complicated relationships to criminals to all kinds of angst. And grief.

Then there are the modern-day societal challenges, like the fentanyl crisis, that have brought grief front and center for far too many people in "real life."

Claudia Friszell, who leads a weekly support group for those affected by addiction and grief, says that she believes the alarming rates of drug-related deaths, especially from the recent fentanyl epidemic, could be the impetus for the emergence of grief as a plot thread.

"It's incredibly healing and comforting to see yourself and your situation on TV. Watching a character behave a little bit crazy due to grief makes me think 'Hey, I'm not crazy after all. I feel the same way,'" said Friszell."

"After my son passed away 24 years ago, I celebrated his birthday and my friends and family almost did an intervention thinking I had totally lost my mind," Friszell said. "But now there are cards and party supplies for that specific occasion! Not sure if that's good or bad but it has certainly helped society to be more accepting."

So, a weekly TV show can become a therapy session, in a sense, for a grieving viewer.

Williams believes that the time the world spent in COVID isolation could also what turned the tide.

“I think Covid did absolutely changed people's understanding of loss as something bigger than just death related losses,” she said. “I think people started to recognize grief as a combination of death and non-death loss. I think that opened a space for people to talk about it more or be more interested.”

Roots credits the comedy element of shows like *Shrinking* for the reason viewers are willing to take the “grief and loss ride” along with the main characters.

“The humor makes it easier to touch the harder parts,” Roots said.

CNN reporter Anderson Cooper has tapped into the need for people to talk about their grief with his podcast, *All There Is*, which just finished its second season. The podcast is about the grief Cooper felt when his mother died in 2019 and the grief that has defined his life since his father died when he was 10 and his brother, who died by suicide when Anderson was 21. At the conclusion of season one, Cooper received thousands of voice messages from listeners, which inspired him to produce a second season of the podcast.

One of those listeners is Barbara Olsen of Baldwin, whose son Liam died of an accidental overdose in 2017. “It’s a release and a relief to just talk or listen and be in the company of someone who truly understands even if it’s through a tv show or podcast. Anderson Cooper’s podcast allows people to call or write to him and tell a part of their story. I like that.”

During an interview on CBS Sunday Morning, Cooper said “The truth is, none of us is alone in our grief, although it certainly feels like it. The path we are on is well-traveled...everyone has felt the pain of loss or will.”

And now it seems that Hollywood and the entertainment industry are on that same well-traveled path.

Carole Trottere knows grief. Her only child Alex died on April 8, 2018 at the age of 30 from a fentanyl poisoning.

World Suicide Prevention Day September 10



World Suicide Prevention Day is an awareness day always observed on 10 September every year, in order to provide worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides, with various activities around the world since 2003.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcflosstosucide> Closed FB page





"Forever In Our Hearts"
Our Children/Siblings Remembered

Birthdays 		Remembrances 	
<p style="text-align: center;">September Drew Preston</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October Samual Martin</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">September Andrew Carroll</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">September Kyra Goodman Swiatek</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">October Amanda Wilkinson</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October Audree Ball</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October Jerry Brunk</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">October April White</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">October Daniel Cleary</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Within our hearts You will always be. Our minds will be filled With sweet memories. Your spirit and love Will never be gone, For each life you touched Will carry them on.</i></p>		<p style="text-align: center;">October Matthew Rheaume</p> 
		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Memories You are gone but thank you for all these soft, sweet things you have left behind in my home, in my head, in my heart.. ~Nikita Gill</i></p>	

We talk about them, not because
 we're stuck or because we haven't
 moved on, but we talk about them
 because we are theirs, and they
 are ours, and no passage of time
 will ever change that.

SCRIBBLES & CRUMBS



World Pregnancy & Infant Loss Remembrance Day

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day is an annual day of remembrance that takes place on October

15th. The day honors babies who have died due to miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death, SIDS, ectopic pregnancy, termination for medical reasons, and the death of a newborn. It also aims to raise awareness about the emotional and psychological challenges faced by those who have experienced pregnancy and infant loss.

In 2024, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day falls on a Sunday, which provides an opportunity for individuals, families, and communities to come together in remembrance and support. As part of the day, people around the world participate in the Global Wave of Light by lighting a candle or candles at 7pm local time in memory of the baby or babies they have lost. Photos of these candles on social media create a wave of light that spreads across the globe.

Robyn Bear, Lisa Brown, and Tammy Novak established the day in the United States in 2002, and it has since grown into an international observance. The World Health Organization advocates reversing social and cultural taboos that have historically complicated pregnancy and infant loss, in favor of open expression.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/miscarriagestillbirthinfantgrandchild/> Closed FB miscarriage/still birth grandparents

It's Okay to Laugh.

Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. It's okay to laugh.

~Patricia Lufty Nevitt
TCF Austin, TX



SIBLING CORNOR

DEAR SIBLING:

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you?
But of course, you probably already know – since you know me better than anyone.
No matter how much time passes,
I still wish you were here to share our lives
And the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought
and at times neglected each other,
I just assumed that you would always be there.
That we'd grow old together
and remember stories of growing up
And laugh at each other
as we looked and acted more like our parents.
That we'd share our joys and setbacks,
and adore each other's children.
Your death has rocked me harder
than I could have imagined I'd survive.
And at times I didn't want a future
that didn't include you.

Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions
There is no replacing you
And there is no solace for my grief.
There is only the simple choice I make every day
To live on in the honor of your memory
and the love we shared.

To strive to carry on the best of who you were
To cherish the brief time we have with others
To celebrate the opportunity to be alive
To have compassion for the pain of others
as well as my own
To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you
And to remember that you would want me
to go on and find joy again.

You gave me many gifts while you were alive
And I continue to discover the gifts in this loss.
I am so thankful you were born my sibling
I would not have traded
our time together for anything.
You are always with me
Because you are a part of me.

By Melanie Lamoureux
TCF, Marin County, CA



October's Memories

October's here, the air is bright
The leaves decked out in fancy dress,
The clouds in shapes of animals
Hang in the sky so blue.
This was our time of year, your favorite.
How many times did you come in,
Cheeks glowing, eyes sparkling,
Smelling of the leaves you jumped through
As a child and even after you grew up.
"Just smell, just feel the air.
I love it, crisp,
With a hint of winter coming."
Our time, but now only my time.
Time to dream dreams that won't be.
Time to wish wishes that can't come true,
Time to remember & treasure each day we had together.
Time for October's memories.

~Arden Lansing
TCF Northfield, NJ

The White Pumpkin

A beautiful poem by Jennifer Giles

This is the story
Of a pumpkin of white
What is its place on this autumn night?
Amidst all the orange and colors of fall
It seems out of place and oh what a story
You see, in its face lies the image of glory

Of babies so small, so incredibly tiny
Perfect in purpose, their souls shining brightly
No less a baby, a child just the same
As the one who was held and called by their name
Was my baby a he?
Or was she a she?
What would my child have grown up to be?
Yet bigger than questions and what ifs and whys
Is the comfort they feel when they look to the skies
For their hope is the truth that they so tightly cling
"I'll know all the answers, understand everything
On the day that God hands my child back to me"

This pumpkin is sweet baby boys and girls
Who never opened their eyes to this world
Never cried, never feared
Protected from pain
Touched by their innocence
We're never the same
Lives perfect and pure
All things lovely and sweet
And we honor them here
'Til heaven we meet
This pumpkin is all of the sweet little ones
Whose lives although short were covered in love
In kisses and snuggles, rocking and playing
Their parents not knowing they wouldn't be staying
But the time that they had they would never trade
Even if they could be saved from the pain
Their cribs may be empty, but the promise remains
One day they'll hold their babies again

This pumpkin is for all these sweet angel friends
Whose parents all know this isn't the end
And how they are doing
Tonight, up in heaven
Is better than anything we could imagine
Though we're missing our children
And we're still on this side
Our hearts will continue to swell with pride
At the special, wonderous, the out of place things
Like this white pumpkin, and the joy that it brings
A reminder that our children are made right

Angel parents, I know there's still tears to be shed
But I hope that this pumpkin brings peace instead
Our babies are promised forever in heaven
And that's the best gift we could ever be given.

