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

The Compassionate Friends of  
Oscoda Area  
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**ISSUE 47 MARCH/APRIL 2020**

## SOMEWHERE IT'S SPRING

By Darcie Sims

*Posted on March 20th, 2019 The Compassionate Friends*

It's spring in some places now. And in some places, it will be winter for another couple of weeks (months?). Somewhere the tulips are beginning to push through the soft earth and somewhere the birds are returning to sing. Somewhere the air is warmer, the breezes more gentle, the land begins to awaken from a frozen sleep. The trees are beginning to bud and even the air smells fresh and clean. Somewhere windows are open and the sound of the vacuum can be heard, marking the beginning of spring cleaning... a ritual was given to us long before our forefathers set sail for a new world. Somewhere the last holiday decoration is being packed away (those holiday diehards!) and somewhere a lawn mower is being readied for a new season.

As spring approaches, we begin to shed our overcoats and stand in front of the mirror... examining the body for the extra lumps we've accumulated during the hibernation season. We lace up our jogging shoes and make our way to the sidewalks, high school tracks and to the gym, eager to strip away the added inches that came because it was dark and gloomy and food seemed to soothe and comfort during the dark days of winter. Somewhere someone is planning a wedding, a graduation, a family reunion.

Vacation brochures begin to appear and plans are discussed in anticipation of summer. Spring is the reawakening season... the great wake up call for the earth. Somewhere, someone is answering that get up call... greeting the new season with vim, vigor, and vitality. There are smiles and renewed energy and hope seems to simply float on the softened air. Somewhere... all of that is occurring, but not within me. It's still snowing inside my being. It's still winter inside here and there aren't any tulips about to burst open in my spirit. I've still got my snow boots on and the sun hasn't quite made it to my world. It's still winter inside me... I wonder if spring will ever come.

Oh, there have been moments of spring in the past. Wonderful, warm fleeting moments; moments when I "forgot" about the pain, the emptiness, the despair, the grief. Moments when the world was right side up and the music made me dance. But they were only moments and I'm waiting for spring to arrive in me.

Hope... the major ingredient in spring, seems to elude my grasp. Just when I think there might be some hope, a memory comes creeping across my soul and it's winter again in my heart. It's this lack of hope that seems especially cruel during springtime. I thought this winter inside me would end and I was looking forward to a more peaceful time in my life. I thought we would settle down, plant a garden and live our life filled with memories and the opportunity to make new ones. HA! I thought grief would end at some point. The books all say it will... everyone else looks like their grief has subsided... how come spring missed us?!

A season without hope is the ultimate in despair and I've spent too many such seasons. Where does hope go and how do I get it back?

Hope is that elusive something that keeps us moving, even in the dark. We are only powerless when we have no hope, no vision, no faith in our own abilities. We may be helpless at times. We may question the arrival of spring but we are only truly powerless when we have no hope, no dreams...

Don't lose the hope! Search for it! Fight for it! Demand its return. Hope changes as we do and it can be so disguised that we may not recognize it, but it can be found — in the moments of our memories. We probably won't ever have totally happy lives again... We probably didn't have that kind of life anyway; we just thought we did.

### MONTHLY MEETING

*2<sup>nd</sup> 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—per Sacred Heart  
Policy**

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 10<sup>th</sup>:**  
*"Get Real About Grief"*

**April 14<sup>th</sup>:**  
*Bucket of Flowers*

### CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Area Chapter  
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750  
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Web: [www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org)

**The Compassionate Friends Oscoda**



Area

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SECRETARY-CHARLIE NEGRO  
TREASURER-JANE NEGRO  
OUTREACH-TRACY TOPPA  
DIRECTOR-VICKY WEICHEL

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Don't let death rob you of the moments of joy still to be remembered, and found. Don't let grief rob you of those spring places where love and joy live forever in the heart. Somewhere it is spring... Deal with the anger, the guilt, the depression as it comes and then let it go as you can... so there is room for joy to come again. Let hope come in... it's spring.

*Darcie Sims Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS was a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She was an author of many books on grief and bereavement including Why Are the Casseroles Always Tuna?, Footsteps Through the Valley and If I Could Just See Hope. She was an internationally recognized and popular speaker having keynoted at numerous bereavement conferences nationally and around the world. She served on The Compassionate Friends (TCF) national board of directors and the Association of Death Education and Counseling. Darcie received the TCF Professional Award in 1999. She was president and co-founder of Grief, Inc. and Director of American Grief Academy. She also was Director of Training and Certification for Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). Sadly, Darcie died suddenly and unexpectedly in February of 2014.*



### **A Fork in the Road**

Losing a child is like coming to a fork in the road of your life. You never expect nor plan on finding this fork yet there it is right in front of you. Unlike most forks though, there is an obstacle blocking one...of the paths, the path which was life as you knew it. You can't turn around and go back, there is no way around it, and you will most definitely never get over it. Now your choice is to stay at this intersection or to continue down the only path available. Staying put most certainly gets you nowhere, but continuing down the other path seems impossible as well.

I choose to continue down the path knowing that I can still see that other path and the life that could have been. I know that my son would want me to continue down this path as well and that if at any time I stumble down this path, I can look over and see him encouraging me to get back up and to keep going.

~Samantha Hess



### **Before You Know It**

*Before you know it,  
here's another March  
with daffodils and crocus—  
any hyacinths?*

*Before you know it,  
here's another sorrow--  
the grieving over things  
she used to sing about.*

*Before you know it,  
here's another greening  
with quiet hope  
and modest promise—  
listen, when you can.*

~Sascha Wagner



### **Find A Little Time For Spring**

*Find a little time for Spring  
even if your days are troubled.  
Let a little sunshine in---  
let your memories be doubled.*

*Take a little time to see  
all the things your child was seeing,  
and your tears will help your heart  
find a better time for being.*

~Sascha Wagner





## THE SIBING CORNER

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

### Snow and Sibling Loss

By Evan Rieger

Posted May 15, 2011 Still Standing Magazine

Snow fell from the cold winter skies when my beloved sister was buried. Miniature, delicate snowflakes seemed so out of place in the cemetery filled with grief, tears and darkness. I stared into the sky, away from the casket, and became completely captivated by the gorgeous snowfall. I needed *something* to distract my mind, even if only slightly. Everyone who surrounded me — my best friends, my family — I loved them more than anything. Watching them all break into tears and show that they too are human beings, and not gods, was quite a lot to handle.

I found it curious that was the first day it had snowed all year. It was as if Nature herself spoke through the change of weather, or maybe it was that Stefanie was not even in the casket and has instead returned to the Earth as beautiful snow to comfort us during our nightmare of a reality. But when I refocused my attention back onto the human realm, all of the comfort in my life was lost.

The universe was spinning through my mind, and I began to float through endless time. Teardrops of nostalgia fell from my eyes and my face was bathed with liquid memories. The memories began to flow before my eyes in a stream, before bursting into a vicious waterfall. School, summer camp, Disneyworld, Europe, Florida, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and every memory I had in my entire life with her filled my mind.

I felt as if I was a worthless insect, suffering immolation by the magnifying glass of God. I looked at the grave and failed to find any joy in Nature. Even the warming smell of flowers seemed to stab my sense of smell with tastes of dreariness and disgust.

I looked around at my family and knew that they felt the exact same as I. We were all so different in so many ways, but in this we were connected as one. Without the love of my parents and brother, I would not have been able to continue my life with even the tiniest semblance of happiness.

We suffered the greatest melancholy of all: the death of someone that we love more than ourselves. Death has spread from her body and into us, blackening our souls. Or maybe it painted it a color other than black, for our souls were not completely dead. Maybe it is simply a color that we have never seen before, but what I was certain of is that it is not one that I have ever cared to know. Still, we continued to pull ourselves through this new, unfamiliar life because we knew that every time the sun falls, it must rise again.

Months after the funeral, I noticed something peculiar in a nearby park. This oddity gazed into my eyes from above; it was a watchful owl! I couldn't remember the last time I have seen an owl before! In fact, I couldn't even remember the last time I have seen any creature as majestic as this in the suburbs.

But alas, there was an owl, and she rested on a tree branch under the moon. The moon wore a bright, round halo and released a glow onto the Earth that was entirely absent of gloom. The owl's eyes reflected the moonlight's shine onto me and I became blinded from the brightness. There was not a single moment that I could recollect, up until this point in my life, where I was *not* trying to unbury the past memories from the grave of my old self.

Not a single moment, except for this one.

The strange beauty of the owl left me with fantastical and amazing dreams, which filled my mind with wonder. These are dreams that I could barely remember, but I awoke with the leftover feeling of magnificence. This was odd considering that I had lost a family member such a short time ago, and such feelings should not exist anymore. Nevertheless, dawn curiously smiled at me as I rose into the world of reality. But this day, reality seemed more beautiful.

In 2008 Evan Rieger's twenty-two year old sister was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer and in 2009, she passed away. This was during the transition period from high school to college for Evan, and nothing has had a greater impact on my life.

[www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)



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



**Birthdays**



**Remembrances**



**March**  
Tony Calabrese



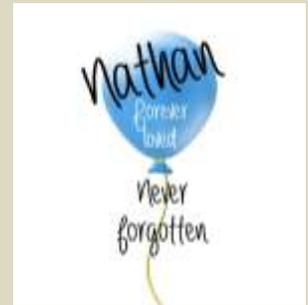
**March**  
Aaron Gonzalez



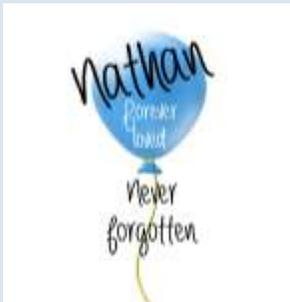
**March**  
Ashley Scott



**March**  
Nathan Kirkpatrick



**March**  
Nathan Kirkpatrick



**April**  
Calvin Vallette



**March**  
Angelo Edmund Stell



**April**  
Derek Toppa



**April**  
April White



**April**  
Aaron Dean



**April**  
Michael Wright





**The Compassionate Friends**  
of Oscoda Area  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

### 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 are 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to:** TCF of Oscoda Area

**Return completed form to:** TCF Oscoda Area  
4087 Forest Rd.  
Oscoda, MI 48750

For more information please contact us at [tcfoscoda@gmail.com](mailto:tcfoscoda@gmail.com)

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




2/23/2020



Like a bird singing in the rain,  
let grateful memories survive  
in time of sorrow.

~ Robert Lewis Stevenson ~

## 2020 TCF Oscoda Area

*2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month 7:00 pm @ Sacred Heart Church Family Center, Oscoda, MI*

*\*If OAS is closed due to the weather TCF meetings are also canceled—per Sacred Heart Policy*

**Looking Ahead**  
**Butterfly Release in June—once a date is set we will let you know!**



**About Our Meetings:** Please don't stay away from a meeting because the scheduled topic does not interest you. At each meeting there will be time to discuss and share whatever is on your mind. We welcome your participation and that participation drives our discussions. However, your participation is not required, we all understand there are times we just want to listen.

### **RESOURCES:**

Visit our chapter website: [www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org)



<https://www.facebook.com/thecompassionatefriends.oscoda/>

National Organization Resources may be found by visiting: <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/>

Click "Find Support" tab:

- National Magazine, We Need Not walk Alone®
- Monthly E-Newsletter
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- Online Support Community
- Facebook Closed (Private) Groups TCF/USA National Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/TCFUSA](http://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA)

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

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