

A Quarterly Newsletter
by and for Bereaved Parents
April/May/June 2021

### Our Mission Statement:

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.



#### Writer's Block or am I a Blockhead Writer!!!!!

I always seem to struggle with what to write about for the newsletter. Mickey and I kick around topics or try to come up with certain ideas, etc. Unfortunately, Covid-19, gave me quite a lot to write about last year. So, I will try to stay away from it, but just a brief update. I tested positive in early January and was off of work from January 13th until January 25th. I had a mild case only losing my sense of taste and smell. I suffered none of the other symptoms like nausea, fever, headaches or fatigue. I have had both of my vaccine doses so hopefully, I am good to go.

TCF has announced that the National Conference will again be a virtual conference and will be held from July 16th through July 18th. For those of you that are interested, please go to the National website for registration details and how to sign-up for the various workshops. The conference was going to be in Detroit this year. The very first national conference that Mickey and I attended back in 2006 was in Dearborn, MI. There were several of us in attendance from our chapter. This is because the conferences are not always close to Green Bay. The only other sites for the conference within driving distance for us, is Chicago and Minneapolis. Mickey and I always felt that if possible that everyone should try to attend at least one national conference. We have attended quite a few of them when I was on the national board of directors from 2010 through 2016. We were able to make many new friends and listen to some outstanding speakers at these various conferences.

Well the year is 1/4 complete as you receive this letter. I was thinking this morning how busy the month of March can be for most of us. First, we have the time change for daylight savings time; followed a week later by the first day of spring. This means I only have about one month left in tax season before I can hopefully relax. Tax season brings 2 deadlines for me, the first is March 15th for partnership and corporation tax returns. The final deadline is April 15th. The hard part with these dates is that Melissa and Emily passed away on May 15th. So when it is March 15th, I know we are 2 months away from another anniversary of their passing and then only 1 month away on April 15th. While this should be a time of relief for me as I don't have to work long days and weekends, it also brings the anticipation of realizing that another year has gone by since they passed. It will be 16 years for us this coming May 15th. That is the hardest part of trying to wrap my head around this, 16 years is a long time not only for us but anyone who has lost a child(ren). Emily has now been gone longer than she lived with us and next year we will hit that milestone with Melissa. So hard to believe how at times 16 years have passed and at other times it seems like it was just yesterday. Here is wishing all of you Easter blessings.

In Peaceful Sadness, Melissa and Emily's Mom and Dad

Mickey and Steve

#### The Green Bay Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

meets the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 501 Howe Street, Green Bay. (Enter the parking lot off Monroe at Doty)

# For further information contact: Main Number: 920-370-3858

Sue DeLong, Remembering our Children
Peg Le Roy, Steering Committee
Mickey Schmeisser, Chapter Leader/Newsletter Editor
Steve Schmeisser, Treasurer
Sue Van Straten, Remembering our Children
Carol Wautlet, Resource Coordinator
E-mail: compassionatefriendsgb@gmail.com
Website: compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

# Monthly Support Group

Tuesday, April 20, 2021 6 p.m.

The New Me: How Are You Different Since Your Child's Death

Tuesday, May 18, 2021 6 p.m.

Music With Special Meaning—Share a Song

Tuesday, June 15, 2021 6 p.m.

**Sharing Precious Memories** 

# THE ROBIN'S SONG

By Genesse Bourdeau Gentry In memory of my daughter Lori Gentry TCF Marin & San Franciscol, CA



turning back towards the sun: trees are leafing out: wildflowers are blooming. Robins are again singing to one another. And, I believe, also singing to those who are grieving.

Before my daughter Lori died in the summer of 1991, I was under the misperception that only the English robin had a glorious song. That smaller, redbreasted scalawag of a bird delights all who hear it, and I had felt that we in the United States had been short-changed when they'd misnamed its larger, boring, American cousin the same sweet name. All I'd ever heard our robins do was cheep!

Then one spring day in the year after Lori died, during one of the darkest times of my grief, my ears and heart flew open with surprise at a song I heard outside my window. I distinctly heard, in the midst of my pain, a bird singing loudly and clearly, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio! . . . Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I went outside to see what marvelous bird might have been sent to sing to me. I could barely see the bird at the top of the neighbor's poplar tree, so, while hoping this exotic, magical bird wouldn't fly away while I was gone, I went to find our binoculars.

room in the house. After adjusting the binoculars, I was truly amazed to see one of our "boring" American robins come clearly into view! As he continued

It's spring once again. Our part of the world is singing clear as day, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I marveled at this special message and wondered if my robin was the only one who sang these words. So I looked it up in my Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds and found that my robin was not an anomaly, but that robins are considered the true harbinger of spring, singing "Cheer-up, cheerup, cheerily."

> I stood there that day filled with wonder. I wasn't hearing things; there it was in the bird book: "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily." I thought to myself, "Cheerily . . . No, that isn't what I hear." We had lived in England for a year and our family, especially Lori, who loved to put on an English accent, often said "Cheerio!" to one another when we meant, "Goodbye" or "See you later!" There was no doubt in my mind as I stood there listening. It WAS cheerio. Lori could have found no more perfect way to try to cheer me up AND say "hello"!

Nine springs have passed since then, and although I will always deeply miss Lori's physical presence in my life, those darkest of times are thankfully now mostly in the past. It is spring once again and as I hear the robin singing so hopefully in the highest branches, it takes me back to that first spring Rushing back, I could hear the bird from each song, and I smile, remembering. And I think of all those who are now in the darkest depths of their own grief and pray they too will hear this lovely song.



# BENT BUT NOT BROKEN

Cathy L. Seehuetter TCF St. Paul, MN In Memory of my daughter, Nina



The beautiful flowering tree planted in Nina's memory on Memorial Day a year short of a decade ago (by her favorite cousins) looked so regal and smelled so delicious yesterday. I like to think it flowers this time of year as a special birthday message from my "baby girl". However, with the vicious storm we had last evening I watched the soft white petals drift and swirl to the ground, as if a deluge of tears from a breaking heart. Today, it sits almost bare - a few petals still hanging on for dear life, unable to let go, desperate to regain its former beauty.

I can't help but see a symbolism in that tree that I can associate with. It is as if it stands as a monument to my grief, the ebb and flow of emotions that I have felt for the past nine years since Nina no longer walks this earth. When the tree is in full flower it seems much like family life "before". Of course there were short-term crises that now seem insignificant in comparison and life's speed bumps along the

way, but all in all, pretty good. I mean, at least our family was intact. When the leaves were suddenly stripped of their branches and thrown to the ground in the furious hailstorm, it was like our lives after Nina's sudden death; thrown suddenly into a world of intense pain and sorrow, trying desperately to survive the unthinkable.

But, yet this morning, the tree stands, more barren and most definitely battered, but still hanging in there. Nine years later, those who love her, have weathered the tornado-like force of grief and loss. And nine years later, much like Nina's tree, though the storm has taken its toll, we will still manage to be upright; definitely bent, but still standing. And somehow, life roars on...

With gentle thoughts



# GRATITUDE...THE KEY TO HAPPINESS Richard Edler TCF South Bay/LA. CA In Memory of my son Mark Edler



I am convinced that the real key to happiness is gratitude. I did not come upon this insight. I learned it from Dennis Prager, a wonderful and gifted man who is both author and talk show host for KNBC radio in Los Angeles. I give him all the credit. But I have thought a lot about this idea after my son, Mark, died five years ago tomorrow.

At first I was offended by people who smiled or even laughed during The Compassionate Friends meetings. These were the people who seemed to have somehow re-entered the land of the living. How dare they greet each other with hugs. How dare they laugh. How dare they appear normal when their children have died. But over the last seven years I have learned three valuable lessons:

- Life goes on and we must too. Gradually the pain eases and the warm memories replace the sadness. Gradually we return to life. One day we find that is 11:00 in the morning and we have not thought about our child yet. At first we feel guilt. But then we also realize we are going forward. We will never forget. But we decide that the loss of our child will not be the all-consuming factor in our life. We choose to enjoy friends again. We choose to go out to dinner again. We choose to laugh again. I am convinced that this is what our children would want for us. The pain does not bring our child back. It only makes us miserable without end.
- Become grateful for what we have, not focused on what we have lost. I see people in our chapter meetings who have gone through "every parent's nightmare" and want no part of life again. But, I ask that these compassionate friends also think about the ways they have been blessed, as well as hurt. In my experience, most people have more to be thankful for than they realize: health, other children, a loving family, a career they enjoy, financial security, life in a free country, a faith that works for them, a true best friend, a spouse who they love. Nobody has it all. But compared to most of the world, we have a lot.
- The life we now lead will be better than it would have been. That does not make our child's death a good thing. It just means that our child's life mattered, and it has changed us forever. It means that in some small way the world will be better because our child lived, and we are the ones who can make it so. We have a new sense of priorities. We don't "sweat the small stuff." We know what matters because we know what is irreplaceable. And we know how deeply other people hurt because we, too, have been there. We "know how they feel."

And when our life is different and better because our child lived, then that child is never forgotten. Each of us would do anything in the world to go back in time, but we can't. It is up to us now to go forward, and we can.

When I grieve, when I stand by others as they grieve, even in the midst of seemingly unbearable sorrow, grief becomes a way to honor life — a way to cling to every fleeting, precious moment of joy.

# Remembering our Children

During the three months that each newsletter covers, we include your child's birthday and the anniversary of your child's death — <u>if we know those dates</u>. Based upon TCF National policy, we will not print the year of your child's birth or death.

# BIRTHDAYS

Matthew Daley	4/01	Ryan Bader	4/26
(son of Mary Daley)		(son of Mark & Cheryl Bader)	
Hannah Lynn Flauger	4/02	Catherine Strom Schmidt	4/30
(daughter of Daniel Flauger)		(daughter of Pete & Karen Strom)	
Dana Kapla	4/02	Matthew Baudhuin	5/06
(daughter of Bob Kapla)		(son of Jason Baudhuin & Dawn Baudhuin)	
Rick Strombach	4/02	Steve Knaus	5/07
(son of Donna Strombach)		(son of Luke & Shirley Knaus)	
Jason Ison	4/04	Nicole Kowalkowski	5/09
(son of Rene Ison)		(daughter of Roman & Sharon Kowalkowski)	
Elizabeth Turek Bigley	4/06	Carson Murfield	5/10
(daughter of Albert & Mary Turek)	7/00	(son of Matthew & Christy Murfield)	0, 10
Mylisa Klapatch	4/06	Chayse Michael Wilcox	5/10
	4/00	(grandson of Todd & Melanie Wilcox)	0, 10
(daughter of Dennis Klapatch & Tamara Walker)	4/00	Jacqueline Evers	5/12
Dean Collard	4/08	(daughter of Joe & Alice Evers)	3/12
(son of Debbie Collard)	4/00	Lance Vies	5/12
Jason Vogels	4/08		3/12
(son of Pam Vogels)	4/00	(son of Wendy Vlies)	E/42
Christopher Voght	4/08	Timmy Parent	5/13
(son of Tammy Viegut & Timm Gay)		(son of Steve & Cindy Parent)	E /4 0
Craig Kozloski	4/09	Luke Stempa	5/13
(son of Bobbie & David Kozloski)		(son of Gerri & Steve Stempa)	_,,_
Jason Kurey	4/09	Greg Lindbloom	5/17
(son of Deb Kurey)		(son of Ginger Lindbloom)	
Cody Green	4/10	Kevin Betker	5/24
(son of Dan & Gwen Green)		(son of Roy "Pete" & Renee Betker)	
Brandon Scheider	4/10	Stephanie Corbeill	5/27
(son of Deb Scheider)		(daughter of Sylvia & Richard Corbeill)	
Kevin Kazik	4/11	Patrick Meyer	5/27
(son of Sally Kazik & Charlie Kazik)		(son of Dan & Anne)	
Zachary Larson	4/11	Nathan Crowe	5/28
(son of Dan & Paula Larson)		(son of Tom Crowe & Lisa Hanneman)	
Tammie Gustman	4/12	Tyffany Stevens	5/28
(daughter of Victoria Fifield & Marvin Gustman)		(daughter of Lynn Pigeon)	
Brent Rosner	4/12	Shannon Saldana	6/02
(son of Tina Rosner)		(daughter of JoAnn Koss)	
Rebekah Puzen	4/14	Amanda Dulak	6/04
(daughter of Larry Puzen & Carol Schroeder-Puzen)		(daughter of Frank & Maddy)	
Blair Chapin	4/15	Noah Froemming	6/07
(son of Scott and Susan Chapin)		(son of Butch & Sara Froemming)	
Jacob Peters	4/15	Aidan Hammer Fry	6/08
(son of Jerry & Natalie Peters)		(son of Linda Hammer & Megan Fry)	
Hailey Kreil	4/16	Hunter Vincent	6/08
(daughter of Virginia Kreil)		(son of Bonnie & Steve Vincent)	
Erin Schumacher	4/17	Sharon Ellner	6/09
(daughter of Diane Payne)		(daughter of Laverne Heezen)	
Joel Bagneski	4/19	Alison Johnson	6/10
(son of Bill & Kelly Bagneski)		(daughter of Lon & Carolyn Johnson)	
Isaiah Ebben	4/21	Evan Meder	6/13
(son of Tim Ebben)		(Son of Randy & Margaret Meder)	
Nathan Jarosinski	4/21	Jared Gehm	6/16
(son of Mark & Jean Jarosinski)		(son of Ken & Mary Gehm)	
Joshua Calaway	4/24	Taylor Poole	6/16
(son of Bonnie Calaway)		(son of Kelly Poole)	
Kaitlyn Marie Schley	4/24	Derek Waterman	6/16
(daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)		(son of Patricia Waterman)	
Justin Plate	4/25	Stephen Charneski	6/17
(son of Mark & Grace Plate)		(son of James & Roberta Charneski)	
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Ashley MacDonald	6/18	Justin Merriner	6/25
(daughter of Yvonne Cerkas) Emily Schmeisser	6/19	(son of Chris Merriner)  Drew Hohl	6/26
(daughter of Steve & Mickey Schmeisser)		(son of Helen Hohl)	
Shawnie Silas-Grode	6/19	Joshua Webster	6/26
(daughter of Pauline Silas) Nicole Ekberg	6/20	(son of Julie Denny) Chase Lasecki	6/26
(daughter of Debbie Ekberg)	6/20	(son of Steven & Linda Lasecki)	0/20
Andrew Sorensen	6/23	Matthew Murphy	6/26
(son of Wendy Sorensen)		(son of Kathleen Murphy)	2/22
Alyssa Steward	6/23	Ben Delain	6/29
(daughter of Wendy Steward)  lan Seymour	6/24	(son of Peter & Becky Delain) <b>Alex Wesner</b>	6/09
(son of Diane & Paul Seymour)	0/24	(son of Jenny Wesner)	0,00
Maria Cambray	6/24	Steve Price	6/30
(daughter of Jack & Gerry Cambray)		(son of Jennifer & Steve Price)	
	ANNIVE	RSARIES	
Andy Bell (son of Patrick & Debbie Bell)	4/02	Kaitlyn Marie Schley	4/19
Joshua Calaway	4/02	(daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)  Mark Malueg	4/22
(son of Bonnie Calaway)	4/02	(son of Sue Malueg)	7/22
Hailey Kreil	4/02	Marisa Nelson	4/22
(daughter of Virginia Kreil)		(daughter of Amy Nelson)	
Makayla Lego	4/02	Andrew (Andy) Short	4/22
(niece of Tim & Christine Newtols)  Mike Quinnette	4/02	(son of Barbara Short)  Paige Franklin	4/23
(son of Jim & Carol Quinnette)	4/02	(granddaughter of Judy & Chuck Dams)	4/23
Hannah Lynn Flauger	4/03	Doug Kwiatkowski	4/23
(daughter of Daniel Flauger)		(son of Dave & Theresa Kwiatkowski)	
Nicolas Resch	4/04	Mike Smith	4/23
(son of Lynn & Steve Marcks) Rick Strombach	4/06	(son of Dave Smith)  Dalon Calkins	4/26
(son of Donna Strombach)	4/06	(son of Kate Calkins)	4/20
Eric Barlamant	4/07	Catherine Strom Schmidt	4/26
(son of Jim Barlament & Penny Maraccini)		(daughter of Pete & Karen Strom)	
Austin Jirikowic	4/08	Evan Van Lanen	4/26
(son of Julie Jirikowic)	4/00	(son of Dan & Peg Van Lanen)	4/30
Wendy Johnson (daughter of Tom & Debbie Johnson)	4/08	Crystal (Falish ) Peterson (daughter of Steve & Darlene Enderby)	4/30
April Erickson	4/09	Jon Boettcher	5/05
(daughter of Darla Nooyen)		(son of Roger & Pat Boettcher)	5.55
Taylor Dale Postoak	4/10	Noah Luokkala	5/06
(son of Kathleen Postoak)	4/4.4	(son of Carol Luokkala)	F/00
Amy Laedke (daughter of Debra & Fred Laedke)	4/11	Nicole Ekberg (daughter of Debbie Ekberg)	5/09
Shannon Saldana	4/12	Amanda Rose Skar	5/09
(daughter of JoAnn Koss)		(daughter of Wayne and Kim Skar)	0,00
Jon Daniel Strawser	4/13	Charlie Tinkham	5/10
(son of Brenda Choat)		(son of Karen Tinkham)	
Joseph Derge	4/14	Noah W. Froemming	5/11
(son of Randy & Ann Derge)  Megan Kelley	4/14	(son of Sara & Butch Froemming)  Adam Federwitz	5/12
(daughter of Bev Kelley-Miller)	4/14	(son of Mary & Gary Federwitz)	0/12
Brody Post	4/14	Joseph Jacques	5/12
(son of Jake Post)		(son-in-law of Pat Wojcik)	
Jared Gehn	4/15	Austin Reeck	5/12
(son of Ken & Mary Gehm) Patton Prunty	4/15	(son of Ann Rieckmann) <b>Gabriela Jacques</b>	5/13
(son of Ed & Pat Prunty)	4/10	(granddaughter of Pat Wojcik)	<i>3/</i> 13
Travis Christenson	4/18	Michael Anderson	5/14
(son of Cherie Oettinger)		(son of Ron & Lori Anderson)	

Ashley MacDonald	6/05
(daughter of Yvonne Cerkas)	
Jenah VanGroll	6/05
(daughter of James & JoAnn VanGroll)	
Shane Bowhousen	6/06
(son of Doug & Renie Bowhousen)	
Brent Rosner	6/06
(son of Tina Rosner)	
Troy Tousey	6/06
(son of Vicki & Tim Tousey)	
Taylor Poole	6/08
(son of Kelly Poole)	
Kara Rojas-Spice	6/08
(daughter of Jerry & Amy Spice)	
Chris Sauer	6/08
(son of Ron & Kathy Sauer)	
Bruce T. Blaser Jr.	6/12
(son of Bruce & Paige Blaser)	
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	C/20
Brian Kofler	6/30
Brian Kofler (son of Wendy Kofler)	6/30
Brian Kofler (son of Wendy Kofler)	6/30
	(daughter of Yvonne Cerkas) Jenah VanGroll (daughter of James & JoAnn VanGroll) Shane Bowhousen (son of Doug & Renie Bowhousen) Brent Rosner (son of Tina Rosner) Troy Tousey (son of Vicki & Tim Tousey) Taylor Poole (son of Kelly Poole) Kara Rojas-Spice (daughter of Jerry & Amy Spice) Chris Sauer (son of Ron & Kathy Sauer) Bruce T. Blaser Jr. (son of Bruce & Paige Blaser) Lily Boettcher (daughter of Melissa Mielke) Jamie Bialozynski (daughter of Mike & Arlene Bailozynski) Allison Hunt Bush (daughter of Nan & Terry Bush) Riviera Konen (daughter of Jennifer & Todd Konen) Alyssa Steward (daughter of Wendy Steward) Drew Hohl (son of Helen Hohl) Samantha DeLong (daughter of Chuck & Judy Dams) Katie Culhane (daughter of Muffy & Kevin Culhane) Allison Fields (daughter of Leanne Fields) Jordan Hischke (son of Danae & Alan Hischke) Heather Fuller (daughter of Leslie Tagge) Timothy Metoxen (son of Florence Petri) Amelia Wesner (daughter of Jenny Wesner)

Love gifts were recently given by:

Michael & Mary Daley, in memory of Matthew Daley
Ken and Mary Gehm, in memory of Jared Gehm
William and Sally Kostka, in memory of Kandy Kostka
Doug and Renee LaViolette, in memory of Brian LaViolette
Todd and Sandy Scheffen, in memory of Sam Compton

# ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS, & MISC.

#### Calendar of Events 2021:

April 20: The New Me: How Are You Different Since Your Child's Death

May 18: Music With Special Meaning—Share A Song

**June 15:** Sharing Precious Memories

#### Do you want to Share??

Do you want to share a picture and/or a story of your child? Would you like to write an article about how you're feeling? If you would like to submit a post for our newsletter, we would love to hear from you. We only ask that you remember copyright when submitting.

# I Am Spring

By Carol Clum

I am the beginning.
I am budding promise.
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels
creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play.

I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
With compassion, we feather nests
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream
I whisper truth – life is change.

I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

(written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox, author of 'Finding What You Didn't Lose' and 'Poetic Medicine'.)

## **Please Visit Our Sites At:**

compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

All sorts of goodies are included:

\*Past Newsletters

\*Calendar of Events

\*Articles

\*Online Donations

\*and More!

2021 National Conference

Dear Compassionate Friends,

As many of you know, The Compassionate Friends' 2021 National Conference was scheduled to be held in Detroit, Michigan this July. We have been actively watching national developments and considering the many issues that are involved for determining how to proceed. As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to have strict restrictions for large gatherings, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the in-person conference in Detroit.

Please visit the TCF National Website for more information and how to register for the Virtual Conference.

The Compassionate Friends

2021 Virtual National Conference

July 16 - 18, 2021







PO Box 211 Green Bay, WI 54305

#### We need not walk alone!

Our monthly support group meets next on:

Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

at First United Methodist Church, off Monroe at Doty. Call 920-370-3858 for information.



# A MOTHER'S DAY WISH FROM HEAVEN Author Unknown



Dear Mr. Hallmark,

I am writing to you from heaven, and though it must appear A rather strange idea, I see everything from here. I just popped in to visit, your stores to find a card A card of love for my mother, as this day for her is hard.

There must be some mistake I thought, every card you could imagine

Except I could not find a card, from a child who lives in heaven.

She is still a mother too, no matter where I reside I had to leave, she understands, but oh the tears she's cried.

I thought that if I wrote you, that you would come to know that though I live in heaven now, I still love my mother so. She talks with me, and dreams with me; we still share laughter too,

Memories our way of speaking now, would you see what you Until I can do it for myself, when she joins me in eternity. could do?

My mother carries me in her heart, her tears she hides from sight.

She writes poems to honor me, sometimes far into the night She plants flowers in my garden, there my living memory dwells

She writes to other grieving parents, trying to ease their pain as well.

So you see Mr. Hallmark, though I no longer live on earth I must find a way, to remind her of her wondrous worth She needs to be honored, and remembered too Just as the children of earth will do.

Thank you Mr. Hallmark, I know you'll do your best I have done all I can do; to you I'll leave the rest. Find a way to tell her, how much she means to me Until I can do it for myself, when she joins me in eternity.