

**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS
of Green Bay**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A Quarterly Newsletter

by and for Bereaved Parents

January/February/March 2022

**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.



Our Winter of Grief

I am writing this article the morning after our annual Candle Lighting Ceremony. We had approximately 35 people attend yesterday. There was a mix of bereaved parents, some who had a child pass away in 2021 and some that have been bereaved more than 15 years. Interestingly enough our December meeting was on the 1st day of winter, the Winter Solstice. This is the day with the shortest amount of daylight in the year. After this date, the days will start to get longer by a minute or more every day until the first day of spring. The church also had a Blue Christmas service on the same night as our December meeting. For many of us, our Christmas's have been Blue after the passing of our child and will never be the same again. For all we know they may remain permanently blue no matter how hard we try to not let that happen.

Our grief is like Winter for many of us and I can't think of another season that is even close to grief. It surely isn't Spring or Summer, which are warm and happy times. Fall would be close as sometimes when we think we have rounded the corner something triggers our grief and returns us to the winter doldrums. Like Winter, grief is cold and gray with nothing but silence. The days are short with sunrise being later and sunset early in the day. The trees are bare having dropped their leaves. Our hearts are heavy like these same branches when they are covered with snow or freezing rain. Sometimes these branches break from the weight of the snow or freezing rain, just like our heart is broken with grief from the loss of our child. But like these branches, with help of friends and family, new growth may happen just like our hearts might eventually heal and slowly grow again. This is the way a support network whether it be our TCF chapter or friends and family will help us battle these winter doldrums as we wait for the warmth and arrival of spring.

We can only hope that we do not sink too far into our winter of grief so that no matter how hard we try, the rebirth and warmth of spring and summer will not help us. Just like we have experienced over the past few winters, hopefully our winter of grief will be mild and not severe. We do know that the memories of all the good times with our child will be for us like the warm rays of the sun on a mild winter day. Our grief will be with us forever, just like the 4 seasons but we can take steps just like we do to prepare for winter that will make it easier for us to endure and survive.

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

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, January 18, 2022 6 p.m.

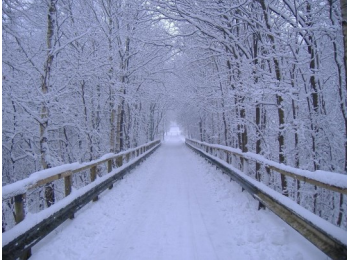
Open Discussion—Did we survive the holidays

Tuesday, February 15, 2022 6 p.m.

Open Discussion—Future of the Compassionate Friends

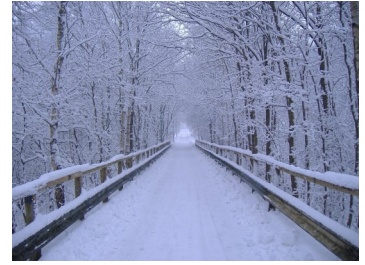
Tuesday, March 15, 2022 6 p.m.

Open Discussion—How have you changed / What have you learned in your life



WAITING FOR THE WAKE-UP CALL

Darcie Sims



I'm waiting for the wakeup call that surely must come someday in this journey through grief. When *will* it get better?!! I'm waiting for the day when the memories are softer, the step a little lighter and when the sounds in my heart aren't always those of sadness, I'm waiting for the music to return, for the light to shine, for the magic to come back. I'm waiting for the pain to stop, the hurt to leave and for everything to go back to its original place. I want the picture to look the same as before, and I'm waiting until it does.

But, while I'm waiting, I'm learning a lot, I know I have to make lists now in order to capture my chores and things I have to do. I gave up trying to remember and now just carry a notepad with me (with a pencil attached!) I have set the clocks 10 minutes fast so I have a better chance of being on time, and I have stocked the car with maps of every place I need to be.

I make menus and create shopping lists. I plan ahead, write down everything and then don't worry when I lose the list, get lost, or simply change my mind, I think most people thought I was always confused, so now I don't worry so much about not remembering. I'm taking advantage of being bereaved and am learning to work with the lack of concentration, the forgetfulness, the confusion. If it isn't written down, it doesn't exist and I've been much happier ever since!

If the weather and the seasons can't get it together, why should I try to coordinate an outfit? I'll just wear what's comfortable for the moment and worry less about what others think. Maybe they are as confused as I am. Maybe they're struggling too. Maybe we should all just stop, look and listen...trying to remember to hold hands when crossing the street and practice hugging instead of hitting.

Maybe spring reflects nature's inability to make up its mind or maybe that hesitation to change is more of Mother Nature's mourning the passing of her winter season. Maybe it's hot one day and cold the next to keep us on our toes, to keep the blood flowing, the legs moving. Maybe shoveling snow one day and planting seeds the next is what we are

supposed to be doing...maybe spring is the season of change and we should let go of the whys? and work on the hows? Maybe pushing the plow is better than trying to pull it.

Maybe just relaxing into the craziness and letting the tides ebb and flow across the beach will work better than trying to direct the winds that change rides on. Perhaps letting the sun warm my winter-weary bones is a more productive activity than rearranging the closet, and maybe the good memories will come back if I let them.

Maybe spring is the reason for getting up...to simply see what is possible today. Maybe today is the day and if I'm in bed, I'll miss the beginning, and I'll still be lost.

Maybe I'm already in the middle of change and maybe I will always be confused, lost and slightly off balance, but maybe that's okay, and I'll just have to figure out how? instead of why? And when that happens, I know I won't be lost anymore! It really doesn't matter if it's Tuesday or Friday (unless one of those days is garbage day, and then it does matter!) Maybe I can let go of the time frames and calendar pages that dictate my life and my emotions and let life simply flow.

Perhaps you and I have already answered the wake up call. Don't let a poor yesterday or an uncertain tomorrow use up today. I think this is it, and now is the time for being all I can be. Half of me is still in winter and dyeing eggs. All of me is still perhaps a bit off balance, but I am alive and that's a start! This wasn't the life I expected to live, but it is the one I've got.

If I'm lost, I'd explore wherever it is I am. If I'm late, I'll just apologize and enjoy the time I have left. If I'm out of place, out of style or out of sync, I'll just keep dancing to the tune I hear and let the rest of the world figure out their own melody...

Where there is great love there are always miracles
- Willa Cather

A VALENTINE FOR MOM

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen



As we grow older, we find that the simple reflections of our children are often the best memories we have. One such memory most mothers have is a valentine.....maybe many valentines. These special valentines were made by our children just for us. They were made when mom was the most important person in their world.

Some of us have kept each little memento of our child's years....from the first little hand plaque to the handmade gifts and cards to the special gifts that our children purchased with their own money. Each one is a part of our child, a part of us and a part of our shared history.

My first valentine from my child was a handmade red construction paper heart glued to heart shaped white lace paper... On it he had written "Happy Valentine's Day to my MOM. I love you. Todd." Shyly he asked if I liked it. I told him I loved it, and that his valentine was the most beautiful valentine a mother could receive. It is a treasure I have always kept. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

In my office I have a gift that Todd bought me five years ago. All grown up now with an MBA, bright future, important corporate job, family of four children, a beautiful new home, and major responsibilities, precious little time was available for finding the perfect gift for his mom. His life was busy; his free time was limited, but a something special caught his eye and he thought about me. He decided to buy it. A few weeks later, he gave me a brightly wrapped package containing a beautiful plate picturing a Sioux Indian princess. "She's beautiful, just beautiful", I told him. "Do you really like it?" he asked. The detail, the essence of her

heritage and her outlook were captured perfectly. I told him, "I love it, Todd I'll keep her in the office so I can see her every day. I think she is beautiful." And she is in my office today, another treasure I will always keep. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

Much has happened since my three year old son gave me that handmade valentine and my adult son gave me that special gift. The years have raced by; my son has been dead for over two years. And so this month I will open another special gift that my son bought me when he was still in college: my cedar chest. I'd always wanted a cedar chest for the special keepsakes marking our lives. That cedar chest contains pictures, cards, handmade gifts and other things that only a mother could hold in her hands while watching the movies play in her head. There are many movies in that cedar chest, but only I can see them. That is the beauty of memories.

Each of us has our memories of our child. Whether our child was 5 days old or 55 years old, we have special memories that are as much a part of us as our faces. Valentine's Day was always a special day for our family. We exchanged valentines and sometimes give a special gift.

This Valentine's Day I will send my son a special handwritten valentine, carried on the wind to the cosmos. The message will be simple. "Happy Valentine's Day to my SON, Todd. I love you. Your Mom."



WINTER OF OUR LIVES

Mary Wildman
TCF Madison County, IL



Someone has said that it is in the winter, when the trees have dropped their leaves, revealing the diversity and uniqueness of each ridge and valley—when the hills bare their innermost selves—that we get to know them and what is really out there. And so it is with people. Most of the time we wear our masks, but it is during the difficult times, during the winters of our lives, that there is the strong need to shed our masks and be able to reveal the hurting and turmoil that is really there.

It is in these moments that friendships are formed and we experience one another as few others ever will. So it is among The Compassionate Friends you meet.

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 — if we know those dates. Based upon TCF National policy, we will not print the year of your child's birth or death.

BIRTHDAYS

Marisa Nelson (daughter of Amy Nelson)	1/01	Jeff Baenen (son of Susan Otradovec)	2/03
Alex Wolf (son of Keith Wolf)	1/02	Ryan Brunner (son of Bill & Sue Brunner)	2/03
Aliina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	1/03	Matthew Dulak (son of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	2/03
Allison Fields (daughter of Leanne Fields)	1/04	Adam Federwitz (son of Gary & Mary Federwitz)	2/03
Ben Garot (son of Keith Garot)	1/07	Mike Smith (son of Dave Smith)	2/04
Megan Kelley (daughter of Bev Kelley-Miller)	1/09	Jesse Hettmann (son of Linda Hettmann)	2/05
Kandy Kostka (daughter of William & Sally Kostka)	1/09	Caitlin Van Duyse (daughter of Brenda Van Duyse)	2/06
Mathew Odea (son of Nan Odea & Greg Warcham)	1/09	Lily Boettcher (daughter of Melissa Mielke)	2/09
Prisha Laabs (daughter of Shamla & David Laabs)	1/12	Julie Sarah Smits (daughter of Jeane Smits)	2/10
Alex Neiman (son of Angel Neiman)	1/13	Brett Buhr (son of Tim & Michele Buhr)	2/11
Corey Calaway (son of Paul & Nancy Calaway)	1/14	Jason Peck (son of Marianne Peck)	2/11
April Erickson (daughter of Darla Nooyen)	1/14	Kelby Bagneski (daughter of Bill & Kelly Bagneski)	2/12
Brody Post (son of Jake Post)	1/14	Sam Compton (son of Mark Compton and Todd & Sandra Scheffen)	2/13
Travis Christenson (son of Cheryl Oettinger)	1/17	Ricky Lambert (son of Maria Lambert)	2/14
Justin Banaszynski (son of Donna Baranczyk)	1/21	Katie Culhane (daughter of Kevin & Muffy Culhane)	2/15
Jason Banaszynski (son of Donna Baranczyk)	1/21	Ryan Jozwiak (son of Lenee & Eddie Jozwiak)	2/15
Dustin Wilkinson (son of Dave & Donna Wilkinson)	1/21	Aislinn Shimon (daughter of Dave & Patricia Novak)	2/16
Christian Warzniak (son of Tara Hein)	1/22	Samantha LaCount (daughter of Dale & Linda LaCount)	2/22
Brian LaViolette (son of Doug & Renee LaViolette)	1/23	Nick Hietpas (son of Bruce & Diane Hietpas)	2/23
Joseph Wesolowski (son of Jennifer Heller)	1/25	Raina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	2/26
Roberta Jean Glebke (daughter of Joyce Glebke)	1/26	Karen Mary Schley (daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)	2/27
Lawson Aerts (son of Dennis & Teressa Aerts)	1/28	Lucas Shallow (son of Robert Shallow)	2/27
Dylan Krings (son of Jason & Joleen Krings)	1/28	David Staude (son of Irv & Bev Michaud)	3/01
Austin Lindberg (son of Todd & Sandy Lindberg)	1/28	Matthew Blazek (son of Bill & Betty Blazek)	3/03
Maliyah Monacelli (granddaughter of Brenda Hendries)	1/29	Samantha DeLong (daughter of Joe & Sue DeLong)	3/03
Doug Kwiatkowski (son of Dave & Theresa Kwiatkowski)	1/30	Mark Louis Starr (son of Ruth (Patti) Schmidt)	3/04
Amy Laedke (daughter of Fred & Debra Laedtke)	2/02	Colton John Margotto (grandson of Deb Dobson)	3/05

Molly Klika Zarnoth (daughter of Bob & Barb Klika)	3/06	Shawn Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21
Kelley Calkins (daughter of Kate Calkins)	3/11	Allison Hunt Bush (daughter of Terry & Nan Bush)	3/23
Kevin Keane (son of Mike Keane)	3/12	Cam Wendt (son of Lon Wendt)	3/24
Heather Fuller (daughter of Leslie Tagge)	3/14	Tami (Sam) Cornelius (daughter of Brenda Cornelius)	3/25
Anne Johanski (daughter of Judy Johanski)	3/16	Mike Quinette (son of Carol Quinette)	3/26
Beau Baxter (son of Laura Martens)	3/17	Steven L Vosters (son of Marvin & Patti Vosters)	3/26
Tayler Nieft (daughter of Michael & Dawn Nieft)	3/18	Lane Harris (son of Susan Harris)	3/27
Kali Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	3/20	Heidi Lessmiller (daughter of David Lessmiller)	3/29
Patrice True (daughter of Wendy Hunter)	3/20	Andrew (Andy) Short (son of Barbara Short)	3/29
Ella Cumicek (daughter of Chris & Rhonda Cumicek)	3/21	Mark Malueg (son of Sue Malueg)	3/31
Parker Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21		

ANNIVERSARIES

Matthew Daley (son of Mary Daley)	1/03	Carson Murfield (son of Matthew & Christy Murfield)	1/24
Aliina Manders (daughter of Spring Manders)	1/03	Troy Jacques (son of Sally Martin)	1/26
Matthew Dulak (son of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	1/08	Heidi Lessmiller (daughter of David Lessmiller)	1/26
Mark Shafer (son of Bruce & Pat Shafer)	1/10	Chad Olson (son of Brenda Olson)	1/26
Christy Stackhouse (daughter of Frank Stackhouse)	1/10	Madeline Wotachek (daughter of Brandon & Michelle Wotachek)	1/26
Ben Garot (son of Keith Garot)	1/11	Matthew Arnold (son of Bob & Carrie Arnold)	1/31
Jesse Hettmann (son of Linda Hettmann)	1/11	Mark Louis Starr (son of Ruth (Patti) Schmidt)	2/01
Chad Schaefer (son of David & Miriam Schaefer)	1/11	Zander Varga Schenzel (grandson of Nancy Varga)	2/02
Ian Seymour (son of Paul & Diane Seymour)	1/12	Andrew Steiner (son of Nicole Steiner)	2/02
Craig Kozloski (son of David & Bobbie Kozloski)	1/14	Steve Price (son of Steve & Jennifer Price)	2/03
Robby Rohr (son of Carol Wautlet)	1/16	Amanda Dulak (daughter of Frank & Maddy Dulak)	2/04
Shawnie Silas-Grode (daughter of Pauline Silas)	1/18	Chris Krueger (son of Cheryl Krueger)	2/05
Matthew Murphy (son of Kathleen Murphy)	1/21	Dylan Krings (son of Jason & Joleen Krings)	2/08
Joshua Webster (son of Julie Denny)	1/21	Corey Calaway (son of Paul & Nancy Calaway)	2/09
Elias Gonzales (son of Maria Gonzales)	1/22	Karson Fenlon (son of Jennifer Neshek)	2/09
Alex Neiman (son of Angel Neiman)	1/22	Allen O'Harrow (son of Cal & Lois O'Harrow)	2/09
Alex Olmsted (son of Lisa Olmsted)	1/22	Jeff Baenen (son of Susan Otradovec)	2/12
Justin Merriner (son of Chris Merriner)	1/23	Nathan Crowe (son of Tom Crowe & Lisa Hanneman)	2/13
John Charniak (son of Maynard & Jeanette Charniak)	1/24	Chad Seitzer (son of Fred & Sandi Seitzer)	2/13

Lawson Aerts (son of Dennis & Teressa Aerts)	2/16	Brandon Groh (son of Cathy Groh)	3/11
Maliyah Monacelli (granddaughter of Brenda Hendries)	2/16	Jason Ziemann (son of Diane Strick)	3/12
Derek Waterman (son of Patricia Waterman)	2/16	Elizabeth Turek Bigley (daughter of Albert & Mary Turek)	3/13
Ella Cumicek (daughter of Chris & Rhonda Cumicek)	2/18	Beau Baxter (son of Laura Martens)	3/17
Nathan Axelrod (son of Johanna Axelrod)	2/19	Josh Gilson (son of Ron & Cindy Gilson)	3/17
Patrick Meyer (son of Dan & Anne Meyer)	2/19	Amaris Soletski (daughter of Amy Soletski)	3/18
Federico Abarca (son of Concepcion Melgar)	2/22	Rebekah Puzen (daughter of Larry Puzen & Carol Schroeder-Puzen)	3/19
Brett Buhr (son of Tim & Michele Buhr)	2/22	Julie Sarah Smits (daughter of Jeane Smits)	3/20
Matthew Odea (son of Nan Odea & Greg Warcham)	2/25	Bryan VanderKelen (son of Bob & Debi Lepak)	3/20
Shane Hopfensperger (son of Mike & Joann Hopfensperger)	2/28	Ricky Lambert (son of Maria Lambert)	3/21
Jason Peck (son of Marianne Peck)	2/28	Parker Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21
Christian Warzniak (son of Tara Hein)	2/29	Shawn Wendricks (son of Darrick & Amy Wendricks)	3/21
Tom Manning (son of Peggy Manning)	3/01	Tayler Nieft (daughter of Michael & Dawn Nieft)	3/24
Matthew Blazek (son of Bill & Betty Blazek)	3/03	Hunter Vincent (son of Steven & Dawn Vincent)	3/24
Matt Hanson (son of Dean & Mary Hanson)	3/03	Luke Watzka (son of Marty & Rita Watzka)	3/24
Colton John Margotto (grandson of Deb Dobson)	3/05	Randy Blezek (son of Bill & Betty Blazek)	3/25
Chayse Michael Wilcox (grandson of Todd & Melanie Wilcox)	3/06	John Aulik (son of Germaine Aulik)	3/26
Todd Reigner (son of Arthur & Barbara Reigner)	3/08	Dustin Wilkinson (son of Dave & Donna Wilkinson)	3/29



ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS, & MISC.

Calendar of Events 2022:

January 18: Did we survive the holidays

February 15: Future of the Compassionate Friends

March 15: How have you changed / What have you learned in your life

Please Visit Our Site At:

compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

All sorts of goodies are included:

- *Past Newsletters
- *Calendar of Events
- *Articles
- *Online Donations
- *and More!

TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

August 5, 2022—August, 7, 2022



Please note:
If area schools are closed,
due to inclement weather, we will cancel
our scheduled meeting

Love gifts were recently given by:

Ken and Mary Gehm, in memory of Jared Gehm
Mike and Joann Hopfensberger, in memory of Shane Hopfensberger
Daniel and Myra Krhin, in memory of all our children
Todd and Sandy Scheffen, in memory of Sam Compton
Sue Van Straten, in memory of Jessica Van Straten
Pam Vogels, in memory of Jason Vogels
Carol Wautlet, in memory of Robby Rohr



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS
of Green Bay**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



PO Box 211
Green Bay, WI 54305

We need not walk alone!

Our monthly
support group
meets next on:

Tuesday,
January 18, 2022
at 6:00 p.m.

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

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends.