



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

A Quarterly Newsletter

by and for Bereaved Parents

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024

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.



Changes are in the Works for 2025:

After a lot of soul searching and contemplation regarding the future of our chapter, I will be stepping down as the monthly meeting facilitator beginning in January of 2025. I will still continue in my role as Chapter Leader and Steve will remain as the Chapter Treasurer. The newsletter, unfortunately, will go on hiatus beginning in January of 2025, unless someone steps forward to assume this task.

Our monthly meetings will continue as Mike Niefert, Tayler's dad, will take over as our monthly meeting facilitator. As we learned over the years, many chapters have a Chapter leader in addition to a meeting facilitator. Some chapters even rotate the facilitator role among members of the steering committee. When we first started attending meetings back in 2005, our Chapter leader was also the meeting facilitator. This dual role makes it difficult at times if the Chapter leader was ill or unable to attend a meeting due to a conflict.

Sue VanStraten, Jessica's mom, is stepping down in January of 2025. Sue mails out the Remember our Children, Angelversary cards. Fortunately, Carol Pomrenke, Kory's mom, has graciously, stepped forward to assume this role for the Chapter. Sue DeLong will remain in her role in Remembering our Children. She mails out the Birthday cards.

This was a very difficult decision for me but I also realize that someday, both Steve and myself will no longer be able to do our roles due to age and possibly health issues as we head into our retirement years.

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

Joleen Krings, Steering Committee

Mike Niefert, Steering Committee

Mickey Schmeisser, Chapter Leader/Newsletter Editor

Steve Schmeisser, Treasurer

Sue VanStraten, Remembering our Children

E-mail: compassionatefriendsgb@gmail.com

Website: compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

Monthly Support Group

Tuesday, July 16, 2024 6 p.m.

NO MEETING / no staff available at First United Methodist Church, due to renovations

Tuesday, August 20, 2024 6 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Margaret Meder
Certified Grief Educator

Tuesday, September 17, 2024 6 p.m.

Dreaming of your Son or Daughter

Strange Words Welcome New Members

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



I am always amazed at the instant empathy we each feel as new members come to their first meeting. We have the strangest welcome for these parents: "We are so sorry you have to be here."

In other organizations the questions are probing: where did you go to school, where do you work, where do you live? All designed to "size up" the newcomer, put him or her in the proper perspective of a neatly ordered world. For us, this information is meaningless. We know the world isn't neat and orderly; we discovered that when we lost our children. We care about you, the newly bereaved parent, whose life was tossed into a cosmic blender when your child died. We care because we are you. We have been here a while, in this purgatory of pain. We have learned to live our lives in a different way, to place value on understanding and hope, the intangibles of the purest meanings of life. We have learned to value each other, to reach out and talk, to wait patiently during the silences needed to form thoughts. We listen intently as you quietly say your child's name, tell your child's story, speak of your heartbreak.

Yes, this is a different kind of welcome. But it is the most deeply sincere welcome we will ever receive. We are kindred souls, you and I. Each of us lives in the "after death" world of losing our child. Each of us has learned gradually that the hope we have attained has made life better, lessened the pain, moderated the isolation, tears, emotional devastation and pure mayhem that once overtook us. Each of us has learned this slowly, in our own time and in our own way.

Each month new parents who have suffered the most horrific loss that a human can endure are welcomed into our group. We reach out, we listen with our hearts and we remember.

Margaret Meder, mom to Evan Meder, 2004-2013. In the eleven years since Evan passed, Margaret has been on a journey of discovery. She's explored varied healing modalities and well-being philosophies. At the center of it all has been the ancient healing art of Jin Shin Jyutsu (JSJ), a light touch therapy which has an extensive self-help basis, using our own two hands. This simple healing modality assists in harmonizing spirit, mind, and body. It's interesting to know that JSJ is being used at places such as the University of Kentucky, offering a Jin Shin Jyutsu department alongside their Cancer Department, as effective means of alleviating the pain and discomfort of chemotherapy and radiation. Margaret is a Certified JSJ Practitioner. Most recently Margaret became a Certified Grief Educator and is sharing her unique program: Grief Jin Shin Jyutsu: a way to ease and harmonize the pain of loss. Now, having found healing and peace after loss, Margaret is on a journey to offer support and hope to other parents.

Margaret will be our guest speaker at our August gathering. If you would like to learn more of Margaret's journey you may visit her website at: www.exhalinggrief.com



A First Timers Perspective:
Thoughts on the 2005 National Conference
Libby Mirabile
In Memory of my brother, Rich
and my sister, Lynn



When my father began going to the national Compassionate Friends meetings several years ago, I thought it was wonderful. When my mother joined him a few years later, I was ecstatic. The idea of the two of them being surrounded by other bereaved parents in an environment that allowed them to share their experiences seemed nothing short of brilliant. My sister Lynn and I agreed that it showed definite progress on their part in dealing with the loss of our older brother Rich. We were their cheerleaders, taking care of the house and the dogs while they did their thing in Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Hollywood, CA. For our part, we wanted nothing to do with it. We always managed to find an excuse not to attend...the meetings were too far away. We had to work that weekend. We just weren't ready to go yet. Last summer we learned that the 2005 National Conference was to be held in Boston...a mere twenty minutes from our house. We were stuck; we had to go.

If I had been hesitant to attend the other conferences, the sudden death of my sister this past November did nothing to increase my desire to go. I had no problem helping in *preparation* for the conference, but I tried to think of every possible way out of actually going. However, the bottom line was that Lynn and I had agreed to go—if for no other reason than to support our parents—and so I went. Alone. And it was scary.

Having had literally no exposure to Compassionate Friends meetings, I didn't know quite what to expect. I knew that the men and women who flocked to our house in late November were extraordinary. They felt the pain of my parents as we stumbled blindly through Thanksgiving night and Christmas morning; they looked at me saw the pain of their surviving sons and daughters who had lost their brothers and sisters. I could take them in small doses, but disregarded them in part because they were there for my parents. No one really knew what it was like to lose a brother or a sister....let alone both. I dreaded going to the conference because I didn't want to deal with the consequences of opening the door. I worried that once I started dealing with all my grief I wouldn't be able to stop. And I was right. From the outset of the conference, I was overcome with sorrow and sadness for all the people who had suffered losses as bad, if not worse than my own. I could-

n't see past the sadness and senselessness of all the loved ones who had been lost.

As the weekend progressed, however, I came to see that while it is indeed overwhelming, the very essence of this beautiful support system is found in its awe inspiring numbers. While the workshops I attended ranged from slightly boring to extremely stirring and inspiring, no part of the weekend moved me as much as the Candle Lighting ceremony and the Walk to Remember. These two events embodied the TCF belief "We need not walk alone". Looking around the room at the hundreds and hundreds of candles that were lit in honor of those we have lost roused a feeling like no other I have ever experienced. It was sad and tragic, yet beautiful in the communality of the pain we all shared. Walking among the mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters, down the beautiful streets of Boston on Sunday morning was amazing. Each person displayed names and pictures of those they had lost, proud to have their loved ones be known. Perhaps most satisfying of all was to take part in this walk, not as the lonely trio my parents and I have become, but as part of a larger family. To see my father walking with his new friends, my mother a short distance behind with others she had recently met, and even me...walking not with my sister and brother as I would've liked, but rather *for* them, beside my new friend as well.

Throughout the weekend, I heard it said many times that TCF is a family, and though it's a family no one would ever choose to be part of, it is remarkable nonetheless. Are the conferences for everyone? No. I didn't want to go because I was scared and it was inconvenient. The truth is, there is no convenient time to fall apart. You will always be able to come up with an excuse that prevents you from dealing with things. While the weekend was hard at times and left me utterly exhausted at the end, it was worth it. For those of you who are too busy/too tired/too anxious to go to a conference, I hope for your sake you "get stuck" going like I did. It's an experience you'll never forget and one that cannot be conveyed through words.

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

Kristin Metsa (daughter of Bethany Metsa)	7/1	Grant Lardo (son of Jenny & Tim Cornell)	8/15
Madeline Wotachek (daughter of Brandon & Michelle Wotachek)	7/5	Luke Watzka (son of Rita & Marty Watzka)	8/17
Megan Short (daughter of Norb & Mary Short)	7/6	Kira Smith (daughter of Tara Smith)	8/18
Alex Olmstead (son of Lisa Olmstead)	7/8	Doug Cole (son of Don & Karol Cole)	8/19
Riviera Konen (daughter of Jennifer Konen)	7/9	Wendy Jacques (daughter of Sally Martin)	8/19
Eric Schalow (son of Lorrie Shafer)	7/12	Dalon Calkins (son of Kate Calkins)	8/21
Austin Reeck (son of Ann Rieckmann)	7/13	Nicolas Leon (son of Jesus & Catherine Leon)	8/21
Joseph Stetson (son of Sherry Stetson)	7/15	Lisa Becker-Fortuna (daughter of Denise Van Zeeland)	8/23
Gary Glebke (son of Joyce Glebke)	7/19	Lily Froelich (daughter of Tony & Stephanie Froelich)	8/23
Bryan VanderKelen (son of Bob & Debi Lepak)	7/19	Gabriela Jacques (granddaughter of Pat Wojcik)	8/23
Evan DeWan (son of Matthew & Christine DeWan)	7/20	Bruce T Blaser Jr (son of Bruce & Paige Blaser)	8/24
Eloise "Ella" Kasprzak (daughter of Eddie & Kimberly Kasprzak)	7/22	Robby Rohr (son of Carol Wautlet)	8/25
Ella Smetana (daughter of Frank Smetana)	7/22	Taylor Budysz (daughter of Krysta Budysz)	8/26
Jason Ziemann (son of Diane Strick)	7/22	Kymberly Koskiniem (daughter of Trudie Koskiniem)	8/26
Heather Sigl (daughter of Greg & Joyce Sigl)	7/25	Andrew Steiner (son of Nicole Steiner)	8/28
Eric Rasmussen (son of Karen Rasmussen)	7/26	Jessica Hoffman (daughter of Jodi Hoffman)	8/29
Joseph Derge (son of Randy & Ann Derge)	7/27	Timothy Metoxen (son of Florence Petri)	8/30
Austin Robert Bush (son of Terry & Nan Bush)	7/30	Nicholas Resch (son of Lynn & Steve Marcks)	8/30
Keaton Sirianni (son of Jason & Lindsey Sirianni)	8/2	Chad Schaefer (son of David & Miriam Schaefer)	8/31
Nick Argall (son of Joyce Argall)	8/4	Ross Ambrosius (son of Melissa & Rob Ambrosius)	9/5
Sarah Lesperance (daughter of Maria Smith)	8/4	Eric Barlament (son of Jim Barlament & Penny Maraccini)	9/5
Jeff Skenadore (son of Jude Skenadore)	8/4	Kory Kuran (son of Carol Pomrenke)	9/5
Makayla Lego (niece of Christine Newtols)	8/5	Adam Schultz (son of Stan & Deb Schultz)	9/5
Olivia DeMeuse (daughter of Cheryl DeMeuse)	8/8	Matthew Kiefer (son of Mary Jo Hempel)	9/8
Todd Konop (son of Tom & Dorothy Konop)	8/8	Jenah VanGroll (daughter of James & JoAnn VanGroll)	9/11
Ken Johnson (son of Kathy Johnson)	8/11	Wendy Johnson (daughter of Tom & Debbie Johnson)	9/12
Tara Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	8/12	Michael Schermerhorn (son of Jayne Schermerhorn)	9/12

Mike Vos (son of George & Jane Vos)	9/12	Jack McDonough (son of Carrie Harrison)	9/22
Patton Prunty (son of Edward Prunty)	9/13	Jessica VanStraten (daughter of Sue VanStraten & Randy Merryfield)	9/22
Jackson Rukamp (son of Bob & Missy Rukamp)	9/13	Christy Stackhouse (daughter of Frank Stackhouse)	9/23
Megan Mae Vincent (daughter of Mark & Connie Rissling)	9/13	Andy Bell (son of Patrick & Debbie Bell)	9/24
Melissa Schmeisser (daughter of Steve & Mickey Schmeisser)	9/14	Troy Tousey (son of Tim & Vicki Tousey)	9/24
Christopher Grah (son of Tim Grah)	9/15	Amaris Soletski (daughter of Amy Soletski)	9/26
Craig Jacobs (son of John & Cathy Jacobs)	9/16	Aaron Lison (son of Adele Coopmans)	9/28
Susan Nickel (daughter of Mike & Judy Parins)	9/18	Ben Wilfer (son of Paul Wilfer)	9/30
Troy Jacques (son of Sally Martin)	9/19		
Greg Corbeill (son of Sylvia Corbeill)	9/22		

ANNIVERSARIES

Chase Lasecki (son of Steven & Linda Lasecki)	7/2	Eloise "Ella" Kasprzak (daughter of Eddie & Kimberly Kasprzak)	7/27
Jacob Kowalski (grandson of Jessica Fehlberg)	7/3	Greg Corbeill (son of Sylvia Corbeill)	7/29
Megan Short (daughter of Norb & Mary Short)	7/3	Travis Stelzer (son of Don & Pam Stelzer)	7/29
Dane Cole (son of Don & Karol Cole)	7/5	Amber Mastey (daughter of Brett & Amanda Mastey)	8/1
Jillian Faymonville (daughter of Louise Faymonville)	7/5	Justin Plate (son of Mark & Grace Plate)	8/2
Lily Froelich (daughter of Tony & Stephanie Froelich)	7/7	Brad Cox (son of Robert Cox)	8/3
Van Jarchow (son of Mike & Dixie Jarchow)	7/7	Eric Rasmussen (son of Karen Rasmussen)	8/5
Grant Lardo (son of Jenny & Tim Cornell)	7/7	Stephen Charneski (son of Roberta Charneski)	8/6
Sam Compton (son of Mark Compton, and Todd & Sandra Scheffen)	7/8	Anne Johanski (daughter of Judy & Bob Johanski)	8/7
Kevin Kazik (son of Charlie Kazik & Sally Kazik)	7/11	Austin Lindberg (son of Todd & Sandy Lindberg)	8/7
Tyffany Stevens (daughter of Lynn Pigeon)	7/11	Brian LaViolette (son of Doug & Renee LaViolette)	8/8
Christopher Grah (son of Tim Grah)	7/19	Luke Stempa (son of Gerri & Steve Stempa)	8/8
Debi Schultz (daughter of Barbara Fitzpatrick)	7/19	Matthew Shukoski (son of Darlene Vanhorn)	8/9
Roberta Glebke (daughter of Joyce Glebke)	7/20	Jeremy DeMille (son of Marysue Gerondale)	8/11
Lucas Shallow (son of Robert Shallow)	7/20	Samantha LaCount (daughter of Dale & Linda LaCount)	8/14
Susan Nickel (daughter of Mike & Judy Parins)	7/21	Mike Vos (son of George & Jane Vos)	8/14
Steven L Vosters (son of Patti & Marvin Vosters)	7/21	Maria Cambray (daughter of Jack & Gerry Cambray)	8/16
Megan Mae Vincent (daughter of Mark & Connie Rissling)	7/24	Nick Bagnet (son of DeeDee & Joan Bagnet)	8/17
Heather Sigl (daughter of Greg & Joyce Sigl)	7/25	Lane Harris (son of Susan Harris)	8/17

Ben Delain (son of Peter & Becky Delain)	8/18	Colton Steinhorst (son of Tara Steinhorst)	9/3
Molly Klika Zarnoth (daughter of Bob & Barb Klika)	8/18	Kandy Kostka (daughter of William & Sally Kostka)	9/4
Jimmy Wanner Jr. (son of Pam & Keith Blondeim)	8/20	Kristin Metsa (daughter of Bethany Metsa)	9/7
Kelley Calkins (son of Kate Calkins)	8/21	Josh Kimes (son of Susan Kimes)	9/8
Nicolas Leon (son of Jesus & Catherine Leon)	8/21	Tara Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	9/8
Andrea Eve Wirth (daughter of Thomas & Angela Wirth)	8/21	Jason Vogels (son of Pam Vogels)	9/10
Greg Lindbloom (son of Ginger Lindbloom)	8/22	Corey Jonet (son of Lisa & Dan Jonet)	9/11
Jessica VanStraten (daughter of Sue VanStraten & Randy Merryfield)	8/22	Eric Schalow (son of Lorrie Shafer)	9/11
Leo Fulmer (son of Evonna Krause)	8/24	Jack Natzke (son of Jason & Renee Natzke)	9/15
Kali Pfaller (daughter of Sally Winger)	8/25	Austin Robert Bush (son of Terry & Nan Bush)	9/17
Jessica Hoffman (daughter of Jodi Hoffman)	8/26	Matthew Skenadore (son of Jude Skenadore)	9/21
Kymberly Koskiniem (daughter of Trudie Koskiniem)	8/26	Cam Wendt (son of Lon Wendt)	9/22
Sarah Lesperance (daughter of Maria Smith)	8/28	Craig St. John (son of Debra St. John)	9/25
Tammie Gustman (daughter of Victoria Fifield and Marvin Gustman)	8/31	Stephanie Corbeill (daughter of Sylvia Corbeill)	9/27
Jackson Rukamp (son of Bob & Missy Rukamp)	8/31	Troy Milan (son of Pam Milan)	9/28
Keaton Sirianni (son of Jason & Lindsey Sirianni)	8/31	Nick Hietpas (son of Bruce & Diane Hietpas)	9/30
Evan DeWan (son of Matthew & Christine DeWan)	9/1		

We quickly find there are no words to describe the experience of losing a child. For those who have not lost a child, no explanation will do. For those who have, no explanation is necessary. ~ Mary Lingle

ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS, & MISC.

Calendar of Events 2024:

July 16: NO MEETING / no staff available at First United Methodist Church, due to renovations
August 20: Guest speaker: Margaret Meder
September 17: Dreaming of your Son or Daughter
September 28: October Fest, Appleton, WI
December 8: Worldwide Candle Lighting

Please Visit Our Website:

www.compassionatefriendsgreenbay.org

All sorts of goodies are included:

- *Past Newsletters
- *Calendar of Events
- *Articles
- *Online Donations

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.

Standing

Julie Short
TCF Southeastern Illinois Chapter
In Memory of Kyra

Treasured

Scott Newport
Royal Oak, MI

What I love most is
Waking to the dew of
The grass upon my boots

What I love most is
Smelling the end of
The day upon
My shirt, holding
My child

What I love most is
Something I don't see
Everyday or smell or
Touch

What I do love most is
The memories of those
Moments if only buried in
My dreams

*People say
"Oh you are doing so well,
you are so strong,
you are an inspiration!"
We do not feel strong.*

*We feel shaken to the core,
Saddened beyond belief,
Pain beyond comprehension,
Forever changed.*

What do they see that we cannot see?

*"That a horrible storm,
unexpectedly ripped through
our lives and we are
still standing"*

*They are amazed
We are paralyzed*

Still Standing



**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,
August 20, 2024
at 6:00 p.m.

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



Love gifts were recently given by:

Ken and Mary Gehm, in memory of Jared Gehm
Joyce Glebke, in memory of Gary and Roberta Glebke
Jay and Joleen Krings, in memory of Dylan Krings
Dana Reyes, in honor of Cindy Bottine / N-E-W Healing Hive
Todd and Sandy Scheffen, in memory of Sam Compton
Lon Wendt, in memory of Cam Wendt
Dave and Donna Wilkinson, in memory of Dustin Wilkinson