



The Compassionate Friends

Minneapolis Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

8701 36th Ave N

New Hope, MN 55427

Meeting Schedule

NOW OFFERING HYBRID MONTHLY MEETINGS

ATTEND IN-PERSON OR VIA ZOOM

We meet 7:00–8:30 pm on the third Monday of each month. Join us:

In Person—St. Joseph Parish Community
8701 36th Ave N., New Hope, MN

Via Zoom—Register using the link emailed to you a few days prior to each meeting.

Bereaved Siblings Hybrid Meeting

A bereaved sibling facilitates the group. Siblings (14+) meet separately, but at the same time as our Chapter meeting.

See the article on page 3 for more details on our new Hybrid meeting structure.

Monday, November 15 “Handling the Holidays”

HYBRID (In-person Zoom) MEETING

The work and pain of grief doesn’t take a vacation. The challenge is how to manage the pain. Sometimes the anticipation is worse than the actual day. We’ll explore options that may help you make a plan to handle the holidays.

Monday, December 20 “Candle Lighting Ceremony”

HYBRID (In-person & Zoom) PROGRAM

Our annual CLC takes the place of our regular meeting. Join us in-person or via Zoom for this special evening, including a program, live music, candle lighting, and memorial video. Sign-in begins at 6:30 pm. See page 3 for details.

Monday, January 17 “Birthday Wishes”

HYBRID (In-person & Zoom) MEETING

With or without cake and candles, we can remember, reminisce, honor, and heal while celebrating our children and sibling’s life. Is it possible to find joy as we preserve memories and create new ones?

We Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child at any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents the opportunity to talk about their child and feelings as they go through the grieving process. Our meetings are also open to grandparents, older siblings, and extended family. There are no membership dues. There is no religious affiliation.

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Mission of The Compassionate Friends is to provide highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or daughter, a brother or sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The Secret of TCF's Success is Simple: As seasoned griever reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward, and both are helped to heal.

To Our New Members: Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But, you have nothing to lose, and much to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you find the right person...or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Members Further Down the ‘Grief Road’: We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting, we have new parents. Think back, what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF “veterans” to welcome you and share your grief?

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, but it is not required.

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*TCF’s Vision...
That everyone who
needs us will find us
and everyone who finds
us will be helped.*

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Mary Jo Peterson & Monica Colberg

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Steering Committee Meetings
Held quarterly to plan events and Chapter direction. Next meeting: January 14.

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Those who have **SUFFERED**

UNDERSTAND SUFFERING

and therefore



extend their hand.



~Patti Smith

Articles printed in this newsletter reflect the author's personal views, and not necessarily the opinion of the newsletter editor or The Compassionate Friends.

Resources

Minneapolis Chapter Website:
tcfmpls.org

Our Local Chapter Is On Facebook.



Join our Minneapolis Chapter's private Facebook community online: [TCF Mpls](https://www.facebook.com/groups/TCFMpls)

Or log onto Facebook and search:
TCF Mpls

www.facebook.com/groups/TCFMpls

Chapter Locator tool is available on TCF National Website
[Locate Chapter Here](#) www.compassionatefriends.org

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support our TCF Minneapolis Chapter, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to us! Same products, same prices, same service!

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer, or mobile phone Amazon app. Pick your charitable organization—search for **The Compassionate Friends Minneapolis**. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile. That's it! You are now signed up for Amazon Smile! Just be sure to visit smile.amazon.com every time you normally visit Amazon to make sure your eligible purchases are having a portion of the price donated to TCF Minneapolis. Visit our website: tcfmpls.org or our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/TCFMpls for helpful instructions.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the children, siblings, and grandchildren who left too soon.

Light a candle in your home on December 12th at 7:00 pm to join hundreds of thousands of people honor the memory of all children gone too soon. Visit compassionatefriends.org for more info.

Angel of Hope Candlelight Memorial

Each year on **December 6th** at 7:00 pm a **Remembrance Vigil** is held at Angel of Hope sites. The public is invited to attend a short, simple, secular outdoor ceremony in memory of children who died at any age. Candles will be provided. Attendees are invited to bring a white flower to leave at the statue's base.

An Angel of Hope statue is located in **Chanhassen**, just north of downtown along Santa Vera Dr, between Powers and Kerber Blvd. Visit: williamswings.org/angel-hope/

A second Angel of Hope location is in the **Maple Grove Arboretum**, 9400 Fernbrook Ln N. Participants are encouraged to car pool as parking is limited. Additional parking is available across the street at the Arbor View Early Childhood Center, and at the Assembly of God Church. Afterwards, refreshments will be served across the street inside the Arbor View Childhood Center. For more information visit www.friendsoftheangel.org/news-events/upcoming-events/annual-candlelight-vigil.



Minneapolis Chapter Remembrance Candle Lighting

Monday, December 20, 2021

Sign-in begins 6:30 p.m.— Program begins 7:00 p.m.

Our chapter's annual remembrance candle lighting program is Monday, December 20 at our regular meeting location, St. Joseph Parish, 8701 36th Ave. N, New Hope. We will also hold a simultaneous Zoom connect.

This event takes the place of our regular chapter meeting. Parents, grandparents, siblings, family & friends are invited to join us.

The church where we meet already practices COVID-19 health and safety protocols. The compassionate staff is eager to assist at our largest annual event honoring our children/grandchildren/siblings.

We need you to RSVP in advance. Email us at tcf.mpls@gmail.com with your name and number attending in your group. Anyone not vaccinated for COVID needs to wear a mask to enter the church building. Unfortunately, because of COVID restrictions this year, we are unable to offer food and refreshments.

At 6:30 p.m. participants may sign-in at the front door of the church. A free-will offering will be appreciated to help offset program costs. Ornaments are provided (one per family) which we will personalize with your child's name. You may take it home as a memento of the evening.

The remembrance program begins at 7:00 p.m. with beautiful live music performed by parents, friends and families in our bereaved community. Readings by TCF members will be followed by families individually lighting flameless candles in memory of our siblings and our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, cousins and friends. The evening will conclude with a photo slideshow presentation of our loved ones who have left too soon.

To include your loved one's photograph in the slideshow, please email Gloria Jordan at tcf.mpls@gmail.com and reference their name and attach a photo. Send a high quality .jpg for best results. The DEADLINE is December 6. You DO NOT need to send us a photo if you have already sent one in previous years; we still have it.

If you would like to participate in the program by reading a poem or prose, email Gloria at tcf.mpls@gmail.com with your name, your loved one's name, and the title and author of your selection. The DEADLINE is December 6 to be included in the program.

If the TCF chapter needs to postpone the event due to severe weather or COVID-19 changes, we will post a notice on our TCF chapter Facebook page and announce the change on channel KARE11 TV.

In-Person Meetings Again

The Minneapolis Chapter of The Compassionate Friends has returned to in-person monthly meetings with an option to attend via Zoom. We offer this hybrid meeting format to accommodate all who want to remain connected. We ask for your understanding as we navigate the new format.

We meet at St. Joseph Parish Community at 8701 36th Ave North in New Hope, MN on the third Monday of the month from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We will follow the church's COVID protocols in effect at time of meeting (masks are recommended, appropriate distancing, hand sanitation, etc.).

A few days prior, an email invite will be sent to register for each Zoom meeting, held at the same time as our in-person meeting.



Leader's Corner

New members attend their first TCF meetings with courage and lots of fear after they have slipped into that awful new reality. Eventually they begin to balance the cost of living in fear with the trust that they gain by talking with parents or siblings who have lost loved ones. In early grief there are no smiles to be had.

There are smiles in TCF meetings and there is laughter. Newcomers are shocked to find peers who see joy again. Trust begins to grow that maybe someday they too will find joy again.

I have seen TCF members demonstrate care and concern for new grievers. I have seen the trickle-down effect as newer members courageously turn to the brand new members to offer their support. It brings me to tears. Happy tears.

Monica Colberg
Art's Mom and Chapter Leader,
TCF Minneapolis MN

Free Photo Button Pin

We will make each member a free button pin using your child's or sibling's photo. You may bring a photo to a meeting, or email it to tcf.mpls@gmail.com. See important instructions listed below.

- Email a hi-res .jpg of the photo to tcf.mpls@gmail.com. We will size and crop the photo to fit the button area. Please note if there are any special cropping instructions.
- Or, bring a print or photocopy of the photo to a meeting. The print or photocopy must be on regular (20 lb.) copy paper. It's important to not use any heavier paper. Do not cut the photo into a circle.
- For best results, your printed photo image should be 3½" in diameter (black dashed line as shown in layout below).
- It will be placed on a 3-inch button (white solid line). The additional background of the photo is folded to the backside under the plastic cover.
- Because slight shifting may occur, the desired image area should be within a 2⅞" diameter (red dotted line).
- Button image shown below is not actual size.



Carson Thomas Jordan



Like snowflakes,
your words fall silent.
But my heart
still hears your voice.

Angie Weiland-Crosby

Coping With Grief: Winter Blues

When the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, we often find ourselves feeling low. Some people call this the Winter Blues. When you are grieving, those blues can feel overwhelming. Grief itself is hard to cope with, and cold winds and longer nights can make those feelings seem more intense. Here are a few ideas that may help you cope with the Winter Blues:

- Winter only lasts a few months. Use this time to reflect on your relationship with the person who died. Sometimes in our efforts to deny our loss, we rob ourselves of precious memories.
- Reach out to friends or family when you can. Often our isolation is worse because we do not allow ourselves time with others. You are not alone. There are many other people going through a similar experience. Although your relationship with your loved one is special, other people can understand. Take the risk to ask someone over for coffee or tea. Share with them.
- Take time to look through picture albums. Gather family to share stories. Make a new tradition during the dreary months of winter for family to gather for an evening of remembering. The holidays are over and the pressure is off. Maybe other people are feeling the same way and are afraid to talk about it.
- Try a grief support group. Sometimes all we need is to know other people hear us and understand. A group can help you to know you are normal.
- Read...favorite stories, comedies, novels, or information about grief to understand your own reactions better. Somehow reading about such topics helps us know we are not alone.
- You can look for grief materials in your local library, church, or local TCF chapter.
- Take good care of yourself. Eat right, rest and pamper your body. This goes for any season. Your body is under a tremendous amount of stress in adjusting to your loss.
- Since grief affects us physically, paying attention to our bodies is important. Whether you prefer to do things alone or with others, physical activity helps. Taking a walk, doing simple aerobics, indoor swimming, playing racquetball or other activities can help you keep your body ready for the continued adjustment to loss. Feeling better physically can make a difference.
- If you feel sad and need to cry, know that is a normal reaction. You are not weak if you need to show your emotions.
- Write a letter to your loved one. Sometimes we need to communicate with them. Going to the cemetery is okay and normal. If the weather prevents that, a letter can be very helpful.
- Remember that you will survive this loss. The pain and ache can seem like it will last forever. The intensity will lessen in time, although you will always remember your loved one. Time does not necessarily "heal" all wounds, but it can help us adjust to the change. Take it minute by minute...then day by day.

TCF Newsletter, Pittsburgh, PA

Eleven Thanksgivings After

The Monday before Thanksgiving my emotions pulled a surprise attack. Cold sunny weather provided a Texas-perfect backdrop for Thanksgiving week, with Monday marking the first official day of preparation. Dinner would be at my sister-in-law and brother's this year. I was thankful for the contributing duties of mashed potatoes, fresh green beans and cranberry relish. Organization brings comfort; I was working on my week's list.

Then my heart wandered back to The Thanksgivings before, anticipating events that had once shaped our family holiday, traditions that my mind logically knew could never be. It seemed as if I had to teach myself all over again. Sarah would not breeze in the door home from college on Wednesday night. We would not huddle up to watch Texas Tech football and the Dallas Cowboys or attend worship services. I would not make a big pot of potato soup for her homecoming, hear the excited chatter of her arriving friends or go for Mexican food the Friday after.

Sarah would be almost 35 now but I could not move my years past her 24 years of life. She was now the way I had always thought of President Kennedy after 1963, frozen solidly in time. Forever Young.

I encouraged myself. I am working to move forward, reviving my interests, creating a "new life." I appreciate my loving friends and family and am grateful for the tremendous healing power of a struggling faith. Writing through the days helps me to focus. I have learned who to trust with my thoughts and when to lock up.

Thinking back before Sarah died, it is true that until I had experienced the loss of my own child, I was incapable of understanding the depths of such pain. I was sympathetic but not empathetic. This insight allows me to forego or lower my expectations of other people and to better control hurt, anger and disappointment.

Most importantly, I have learned that rich healing takes place when hurting people extend themselves to others who struggle in grief. Listening, sharing with honesty, encouraging. These gifts of truth and service honor the memory of our precious children and continue their legacy.

But this Monday before Thanksgiving I'm crying. I miss my girl. It's hard to envision the years ahead having lost the most vital part of my life. I am not ashamed of my sorrow or my tears or worry that I'm not "making progress." What parent does not think on his or her son or daughter whether they are alive or have passed on? These thoughts cannot be shut off like a water faucet. I have given myself the right to set the standards of my very personal grief, to measure my path using my own yardstick. I have mastered an essential lesson. "Do the next thing."

I recall the words of my friend, Pat, whose daughter Stephanie passed away years ago, when we were talking one day about our hopes for again experiencing life's purest joy. "I'll die happy with a broken heart."

This week there are beans to snap.

Carol Thompson of Tyler, Texas is the mother of Sarah Kathryn Thompson who died in a 2005 pedestrian hit-and-run. Carol is a member of The Compassionate Friends chapter which serves East Texans, and finds healing in writing about the everyday-life aspects of living with grief after the death.

Our Children Remembered...on Their Birthdays

Loved...Missed...Forever in Our Hearts



November

CHILD		MEMBER
Andrew	sibling	Tiana Schwandt
Luke	sibling	Carolyn Crotteau
Luke		Amy & Jason Crotteau
JoAnna		Aron & Ruth Wilterding
Lauren		Dawn & Peter Duwenhoegger
Yaya		Ron Garber
Nathan Scott Weidner		Amanda Weidner
Alex		Kathy Simanek
Barry Allan Beal		Carol Beal
Hallie		Todd & Kathy Brown
Sarah Tilman		Cathie Tilman
Sullivan		Holly Holmes
Campbell		Jenner Johnson
Keith Rosenwinkel		Wanda VonHoltum
Brandon	sibling	Kathryn Demars
Brandon		Pamela & Patrick Demars
Michael DeBruin		Mary & Bob DeBruin
Everett	sibling	Allie Rachko
Everett	nephew	Mary Jane Kronberg
Everett Rachko	cousin	Mollie Freese
Everett		Charla Rachko
Leon Harwood		Antonia (Flipper) Filipiak
Tucker		Dana & Kevin O'Brien

December

CHILD		MEMBER
Joshua		Brenda Kise
Scott	sibling	Suzie Berzins
Scott		Stephen Berzins
Scott		Cathy Drexel
Daniel Nelson	sibling	Michele Dooley
Daniel		Audrey Nelson
Michelle Franta	sibling	Jeff & Melia Liedman
Michelle Marie Franta		Lynn & Stan Liedman
Jeremy Klein		Chris Klein
Cole Haakana		Carrie Haakana
Conner Box-Lindholm		Stacey Lindholm
Monica Marie Collins	sibling	Gladys Williamson
Mark Andersen		Ruth Shaddrick
Natalie Perry Smead		Karen Prieto & Pete Smead
Daniel Christian Demsky		Barbara & Robert Demsky
Wilder		Tea Lee
Vanessa Marie		Maureen Voltin
Joseph		Kim Corkins
John Alden		Mary & John Alden
Juliette		Nancy Kilhan

Birthday Month

Birthdays are given special recognition at our monthly meetings. During your child's birthday month, you are invited to bring a photo or memorabilia to share and display on our Birthday Table. If you're attending via Zoom, share your photo during introductions.

January

CHILD		MEMBER
James		Samantha & Michael Wallad
Tara		Seth & Angela Engman
Allyson		Roger Graphenteen
Evelyn Charlotte		Jeff & Jenny Sevaldson
Brian		Bonnie & Mike Maloney
Anne		Carol Just
Dan	sibling	Michael Larson
Dan		Ruth & Jon Larson
Grayson Jett		Brian & Jennifer Jett
Machael Greeman		Marijo Greeman
Alex		Frank Commers
Joseph Engles		Deb & Paul Barland
Amia		Adrienne Pelleg
Grace		Katie & Charlie Heitzig
Kyle		Lynda Kubousek
Madeline May		Lisa & Mark Orfield
Daniel		Dan & Chevis Pесо
Brenden		Tammy Sperr
Nicole Jean Gallery		Janna Gallery
Cody		Dave & Jennifer Perna
Adrian		John & Stephanie Merfeld
Ann Longton-McNamara		Barbara & Richard McNamara
Krystie Anna		Rick Karl & Bruce Steiger
Kali		Peg & Roger Mann
Kelly Hyatt		Maureen Hyatt
Lisa Marie Hall		Ron & Ursula Hall
Missy	sibling	Tasha Feigh
Missy		Mary Feigh

Love transcends time and space, and our loved ones who have passed beyond our sight continue to wrap us in their love, blessing us with that love every minute.

Knowing this does not soften the ache of longing, but I am grateful for this truth. May you too feel weave after weave of blessing from your loved ones who are beyond your sight, but never beyond your love.

Kim Minske Bodeau
TCF, Chippewa Valley, WI

WINDOWS

The breath of winter painted fragile stars on all the windows of my quiet house.

And there I found your face, more fragile even than the season's art, a wonder to my eyes.

How can it be that winter paints such secret things in white-and-silver sheen for those who cry alone at frosted windows?

Sascha

Our Beloved Children...in Our Hearts Always especially during the Remembrance Month of their death.



November

CHILD		MEMBER
Gregory		Mary & Tom Sincheff
Jen		Karen & Gary Gross
Alicia Marie Queen-Wilson		Queen Wilson
Joshua		Brenda Kise
Zachary		Darcie Rummel
Thor Eide		Susan Nokleby
Madeline May		Lisa & Mark Orfield
Kinsley		Farynn Kimmes
Payton Tripp	grandchild	Janet & Richard Tripp
Nick Harter		Brian & Sandy Harter
Joseph		Kim Corkins
Matthew Robert Demsky		Barbara & Robert Demsky
Machael Greeman		Marijo Greeman
Charlotte Jean	grandchild	Jean Umezu
Harry Richards		Winnie Visco
Hailey		Michelle Chamlin
David	sibling	Gabrielle Robbins
David		Christiane Robbins

December

CHILD		MEMBER
Yaya		Ron Garber
Lisa Marie Hall		Ron & Ursula Hall
Andrew	sibling	Tiana Schwandt
Nicholas		Bernadette Bernardini
Cole Haakana		Carrie Haakana
Nathan Scott Weidner		Amanda Weidner
Rachel Anne		Pam Dugdale
Carson Thomas Jordan		Gloria & John Jordan
Michael John Blesi		Carolyn Blesi
Kristin Reller	sibling	Anthony Reller
Kristin Reller		Pat & Don Reller
Sullivan		Cathy Dunn
Sullivan	grandson	Bev Lind
Sullivan		Jamie & Tyler Peek
Mackenzie Ndujwe Nnantah		Korina Hackert
Cody		Dave & Jennifer Perna
Tara		Seth & Angela Engman
Kali		Peg & Roger Mann
Jennifer Blethen	sibling	Melissa Blethen
Brandon	sibling	Kathryn Demars
Brandon		Pamela & Patrick Demars
Drew		Judy Pehrson
Cora		Danielle Grinsel
Allison	sibling	Andrew Bailey
Allison		Ralph Bailey & Miriam Porter



While most are celebrating the joys of the season... some are just trying to get through it without falling apart.

January

CHILD		MEMBER
Caitlin Louise Higgins		Jeffrey Weihe
Christopher Bormann		Susan Bormann
Alyssa		Rich & Dori Beattie
Grace		Katie & Charlie Heitzig
Tom Williams		Keri Williams
Monica Marie Collins	sibling	Gladys Williamson
Eric Brodin		Judy & Buck Brodin
Katie		Fern & Dave Sanders
Evelyn Charlotte		Jeff & Jenny Sevaldson
Mark Frain	sibling	Michael & Terri Frain
Mark Frain		Donna Frain
Scott	sibling	Katie Murray
Stefanie		Jayne Darling
Cristian		Sara & John Schmidt
Keith Demry		Char Fonville
J. D.		Cathy Bailly
Lawrence		Karen & Dave Philbin
Eric Lindquist		Bruce Lindquist
Tina		Cynthia Wong
Ethan		Tom Lang



New Year's Wish

The New Year comes when all the world is ready
for changes, resolutions—great beginnings.

For us, to whom that stroke of midnight means a
missing child remembered, for us the new year
comes more like another darkness.

But let us not forget that this may be the year
when love and hope and courage find each other
somewhere in the darkness
to lift their voice and speak:

Let there be Light.

Thanksgiving

November: Cool days, chilly nights, autumn leaves changing colors, football games, apple cider and pumpkin pie. Ahh. November! Is it November already? Oh, no! Make it go away! Just let me sleep; wake me up in January. November is here, the start of the holiday season.

This is the time of year most bereaved parents dread. This is the time of year when thoughts turn to spending time with family and friends and celebrating. Holiday decorations start popping up everywhere you turn, and holiday music begins to play at the malls and on the radio. People are busy cleaning their home and are all abuzz with getting ready for...Oh, no! Thanksgiving!

Everyone is asking what you are doing for Thanksgiving. For the bereaved parent, especially the newly bereaved, this question can become daunting and almost horrifying. What am I doing for Thanksgiving? Thanksgiving—giving thanks.

But I don't feel very thankful.

How can I be thankful, when my child lives no more?

How can I be thankful, when he/she will never again walk through my front door?

How can I be thankful, when my eyes are filled with tears?

How can I be thankful, when he/she won't be here throughout the years?

How can I be thankful, when my heart will never mend?

How can I be thankful, when I've lost my dearest friend?

How can I be thankful, when his/her hugs and kisses have now ceased?

How can I be thankful, and sit down to a feast?

How can I be thankful, when my heart is filled with sorrow?

How can I be thankful, when I can hardly make it to tomorrow?

What do you answer? What will you do this year? For some, the choice is to keep the same tradition they have in the past. Others choose to remain home and ignore the holiday completely. There are parents who go on vacation or go out to Thanksgiving dinner at a restaurant. Newly bereaved parents may question "what am I supposed to do?" There is no standard right or wrong answer. Whatever feels the most comforting is the right answer for you. Family members or friends might disagree with your decision and say you are wrong. This often happens if you decide to break tradition, want to be alone, or decide not to celebrate at all. People can become very insistent and tell you that Thanksgiving is about being with others. I have found that my choice has varied over the years from choosing to be alone and not acknowledge the holiday at all; to going to friends' and family members' homes; to just having dinner at home and when asked, I say, "I know that you may not like my answer. But still. I need to do what is best for me."

However you decide to spend this Thanksgiving, please remember that for however short or long your precious, awesome, amazing, wonderful child was with you here on earth, you are blessed to be their parent. You have been given a most spectacular gift—a one of a kind, unique, extraordinary child to carry in your heart, thoughts, and soul for all eternity. And this is a reason to be forever thankful. From my home and heart to yours may you have a blessed Thanksgiving and may it be filled with peace.

~ Bev Rosen Katowitz
TCF, Charlotte, NC

(Today I Met) The Boy I'm Gonna Marry

I always knew that someday I would get married. I knew my future spouse was out there...I just didn't know where. The last place I ever thought I would meet him was at a sibling grief support group two weeks before a global pandemic and global shutdown, BUT life is weird.

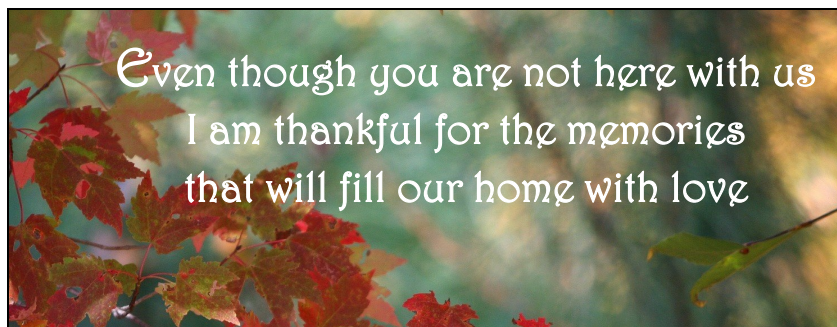
Our brothers, Christopher (my brother) and Matt (his brother) both eerily died unexpectedly in Novembers when they were 32 years old (mine in 2013 and his in 2019). We both found ourselves sitting in a church basement in Manhattan trying to make sense of these deaths of our beloved brothers when we struck up a grief friendship. People who (unfortunately) get your grief become instantly bonded on the mere fact that you both lost a loved one and don't know what to do with all your sadness, but at least you can be sad together.

Shortly after we met at one of the last in-person meetings before Covid-19 shut down the world, our chapter leader Jordon moved these vital meetings onto Zoom in March 2020. They were a lifeline to help keep us as sane as possible while dealing with sibling grief and the isolation of staying home. (I am [spoiler alert: was...more on that later] a single mom to a 2 1/2 year old and being home with only him for 2 months straight was a lot.)

I knew there was something special about Matt's brother and not just because his name was also Chris like my brother and son (in fact he and my son have the same first AND SAME MIDDLE NAME!). Chris and I eventually wanted to meet and talk through Zoom more than just in the sibling group capacity and started Facetimeing each other for hours and hours on end daily during lockdown. This made us so incredibly close. We laughed, cried, shared stories of our brothers, and ultimately began falling in love with each other. (As Chris likes to say, our entire courtship took place over Zoom!).

Once lockdown restrictions were lifted, we started seeing each other in person and then started officially exclusively dating at the end of October 2020. In October 2021, we got engaged to be married. My child affectionately calls him "Daddy" (see: no longer a single mom!) We often struggle with the fact that we met the loves of our lives because our brothers died, but within each other we found hope and love so strong. Christopher and Matt, we love you. Wish you could be here to celebrate with us, but we will honor you within the love we found in each other.

Kimberly A. Meyer (soon to be Behan!)
TCF, Manhattan, NY





The Compassionate Friends

Minneapolis Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

c/o St. Joseph Parish
8701 36th Ave N
New Hope MN 55427

The Minneapolis Chapter of The Compassionate Friends operates solely with voluntary donations. While there are no dues or subscription fees, donations to help support our Chapter's efforts are much appreciated. Funds are used for meeting supplies, rent, newsletter printing/postage, and more. Gifts in any amount are appreciated. Please consider a \$10 annual donation if you are receiving a printed, mailed newsletter.

Thank you for your consideration!

Complete and return this form along with your donation to a chapter monthly meeting or mail to our treasurer:

John Jordan, 11905 53rd Ave N, Plymouth, MN 55442

Please make check payable to *The Compassionate Friends Minneapolis*.

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Child's Name _____

Birth Date _____

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- Perhaps you aren't able to attend monthly meetings, but wish to continue to be informed of our chapter news and events.

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IF THE RENEWAL DATE ON YOUR MAILING LABEL IS HIGHLIGHTED, to remain on our mailing list, DO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

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