



The Compassionate Friends

Minneapolis Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

8701 36th Ave N
New Hope, MN 55427

MEETING SCHEDULE

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 a few days prior to each meeting.

Bereaved Siblings Hybrid Meeting

A bereaved sibling facilitates the group. Siblings (14+) meet at the same time and place (in-person & Zoom) as our Chapter meeting, but break into their own group for support & conversation.

Monday, August 15

“National Conference Reflections”

HYBRID (In-person & Zoom) MEETING

Members who attended the recent TCF National Conference will inspire hope as they share tools and insights acquired.

Monday, September 19

“Guilt and Regret...Why Our Family?”

HYBRID (In-person & Zoom) MEETING

So often guilt, regret and questioning “why” accompanies grief. Join us for our panel discussion on the impacts of guilt, regrets and whys within our grief journey. We provide a physical and emotional space to explore the above topics.

Sunday, October 2

“Walk to Remember”

IN-PERSON EVENT

Members, family, and friends are invited to our annual Walk. Details on Page 3 for this popular Sunday noon event. Held at a lovely park near our meeting space.

Monday, October 17

“Holidays & Significant Days”

HYBRID (In-person & Zoom) MEETING

Grief work doesn’t take a vacation. The challenge is how to manage the pain. Sometimes anticipation is worse than the actual day. We’ll explore ideas & options that may help you navigate these days.

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 grievers 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.

Inside This Issue:	
Chapter and National Contact Info	2
Self Help	2
Walk to Remember	3
Our Many Special Days	4
What To Do With My Child’s Things	4
Remembrance Dates Aug-Sept-Oct	5-6
Why I Felt Selfish to Grieve My Brother	7
TCF Outstanding Sibling Award	7



TCF’s Vision...

That everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

MINNEAPOLIS CHAPTER INFO**TELEPHONE:** (612) 444-1301**EMAIL:** tcf.mpls@gmail.com**Minneapolis Chapter Leader**
Monica Colberg**Treasurer**
John Jordan**Newsletter Editor & Co-Leader**
Gloria Jordan
tcf.mpls.editor@gmail.com**Database Coordinators**
Terri & Tom Lindfors**Webmaster**
Lisa Gross Crees**Facebook Page Administrator**
Lisa Gross Crees**Hospitality Coordinator**
Vickie Hackel**Donor Appreciation**
Pat Reller**Lending Library**
David Benson *WELCOME to the Team!***Special Events Co-coordinators**
Vickie Hackel & Monica Colberg**Sibling Loss Facilitator**
Maggie Bauer**Steering Committee Meetings**
Held quarterly to plan events and Chapter direction. Next meeting: October 14.**TCF NATIONAL OFFICE**

Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010

E-mail:
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
www.compassionatefriends.org**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/TCFUSA**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/TCFofUSA>**REGIONAL COORDINATOR**Cathy Seehuetter: (612) 991-9954
Email: seehuettercathy@yahoo.comThose who have **SUFFERED**
UNDERSTAND SUFFERING
and therefore

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**Chapter Locator Tool** available on TCF National Website
www.compassionatefriends.org
[Locate Chapter Here](#)**Minneapolis Chapter Website:**
tcfmpls.org**MPLS Chapter Is On Facebook:**Join our Minneapolis Chapter's private Facebook community online:
[TCF Mpls](#)Or log onto Facebook and search:
TCF Mplswww.facebook.com/groups/TCFMpls**Self Help**

For many of us, the monthly meeting of our Compassionate Friends Group is the only real healing time we give to ourselves. Helping ourselves on a daily basis is critical to our journey in the grieving process.

Many of us find solace in books. Others find it in movies, music, time with friends, meditation or intense spiritual conviction. Each day we should take some time to center ourselves, to find a place of peace.

If you haven't already done so, start with a quiet time of reflection and search your soul for the key to your own solace. There will still be bad, even terrible, days. The effort to help ourselves begins with knowing ourselves and finding the unique activity that soothes our broken hearts for just a little while.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF Katy, TX
(Annette died in June 2021. She will be remembered through her articles found in numerous TCF chapter newsletters.)

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.

Cortney Davis,
Nurse Practitioner

National Organization Resources
may be found at:
www.compassionatefriends.orgClick "**Find Support**" tab.

- **National Magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*®**
- **Online Grief-Related Webinar Series**
- **Online Support Community**
- **Facebook Closed (Private) Groups**

[TCF/USA National Facebook Page](http://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA)
www.facebook.com/TCFUSA**October**

The month of October brings with it a smorgasbord for the senses. We can hear the crunching and crackling of the leaves under our feet. We can see the brilliant reds; oranges and yellows splash the earth. We can feel the magical approach of winter in the air.

October is also the month for Halloween, a date synonymous with masks. As bereaved parents we have, at various times, worn many and varied masks. We have masked our feelings of despair, sorrow and anguish for the sake of our loved ones, friends and co-workers.

We have masked our feelings of anger and bitterness for the traditional belief that a kind God would not do this to innocence. Most importantly, we have masked the person we are becoming, the person living through the death of our child.

Let us celebrate the month of October by beginning to take off some of our masks. A very positive and helpful way to begin this process is to attend the next Compassionate Friends meeting. Share your sorrow, your fears, your bitterness and disappointment. Above all, share your progress and triumphs through the journey of grief. When you enter a room full of caring and supportive people who have shared your grief, there is no reason to wear your mask.

TCF Greenville, SC

Minneapolis Chapter



October 2, 2022
Bassett Creek Park
6001 32nd Ave N, Crystal

Check-in begins at Noon; Walk begins 12:30 pm

Mark your calendar for **Sunday, October 2** for our annual Minneapolis Chapter Walk to Remember. We walk to remember our children, siblings, and grandchildren who have died. Please invite extended family and friends to join us.

Join us at beautiful **Bassett Creek Community Park in Crystal**, (same park as last year). The official park address is **6001 32nd Ave. N**, between Douglas Dr. N and Hwy 100.

WALK LOCATION INSTRUCTIONS:

IMPORTANT - DO NOT use the park entrance off 32nd Ave N. near the ballfield. Turn south off 32nd Ave N. onto Welcome Ave., turn right towards the parking area off Welcome Ave., near the playground. Meet at the picnic shelter near the parking lot, just down the trail.

Check-in begins at Noon; we'll start the **Walk at 12:30 pm**. It's just a quick, less than 1-mile jaunt around the pond on an asphalt trail, but we can go around as many times as you want.

COVID-19 safety protocols in effect at time of our walk will be followed. There's plenty of room to stay physically distanced.

This is our **Chapter's annual fund raiser**. There is no fee to walk, but donations are appreciated. We are a recognized 501(c)(3) organization; all donations are tax deductible. Funds received are used to support our chapter's many activities that assist families after the death of a child, grandchild or sibling.

Invite family and friends to join us for friendship and healing. It's heartwarming to see a family wearing matching t-shirts or ladybug wings; others brought balloons pinned to their shirts that "lifted" their shoulders. This scenic venue offers free parking, picnic shelters, disc golf, volleyball, a memorial garden with benches, a new playground area, dog park, and more.

We will carry the names of our children, grandchildren and siblings on bibs provided by the chapter. Markers will be available to create and personalize your bib.

If you are unable to join us, please submit their name, and someone will be honored to carry your loved one with us on our walk (email your child's, grandchild's, or sibling's name to tcf.mpls@gmail.com).

Free Lending Library

Our Minneapolis chapter of The Compassionate Friends is fortunate to have a library of books about grief. They are available to take home to read and then return when you are done with them. Please feel free to browse our library cart at a meeting. There are many titles from varying perspectives. You may also contribute books that you found helpful.

Library Corner

Scarlet Oak is a truly remarkable book which describes the journey of a tree sprite as she battles through her own confused identity and loss, to help a couple come to terms with the unimaginable grief of their son's death. Written in hauntingly beautiful prose and with a mesmerizingly original storyline, Angie Weiland-Crosby has crafted a spellbinding and wonderfully structured novel that is utterly entrancing, and incredibly moving. –Indie Reader

Leader's Corner

I anticipate showy blooms in my garden as the seasons progress from spring to winter. But sometimes a prized stargazer lily is knocked down or nibbled. A gardener knows that spectacular stargazer would fade in time. But for that particular flower, time was cut short, despite the gardener's best efforts. Renewal is a few seasons away with fertile ground, rain and time in the sun.

TCF families know the sorrow of children and siblings whose time with them was far too short. Recovery and renewal is possible for the families although they may not recognize it early on. That takes years of seasoning. TCF meetings have seasoned griever who exemplify hope that in time, our broken hearts mend.

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

I Used to Grow Marigolds

When my son Jordan was a toddler, I came up with a notion that he needed to be able to appreciate where his food came from. So, I removed the sod from a small piece of our backyard – a place that seemed to get the requisite amount of sunshine – and I planted cherry tomatoes. Over the years, this spot grew to include cucumbers, zucchini, and green beans as well as a variety of tomatoes.

I am not a gifted gardener. My grandfather was a farmer and I am sure his city/small town bred granddaughter wouldn't make him proud. I most definitely do not have a green thumb. But I did the best I could. I tried various tomato cages over the years to keep the crop from sprawling all over the soil; I tried "raised beds." And I always planted marigolds around the perimeter.

I can no longer remember why I planted marigolds. It wasn't to make the garden look prettier. There was some purpose, some objective. Maybe they were supposed to keep bugs away? Birds? Slugs? No matter. I planted marigolds.

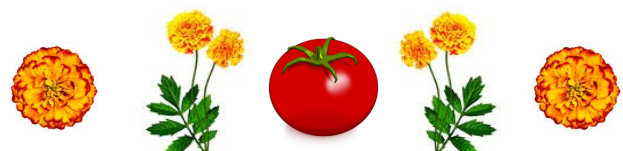
I grew tomatoes until Jordan's final summer. As he got older, his favorite sandwich became a BLT. For weeks at a time in the late summer, I made BLTs for him almost daily. Often two BLTs. His special version of BLTs: no mayo, just a bit of butter and no lettuce. On toast.

He last came home from college for term break in February. I asked him before his break what foods he especially wanted me to prepare when he was home. Among others, he suggested BLTs. And I said, "But, Jordan, tomatoes are terrible in February!" He said, "You're right, Mom." So, no BLT's. Plenty of other favorites, including the angel food birthday cake with chocolate frosting he preferred. But, no BLTs.

He died in April. I am comforted that I grew tomatoes for him until the last summer of his life; I regret that I did not search for a decent tomato that February when he was at home.

The summer after he died, I had our yard man cover up the garden area with sod. I don't grow marigolds anymore. After six years, I do finally eat BLTs again. With lettuce. And mayo, not butter.

Peggi Johnson, In Memory of my son Jordan
 TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA



What Do I Do With My Child's Things

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents. We discuss it from time to time at our chapter meetings. Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything touched or moved.

Some of us find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing that someone we love is wearing our child's clothes or playing with his or her toys brings us comfort.

Some of us find we can deal with only a few items at a time: clothes one month; books, another; perhaps toys a few months later.

Some of us find that time goes on and we would have gotten rid of the things anyway. For instance, after a while we realize that if the child were still alive, he would have outgrown the clothes. Or he would have graduated from college this year, and therefore would no longer use the study desk or clock radio. We can give these things away in the normal time sequence.

The important thing is not to let others rush us into doing something before we are ready and not to let ourselves feel guilty about the amount of time it takes us to make decisions. When the time is right and the decision is right for us, we'll know what to do.



Nancy Mower
TCF Honolulu, Hawaii

If Only They Knew

If only they knew that when I speak of him, I am not being morbid. I am not denying his death. I am proclaiming his life. I am learning to live with his absence. For twenty-six years he was a part of my life, born, nurtured, molded and loved—this cannot be put aside to please those who are uncomfortable with my grief.

If only they knew that when I sit quietly, apparently content with my own company, I am not self indulgently unhappy, dwelling on things which cannot be changed; I am with him. I am seeing his face, hearing his voice, remembering his laughter, recalling his excitement and joy in life. Please allow me this time with him, as I do not begrudge you your time with your children.

If only they knew that when I sometimes weep quietly, I do not cry in self-pity for what I have lost. I weep for what he has lost, for the life he loved, for the music that filled his very being, and for all he still longed to hear; for the poetry which moved him to tears, for the beauty about him that daily fed his soul, for the exhilaration and excitement of flying the skies, of searching for his God in the vast space of the universe. For all that he loved and lost, I cry.

If only they knew the feeling of deep grief, the emptiness, the dull pain, the endlessness of death. If only they understood the insanity of the platitudes so freely spoken—that "time heals", that "you'll get over it", that "it was for the best", that "God takes only the best"—and realize that these are more of an insult than a comfort, that the warm and compassionate touch of another means so much more.

If only they knew that we will not find true peace and tranquility until we are prepared to try to stand in the shoes of others. We will not be understood until we learn to understand compassionately and we will not be heard until we learn to listen with hearts as well as minds.

Jan McNess,
TCF Victoria, Australia

Summer Breezes

There's a hint of laughter

Wafting past the porch.

For a moment I pause...

To listen

In the warmth of the summer sun.

Memories to bask in,

Trees you climbed, kites you flew,

Bikes you raced, waves you splashed in.

At night we wrapped time around us

As we gazed toward the heavens.

The stars were full of wonder then,

And lazy days seemed endless.

Life spread before you,

Laughter filling the wind with happiness.

Just now I thought I heard you once again.

How pleasant this breath of summer,

The breezes hold such memories.

Of life. Of you.

~ K Nelson

Our Many Special Days

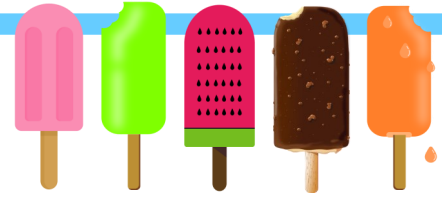
The beginning of the school year each fall seems to signal the coming holidays. The commercial market starts stocking school supplies just after the Fourth of July; shortly thereafter, by late summer the school supplies are crowded out by all the paraphernalia of Halloween! A glimpse of Thanksgiving whizzes by and it is an all out affront on the Christmas season. After the death of our child we stumble around each year looking for the appropriate way of handling these seasons that once had so much joy to them.

But the calendar holidays are far from the only "Special Days" that bereaved parents face. Our child's birthday and death date are especially hard days but also are the days relating to their illness or other events that relate to their death date and funeral or memorial.

The most obvious days are not always the only hard days to live with. Rainy days, snowy days, starry nights can all trigger tugging emotions. Tuesday for laundry day may be the hardest day all year long. No bereaved parent will have the same feeling of a special day or have the same special day because our children were different people to each person. Because of this, like in everything else in our grief work, we have to allow space for each other's "bad" days.

Each passing year after the death of our child finds us relating to special days differently each year. It is a continuing process never to return to that which used to be. As the years pass and we work hard at our "grief work" we will heal but that does not mean being like we were or doing the things we used to do. We are an evolving new person learning to live again.

Gerry Hall
TCF Central, MO



Our Children Remembered...on Their Birthdays

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

August

CHILD		MEMBER
Jennifer Blethen	sibling	Melissa Blethen
Ron Reinert		Sharon Reinert
David Andrew Twigg		Selma Twigg
David		Derwood Twigg
Kristin Reller	sibling	Anthony Reller
Kristin Reller		Pat & Don Reller
Peter Laverty	sibling	Thomas Laverty
John Benz		LuAnn Yerks & Mike Benz
Ben Hansen	sibling	Taylor Gotta
Ben		Karen & Gary Hansen
Hailey		Michelle Chamlin
Sheryl Ann Heggem		Ron & Julia Laabs
Sheryl Ann Heggem	sibling	Sharlene Wimpfheimer
Michael James Lewis		Joanne Lewis
Archer		Kara Amorosi
Keeden	grandchild	Stacey Smith
Tommy		Sheryl Hutton
Dan Lewis		Chris & Bob Lewis
Steffanie Quick	grandchild	Jan Quick
Steffanie Quick	sibling	Matthew Quick
Steffanie		Kevin & Sue Quick
Antonio		Jeffrey Demeules
Kate		Scott & Lisa Fronek
Juli Elisabeth	sibling	Melissa Myers and Michael Crees
Juli Elisabeth		Lisa & Steve Crees
Kyle		Mary Jappe
Mackenzie Ndujwe Nnantah		Korina Hackert
Melissa Roeser		Marilyn & Steve Dahlmeier
Matthew		Sue Reid & Mark Schmidt
David		Joan Robson
Paul		Pilar & Steve Hoenack
Timothy		Rony & Christine Muzik
Lauren		Nancy Riesgraf
Sarah		Jane Ramerth & Marc Friedman
Bill	sibling	Nedra Michael
Joseph Daniel Muonio		Michael & Anita Muonio
Lawrence		Karen & Dave Philbin
Melissa Marie Vomhof		John & Ruth Vomhof
Anthony Howe Jr.		Fahlon Tiller

September

CHILD		MEMBER
Barrett Ugland		Renee Forst
Nick Harter		Brian & Sandy Harter
Tom Williams		Keri Williams
Ty'rah White	grandchild	Shenna Galloway
Kelsey Eberle		Roxanne & Terry Eberle
Brooklyn		Carrie Roderick
David Lindgren		Janet & Jeff Bowers
David Lindgren	sibling	Tony and Adam Lindgren
Weston		Lisa Koch
Rachel Anne		Pam Dugdale
Ethan		Tom Lang
Yoeni		Roberto Falcon
Jaden Dallas Dalton		Karren Gray

September (continued)

CHILD		MEMBER
Calob		Jessica Bartram
Mark		Tim & Ann Bremer
Jesi		Pat & Sue Harding
Abigail Grace		Tom & Christina Monroe
Sullivan	grandchild	Bev Lind
Sullivan		Jamie & Tyler Peek
Paul Daniel Quinn		Joy Hansen
Isaac		Renriery Banegas & Anna Kokesh
Tracy Greenwood	sibling	Tanya Broten
Tim		Rozanne & John Puhek
Keith Demry		Char Fonville
Jason McCarthy	grandchild	Ken & MaryLou Theisen

October

CHILD		MEMBER
Michelle		Katie Krause
Lily		Leah Cameron
Michael John Blesi		Carolyn Blesi
Dani		Wendy Poulsen
Carissa Hayen		Linda Hayen
Christopher		Judi Callas
Jen		Karen & Gary Gross
Alicia Marie Queen-Wilson		Queen Wilson
Scott		Harriet Lodermeier
Scott	sibling	Cori Plehal
Matthew Robert Demsky		Barbara & Robert Demsky
Alyssa		Rich & Dori Beattie
Caitlin Louise Higgins		Jeffrey Weihe
Molly		Pat, Charlie & Tyler Brown
Dominic		Aaron Cepeda
Hunter		Sandra Lawver
Levi Blaukopf		Lauren Cody Bach
Corey		Mary, and Tasha Feigh
Hunter		Sue Aguilar
Gregory Sather	sibling	Eric Sather
Gregory Sather		Nancy Sather
Gregory Sather	sibling	Joelle & Paul Valentini
Jordan		Leslie Holt
Allison	sibling	Andrew Bailey
Allison		Miriam Porter
Peg	sibling	Nedra Michael

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.

Our Beloved Children...in Our Hearts Always

especially during the Remembrance Month of their death.



August

CHILD		MEMBER
David		Elayne Lipp
Bryan	sibling	Nikki Potts
Eric	son in law	Greg Pulles
Rob		Mary Quade
Noah David Muonio		Michael & Anita Muonio
Natalie Perry Smead		Karen Prieto & Pete Smead
Ty'rah White	grandchild	Shenna Galloway
Chad		Joyce Rubin
Jonathan Townsend		Kelly Townsend
Kameron		Dawn Gurule
Keeden	grandchild	Stacey Smith
Isaac		Renieri Banegas & Anna Kokesh
Greuchen		Susan and Dave Windschitl
Bruce		Judith Richart
Anthony Howe Jr.		Fahlon Tiller
Lily		Leah Cameron
Chris	sibling	Maggie Bauer
Christopher		Mary & Bruce Bauer
Everett Rachko	cousin	Mollie Freese
Everett	nephew	Mary Jane Kronberg
Everett	sibling	Allie Rachko
Everett		Charla Rachko
Brian		Bonnie & Mike Maloney
Alex		Lisa Welke
Abigail		Eric & Sam Zander
Yoeni		Roberto Falcon
Isaac		Dominique
Sheryl Ann Heggem		Ron & Julia Laabs
Sheryl Ann Heggem	sibling	Sharlene Wimpfheimer

September

CHILD		MEMBER
Dani		Wendy Poulsen
Dylan Colbath		Lisa Colbath
Matthew (Matt)		Stephen & Carol Hawk
Jackson		Kellie Nielson
Brooklyn		Carrie Roderick
Aiden		Mary Sullivan
Sam Abron-Yeager		Tarsha Davis
Antonio		Jeffrey Demeules
Hunter		Sandra Lawver
Alex		Frank Commers
Adam		Kathryn & Waters
Daniel Nelson	sibling	Michele Dooley
Daniel		Audrey Nelson
John Benz		LuAnn Yerks & Mike Benz
Scott	sibling	Suzie Berzins
Scott		Stephen Berzins
Scott		Cathy Drexel
Benjamin		Todd & Debbie Huberty
Ann Longton-McNamara		Barbara & Richard McNamara
Danny		Georgie Waulk
Dan	sibling	Michael Larson
Dan		Ruth & Jon Larson
Henry		Helen & Chris Taylor
Aaron Ginsberg	sibling	Leonora Ginsberg
Dawn Ankney		Sharon & Gregory Maidment

October

CHILD		MEMBER
Derek		Darwyn & Mary Tri
Carolyn Ann Bedford		Barbara & Robert Demsky
Kyle		Mary Jappe
Paul		Char & Rich Myklebust
Nick	sibling	Alyssa Kroll
Wilder		Tea Lee
Sean		Angel Peterson
Michelle		Katie Krause
Troy Perron		Gin Johnson
Paul Daniel Quinn		Joy Hansen
Aaron Carlton		Kristi Strom
Sawyer James Tate		Robert & Joy Tate
Kelly Hyatt		Maureen Hyatt
Mark		Tim & Ann Bremer
Jean Claude Wishard	sibling	Danielle Wishard-Tudor
Maggie Grace	grandchild	Jean Umezu

Parents

Problems, dilemmas,
Flat tires, dead lights,
Father, the fixer,
Making things right.

Scraped knees, hurt feelings,
A painful ordeal,
Nurturing mother,
Helping things heal.

When Death comes calling,
What will they do
To cope with disaster
And get themselves through
The Hell of their lives
Going up in smoke,
And the healer is sick
And the fixer is broke?

Richard A. Dew, M. D.
TCF Knoxville, TN



Why It Felt Selfish to Grieve After Losing My Brother...so I kept the pain to myself

I remember the day in vivid detail, and although he's been dead longer than he lived, I am quickly drawn to tears at the mere writing of this sentence. We all expect to lose our parents at some point. And losing a child is an almost daily thought and fear of all parents. But the loss of a brother in his youth comes wholly unexpected and changes the landscape of your world so quickly that it can be hard to grasp.

I was 19 on the day I learned of my brother's death to a drug overdose. He was 22 or 23. I can't be sure because I have a mental block about the date. My parents call me every year to remind me and within weeks I find it impossible to put a date to it.

My father didn't say anything as he walked past, but his face was ashen and tense as if holding back something explosive and painful. Without a word I followed him into the master bedroom where my mother was reading a book. He blurted out as though he hadn't the strength to hold it in any longer, "Philip is dead." His face left no doubt of the sincerity of his statement. And the wail that came from my mother racked me to my core. It was like the cumulative pain of every mother who ever lost a child and it haunts me to this day, some 26 years later. My father wrapped his arms around my mother and they grieved deeply.

I stood there. A cold wind blew through me and seemed to strip me of all emotion. A numbness enveloped me. In a way, I understood my parents' grief much better than I did my own. Theirs was so overwhelming, and I knew instinctively that there could be no greater loss than that of a child. My grief seemed almost selfish by comparison. So I held it mostly to myself.

I found my tears a day after the news, and then it seemed like crying would be my permanent state. I cried with my parents, but mostly I cried alone. When you're 19, few of your friends have suffered such a loss. They don't know how to react. They don't know what to say. People came by to comfort my parents. They brought books on losing a child. I walked around in a fog, touching things. Walls, fabrics, rocks, trees. Assuring myself the world was still there. Solid. Real.

It was a strange time and it changed me forever.

My brother was a Dead Head, following the Grateful Dead around. Addicted to the bohemian and drug-fueled life style.

He was popular and fun. The girls thought he was sweet, and the boys found him cool and easygoing. He loved music and cars and could disassemble or build anything. He was my big brother, so he was also a pain the way older siblings can be.

And while I took my share of abuse from him, he also protected me. Protected me from his own influence. From the lifestyle choices he was making. Told me drugs were not for me. For all Phil's many years of drug abuse, he never once asked me or allowed me to get high with him. That's how I best know his love.

I don't have much of my brother. A tie-dye peace symbol banner he made and hung on his wall. And a notebook where he jotted down things he needed to remember. People's phone numbers, money he borrowed and owed, or lent and was due, doodles. I like the notebook and can see him in action in my head rather than in still life like the photographs that seem to crowd out real memories.

My teenage daughters have known of Phil their whole lives. And sadly, I think I have presented him more as a cautionary tale than a real person. Maybe it's time to visit the grave I have never been to. Maybe it's time to share the fun stories and adventures and laughter of the brothers we were. Yes. Maybe it's time they met their Uncle Phil.

By Kevin Kantz

Minneapolis Chapter's Sibling Loss Facilitator Named TCF National Outstanding Sibling

Award recipient, Maggie Bauer, has made significant contributions that have fostered and furthered the philosophy of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) sibling program. This well-deserved award will be presented to Maggie at this year's 45th TCF National Conference in Houston, TX. We are so proud of Maggie and appreciate her dedication to our chapter and our bereaved siblings.

Maggie is Chris' little sister and a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® who has spoken to hundreds of people about dealing with grief and her experiences with sibling loss. She has also been the sibling loss facilitator for the Minneapolis chapter of The Compassionate Friends for over 5 years. She lives on a 32-acre farm with her fiancé and a multitude of farm animals.

Chris died a decade ago and it shattered his family and friends. He was a tall, handsome guy who loved those close to him in a big way and had a lot of compassion. He never missed a chance to tell people he loved them. He was always willing to lend a helping hand, which happened often since he was a carpenter.

Growing up we were typical siblings, me being 3 years younger I tagged along on a lot of his adventures including bicycling the hilly trails at a nearby park and playing flashlight tag with all the kids of the neighborhood. We'd play, wrestle, fight, have tears (me), make up, snuggle, rinse-repeat.



As adults, I often lived in a different state than Chris but that didn't stop us from staying close. He would visit whenever he could and we'd often exchange calls and texts. We were just getting into the new phase of our sibling relationship as adult friends when Chris died! I was 28 years old and Chris stayed forever 31.

One year after Chris' death our family found The Compassionate Friends. Encouraged by my Minneapolis chapter steering committee I went to my first National TCF conference in 2017 in Orlando, FL. What a lifechanging experience. All of a sudden, I had dozens and dozens of siblings who had their sibling(s) die. For a whole weekend I was surrounded by people who "get it" more than anyone else. They understood what it felt like when their sibling(s) died and could deeply relate to my loss. It's hard to accept a relationship that was supposed to last a lifetime cut short. There would be no more sibling adventures together. It takes a lot of active grieving to feel better; really, it's a second job. Exhausting, overwhelming, and at times a disappointing journey. It takes courage, strength, determination and acceptance to find joy on the other side of losing a sibling. Time does not heal our wounds—being an active participant along our grief journey does, AND that looks different for each of us. I am grateful to have found TCF SIBS within The Compassionate Friends organization. With their support, encouragement, friendship, and laughter I am further along on my grief journey and am forever healing. ~ Maggie Bauer



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*.

Please Print

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Child's Name _____

Birth Date _____

Death Date _____

NO LONGER INTERESTED?

Do you wish to remain on our mailing list and receive our quarterly newsletter?

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

- ♦ Perhaps you find comfort in reading the articles and stories included in the newsletter.

IF THE RENEWAL DATE ON YOUR MAILING LABEL IS HIGHLIGHTED, to remain on our mailing list,

DO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Attend an occasional meeting or event, (be sure to sign in)

OR

Email our Database Manager at tcf.mpls@gmail.com

OR

Complete and return the coupon found to the left.