



APRIL—MAY—JUNE 2021

CONTACT US

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P.O. Box 3065
Portland, OR 97208-3065
Ph. 503-248-0102
www.portlandtcf.org

“A Nonprofit Self-Help Organization for Families
Who Have Experienced the Death of a Child”

Portland, Oregon

April 4—Easter

April 22—Earth Day

May 9—Mother's Day

May 31—Memorial Day

June 20—Father's Day

In grieving we face a sacred moment,
one permeated with fear, overflowing
with pain, steeped in difficulty.
Although we run from such an
opportunity, its sacredness is in
the sound of our returning footsteps.

~ from *Safe Passages* by Molly Fumia



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS PERSONAL FLOWER FLOAT MEMORIAL TUESDAY JULY 20, 2021

Because of the uncertainty about Covid-19, Portland TCF is cancelling our Annual 2021 Flower Float gathering. Instead we invite all our families to honor the memory of their child in a personal way.

Amidst the chaos of this time, we encourage everyone to take a moment on Tuesday July 20th with a special remembrance by floating a flower in water ~ in a river, a stream, or even a small bowl of water on your table. Take a deep breath and feel the love and joy your loved one has brought into your life and know that you are always connected through this love.

PLEASE JOIN US ON THE 1ST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH @ 10:30 AM

***Physical meetings have been cancelled due to Coronavirus. In it's place is a Zoom group meeting available at the same day & time. Contact Jeff Littman or Peggy Smith to participate.**

503-284-2725 ~ jwlittman@comcast.net

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 1838 SW JEFFERSON, RMI 130, PORTLAND, OR 97205 (Corner of SW 18th/Jefferson)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: (503) 248-0102

Chapter Leader

Carolyn Harrington
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linerharrington@gmail.com

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jwlittman@comcast.net

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Nancy Best
(503) 260-0378
jagstaruar@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Debra Moon
503-849-1179
debsmoon@gmail.com



WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization composed of bereaved parents/siblings. We offer friendship and understanding. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child/sibling and about the feelings they experience through the grieving process.

There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child/sibling, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

One Foot in Yesterday

Yesterday my child was here, on this planet, alive. Yesterday life looked promising. Yesterday morning I woke up looking forward to the day. Today, I awake peacefully and then I remember my child is dead, and I cannot breathe. I am jolted from head to toe. My child has been dead for a day.



I wonder what my child was thinking in the last moments. I remember all the wonderful times. I remember the joy. I think of my child's life and how his life changed me forever. I remember the last time I saw my child. I remember the last goodbye. I sob and breathe.

I am lost for days. Final arrangements are made. The platitudes float past me ... these words have no meaning. A memorial service for my child. People with sad faces. Hugs, words, tears, head shaking. I can see it in their eyes ... they are thankful it isn't their child. They are uncomfortable. Time heals, they say. There's a plan, there's a reason. I cannot respond. They understand. No, they don't, my child is dead. This is not my parent, my husband, my sibling. This is my child. My child was supposed to outlive me. I thank them for their good intentions. I have no interest in their words. A few friends say nothing. This is the better choice, the wiser action. Be there, be there for me. Understand my unspoken words. See my broken heart. Understand. Listen to my story, a story of my child. Remember his life, remember his death.

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to COVID-19 most of our chapters are currently not holding a physical chapter meeting. Many chapters are offering a virtual meeting, please reach out to your local chapter to get information about what they will be offering.

OTHER TCF CHAPTERS IN THE AREA:

WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAPTER

Elsie Stuhr Center
5550 SW Hall Blvd.
Beaverton, OR 97005
2nd Tuesday
6:30 PM—8:30 PM
Phyllis (503) 324-2504

CLACKAMAS COUNTY CHAPTER

1500 Division Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
Email:
tcfclackamascounty@gmail.com



4th Tuesday
7:00 PM

THE MUSIC BOX

Gone Too Soon - Simple Plan Lyrics

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N-POQr-DQQ>



Take a moment to enjoy this
musical selection ~

*There is love in our pain, memories in our grief,
and hope in our sharing.*

~ Darcie Sims

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

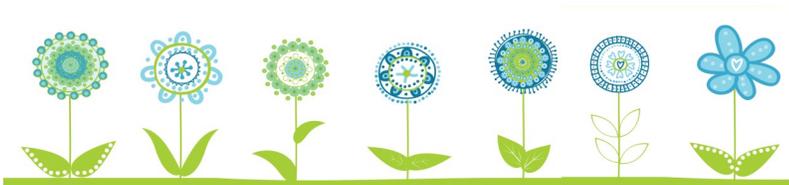


Email your address change
to Jenna Pigeon,
Member Database at
jrpigeon@gmail.com

As the Heart Remembers Spring

Some will be remembered for the fortunes or their fame,
And some will be remembered for the naming of a name.
But you will be remembered as the heart remembers Spring,
As the mind remembers beauty, and the soul each lovely thing.
You have given freely of the beauty of your heart,
And you have made of friendship not a gesture but an art.
You have been as selfless in the gracious things you do
As the sun that shares its kisses,
As the night that shares its dew.
You have planted roses, in lives that lay so bare;
You have sown encouragement to those who knew despair.
By spirit's inner beauty in every lovely thing,
You will be remembered as the heart remembers Spring.

~ Betty W. Stoffel



LOST GRADUATION



POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE,
SPEECHES, HAPPY FACES,
PROUD PARENTS,
IT'S JUST NOT FAIR
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT THERE.

SCHOOL SONG PLAYING,
GIFTS, CELEBRATIONS,
LAUGHING FRIENDS,
WE CANNOT SHARE
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT THERE.

MORTARBOARDS FLYING,
DIPLOMAS, TASSELS TOSSED,
TEACHERS SMILING,
IT'S TOO MUCH TO BEAR
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT THERE.

~ Sue Snapp, TCF, Tucson, AZ
(Dedicated to the children who graduated
only in our hearts)

To You on Mother's Day

It's hard to find the right words
to convey what I wish for you
on Mother's Day.
Words of compassion, filled with
care, knowing full well of
the bond we share.

So on this day I wish for you ...
Beautiful rainbows in the rain;
Joy and laughter, instead of pain.
Sunshine on a cloudy day
Faith to help you guide the way.

Most of all I wish you this ...
A touch, a whisper, a gentle kiss.
Just for you, and filled with love,
Sent from your angel, up above.

~ Jane Bertagnolli, TCF, Richton Park, IL

Our children lovingly remembered...

CONFIDENTIAL

Our children lovingly remembered...

CONFIDENTIAL

Our children lovingly remembered...



MOTHERS & FATHERS

A mother's love for children is a
very special thing,

Filled with all the many days
That motherhood can bring:

Days when children misbehave
and try your patience so.

Days when they are sweet and kind
and let their loving feelings show.

A father's love for children
is very strong and pure.

There's no problem that a child may have
which a father cannot cure.

A parent's love for children is a
never-ending thing.

It lasts from day to day and year to year
through summer, winter, fall and spring.

That special love continues still when
someone's child has died,

For the feelings that a parent has
are impossible to hide.

~ Jean Hottop, TCF, Fox Valley, IL



A DIFFERENT EASTER

Easter bunnies, brand new clothes, egg hunts, candy and baskets, the start of spring. How exciting is this time of the year? A new beginning, everything so fresh, so invigorating! But, unfortunately only painful and sorrowful memories are here for those of us who are bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings.

Gone is the laughter, the excitement in a special child's eyes, the feeling of a whole new aspect in life. Spring is here and the world appears ready to bloom again with new life, new home, and new wonders.

How can we view life in this way when part of ourselves is now gone, forever lost to us? How can our lives continue to go when one of us is missing, no longer able to share this "newness" of life? It seems so unfair! And yet, out of our "darkness" comes the first signs of hope—a "bud" of survival, a moment of laughter, a memory of a happier time.

The Easter season usually represents rebirth; let this season be the "birth" of your finding your way back to life again, of finding the ability to heal, and of being able to resolve your grief so that hope and comfort are once again in your life. Let this time of the year show you that you CAN make it through this deepest, most difficult, and sorrowful time of your lives.

~ Christ Gilbert, TCF, Tampa, FL



ONCE A MOTHER, ALWAYS A MOTHER . . . ONCE A FATHER, ALWAYS A FATHER . . .
PLEASE NEVER FORGET THAT!



A Love Gift is a special note to your child that is printed in the newsletter. It is a wonderful way to remember and honor their memory! Families often submit these either on their birthday or anniversary date of their child, but it can be done at any time! There is no charge for printing a Love Gift, but many families choose to donate a tax deductible contribution to help support TCF expenses such as newsletter expenses, brochures, outreach, special events, etc. Please complete the form on the back page with your love note and submit with your favorite photo.

To include a picture with your Love Gift, please email your special photo to debsmoon@gmail.com or mail to TCF, PO Box 3065, Portland, OR 97208. *Your photo will be returned with current address.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

DEADLINE to submit for the next newsletter is JUNE 10, 2021

In Loving Memory of JOREY BENJAMIN ELLEFSEN



The years keep passing by ~ you will be 21 years old. I can't even imagine. Each year we celebrate your birthday w/a toast using your 'champaign' glass with your favorite drink ... root beer! I remember so well the only Mother's Day I got to spend with you & all my children! It was such an unforgettable special day! This Mother's Day photo always reminds me of that special day.

Jorey, I love & miss you to the Moon & back & beyond ...
Love, Grandma

Debra Moon

**You were one of the greatest gifts in my
life and I will cherish every memory with
you today, tomorrow, and always.**

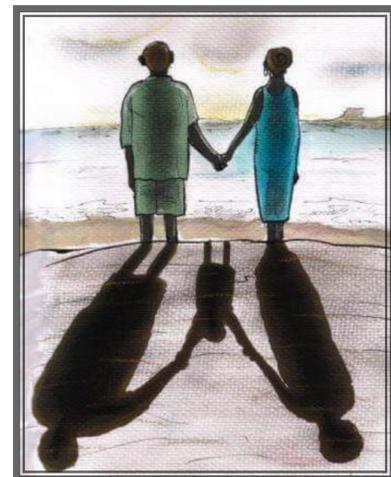
~ Author Unknown

In Loving Memory of MICHAEL EDWARD THOMASON



My beautiful far away child,
No, neither the time nor distance has eased the ache. In some ways it's harder because of how long it's been; life goes on, your brothers are well, and same with Dad and I, but we ALL live with that remaining "rock" in our backpack. It's always there, we always feel it, some days it's lighter, some heavier. Miss ya, sweet boy, cannot wait to see you one day!!! Hope you are smiling that smile.
Thomason 5 Forever

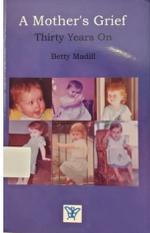
Michelle Thomason



"You will lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp."

~ Anne Lamott





A MOTHER'S GRIEF
Thirty Years On
 Betty Madill, author
 #2019.6-1

If my writing the “ins & outs” of my journey helps any other bereaved parent to find a way forward in their grief, then her life & death would count for something to be remembered long past her 3 years & 3 months.

*Memories can make you ... “Sappy.”
 “Sad and happy ... at the same time.*

(From a Grief Workshop presented by Dr. Alan Wolfelt)



44th TCF National Conference | Presented Virtually
 July 16-18, 2021

Save the Date! TCF's 44th National Conference will be presented virtually July 16-18, 2021. Although we would love to be together in person, we can still connect, support, and gather as a community through our virtual event. More details about TCF's three-day conference are coming soon, including number of sessions, registration prices, and early bird prices and dates.

The Coronavirus pandemic continues to have strict restrictions for large gatherings. we have made the difficult decision to cancel the in-person conference in Detroit.

**** LOOKING FOR WORKSHOP PRESENTERS ****

go to ... **compassionatefriends.org**
 for more information.

OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS:

SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

www.sbsnw.org
 Facebook—SBSNW
 503) 200-0382

*Currently groups are being held several times per month on virtual Zoom meetings & will resume in-person meetings when it is safe & allowed by State regulations

NEW ...

HELPING PARENTS HEAL

Annie & Marc Adams
 hphportlandoregon@gmail.com
 Annie (503)752-8024
 Marc (503) 880-4467

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Ph. 503-699-8006
 Spanish (503) 972-3376
 Peace House, 2116 NE 18th St.
Portland ...2nd Mon 7 pm
Beaverton ...4th Thu 7 pm
Vancouver ...2nd Thu 7 pm
 www.briefencounters.org

Support groups for parents who have experienced infant or pregnancy loss or who are considering or experiencing a subsequent pregnancy/adoption.

PARENTS OF MURDERED CHILDREN

Ph. 503-761-1304 or 503-656-8039
 Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave
Portland... 1st Mon @ 7 pm
 www.pomc.com/portland

SIDS RESOURCES OF OREGON

4035 NE Sandy Blvd Suite 209
Portland
 Ph. 503-287-8265, www.teleport.com

ME, TOO & COMPANY

Children, parents, whole families
 Ph. 503-228-2104
 www.oregonhospice.org

Supports children and families who have experienced the death of a family member or friend.



THE DOUGY CENTER

Ph. 503-775-5683, www.dougy.org
 3909 SE 52nd Ave., Portland, OR 97206

Provides safe place for children, teens, young adults & their families who are grieving a death.

STEPPING STONES

Ph. 360-696-5120

SW Washington Medical Center, Vancouver, WA
 Support groups specialize in helping children with their grief.

This journey of the bereaved, especially the bereaved parent, is unlike other battles we face. It is both an outward battle, as well as an internal battle. Pain and challenges come from external sources, places, rooms, pictures, comments, etc. as well as from within. To say we do battle mentally is a huge understatement. The years of collected memories, moments, sounds and laughter are stored in countless files in our mind. To close our eyes is to turn on the recordings. Eyes open is to see the tangible and physical reminders that our child once lived. Eyes closed is to experience the view from an anguished heart. Both are brutal. One of the most difficult aspects of grief, for me, is that the path truly must be walked alone. Others can and do support us, in part, but no one looks through the unique lens we do. Actions taken in an attempt to “help” us often hurt us. Words given, well meaning, often isolate us further. There is no blame, for how can one possibly know the endless and varied nuances of grief we now live with, except for those who’ve walked this path. Yes, people may say we have shut ourselves off, or have become “too private”, but often we didn’t start out that way. We are quickly

advised how to feel, what to do, and when to do it! Shame sets in, guilt sets in, and we withdraw. Though it is a lonely place, it truly is the place where we must find our inner strength and begin to rebuild. Rebuild our broken heart and soul. No one knows, including us, the exact stones needed to form the path on which we use to go forward. It is also a place of discovery. It is in those times where the tears fall, the heart rages against the injustice and the anguish pours out that we begin to find ourselves. Yes, the night feels horrific, but the morning comes, and we realize we are still breathing. It is this very battle we do alone, and in the darkest night, that allows for a new dawn. Grief is work. Hard work. We must face it, feel it, let it break us and then we must get up and put ourselves back together again. Oh there will be more nights and darkness, but we’ll come to trust that the sun will rise again. In time, and with the backing of Compassionate Friends, we can not only survive, but thrive.

Your life may just be the inspiration that saves another.

~ Michelle Thomason, In loving memory of her son, Michael Thomason



A FATHER'S GRIEF

In the early days of my grief,
a tear would well up in my eyes,
A lump would form in my throat,
But you would not know—
I would hide it.
For I am strong.

In the middle days of my grief,
I would look ahead & see that wall
That I had attempted to go around
As an ever-present reminder of a
wall yet unscaled.

Yet, I did not attempt to scale it
For the strong will survive—
And I am strong.

In the later days of my grief,
I learned to climb over that wall—
Step by step—
Remembering, crying, grieving,
And the tears flowed steadily
As I painstakingly went over.

The way was long, but I made it,
For I am strong.

Near the resolution of my grief,
A tear will well up in my eyes,
A lump will form in my throat,
But I will let that tear fall—
And you will see it.
Through it you will see
That I still hurt and I care,
For I am strong.

~ Terry Jago, TCF, Regina, Canada





Memorial Day

We walked among the crosses
 Where our fallen soldiers lay.
 And listened to the bugle
 As TAPS began to play.
 The Chaplain led a prayer
 We stood with heads bowed low.
 And I thought of fallen comrades
 I had known so long ago.
 They came from every city
 Across this fertile land.
 That we might live in freedom.
 They lie here 'neath the sand.
 I felt a little guilty
 My sacrifice was small.
 I only lost a little time
 But these men lost their all.
 Now the services are over
 For this Memorial Day.
 To the names upon these crosses
 I just want to say,
 Thanks for what you've given
 No one could ask for more.
 May you rest with God in heaven
 From now through evermore.

~ CW Johnson

DANCING IN THE RAIN

The word dance seems to be etched into my mind. Recently, a friend shared a quote she had come across: "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass ... It's about learning to dance in the rain."

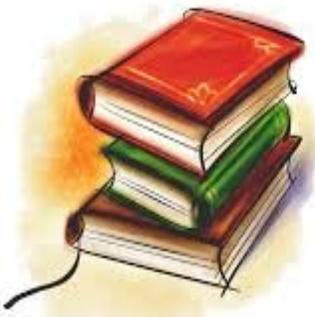
Wow - what awesome words! The image of a storm is a good analogy in understanding our grief. Storms come from nowhere, like a tornado, seemingly destroying everything in their path and leaving our lives in complete and utter shambles. The darkness and dreariness stay while lightning continues to flash, stabbing our heart with pain. Thunder clamors constantly, reminding us that our children are gone. We can walk in a fog for what seems like years as the sleet and frigid cold freeze us in our tracks. The wind howls, imitating our screams and wailing. The rain seems to be endless.

Others, who haven't lost their children, who are living in sunshine, cry out to us, "Come in out of the rain." They don't understand that often we're just not able to move. The storm has become our world for however long we need or choose to live there. My own experience of grief tells me that our lives will always be stormier than they were before the hurricanes came and took what was most precious to us. But, we do have a choice. We can stay hunkered down under the false protection of denial. We can lock ourselves in a protective shell and never come out. We can learn to dance in the rain. However, each bereaved parent must decide what feels best to them.

(continued on page 12)

Mother's Day is a day of appreciation & respect. I can think of no mothers who deserve it more, than those that had to give a child back.

~ Erma Bombeck



We are pleased to offer our members reading material from our **LENDING LIBRARY!**

The profound challenges and trauma of grief often leave us with desperate, unanswered questions, fear and isolation. *Will our children be forgotten? How does one survive this unthinkable trauma? Will I ever be 'normal' again? Why do people stop speaking to them?* It is during this time that many of us seek answers, comfort and guidance in books authored by those who have experienced the death of a child. *We Are Not Alone*.

Through the generous donations of our members, TCF has acquired an inventory of books that are now available for you to borrow for a 3-month period. Books will be mailed directly to your home and will include a postage-paid envelope for the return. Visit our website www.portlandtcf.org and browse through the inventory!

If you have books you would like to donate, please contact us and we will make arrangements for pick up. A label with your child's name will be placed on the inner cover of the book.



I AM SPRING

I am the beginning.
 I am budding promise.
 I spill cleansing tears of life
 From cloudy vessels
 Creating muddy puddles
 Where single cell creatures abide
 And splashing children play.

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

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

~ Carol Clum
 TCF, Topeka Chapter

(continued from page 11)

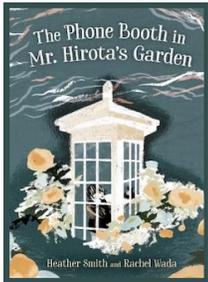
I find myself thinking, "It's hard to crawl, walk or breath without her and she wants me to dance?" She must have forgotten all those times I tried and she said, "Mom, you can't dance!" then I realized that she's not referring to my ability when I hear "Dance Mom, dance. Dance in the rain. Dance because you can't change what has already been done. You have the choice to sit it out or dance. Listen for the music, keep your eyes wide open, go forward, follow the music and dance. Follow me. I am not behind you. I am in front of you. I'm free and I am dancing." She taught me to hear the music and her song continues on. Without it, I couldn't dance.

I believe if we allow our children to lead us to dance in the rain that they will eventually dance us out of the storms of pain and into the sunshine of peace.

~ Julie Short

*Grief is the ceremony of lost treasure.
 Grief is the homage you pay to the love you were
 once blessed to share. Grief is not the enemy.*

~ Sascha



reuters.com

3/4/21

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-fukushima-anniversary-telephone/japans-tsunami-survivors-call-lost-loves-on-the-phone-of-the-wind-idUSKCN2AX03J>

Japan's tsunami survivors call lost loves on the phone of the wind

Paraphrases:

... In a garden on a hill, under the wide boughs of a cherry tree, a white phone booth glistens in the early spring light ...

... Many survivors say the unconnected phone line in the town of Otsuchi helps them keep in touch with their loved ones and gives them some solace as they grapple with their grief ...

... The phone booth was built by Itaru Sasaki, who owns the garden in Otsuchi, a town some 500 km (310 miles) northeast of Tokyo, a few months before the disaster, after he lost his cousin to cancer ...



... "There are many people who were not able to say goodbye," he says. "There are families who wish they could have said something in the end, had they known they wouldn't get to speak again" ...



... The phone now attracts thousands of visitors from all over Japan. It is not only used by tsunami survivors, but also by people who have lost relatives to sickness & suicide. Dubbed "the phone of the wind", it recently inspired a film.

THE KEEPERS OF MEMORIES

You make friends because you
have things in common.
We are friends because
of our children.
The older ones,
the younger ones,
The ones who never even
had a chance to breathe.

They are our reason
for being.
Our heartbeat,
our life's blood.
Whether we have lots of
memories or only a few,
We are joined by an
unbreakable bond.

We are the ones left behind,
to remember..
And carry the torch for those
we remember so lovingly.
We are there for ourselves
and each other
because we understand
the pain of loss.

We must also be there for those
who unfortunately join
our ranks.
Because we are the
parents of lost children,
the bruised hearts,
the keepers of memories.
~ Cheryl Pelletier, TCF, Concord NH



Please Support Portland TCF...

Just by shopping at Fred Meyer with your Rewards Card!! Fred Meyer donates to local community organizations/nonprofits of your choice through their *Community Rewards Program*. Just link your Rewards Card and scan it every time you shop at Freddy's.

~ Whenever you use your Rewards Card you will be helping Portland TCF earn a donation from Fred Meyer.

~ You will still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points and Rebates, just as you do today.

Great Way for Families & Friends to Support TCF!

- Go to www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards
- Sign up online (even if you already have a card, you must create an online account)
- You will immediately receive an email to confirm your account (check your Spam or Junk Mail!)
- Sign up using your email address and password
- From the top menu select: Reward —> Community Rewards
- Click **"LINK YOUR CARD HERE"**
- Enter # FT805
- Be sure to click the bubble! The Compassionate Friends P.O. Box 3065 Portland 97208

TCF Portland earned **\$38.92** during the 4th quarter, 2020!2020 YTD = \$166.03

~ Thank you for participating & enjoy shopping! ~

MOTHER'S DAY

Petunias in a jelly jar
Held out for me to see,
On Mother's Day for 13 years
My son would give to me.

Petunias bobbing brightly
They front a graveyard stone,
Watered by my salty tears.
This Mother's Day alone.

~ Toni Marx, TCF, Springfield, IL

"Grief is like glitter. You can throw a handful of glitter into the air, but when you try to clean it up, you'll never get it all. Even long after the event, you will still find glitter tucked into corners, it will always be there—
somewhere."

~ Author Unknown

Birthdays



If it's your child's birthday month, we invite you to join our monthly meeting and share their story!

Birthdays hold treasured memories and are especially difficult for surviving parents and siblings; TCF offers a wonderful venue to honor and celebrate the precious life-story of your loved one. Taking a few minutes to share a picture, memento, award or even their favorite toy is a gentle reminder to all that *love continues and*

IS IT FATHER'S DAY ALREADY?

Well, it's that time of year again. That awkward, often over hyped day in which Dad is supposed to "relax" and spend time with the kids. We wake up sometimes to breakfast in bed, a card and a small gift or two (often a tool or gadget of some kind), and are then faced with the rest of the day. After the first hour most kids are bored and want to get on with whatever they had planned that morning for themselves. But they are reminded that this is "Father's Day" and Dad decides what we are doing.

Before Stefanie died 6 years ago this "holiday" was taken very lightly without much planning ahead of time. Since then it has taken on new meaning and starts to take on significance around the time Mother's Day arrives. We are being prepared for our day. As the day draws nearer we get more and

more uneasy as we try to figure out what to do. Play golf? ... Watch a ballgame? ... Work around the house? ... These are the stereotyped "dad things to do" on this "special day".

Well this day is quite special to us bereaved fathers but for many different reasons. The first few years can be quite difficult to face if one hasn't planned ahead of time. There is this incredible void of our other child or children who should be there with us. This is where the careful planning comes into play as I try to make this day special for my other daughter, Hilary while keeping Stefanie's presence with us too. The best way to do this is to try and plan something new that involves the natural beauty we have around us. Taking a hike on a new trail, kayaking in the bay, playing golf with the family and not alone or with the guys, a bike ride or maybe a day trip to the beach exploring tidal pools. The options are endless if you use your imagination. The nice thing about do-

ing something outside as opposed to say, a movie, is that it allows you to "feel" the presence of your other child. Places like Monterey, Point Reyes or anywhere along the coast gives me a real sense of peace. If it happens to be foggy then head inland towards some of the back roads of wine country. The sun is very important on this day, our day.

So rather than dreading this day use it as a chance to reflect on all the wonderful memories of our children. Share this day with your family and allow their warmth, support and comfort to be a part of us. Our children would want it this way.

~ Your Compassionate Friend, Rob Jacobs



THIS IS A LISTING OF SEVERAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

www.compassionatefriends.org

ONLINE SUPPORT

The Compassionate Friends offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Several days & times available.

First-Time Chatter Orientation ~ Parents/Grandparents/Siblings ~ Loss to Substance Related Causes ~ Bereaved More Than Two Years ~ No Surviving Children ~ Pregnancy/Infant Loss

PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. If you are waiting approval, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

Loss of a Stepchild ~ Loss of a Grandchild ~ Sibs (for bereaved siblings) ~ Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a Child ~ Multiple Losses ~ Men in Grief ~ Daughterless Mothers ~ Sudden Death ~ Loss to Substance Related Causes ~ Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes ~ Loss to Suicide ~ Loss to Homicide ~ Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver ~ Loss to Cancer ~ Loss of a Child with Special Needs ~ Loss to Long-term Illness ~ Loss After Withdrawing Life Support ~ Loss to Mental Illness ~ Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth ~ Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Loss of an Infant Grandchild ~ Infant & Toddler Loss ~ Loss of a Child 4-12 Years Old ~ Loss of a Child 13-19 Years Old ~ Loss of an Adult Child ~ Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children ~ Finding Hope for Parents Through TCF SIBS ~ Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren ~ Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation Issues ~ Inclusion and Diversity ~ Grieving with Faith and Hope ~ Secular Support ~ Reading Your Way Through Grief ~ Crafty Corner ~ Loss of a Child

Older Siblings Grief

Everyone grieves differently. A sibling's response is determined by his/her relationship to the child who died and place in the family. The death of a sibling is a mid-life crisis for kids. Suddenly they are aware of their own mortality. That may cause them to become over-protective. They may also over-react to illnesses. They will rarely talk about their feelings because they're afraid it will hurt their parents more. The reality here is that parents are at the bottom of the list of people they will talk to, but that doesn't mean they aren't talking to someone. School becomes a terrible problem and grades drop because they can't function any better than we parents do. At some point in the grief process overachieving can also become a way of dealing with pain. Conflicts intensify between remaining siblings.

Sometimes there is nothing you can do for your kids but allow them to hurt. At the same time, it is hard for parents to make the grief be the child's problem.

PLAYING IN THE SHADOWS

We grew up together,
Big sister, little brother.

I took care of you
Until you were old enough
to care for yourself.
Though you didn't say it
I knew you loved me.

We played in the sunlight, you & I;
Remember the games of
Mother-May! & Hide-and-Seek?
Sure we had our fights
As all siblings do.
But through it all we never lost
Our love for each other.

Now you're gone.
I'll never see you again
Except in the memories
Of those sunny days.

You will forever be sixteen—
Far too young to die.
You had your whole life to live.
I'll always grieve, but I must go on.
Still, without you,
I play alone in the shadows.

~ Cheryl Larson, TCF, Pikes Peak, CO



They feel they have to make up for the child who's gone. Kids will think, "It should have been me. You wouldn't hurt quite so much if it were me." there is likely to be some distancing for a while. There is also a fear that if you pull away you'll never be close again, but that usually doesn't happen. You have to develop memories of things that happen after the child died and you have to develop new traditions, but that takes years. The loss surfaces for young people at every milestone in their lives—significant birthdays, graduations, weddings, parenthood, etc.. The child who is suddenly the only child has envy of other kids' siblings to cope with on top of everything else. They seem to experience more anger and pain than other bereaved siblings do. It is difficult for kids when the parent's energy is trapped up in the dead child. Inside they are screaming, "Look at me. I'm still alive."

The reality of death is that there is always remorse about things done or left undone. Siblings can benefit from this painful experience. They may gain a different perspective on life, value it more highly, and adopt new priorities. They learn things that strengthen them, and they tend to be more compassionate and sensitive than other young people.

~Sibling Grief Workshop led by Karen Wendt, TCF, Milwaukee, WI



The Compassionate Friends
Portland Chapter
P.O. Box 3065
Portland, OR 97208-3065

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



APRIL—MAY—JUNE
2021



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Date of Birth: ___/___/___ Date of Death: ___/___/___

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