



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter #1511

April 2025 Newsletter

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents

Notes from Susan

A note borrowed from Toni, our former Chapter Leader

"I CAN CARRY IT NOW . . ."

At a recent meeting of our chapter, we were sharing how each of us was doing at various points within our individual grief journeys. Some of us had experienced the death of our child or sibling only 1 or 2 years before and for some it had been 5 years, 11 years and even 15 years.

We agreed that the first year of loss was a blur with deep emotional and psychological pain that is indescribable to someone who hasn't experienced it.

We also agreed that the second year is similarly painful but in a different way. The fog and disorientation caused by the death begins to recede.

You start going through the seasons, holidays, birthdays and the anniversary of the death which magnifies the absence of your loved one. You realize, on some level, that you have to come to terms with the death. You have to find a way to live with life's most cruel experiences.

A father in our group, who lost his beautiful daughter, 3 years ago, said **"I can carry it now . . ."** I thought that statement was poignant.

Those of us who are grieving, whether it is 1 year after or 20 years after, know that the burden of grief is always with us. Sometimes it seems like a shadow, just following us around, always on the edges of each experience, no matter how joyful it may be. Other times, it is like a heavy lead apron That we wear, exhausting us before we get out of bed in the morning and as we collapse into bed at night.

We try to behave to the outside world like nothing has changed and we are just "fine". It is woefully exhausting.

Over time we have all found different ways in which to alleviate the pain and grow strong enough to "carry it".

For many of us in The Compassionate Friends, it helps to meet once a month and just talk about our children or sisters or brothers who have gone too soon. Many people find solace in establishing scholarships or events in their child's name as a way to honor them and keep their memory alive. Some people find it helpful to keep a journal or write poetry and essays. Keeping busy with a garden or grandchildren, travel or work are all ways that we cope with loss.

The members of The Compassionate Friends are here to support you, listen to you and remind you that you will realize the need and find the strength to adjust to the new life that was thrust upon you.

You can carry it.

Happy Spring, Toni Nesheim April newsletter 2017



Life doesn't necessarily "gets better" after a heartbreaking loss. It gets different and with hope, that different will lead to moments of joy again alongside the grief you will always carry in your heart.

@INSCRIPTURE

Chapter Meetings

Northern Illinois Chapter TCF #1511

<http://www.iltcf.org/index.html>

Zoom meeting
First Thursday of the month
 7p.m. to 8:30pm
 Susan Banks will email the
 link to the meeting
 April 3, 2025

Third Thursday of the month meets at
 Millburn Congregational Church
 19073 West Old Town Court
 Lake Villa, IL 60046.
 Park in the parking lot behind the church, enter through the double glass doors.
 It's also ok to sit and listen and when you feel comfortable sharing, please share with us.
 Open discussion
 April 17, 2025

My Photo Album

By Jeanne Losey
 Shelbyville, Indiana

*The photo album of my mind
 Holds treasured thoughts of you,
 And I can almost see again
 The things we used to do.
 I hear your voice; I see your smile.
 I feel you close to me.
 The photo album of my mind
 Shows how we used to be.
 Time may have changed us through the years
 But I will always find
 You're just as I remember in
 The album in my mind.
 And, as I turn page after page,
 Such precious scenes I see.
 The photo album of my mind
 Is very dear to me.
 It holds the pictures of our past
 Like reels of film unwind.
 I cherish all those photos in
 The album of my mind.*

"My photo album"

Lovingly Lifted from the
 Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania
 Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Lovingly lifted from the March 2008 TCF
 Arlington, DC, Leesburg, Prince William, and Burke-Springfield-Fairfax Virginia Chapters Newsletter



GIFTS OF LOVE

A donation to
 our chapter in honor of or in
 loving memory of your child.

A love gift is a gift of money or of time given to the Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but donations can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of your chapters. Love gifts are acknowledged each month in the newsletter.

Please remember that our chapter will never solicit for donations. You will never receive an email, text message or phone call soliciting for a donation or a need of money or payment from any steering committee member. I, as the chapter leader will never ask for money for assistance with any chapter finances. We provide the opportunity for Gifts of Love as a place to give a donation in honor or memory of a loved one. *Susan Banks Chapter Leader and our Chapter Steering Committee members.*



OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED IN APRIL

Each month we remember the children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments, place them in your thoughts, and remember them on their day together with their parents. Our children's lives will go on, if we remember them and celebrate their lives

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Lea Ann (Heise) Knuth</i>	<i>April 2</i>	<i>Daughter of Leslie & Shirley Heise</i>
<i>Brandon Travelstead</i>	<i>April 6</i>	<i>Son of Joan Travelstead</i>
<i>Michael Sean Gaede</i>	<i>April 8</i>	<i>Son of Maureen Gaede</i>
<i>Russell Isaac Thomashow</i>	<i>April 9</i>	<i>Son of Blythe Thomashow</i>
<i>Scott Ewing</i>	<i>April 11</i>	<i>Son of Alan & Renee Ewing</i>
<i>Qua'Shawn Wade</i>	<i>April 12</i>	<i>Son of June Andrejewski</i>
<i>Alyssa Carranza</i>	<i>April 15</i>	<i>Daughter of Angel & Raquel Gaso</i>
<i>Adrien Gonzales</i>	<i>April 21</i>	<i>Son of Lauren Gonzales</i>
<i>Lisa M. Johnson</i>	<i>April 25</i>	<i>Daughter of Issey Lugo</i>
<i>Jammi Hui</i>	<i>April 25</i>	<i>Daughter of William & Joyce Hui</i>
<i>Sean Jones</i>	<i>April 26</i>	<i>Son of Octavine Jones</i>
<i>Timothy Reece</i>	<i>April 27</i>	<i>Son of Joanne Prihoda-Reece</i>
<i>Cole Adkins</i>	<i>April 28</i>	<i>Son of Amy & Ted Adkins</i>

ANNIVERSARIES

<i>José De Jesús Hernández</i>	<i>April 1</i>	<i>Son of Jesús & Virginia Hernández</i>
<i>Selene Martinez</i>	<i>April 8</i>	<i>Daughter of Manuel & Lidia Martinez</i>
<i>Ruthie Johnson</i>	<i>April 9</i>	<i>Daughter of Paula Ali</i>
<i>Matthew Tisch</i>	<i>April 10</i>	<i>Son of William & Barbara Tisch</i>
<i>Jennifer Corbett Dennis</i>	<i>April 12</i>	<i>Daughter of Joan K Corbett</i>
<i>Daniel Wang</i>	<i>April 13</i>	<i>Son of Millie Yu</i>
<i>Montana (Monti) Brown</i>	<i>April 16</i>	<i>Son of Donna Brown</i>
<i>Thomas Mattingly</i>	<i>April 17</i>	<i>Son of Sue & Jerry Mattingly</i>
<i>Shannon McCarty</i>	<i>April 18</i>	<i>Daughter of Kevin McCarty & Pat Hays</i>
<i>Westley Banks</i>	<i>April 19</i>	<i>Son of Susan & Michael Banks</i>
<i>Alexander Rettinger</i>	<i>April 20</i>	<i>Daughter of Kathleen Rettinger</i>
<i>David Nesheim</i>	<i>April 24</i>	<i>Brother of Toni Nesheim</i>
<i>Lisa Rosemann</i>	<i>April 25</i>	<i>Daughter of Pat & Craig Rosemann</i>
<i>Griffin Schumow</i>	<i>April 26</i>	<i>Son of Jeff & Krista Schumow</i>
<i>Timothy Reece</i>	<i>April 29</i>	<i>Son of JoAnn Prihoda-Reece</i>
<i>Gavin Short</i>	<i>April 29</i>	<i>Beth & Alan Short</i>
<i>Anne Thomson</i>	<i>April 30</i>	<i>Daughter of Nancy & Tom Thomson</i>

Please let me know if I have omitted a child, misspelled a name or have published an incorrect date. I know how important it is to bereaved families to have their children remembered. Susan; lanwesmar@comcast.net



SPRING CLEANING

We used to live in a townhouse, one of those inventions designed to minimize house-keeping chores, mortgage payments and a tendency to accumulate more things than one needs to cross the Sahara in summer. We moved there because I liked the idea of no yard work, and we would be unburdened by conversations of "It's-Saturday-so-mow-the-lawn." I hate housework (it hates me too!), and we wanted a less complex life.

Smaller places do have a certain appeal...especially during the "It's Spring and that means let's-get-organized-around-here-and-throw-out-all-YOUR-stuff" mood that tends to permeate the months of March and April.

When you only have one closet, cleaning it takes a minimum of time. Opening the door starts the process, and if you are clever, you will stand with an open trash bag as you pry open the door. Always do this at 2:00 a.m. when the other nearby occupants in your townhome are asleep, or during those few quiet moments of solitude you get after announcing that Dairy Queen is having a twenty-minute-only-special, and you have (thoughtfully) placed the keys in the car.

Designed by some psychologist in an effort to help patients rid their psyches of old memories, useless information and general "clutter," spring cleaning has become an American phrase most often associated with grief. It is a painful process, this sifting and sorting of all the things that tell us (and the rest of the world) who we are or were.

There are as many ways to spring clean as there are homes and hearts and minds and spirits that need "adjusting" (a real psychological term thrown in just to remind you that I am a professional too!)

How many times have you been told "It's time to move on," or, "It's time to get back to normal," or, "You mean you haven't gotten rid of that yet?" (That can refer to a multitude of things such as his favorite pipe, her bathrobe that the dog attacked during one his "spells," or an odd assortment of baseball cards, used gum wrappers and dirty socks that were secreted under the bed, left behind for you to find and cry over).

How come everybody else knows when it is time for me to spring clean! How come everybody else knows when it is time for me to open that closet and sort through all those memories, trying to decide which ones to keep and which ones to pass on to the Salvation? How come everybody else knows when it is time for me to get back to living?

(continued on page 5)



SPRING CLEANING

(Spring Cleaning continued from page 4)

I am spring cleaning. I am sifting through the “stuff” that made up my loved one’s life and I am learning to let go of a few things...slowly.

When we moved to a townhouse, we thought life wouldn’t be so complicated. I wouldn’t have to go out into the yard and remember how wonderful it was to enjoy the first spring flowers...with him. I don’t want to cut the grass, because we loved playing in it, tickling our bare toes and laughing our way through spring into summer. We moved to a townhouse so we couldn’t keep everything forever. It doesn’t stay around anyway, so why have storage space? Why have cupboards that no longer need to hold cereal that turns the milk blue, or closets that no longer need to hold baseball shoes, bats and crumpled homework pages? Why have room for memories?

WHY? Because I can’t live without them! Spring is a time for spring cleaning, for sifting and sorting and re-reading and remembering. Spring is a time for things to go and things to stay. We just have to decide which ones do what. Spring is a time for renewal, when the earth begins to defrost after a harsh and bitter winter. It doesn’t matter when your loved one died ; it does matter when you begin to let spring back

into your life. It does matter when you open that closet and let the memories come out, along with the hurts and the hopes that you buried one day not so very long ago.

You never know what you are going to find when you start spring cleaning. You might discover treasures you had long forgotten, or the tax papers you needed, or the Easter egg no one found last year. You might find a few bits of joy lurking under the bed (we found dust bunnies). What fun to remember how that stuff got there or who might have been hiding under the bed when you were looking for volunteers for trash patrol!

Spring cleaning is a tradition that follows the footprints across your freshly waxed floor. I wish there were still footprints to clean up, but since there aren’t, I’ll just have to spend a few extra moments with this box of treasures I found. No time like the present to inspect the “stuff” in search of few “bits of joy.”

When we lived in a townhouse, we thought that maybe, in a few years, we could stretch out into something a bit larger (and have a maid, too!). Maybe we would just start a little patch of grass out front, plant a seed or two in a clay pot on the patio, and live with what we have. Eventually, my house got larger, and my heart has grown, too!

Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS was a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist.

Book; *Losing Jonathan*

by Robert and Linda Waxler

They say that couples, like branches on a family tree, often break apart after the death of a child. I have looked closely at the statistics, and the numbers do not support this belief. It is apparently an urban legend of sorts. But it's true we grieve deeply and alone in so many ways, and our grief can so weight us down that we do not pay adequate attention to our loved ones.

I have also read that we mirror the sorrow of our spouse, sharply reflecting the pain, forcing us to look away. I don't believe this is true either. I saw Linda's pain. I wanted to reach out to her in any way I could. Her pain was mine. Fortunately, Linda's confidence continued to grow during the fifth year. Rooted in her own struggle, she was now convinced she should create a survival kit for others, orderly, tucked in, numbered. She was right. And she did. Here it is. How have I survived? I often wonder about that. I stand outside myself and say, "How is this person still living and breathing?" I am amazed it is me that has gone through this excruciating trauma and come out on the other end, a changed but whole person. Here are some reasons that come to mind.

I am sure Jonathan would not forgive me if I stayed in that place of constant sorrow and deep pain. He loved life and wanted everyone around him to love life with him. My reentry into life has been with Jonathan by my side, coaxing me slowly but surely.

I must go on and do things that keep Jonathan's memory alive. It gives me pleasure to give a social justice scholarship in his name at the university, to work on the board of an organization that battles addiction or simply to help newly bereaved parents in our support group. It gives me pleasure to remember Jonathan and to think about all the wonderful times. All of this keeps his memory alive.

I am still a mother, I am still a father, and we must show Jeremy that our lives, though changed, will go on and be productive and happy. He too will help keep Jonathan's memory alive and will carry the happy memories of his brother with him forever.

Parental grieving is hard work and takes a very long time. It is a job forever. It zaps your energy and strength and makes you think you are going crazy. The

world goes on, but you are outside of it and for you, the world has stopped. I changed. I felt like I was in a foreign country. But life pulls you back in and you find yourself feeling some of those old feelings of joy. Maybe they are not as intense as before, but they are there.

Before Jonathan's death, things just seemed to work out. Our life was on a good path, we were lucky. When something was particularly worrisome, it seemed to turn out ok. I looked around me and saw tragedy hitting other families, but I was sure it would not hit ours. After Jonathan's death, things are different – I am different. Certainly, my priorities have changed. I understand that much of life is out of my control and I do not worry as much. Other things are just not that important and must be addressed with much less thought. I think I am a more compassionate and less judgmental person. I am more patient. I know if I am feeling sad and stuck, this will change and get better. When I was at the beginning of my journey in this new life, I did not think I would ever come out of the darkness.

Time does help. Our pain gets less intense and more manageable. We learn how to manage the bad times and take advantage of the good. We learn to accept the sadness of holidays and special occasions and how to appreciate the gift when we are surprised by joy. We learn how to put the pain and sorrow away and take it out in small pieces rather than all at once, we learn how to remember the wonderful times with our children and to smile when we are thinking about them. The bitterness and anger begin to fade, perhaps to return again and again but with less intensity and for shorter periods of time. Our sorrow will never go away, and we will never stop missing our children, but they are as much a part of our new lives as they were of the old, but in a different way.

Losing Jonathan

Robert and Linda Waxler
Spinner Publications, Inc. 2003

Losing Jonathan is a hard book to read. The Waxler's take us with them as they find themselves in uncharted territory watching their son struggle with, and eventually lose the battle to, drug addiction. It is perhaps a fair look at the difference between the way fathers and mothers grieve the death of a child.



Infant Loss

Patricia Karg, Conyers, GA

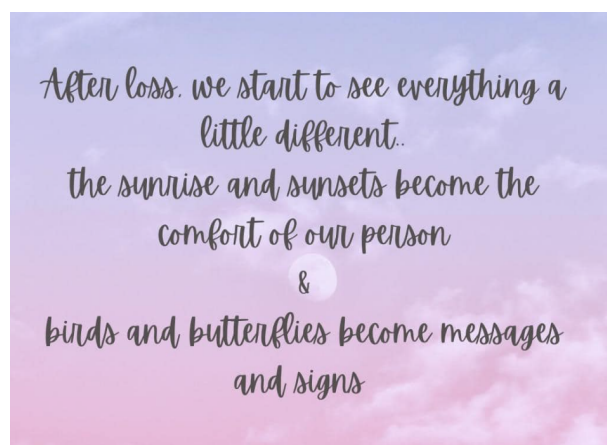
I would like to talk with you about infant loss in memory of my daughter, Mary Elizabeth Karg. Mary was born on Sept. 3, 1998, and lived for 36 hours. While still in the womb, she was diagnosed with a fatal birth defect, called anencephaly. Anencephaly is a condition in which the brain does not form completely. For those of us who have lost an infant, we are left to wonder what might have been. We are reminded that we will never see that first tooth, see that first step, hear our baby's first word or see our child attend kindergarten for the first time.

I find comfort in writing letters to Mary Elizabeth. As I write, the tears always come, and they are somehow healing to my heart. In the letters, I share with her the hopes and dreams that never had the chance to come true.

I started going to a parent grief support group in Conyers even before Mary Elizabeth was born. Knowing that my baby would die, I needed a group of people who would somehow understand how I felt and I found what I needed there. I am very thankful for the friends that I have there who understand better than anyone else. Thank you for letting me share my daughter with you and may all of our children's lights shine forever.

©1995 and reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national publication of The Compassionate Friends

–reprinted from TCF Front Range Chapters March 2008



The journey of grief can seem bleak and lonely
Look in front of you . . .
there are others encouraging and guiding you
Look beside you . . .
there are others on the same journey
Look behind you , , ,
there are others encourage by you

We are not alone on this journey

The Grief Toolbox

joy trickles in.

can joy be found in crumpled hearts,
in empty rooms and broken parts.
can it be found in desert earth,
in washed up dreams and faded worth.
can joy come when the rain outweighs
the happy, blissful, sunny days.
or in the middle of our grief with
words held tight between our teeth.
can joy be found in trembling hands,
where nothing but the unknown stands.
where the unthinkable comes true
and changes everything we knew.
i wonder if joy even knows
how to emerge when sorrow grows.
does it lay down beside the bed
and still caress our weary head.
and is joy really brave enough
to walk along when things get tough.
is joy right there before our eyes
but stuck between our heavy sighs.
i hear joy say that it's okay
to feel both joy and pain today.
whatever loss or lacking light,
joy finds a way to make us bright.
you see our lanterns glow the best
when darkness comes to steal our rest.
and just when sadness seems to win,
joy trickles in.

ullie-kaye





There is something you need to know, to understand. From someone who's been there, and will be again...

In a place of overwhelming sadness of grief, fear, worry and anxiety. Stuck in this moment that can last a short time or go on for days or weeks, months even years.

In these moments, these times, this is where I'm at. All cylinders firing, trying as best as I can just to get by.

Moment by moment, day by day.

And when I'm here I'm not going to reach out. I'm just not, at least not yet. I'm not ready.

I'm too busy, too overwhelmed in the process of being and trying to find my way. To begin healing and searching out that speck of light in the dark that will hopefully begin guiding me out.

So, no I'm not going to reach out.

But you, You can reach in and meet me where I'm at. Meet me with a gentle presence, with patience. No pressure. With empathy and care and no expectations.

Reach in and don't be upset when I don't reach back. But do keep reaching in, saying "hello, I'm thinking of you."

That's enough, I know you're there and I love you for it, even if I don't say the words out loud. One day I will.

When the weight of my world feels less heavy.
After the sun has found its way in through the cracks.

One day you'll reach in, and I'll reach back.

Tara Shannon

Art by Nino Chakvetadze

*I have felt no greater pain
than the moment when your
heart ❤️*

Stopped beating.

*And mine
carried on...*

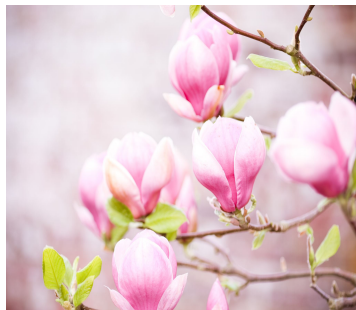


The Compassionate Friends 48th National Conference

July 11, 2025 ~ July 13, 2025

The Conference will be held in Bellevue, WA at
the Hyatt Regency Bellevue.

<https://web.cvent.com/event/e262ef50-069d-43db-87c8-1120ec497402/summary>



Spring's Promise

It looks like Winter is finally over. Most of the world is looking forward to the early signs of spring. But this is not always true for the bereaved parent.

The warmth of the sun brings forth new and brightly colored blooms of bulbs that seem to appear through the thawing ground almost overnight.

We may feel excitement for a moment, but then the pain sets in. A lost, hopeless feeling seems to overwhelm us. Our child is not here to see the beauty of this season.

Many springs have passed since the death of my daughter, Jennifer. It has taken years to put this season of new life into perspective.

Our children were much like the new life of springtime. When they died and we could see them no more, our fear was great that they were gone forever. Then we awake one morning to see the flowers that were buried deep beneath the ground, burst with life to create a new beginning. And so, it is with our children.

Although they are gone from our sight, their spirits remain with us. The seeds that were sown during your child's life, that were planted in everyone who knew them, will continue to grow and flourish throughout Eternity.

Take a moment right now to think of the impact your child's life has had on their family, their friends, and even strangers who never knew them.

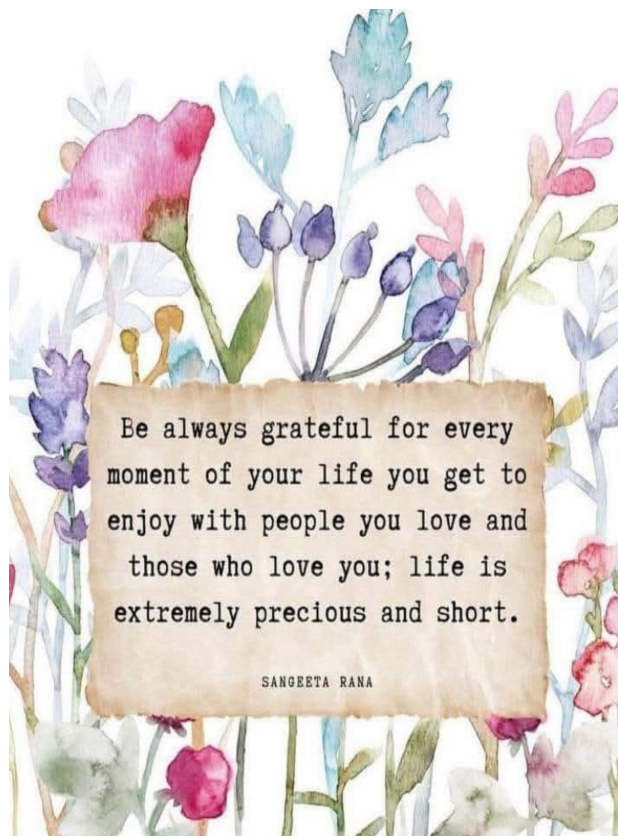
This world is a better place because they lived, no matter how short their stay.

Smile when you see the bouquets of spring-time flowers.

They are reminders from God that assure us that our children are in His safe keeping and will be with us forever.

In memory of Jennifer Wildman,
4-23-70 - 11-12-89

Written in love by Linda Wildman, TCF
Bloomington, IN



LOVE GIFTS

Enclosed in a check in the amount of _____ to be used as follows (check all that apply):

In loving memory of _____

In honor of _____

Sponsor the newsletter for _____ (month) (\$30.00 assists the costs)

Pay for a book for the chapter's Lending Library _____

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter _____

If you are donating, please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends**.

Return to Rosita Hernandez 3016 16th Place, North Chicago, IL 60064. rosehernandez@juno.com

We welcome your comments and/or items submitted for use in the newsletter. Short articles, poems, or book reviews are always appreciated. Please include the author of any written works. Send your items for the newsletter to Susan Banks Lanwesmar@comcast.net 1427 Clavey Lane Gurnee, IL 60031.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families. Its' mission is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others to be supportive

TCF National Office - 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI - 48393 PH 877-969-0010 - Fax: 630-990-0246. The Compassionate Friends home page can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org

Steering Committee 2025 - 2026

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP Susan Banks 847-366-9375 lanwesmar@comcast.net – Son, Westley Banks Age 21 of suicide

TREASURER Rosita Hernandez 847-602-0698 rosehernandez@juno.com Daughter, Victoria Pickett Age 26 of suicide

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HOSPITALITY Kris Frisby 847-366-3170 Kefrisby88@comcast.net Son, Camden Frisby Age 15 of suicide.

SECRETARY / LIBRARIAN

REMEMBRANCE SECRETARY Shannon Seay 224-456-2891 Seayseven1@comcast.net Daughter, Ashley Seay Age 17 Auto accident.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Susan Banks 847-366-9375 lanwesmar@comcast.net – Son, Westley Banks Age 21 of suicide

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WOODLAND WALK COORDINATORS Christine Pado 847-455-6642 chpado@gmail.com - Daughter Lindsay Wilcynski Age 29 Pulmonary Embolism

FACILITATORS AT HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL. SPANISH AND ENGLISH. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, Son Raphael Vidal age 17 of suicide. Mirtha is available by phone call or email.

FACILITADORES EN HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH WAUKEGAN, IL. Española e inglés. Mirtha Vidal 847-293-1658 mirthavidal1213@yahoo.com & Raphael Vidal rvidal1027@yahoo.com, Hijo Raphael Vidal de 17 años de suicidio. Mirtha está disponible por teléfono o correo electrónico.

Northern Lake County IL Chapter #1511 <http://www.iltcf.org/index.html>

NORTHERN LAKE COUNTY COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS FACEBOOK

Facebook Pages for Siblings - The Sounds of the Siblings: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/>

TCF SIBS: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcfsibs/>



The Compassionate Friends
Northern Lake County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies