



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter #1511

June & July 2025 Newsletter

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

A note from Susan our Chapter Leader

Dear friends, this month of June brings us Father's Day to celebrate the Fathers and Grandfathers we love. On Sunday June 15th will be Father's Day all around the world.

~ My wish to you and from all who love you ~

I want you to know

that you are a beautiful gift to so many.

I hope you know

how much you are appreciated ~

today and everyday ~

And that you are being wished

A beautiful day,

A year filled with all you hope for,

And all the happiness you deserve. *Jason Blume*

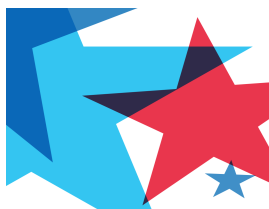
Be gentle with yourself, enjoy the loved ones who gather around you and those away from home. I

know we will be remembering and thinking of the child who has gone too soon. We begin to remember not just that you died, but that you lived ~ And that your life gave us memories too beautiful to forget.

~ May you find the peace you need to have a Happy Father's Day. And I wish you a heartwarming and delightful month of June.

And we have the month of July approaching and Summer will be in full swing. If you have travel plans, vacation plans or you are spending time at home and enjoying your day-to-day activities; I hope you and your family find time to rest and relax and enjoy the warmth and sunshine of the season of summer.

Your friend, Susan



HURTING ON FATHER'S DAY

As the day approaches, I wonder how
I will react.

Am I still a father?

I will sit quietly, never allowing friends
and family to see how I feel.

I miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break."

I must remain strong and always be the "rock."

I wish I could just let someone

Know how much I miss my little angel,

how much I cry and how much

I miss hearing

"Dad, I love you."

Remember me, for I hurt, too,
on this "special day."



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
 June 5 and July 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
 July 17, 2025

Chapter News

Upcoming events for our Chapter.

No meeting on Thursday June 19, 2025

June 5th is our zoom meeting. June 19 is our in-person meeting. This meeting has been cancelled. Susan and members who assist with the meetings will be traveling, spending time with family.

Thursday September 18 meeting will feature;
 Family and friends ~ The HeART Remembers.
 We will create art in memory of our loved ones.

Sunday December 14, 2025 ~ The 29th Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony; The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. *More information will be shared to our members.*

If you have any questions about the mentioned events, please call, email, or text Susan at 847.366.9375 or Lanwesmar@comcast.net



GIFTS OF LOVE

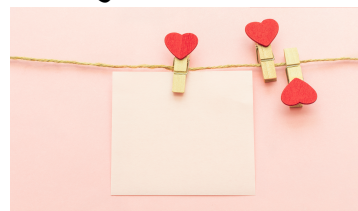
A donation to our chapter in honor of or in loving memory of your child.

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.

Thank you, Charles & Diana Laufer;
 In loving memory of Adam Michael Laufer.

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 THIS MONTH OF JUNE & JULY***

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. None of us ever forget our special days and messages that say "I care" help us to get through them. Our children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

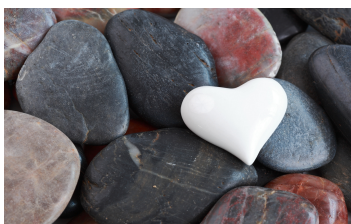
BIRTHDAYS

Edgar O Villareal	June 2	Son of Guadalupe Villareal
Brendan Hall	June 3	Son of Diane Arndt
Sage Cue	June 3	Daughter of Ben Cue & Jennifer Peterson-Cue
Brian Langevin	June 4	Son of Claudia Smith
Westley Banks	June 6	Son of Susan & Michael Banks
Connor Leden	June 8	Son of Cindy & Brian Leden
Brandon Ward	June 10	Son of Marcy Reif
Lila Ruffolo	June 12	Daughter of Jenny Selle
Jose A Barrerea	June 17	Son of Lorena Alcala & Orsy Barrera
Elora Montgomery	June 17	Daughter of Linda & Christopher Montgomery
Pressley Suzanne McHugh	June 20	Daughter of Kari McHugh
David Nesheim	June 22	Brother of Toni Nesheim
Luis F Reyes	June 30	Son of Felipe & Margarita Reyes
Gavin Short	July 2	Son of Beth & Allen Short
Noel Wendell Hernandez	July 13	Son of Colleen Sinsun Ramos
Brian Scott Ludlow	July 19	Son of Ronald & Karen Zaylik
Robert William Corbett	July 20	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
Taylor Albert Rydahl	July 22	Son of Carol Ann & Keith Rydahl
Elizabeth (Liz) Willding	July 27	Daughter of Gigi Willding
Darien Wilson	July 27	Son of Tammy and Tim Olvera

ANNIVERSARIES

Scott Levin	June 1	Son of Lynda Levin
Brian Langevin	June 3	Son of Claudia Smith
Raegan Lee Migacz	June 4	Daughter of Dan & Callen Migacz
Marcia Stone	June 8	Daughter of Kathryn (Sissy) Castillo
Josephine Stewart	June 9	Sister of Mary (Angel) Barrera
Ruthie Johnson	June 17	Sister of Paula Ali
Angel Reyes Soto	June 18	Son of Ricardo Reyes & Alma Soto
Connor Leden	June 24	Son of Cindy & Brian Leden
Robert William Corbett	June 30	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
Daniel Powalish	July 5	Son of Mary Ellyn Carroll
Anna Smith Miller	July 6	Daughter of Carol Smith
Brandon Travelstead	July 10	Son of Joan Travelstead
Gabriel Murphy Jr	July 7	Son of Arvine Murphy
Hiezer Castillo	July 14	Son of Somara & Antonio Castillo
Elizabeth (Liz) Willding	July 14	Daughter of Gigi Wilding
Jaime Smith	July 19	Sister of Melissa Smith
Qua'Shawn Wade	July 24	Son of June Andrejewski
Sage Cue	July 26	Daughter of Ben & Jennifer Peterson-Cue
John Thumel	July 26	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel
Tony Trevithick Jr	July 26	Son of Tony Trevithick
Alyson Bixler	July 27	Daughter of Cathy & Dave Bixler
Victoria Piela	July 29	Daughter of Joanna & John Piela
Nick Weber	July 29	Son of Glenda Weber & Brother of Karen Lumusga
Javier Ramirez	July 30	Son of Julie Ojeda

Rekindling the Spark



Don't let the chain of love end with you.
Clay Walker.

Carl believed in the Big Bang Theory the bigger the bang, the better the 4th of July celebration. He would orchestrate the whole event. From how to get the biggest bang for the buck, to how to arrange them on the street for the most fantastic show on the block. He had this intuitive knowledge of how to run the whole event. Even his sister Carrie would agree that Carl knew what to buy to make the day special, although she always added her special order to the event! So, as the day approached, the family would hit all the fireworks stands in Visalia. You name them – we bought them! When it came to putting the sparks in a 4th of July celebration, Carl was in his element. For the finale, Carl would grab our ladder and have fireworks on each wrung for one spectacular wrap up. At the end, when all the fireworks were lit and the cleanup was done, the family carried this glow inside our hearts. Oh, how I wish those good times would return.

When Carl died, my spark for life was gone also. He gave sparkle to my life. He put fireworks in the fun activities we did as father and son. After his passing, I had no desire to reinvest in life. It was so easy, so painless, at least I thought, to plop myself down in front of the television and vegetate. Zone out!! Way out where pain couldn't reach me. I could numb myself and not think. But like all solutions of this kind, the hurt would not be denied in such a simple fashion. The hurt was not properly dealt with, only pushed down. When it came back, it always came back with a vengeance.

My wounded spirit needed something to make it come back to life again. Or, if not quite that yet, at least to feel the stirring of life in me. As my wife, daughter, and I shared the early deep struggles of living without Carl, ideas began to form. Our conversations took us to a very unforgettable aspect of Carl's life, that being how he made an indelible impact on our lives. Carl gave us new dimensions in love as he shared

his triumphs and trials after his brain injury. He fleshed out the meaning of charity when he so often gave his own belongings to others, yet he was so needy. His examples sparked some ideas, which will be shared later.

In our TCF meetings we say, grief won't be denied. Well, grief also needs a place to go. It needs to be dealt with appropriately. Building on Carl's legacy allows me to deal with my wounded spirit constructively. Part of the healing of my wounds has come in finding meaning in his short life and tragic, unexpected death. If I can find a way to extract the meaning of his life and share it properly, then I can deal more effectively with my wounded spirit. Maybe start kindling a tiny spark. Getting back into the rigors and routines of life has been slow. Amazingly slow at times. I am now seeing my recovery from Carl's passing as a lifelong recovery. Someone once said, "The journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step." Yep, that's my journey—one step at a time. I wish I could be "all better" again and back to my jolly old self. It is not to be of course. A new me is here. Little acts of kindness have created tiny sparks of life. After Carl's initial accident, I learned to take "someday" out of the family vocabulary. Special family trips, vacations, and celebrations were planned and done. Carl's last spoken words are etched in my memory forever. They are simple words. "I love you too, Dad." So, conversations with my forever friend Debby and my lovely daughter, Carrie, end with those words.

I would like to now share some ideas for kindling a spark in life. Reinvest in life on your timetable. In the first year after a son or daughter's passing, much time is needed for dealing with the loss and the overwhelming feelings that come with it. I said the first year. It could be longer than that. At least it was for me. I used to marvel at others who, when their children passed away, accomplished great deeds like starting foundations for missing and murdered children, or MADD groups. My timetable was different. I started with little projects.

(Continued on page 5)

(Rekindling the Spark from page 4)

Learn to listen to that still small voice. Call it the gut feeling. Grieving family members move on at different times. On the third anniversary of Carl's death, I heard that still, small voice whisper, "Now." I vowed to God, and to Carl, that I would start a TCF chapter in Visalia. That still, small voice let me know I was ready to take on the task of forming a TCF chapter.

IN TCF circles, the term stuck is used. It refers to grieving parents who remain stuck at a certain point in grief recovery. They are no longer growing through the grief recovery process but have stagnated.

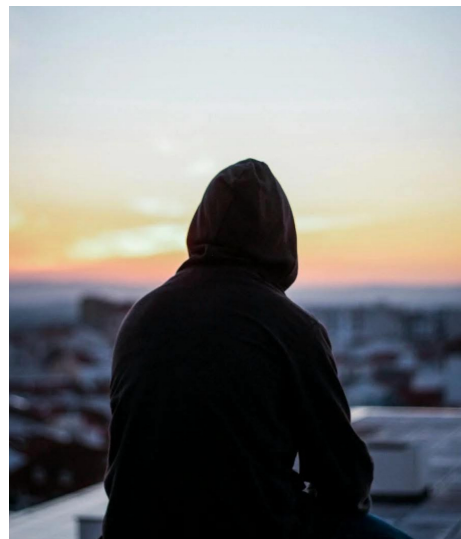
Here are suggestions to get unstuck and feel a bit of spark for life again. Find a simple project that is significant of your child. Plant a tree. Give a donation to a charity or church. Work in a soup kitchen or rescue mission.

Find a way to tell your son or daughter's story. This is so important. This is a very cathartic experience. My healing occurs for me when I write my columns. Debby echoes this sentiment as editor of our newsletters. Don't leave out the siblings of your child. They enjoy writing memories of their brother/sister. Write that story and submit it. It could even be a poem or a song. Recently, an older member of our chapter wrote about his son, who died at 57. This father worked a fulltime job and then came home to the fulltime job of caring for his disabled son. That story touched several readers. They said, "Wow! That's our story. That's how we felt. Tell the writer he has helped us so much!"

Dedicate a newsletter to your child. Our newsletter reaches a wide audience of readers across the country. The feedback is wonderful. People read of our beloved daughters and sons, and they are helped in their own recovery. Each time hurting people reach out, they get helped within. Finding that spark in life will not be easy, trust me. It will even be necessary to re-ignite that spark. That's pretty normal. Each time the spark of life gets re-ignited, recovery is a little easier. Be good to yourselves.
~Aaron.

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta July/August 2002 Newsletter

A Grieving Father carries his love and his loss every day. Even when the world doesn't see his pain, it is there. If you are that father, your grief is real, your love is forever, and your healing matters. You are not alone.



Grieving Fathers are often expected to be the strong ones, the ones who hold everything together while their world is falling apart. But fathers grieve too. They feel the weight of their loss in every quiet moment, in every unspoken dream, in the space where their child should be. If you're a grieving father, your pain is real, and your grief deserves it's attention. You don't have to carry it alone. Whether through talking, writing, remembering or simply allowing yourself to feel, your grief matters. Your love for your child remains, always. To all the Fathers carrying the unimaginable loss, you are not alone.



Fireworks Are Like the Love In Our Hearts

July brings Central Oregonians lingering blue skies, lazy afternoons and the Fourth of July celebration,

complete with the grand fireworks finale bolting from the top of Pilot Butte. This was one of my son's favorite holidays. When he was six, I asked him why fireworks were so special to him. He said, "The lights explode in the dark and make the whole sky light up!" That was obvious. I said "Hum?" He gave me one of his "Oh mom" looks, then went on to say, "The fireworks are like the love in our hearts, we should always try to spread our love out to others". I knew then and I still am aware today that profound wisdom comes from the lips of our children. From the summer on, in my mind, fireworks have been a triumphant testament of love's enduring power and wonder. I miss my son, Joshua terribly. I comfort myself knowing that his wisdom and kindness were precious gifts in my life.

Wherever you are on the Fourth of July, I hope that the splendor of sparkling fireworks might comfort as you acknowledge that the love you hold dear for your child is the light that is able to shine through you. We all have known grief well, yet as compassionate friends we need not walk alone in the darkness. We can lighten the path for others.

Grief can cripple and destroy us, but as we gather to share each other's burden, we are able to gain strength. Love for our children is our common flame, sharing and caring keep the flames afire. I look forward to our next meeting and the opportunity to hug and listen to my comrades.

~lovingly lifted from TCF Salem, OR Newsletter
~written by Jane Oja, TCF, Central Oregon Chapter

They say time helps

They say time helps you to accept what's happened. But when it comes to the death of a child, time doesn't work the way people think it does.

For many Bereaved parents, it can take years, sometimes a lifetime to even begin to face the full reality of that loss.

We still expect to hear their footsteps. We glance at the front door and imagine it opening. We pass their room and whisper a prayer: Please, let them be in there. Just the once.

It's not denial. It's love refusing to let go of what should have been.

Because losing a child isn't just heartbreaking ~ it's unnatural. It goes against every instinct we have. We were meant to protect them, raise them, and watch them grow into the best person imagined. And when that future is taken, our hearts don't just grieve ~ we struggle to understand how the world can still go on.

Grief like this doesn't follow a timeline. It's not something to be "gotten over". It's something we carry ~ gently, painfully ~ for the rest of our lives.

So, if you're still waiting to truly accept what happened... you're not alone.

You're not broken.
You are a parent
who loves beyond all
reason, beyond all
time.

And the love ~ as
painful as it is to
carry, it is also something sacred.



The compassionate friends.



Lost in Space

By Deb Kosmer
Shawn's Mom
Oshkosh, WI

Back in the 1960s there was a popular television show called "Lost in Space." It was the story of an astronaut family that found themselves shipwrecked on an alien world, unable to get back home and the adjustments and adaptations they had to make in order to survive.

When someone we love has died, we too can feel like we are lost in space as we struggle to find our way back home. The death of our loved one draws an inerasable line between what was and what is, our BD and our AD: before death and after death. The line that is drawn seems to leave us on one side struggling to hold onto the past while the rest of the world remains and continues to move forward on the other side of the line.

Our grief can feel very much like an alien world. All of the things that we once believed are suddenly called into question. The future we thought we had mapped out is shattered, leaving nothing behind but a question mark. Many of the people in our lives, whom we had always depended upon, are absent just like our loved one as we begin to realize that what was the normalcy of our lives, both the good and the bad, has vanished in that instant.

Grief places us on a journey we never signed up to take. It is a journey we must make even though most of our resources have been depleted. Grief robs us of our energy and our capacity to make decisions. It leaves us feeling immobilized, unsure of the route to take and afraid of our destination. It throws out the rules and leaves us to make new ones.

As we struggle to find our way, misguided family and friends are often quick to point out that we are going and doing it the wrong way.

After a while, when we become more tired than afraid, we begin to slowly and cautiously move forward. The road that we take will not be a straight one. Grief has many curves, rest stops, and changes of direction. That does not mean we are doing it wrong. It is just the nature of grief and learning to adapt to the world without our loved one in it. As time passes, we will discover new places and friends. We will begin to reconnect with some of the people we thought had left us behind. Our world will no longer look or feel exactly the same as it was but will not feel as foreign as it has. Eventually we will come to understand that our loved one has made the journey with us through our memories and the unshakable love that we shared. Home, though not the same, is once again a welcoming place, a safe haven, the place where we belong.

I KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

By Debbie Trepanier
Springfield IL BP/USA Chapter

3 years ago, you left this earth
but I know where you are.

You are in my heart, in my breath.
You are in every part of my day.

You are in my dreams and my thoughts.

I know one day I will see you again
and, oh! what a day that will be.

We can laugh with each other again,
and cry with each other again.

I may have to suffer many years
before that glorious day.

But, for now, it gives me hope.

For now

I know where you are.

Father's Grief

By Rebekah Mitchell

"I'm so sorry!" "I'm so sorry!" I sobbed to Byron after Jonathan's death was confirmed. Between his own tears he asked me why I was apologizing to him. I felt as if I had failed him as a wife and as a mother to his children.

After Byron and I spent time alone with Jonathan, we wanted to share him without family and friends who were waiting in an empty labor room down the hall. I was wheeled down there as Byron followed holding our tiny, lifeless bundle. One of my sisters says it is a sight she will never forget. I was very groggy during this sharing time, but I remember seeing Byron crying uncontrollably most of the night. In a drug-induced and shocked state, I tried to comfort Byron and tell him it was going to be okay.

Two days later my shock and painkillers wore off a little and I found that the role of comforting was reversed. Byron rarely left my side for the next several days but seldom did we grieve together. It seemed as if when one of us was having a hard time, the other would be the emotionally strong one.

Before long, we were home and attempting to get our lives back together. It seemed to me that Byron was having an easier time adjusting to the loss of Jonathan than I was. At times, I found myself enraged that he could get back to normal so quickly and continue his day-to-day activities when I was at home grieving over our precious baby.

What I didn't know was that he was burying his grief. Although his heart was torn in two when we lost our little boy, he was afraid that we were also going to lose the blissful family we once were. He wondered if we would ever truly be happy again and if our marriage would ever be the same. Because of these anxieties he subconsciously convinced himself that he had to get our family back on track before he would mourn the death of his son. It wasn't until two years after Jonathan's death that we realized this.

I am so thankful for my wonderful husband who has been my lifeline since the stillbirth of our baby. Except by the grace of God, I know I wouldn't have survived without Byron's love, compassion, and sensitivity. If you feel your

husband is not grieving "right" or "enough," I hope you will find this article helpful. Encourage your spouse to read this also, and hopefully, he will realize that it's okay to have fears, express his emotions, and outwardly grieve the loss of his child.

A New Normal

I wanted my life to return to normal. Then I realized what I wanted was for my life to return to what it once was.

A year ago, I found hope one night when I heard my wife and my youngest son laughing in our bedroom. I thought my life was returning to normal. I played cards with our youngest son after supper, with much fun and laughter. After a few cartoons, he and my wife were off to bed.

It was then that I realized my life was not returning to the normal that it was when Greg was alive but changing to a new normal. I cannot return to what I once was, because all of the parts are no longer there.

I have the choice, consciously, and subconsciously to carry on with my life, thus creating a new normal. Hope lies in accepting what you now have, looking with joy, not sorrow, looking ahead with optimism not pessimism.

© 2006 Daryl Hutso

~reprinted from Bereaved Parents USA website

http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/AP_Fathers.htm

Some days you feel like you're getting better. Other days, it's like you're falling apart again.

It's okay.

Healing has never been linear. It comes in waves, and sometimes the waves crash harder than we expect. That doesn't mean you're failing— *you are still healing, even in your breaking.*

lettersofannawin



Today, we remember them.

We say their names out loud.

We share their stories.

We talk about them.

We think of them ~ always.

We remember them ~ always.

We will never, ever forget.

*No matter how much time has passed,
they forever remain a part of us.*

Loved, Missed. Remembered.

Say their name.



Artist: Tiffany Bohrer



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>

Nothing you love is lost. Not really.
Things, people ~ they always go away,
sooner or later. You can't hold them, any
more than you can hold moonlight. But if
they've touched you, if they're inside you,
then they are still yours. The only things
you ever really have are the ones you hold
inside your heart.

Words by B. Coville

The Compassionate Friends

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.

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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