



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter #1511

June/July 2026 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. Honoring all the dads this Father's Day. We will be thinking of the fathers of our babies and children who have gone too soon. Wishing each father peace, quiet thoughts and may your memories of your child and you, fill your heart with joy. I understand that the day will be a mixed blessing for many. For those fathers who have other children, stepchildren and maybe grandchildren, your day will most likely be busy with family gatherings, sharing the holiday with love, laughter, and memories. If your children live away from you, phone calls, cards or facetime might be on the venue for the day. If you have no other children and the child who left too soon was your only child, Father's Day can be emotional, thoughtful, and sometimes there will be tears. My wish to you is to hold the memories of your child close and be with others who can offer comfort and quiet support.

~

A father holds his children's hands for just a little while. But he holds them in his heart forever.

A Poem for you...

Years have come and gone, maybe less and time has surely drifted by.
I've searched for any answer, yet I'm left to wonder why.

The only thing I know for sure, through the happy and the sad.

No matter what the circumstance,

I will always be your dad.

Not a day goes by that I don't hold you in my heart.

My love reaches far beyond this space we are apart.

These empty arms remember all the good times that we had.

I may be standing here alone, but I will always be your dad.

Some won't understand, so I don't bother to explain.

They look into my eyes, but they can only see the pain.

Afraid to look too deep as they are blinded by the fear,

If only they could know, a father's love won't disappear.

So, when this road gets lonely and the journey seems too hard,

And I get to feeling sorry that I didn't get a card.

If I close my eyes, I can almost hear you say.

"I love you and I miss you, dad...."

Happy Father's Day."

Alan Pederson – finding hope after loss.

Take care and I hope you have a nice Father's Day, I wish you peace.

Your friend,

Susan
Westley's mom



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.

July 2, 2026

Third Thursday of the month meets at

Millburn Congregational Church

19073 West Old Town Court

Lake Villa, IL 60046.

Park in the lot behind the church, enter through the double glass doors.

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 16, 2026

Chapter News

Upcoming events for our Chapter

**Your attention Please; The month of June 2026 will not have any meetings. We are taking time the month of June to be with family and friends.*

September; the HeART remembers.

Thursday September 17 meeting will feature; Family and friends ~ The HeART Remembers. We will create art in memory of our loved ones.

Sunday December 13, 2026~ The 30th 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 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 our chapter. 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 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.

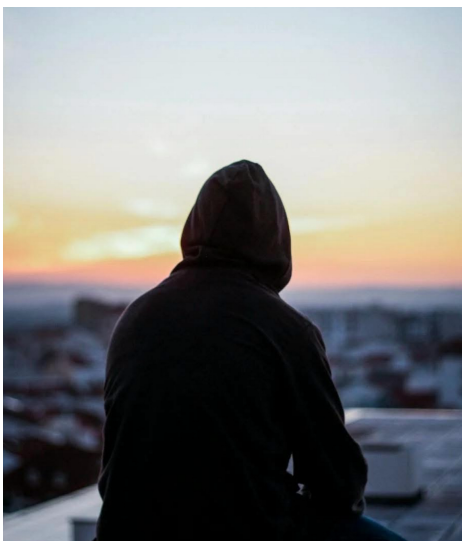
BIRTHDAYS

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
Tristan Metzler	June 13	Son of Lisa Metzler
Jose A Bareera	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
Danny Burchard	July 13	Son of Jerry & Lori Burchard
Noel Wendell Hernandez	July 13	Son of Colleen Sinsun Ramos
Ellie Grace	July 15	Daughter of Laura Caffrey
Robert William Corbett	July 20	Son of Mary Ellen & Robert Corbett
Taylor Albert Rydahl	July 22	Son of Carol Ann & Keith Rydahl
Maximillion Herrick	July 24	Son of Jared Herrick
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
Tristan Metzler	June 21	Son of Lisa Metzler
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
Brandon Travelstead	July 10	Son of Joan Travelstead
Hiezer Castillo	July 14	Son of Somara & Antonio Castillo
Juan Barbosa-Gomez	July 16	Son of Alma Leticia Gomez
Jaime Smith	July 19	Sister of Melissa Smith
Ellie Grace	July 21	Daughter of Laura Caffrey
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

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 its 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.

When you are grieving, what often helps is remembering the person you lost. If you can, now or soon; Being surrounded by their things. Looking through photos and videos. Visiting their online presence. Talking about them with others. Hearing someone share a story. Hearing their name spoken out loud.

These moments matter. They are a gift.

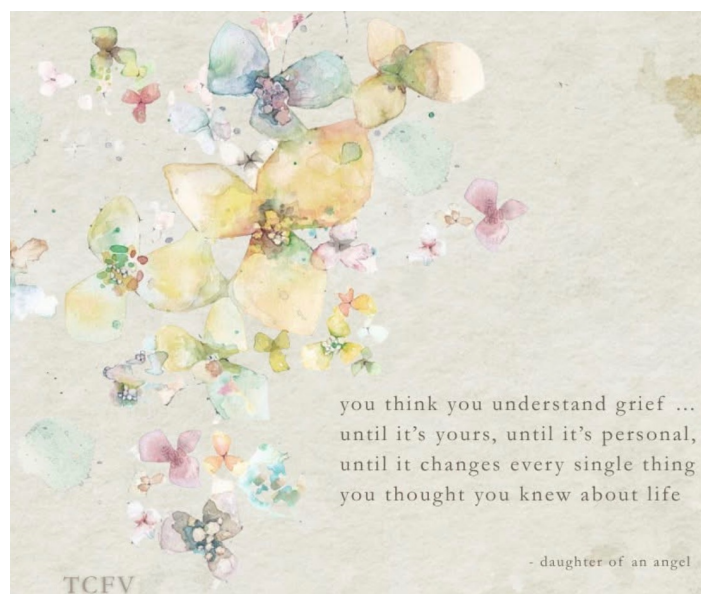
There is a deep need to know that the person you love is remembered by others, that their life mattered, that they are not forgotten, that they still hold a place in the world.

Grief doesn't ask us to erase or forget. It asks us to remember, again and again, in ways that feel right and safe.

Expecting someone to "move on" by ignoring that a life was lived is not only unrealistic, but it can also feel deeply hurtful. Love doesn't disappear, and neither does the need to honor it.

Remembering is not holding on too tightly; it's acknowledging what will always be part of us.

Words by TCFV



you think you understand grief ...
until it's yours, until it's personal,
until it changes every single thing
you thought you knew about life

- daughter of an angel

I Made it Home

Shared to us from a member of our chapter

If I could send you one more message,
one more letter folded gently into your hands, it
would begin like this.

I made it home. Not the kind of home with walls
and windows,
not the kind you can drive to, but a place where
everything feels light.

So white.

So fresh.

So new.

A place where there is no ache in my bones, no
heaviness in my chest,
no long nights filled with worry.
Please try not to be sad for me.

I know you miss me.

I know the silence feels different now.

I know there are moments

when the world seems too quiet.

But I am safe.

Held.

Sheltered.

Carried in hands stronger than anything we knew
on earth. Here, there is no sorrow.

No pain.

No tears.

The things that hurt me cannot reach me
anymore.

And if you could see what I see now, you would
understand that I am okay.

More than okay.

I wish I could wipe your tears. I wish I could tell
you that your love still reaches me.

Because it does.

Every time you think of me. Every time you say
my name. Every time you look up and whisper,
“I miss you”.

I hear it.

I feel it.

And I send you back peace in ways you may not
always notice; in calm mornings, in unexpected
comfort, in strength you didn't know you had.

I made it home.

And one day, when it is your time ~ not before,
not too soon ~ we will understand everything.

Until then,

Live.

Laugh.

Carry me gently in your heart.

I am at home.

And I am at peace.



Becoming Stronger at The Broken Places

If I am what I do, and I don't, then I'm not. Those words have been spinning around in my head ever since I heard someone comment on how we tend to define ourselves by what we do, rather than by who we are. I thought about those words incessantly, almost to the point where they became nonsensical. But they aren't.

Until April 25, 1978, the day of my son Bryan's death, I'm afraid I was guilty of defining myself by my roles in life; computer marketer, husband, father - and without really being aware of it, most often in that order. I was caught up with "bringing home the bacon", "making a name for myself", and the tunnel vision that goes with all of that. My sense of self-worth was wrapped up with these feelings.

One of my colleagues used to call me "Rapid Robert" because of my pace in going places - or was it a treadmill? I was a workaholic, and only too often by the time I'd gotten around to family matters, I'd run out of steam.

Then my son Bryan died. The superficiality of my life smashed headlong into a brick wall. For months I felt like I was sitting in the middle of a field scattered with pieces of my life; job pieces askew here, family relationships trailing off there, dreams piled akimbo over here, hopes were asunder over there.

As I listened to my son's friends at the two remembrances for him, it dawned on me that at nineteen a young man doesn't have a long list of credits and accomplishments. "Bryan hadn't made a name for himself." Bryan was Bryan, no more, no less. His many friends loved him for who he was, not what he was.

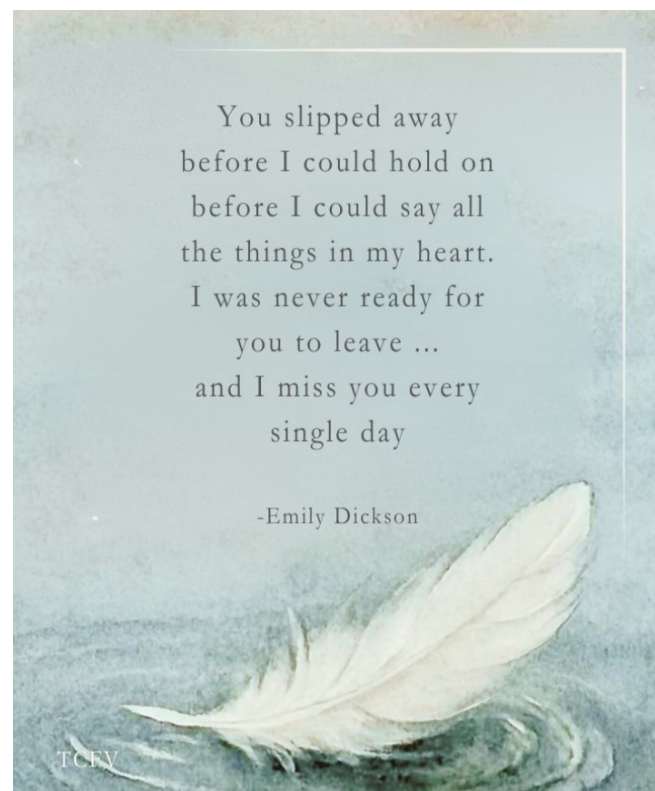
Strange the lessons Fathers learn from sons;
To care ~ To Share ~ To be there.

I wrote these words blinded by pain, and I could sense what it was that brought together people from all over in a common bond of shared grief, Bryan cared about them. I wondered if I were to die suddenly, after more than fifty years of life, how would I be eulogized? "A real professional, a true marketer, a dedicated employee" I'd settle for two words: "He Cared."

I've tried to put the pieces of my life back together again, but I've tried to be selective. I've left many pieces lying in that field because they don't fit anymore. And I've fashioned new pieces, each in some way inspired by the lessons of Bryan's life.

Hemingway wrote, "Sooner or later life breaks everyone, but afterwards some are stronger at the broken places." I've tried to put the pieces of my life back together selectively. As bereaved parents, we have a choice; we can fixate on the death or we can affirm life. I know which my son would have wanted me to do.

Robert Rosenberger, TCF, Burke, VA



THE BITTERSWEET BALM OF FATHER'S DAY AS A BEREAVED DAD, AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

By Jayson Greene

This weekend will be Father's Day. As a bereaved parent, I both dread the day and quietly long for the recognition it brings. I am a father, after all, to one child still here and one who is not, and to receive acknowledgment for that is a balm. It is, of course, a torment of sorts.

For those who have lost children, these holidays can be particularly trying times, their social media feeds will be flooded with picture-perfect representations of families and their children. Many turn their phones off on these days, unable to expose themselves to the drip-feed of other people's happiness. As Mother's Day is for mothers of children who are gone, these holidays often find us succumbing to our darker feelings; simmering anger, envy, self-pity, depression.

Four years ago, my daughter Greta was killed by a falling brick on the Upper West Side. The accident was freakish, a perfect storm of negligence and timing. She had been such a powerful little person, a force to be reckoned with even at 10 months old. Whether it was putting on socks, walking upstairs, or brushing her teeth — which consisted only of wetting a toothbrush and sucking off the water, over and over, until I gently pried it from the iron grip of her toddler fingers — Greta radiated unconquerable certainty. She was sure of herself, of who "Greta" was, and this world seemed to exist for her benevolent conquest.

I still cannot imagine that energy, so happily invincible, being snuffed out so quickly and unceremoniously.

It is the part of the loss that still leaves me gasping, years later.

Ever since that freak accident, I have become acutely aware of what it means to feel expelled from the society of parents, one that I felt I had worked so hard to join. In the weeks and months after Greta's death, I felt an awful need to walk up to parents — complete strangers — and inform them that I, too, had once been a parent. I resisted, but the words burned in me as if I had shouted them. Children's laughter, once the happiest sound in the world, became oddly mocking, even cruel, in my ears.

I would walk past a young girl, maybe 7 or 8, attempting a barefoot cartwheel in the grass and watch her flop over, laughing, and feel nothing but bitterness. Everywhere I went I saw parents with daughters slightly older than Greta — they were either reminders of what I missed or visions of what I missed out on.

Anyone who has lost a child has a complicated relationship to the notion of "luck," but I am deeply aware that in many respects my wife and I are impossibly fortunate. We have a son, Harrison, born 15 months after his sister died. Therefore, Father's Day is very different for me than it is for other bereaved parents, for whom the choice to have another child is often not even an option. But even for us, it is a balancing act — despite visible evidence, I remain a father of two.

There is an absence in my life that is ever-present, and she is named Greta. On days when other families post selfies of their clamoring children and their quarreling siblings, her absence becomes more vivid to me than ever before.

(Continued on page 8)

Continued from page 7

(The Bittersweet Balm of Father's Day as a Bereaved Dad and How You Can Help)

So, what to do, and, most importantly, what to say? I have been asked this question, by too many well-meaning and kind souls to count. What do you say to a friend or loved one suffering from grief over a lost child, particularly on days such as Father's Day? I am no grief expert, so I will quote one: "Above all, grief must be witnessed." These are the words of David Kessler, an author and public speaker on grief who runs workshops across the country. I was lucky enough to meet David early on in our grief journey, and in following his lead and in meeting many other bereaved parents I have learned some truths.

First of all: No matter the intensity of the pain a grieving parent may feel, the pain of invisibility is worse. When grieving a child, you learn early to live within the vast cognitive dissonance that is your life. You become an expert at distinguishing between kinds of pain. There is good pain, and there is bad pain, and the only good kind of pain comes from acknowledging your child's existence.

Do not be afraid to speak the name of a deceased child for fear of causing the parent pain. Their name was given to them in love, it was spoken in love, and to speak it is to strike that joyful note again. There is nothing that parents love to talk about more than their children. That never changes, even when the child is no longer here.

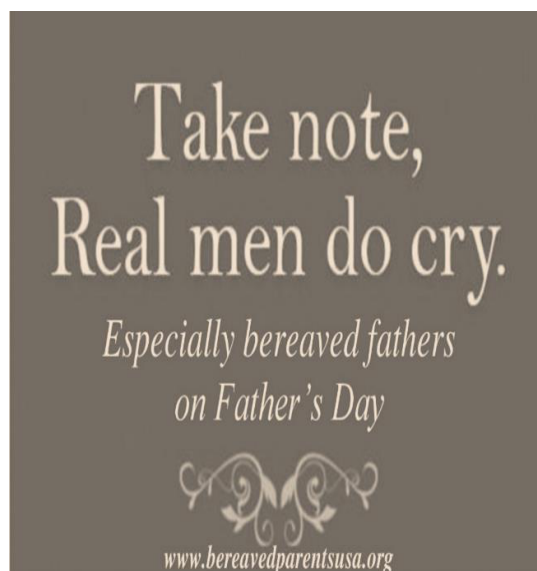
The worst and loneliest thing a grieving parent can feel is the suspicion the world has forgotten their child. Speak the child's name; you may bring tears to that parent's eyes, but they will be at least partly of gratitude.

Individual parents grieve in individual ways, of course. Just as with love, each of us has our unique way of expressing ourselves. But while the names we give the feelings inside vary from person to person, the feelings themselves do not, at least not much.

Every grieving parent you know is probably a little sadder than usual on Mother's Day, or Father's Day. Or Christmas, Hanukkah, or Halloween. Their wounds feel a little rawer, their grief a little more palpable. Do not be afraid of them, or their grief. Do not worry that you are going to hurt them further by acknowledging them; they are already in pain. Tell them that you see them. Tell them that you love their children.

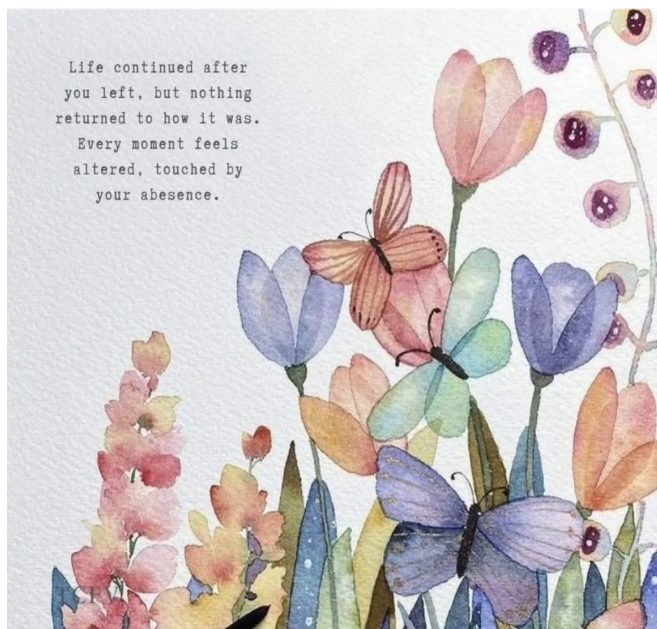
Perhaps you do not need to wish them a "happy" Father's Day. But perhaps, if you feel moved to do so, you could wish them a peaceful one.

Borrowed from a Journey Together, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA, Volume XXVI No. 3, Summer 2021,



Grief

Grief changes us, grief changes our world. Often in ways we never anticipate. When faced with heartbreak of losing a loved one, returning to who we once were becomes impossible. Instead, we are forced to move forward, reshaping ourselves and our lives along the way. In these moments, we find new parts within ourselves we never knew existed. It's not about "trying to move on" or erasing the pain, but about learning to live with it, carrying it as part of who we are now. We move forward, not as we once were, but as someone new, someone different, someone who has lived through the unthinkable and has had no choice but to continue on.



Grief leaves us in a world that feels unfamiliar, as if everything we once knew has shifted in the absence of the one we've lost. Each day brings the same aching question: How do I live in a world without you? It's not a question we ask expecting answers but one we ask because the weight of loss demands it. And every day, the truth remains, I don't know. There's no map for this kind of loss, no way to reconcile the enormity of their absence with the need to keep going. Yet somehow, in that not knowing, we keep existing, carrying the question alongside the love we'll never stop holding. TCFV



*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.

Lovingly lifted from TCF Salem, OR
Newsletter written by Jane Oja,
Compassionate Friends July 4th 2023.

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) (\$25 pays ½ monthly cost)

Check here to keep receiving the newsletter _____

It is important for our children to be remembered. Please understand that in order for your child to be included in the "special days" list each month in the newsletter, you must fill out this form that gives us permission to list this information. If you are donating, please make the check payable to **The Compassionate Friends. 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 1427 Clavey Lane, Gurnee, IL 60031. Lanwesmar@comcast.net

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 PO Box 46 Wheaton, IL 60187. 877-969-0001. www.compassionatefriends.org

Steering Committee 2025 – 2026

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

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

SECRETARY / LIBRARIAN

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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>

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

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

