



The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Northern Lake County Illinois Chapter #1511

May 2025 Newsletter

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

A note from Susan our Chapter Leader

Dear friends, this month brings us Mother's Day for Mothers and Grandmothers. On Sunday May 11th will be Mother'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

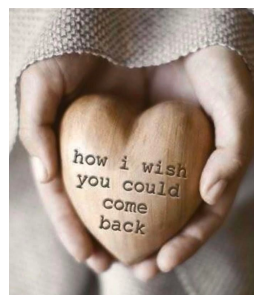
that your life gave us memories too beautiful to

forget.

~ May you find the peace you need to have a

Happy Mother's Day. And I wish you a heartwarming and delightful month of May.

Your friend, Susan



One More Day

~If I could have just one more day with you...

I would hardly speak. I would simply listen to your voice and commit every tone of it to memory until it became my favorite melody.

I would look at you. I would study your eyes and your mouth, and I would learn every angle, every pane of your face until I could see you perfectly with my eyes closed.

I would hold your hand in mine. I would trace all the lines on your palm until they became a trail – a map - that I could retrace on my own palm every time I felt lost.

I would soak you up and breathe you in until there was not a single thing that I could not recall at a moment's notice.

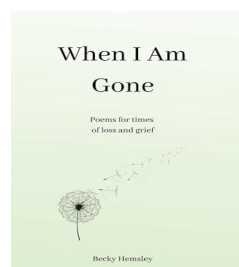
But more than anything, if I had one more day with you,

I would hold you.

I would hold you so tight, hoping that maybe if I didn't let you go...

You wouldn't.

~Yes, if I had just one more day with you, I would hope... I would hope so hard... that you wouldn't have to leave again.



Becky Hemsley 2023

'One More Day' is from the book of poems

When I Am Gone

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
 May 1, 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
 May 15, 2025

Love gifts are acknowledged each month in the newsletter.

Thank you, Alana E. Anderson;

In loving memory of her daughter, Amy Fry-Pitzen and In honor of her Grandson, Timmothy James Pitzen.

Thank you for your gift of love,

Rosita Hernandez;

In Loving memory of Westley Banks, beloved son of Susan & Michael and brother of Landan and Marllys.

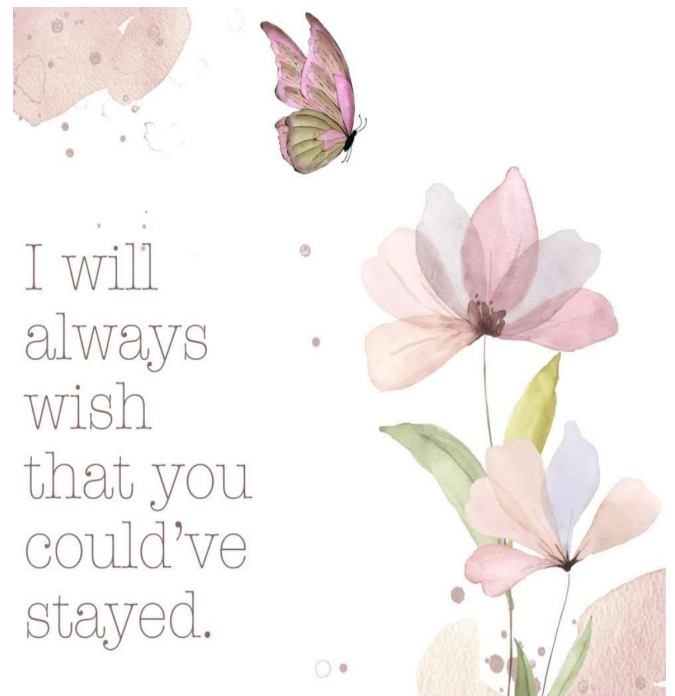
Please remember that our chapter will never solicit for donations. You will never receive an email, text message or phone call soliciting for a donation or a need of money or payment from any steering committee member. I, as the chapter leader will never ask for money for assistance with any chapter 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.*



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.





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

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. 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 at Lanwesmar@comcast.net

BIRTHDAYS

Erin Dinklenburg	May 1	Daughter of Kelli Brooks
Rachel Salomonson	May 2	Daughter of Toni Nesheim & Denny Salomonson
Amy Fry-Pitzen	May 3	Daughter of Alana Anderson
Daniel Powalish	May 4	Son of Mary Ellyn Carroll
John Francis Thumel	May 6	Son of Laura & Mike Thumel
Rachel Elizabeth Szech	May 9	Daughter of Daughter of Vicki Szech Brother of Andrew Szech
Victoria Pickett	May 9	Daughter of Rosita Hernandez
Ryan A. Nieves	May 12	Son of Jeanette Nieves
Christian Romero	May 14	Son of Veronica Romero Carlos
Carlos Cantu	May 18	Son of Mateo & Lucy Cantu
Rachel Elaine Robertson	May 21	Daughter of Regan Robertson
Sven Christian Reinhard	May 28	Son of Astrid Reinhard
Tony Trevithick Jr	May 28	Son of Tony Trevithick
Adam Michael Laufer	May 30	Son of Charles & Diana Laufer
Raegan Lee Migacz	May 31	Daughter of Dan & Callen Migacz

ANNIVERSARIES

Donette Klawonn	May 1	Daughter of Raymond & Dorothy Klawonn
Carlos Cantu	May 3	Son of Mateo & Lucy Cantu
Colin Henderson	May 6	Son of Lisa Henderson
Jeff Stirnichuk	May 9	Son of Mary Wagner
Amanda Lauren Cecchi	May 10	Daughter of Kim & Steve Cecchi
Alina Mejdouli	May 12	Daughter of Amada Booras
Timothy James Pitzen	May 13	Missing grandson of Alana Anderson
Amy Fry-Pitzen	May 14	Daughter of Alana Anderson
Anthony (Tony) Clemente	May 16	Son of Becky Wolf
Adam Michael Laufer	May 19	Son of Charles & Diana Laufer
Andrew Shaver	May 25	Son of Dolly LeMaster
Jacilynn Wright	May 26	Daughter of Michell Wright Niece of Susan Banks
Manuel Isaiah Garza	May 29	Son of Vanessa Grajeda, stepson of Roberto Grajed

So, on the hard days, you must remind yourself:
 You wouldn't trade the love to escape the grief.
 You wouldn't erase the happiness to avoid the pain.
 And you will endure a lifetime of missing,
 For the privilege of having loved. -Jameson Arasi

Missing and Valuing on Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a special day, and special days are hard after the death of a child. It is a normal and natural thing for either parent for the first few years after the death to zero in on who is missing, rather than who is left...and I want no different.

Fortunately, for me, not long after Atlanta Chapter formed, a local psychiatrist, Dr. Victor Gonzales, spoke one evening shortly before Mother's Day. He told of his parents' loss of their first two children. His story of how his life has been influenced and molded by his mother's reaction touched me. He spoke of how he and his siblings who came later were forever denied his mother's happiness and joy. She was unable to value what she had left as much as what she had lost.

Dr. Gonzales said he spent a great deal of his childhood trying to make his mother happy, always failing and always feeling there must be something lacking in him that caused him to fail. The picture in my mind him and his siblings always trying and always failing, though no fault of their own, made a great impact on me. I determined from that day forward that my daughter would not have to lament later in life that she had been denied my happiness and joy because my brother had died.

On Mother's Day now I make room for both missing and valuing, for they are not, I have discovered, mutually exclusive. Now when I go to the cemetery with my rosebud on my day, my daughter has no part in my needs while I am there. When I come home, my son doesn't interfere with my acceptance and appreciation of my daughter's expression of love. She gives me a gift on my day, and I give her one in return. It's probably the best gift I could possibly give her – my happiness and joy for life. She is as important as what I have lost, and I know her worth. If you are fortunate enough to have surviving children, I hope you, too, are able to value as well as miss.

There's room for both, you know.

Mary Cleckley
Member of Bereaved Parents USA



On Butterfly Wings

From earth's caterpillars to heaven's
butterflies -
They soar with the angels from the earth to
the sky.
Their wings seem so fragile,
translucent and light
But they transfuse our world giving us strength
in our night.
In silence they appear like messengers of love,
Bringing hope and comfort from heaven above.
These beautiful butterflies
so graceful in flight,
Transport us from darkness
to color and light.
So, when choosing a symbol to help grieving
parents cope,
What more than a butterfly could
best symbolize hope.
Our hearts stand in awe and hope
from within us springs.
As our hearts take flight - On Butterfly Wings.

By Faye McCord,
(TCF Chapter Leader / Jackson, MS)

In loving memory of my son, Lane McCord
(1/26/65 - 9/13/98)



The Dream

We've gotten along so long,
 And now it seems like you're nowhere, gone,
 My opinion of you actually mattered,
 And now my dreams seem so shattered,
 You were my big brother forever,
 I always assumed we'd grow up together,
 Now I sit here thinking of the past,
 Everything we had and loved is gone so fast,
 No more dirt bikes, snowmobiles, horses or cars,
 No more metal, jeeps, or even bars,
 Although you're in heaven you still remain,
 Along with the recurring memories,
 grieving, and pain,
 The whole family misses you,
 And you better bet your friends do.
 But this whole thing opens your door,
 Because now you're free, you were born to soar,
 I'm starting to find peace in my soul,
 Because you're my guardian angel,
 now I'm whole,
 No one will ever take your place,
 Everything's for you, every smile on my face,
 Although this time for me will always be rough,
 I know you're here with me to help me be tough,
 So, rest in peace now, my dearest Nick,
 Because if I ever had to choose another brother,
 You would be the only one I'd pick.

Love forever and always,
 Your little sister.
 By Heide Hietpas
 In Memory of her big brother Nick Hietpas



Every Life is a Story

I was just thinking today that every life is a story.
 When my daughter died at age seventeen and a half,
 her life and her story was cut short. No, she wasn't
 elected the most popular at school, she wasn't a cheerleader,
 she wasn't a member of the National Honor Society,
 but still her life was an interesting story.

When I remember her as a young girl, I can see her dark hair,
 fair skin, and thin body. If I think back hard enough,
 I can picture her and some of her friends as they did various activities.
 There were some funny times, there were some stressful times,
 there were some worrisome times, and there were some good times.
 As my daughter grew older living

her life, she made some friends, "rubbed shoulders" with family,
 teachers, classmates, neighbors, and church members. And as she met these
 different people, she had an effect on them. Perhaps she made a minor impression
 on them, perhaps she made a major impression on them. Maybe she made a good impression,
 maybe she made a bad impression. But in each case, her life impacted them in some way.
 No one is an island, and as we live our lives, we touch other people and leave our mark on them.

Every life is a story, and since our child's story ended too soon,
 perhaps we can try to live a better life ourselves in memory of our child.
 What story will our life tell?

David Haddock

David.Haddock@mid.state.ms.us



MEMORIAL DAY

*For each grave where a soldier lies at his rest,
 For each prayer that is said today out of love,
 For each sign of remembering someone who has died.
 Let us also give thought to the mothers and fathers.
 The brothers and sister the friends and lovers.
 Whom death left behind. Sasha*



I see you.

This Mother's Day won't be easy for you,
And your sorrow is not overlooked.
I'm grieving alongside you
And holding you tenderly in my heart.

A BEREAVED MOTHER'S LOVE

By Jessi Snapp

There is a love so pure, so tender, so strong. A love that spans over a lifetime and pours in and out of other realms. It is higher than the stars that fill the moonlit skies. Wider than the earth itself. It is deeper than the most forbidding places of the ocean. A love that radiates brighter than the sun and pulls just as mercilessly as a black hole. A love that is insurmountable in all regards. It is a love that transcends time and is completely unrestrained. It is free.

There is a love so sacred, so cherished, and true. A love that is incomprehensible to the world around. A love that can exist where others think it wouldn't. A love so perfectly intertwined deep within your heart, your soul. A love that makes it's beauty and depth as it sheds beauty upon the earth.

Nothing compares to this love.

This love – it does exist. It exists can exist even though unseen. remaining, it still survives. But more and more each day this love, like wildflowers untouched never fade and the gusts of its breath live on.

The depth and intensity of such about in fairy tales and happily something far from that. This love grounds. It lingers in silent tears the most isolated place. It lives to longer. This love rests in the irrecoverable pieces of our souls and the gaping wounds of our shattered hearts. It sways elegantly with joy in the darkest places of desolation and despair. For even in darkness, it continues to grow and rejoice.

It is beauty and chaos released in the same breath.

This love – this unchanging, unwavering, unbreakable love – is that of a broken heart. This love belongs to the bereaved mother. For even in death, she loves endlessly. For even in darkness, her love is scintillating. Not even death could extinguish this love, for it is a love like no other. Unmatched and unparalleled – it is truly one of a kind.

The beautiful love of mother and child – put to the ultimate test and stretched far past the breaking point. Yet it remains untouched – only to grow stronger with each pull. The world stands idly by waiting for the bond to break. For the bereaved mother to let it go – to give up. Little do they know, they will wait for an eternity.

The love of a bereaved mother is a force to be reckoned with. A force so powerful that nothing can stand in its way. Time nor death can change it. Sorrow nor pain can break it.

This love – it is our love. It survives where they are not. It is the love that occupies the space in our hearts and in our lives where they once were. This love saves a sacred space for them. It exists only because they lived. It remains even though they left. It is neither theory nor fiction – it is an incredible, powerful truth. (Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

The love of a bereaved mother is an implausible, fierce, interminable love that defies all odds.

This love is what has taken root in every single cell of my body and pulses through my veins with purpose and meaning. This love has wiped my soul clean. It has changed my very being. This love lightens the burden of loss. For it is this love that makes the pain more bearable. Perhaps, even worthwhile.

Death does not define me – it is life and this love that defines me. It is this love that has changed the course of my life and has separated me from the rest of the world. This love – it is my love. And for the life of me – I will never let it go. It is the one thing that binds my broken soul. This love – it is what keeps me going. It is the echo that ripples from all that I do. And all that I am.

No matter the distance, no matter the time – this love is prevailing. And it is mine.

Borrowed from a Journey Together, National Newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA, Volume XXI No. 2, Spring 2016

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

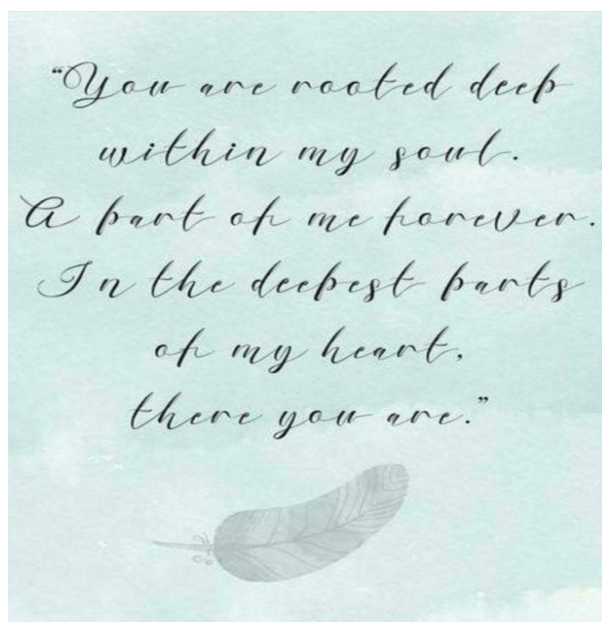


The Compassionate Friends 48th National Conference

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>





WHAT DOES MAY BRING?

Tracy Rhein
BP/USA Central Arkansas

First, May brings MOTHER'S DAY – another painful holiday. Commercials are everywhere; I can't check e-mail without being bombarded with ads for gifts and cards for Mother's Day. Some churches honor the oldest mother, the youngest mother, and the mother with the most children present. Then there are the flowers – wear a red flower if your mother is living and a white one if your mother has died. (I keep hearing carnations, but it was always roses when I was a child.) Some years ago, some bereaved mothers started wearing a yellow flower, either alone or with the traditional color, honoring their own mother.

It helped me to know the origin of Mother's Day. After Anna Jarvis's mother died May 9, 1905, Anna decided a Sunday in May should be set aside to honor her mother and all mothers. Anna felt her mother deserved recognition because, although her life was filled with sorrow, she lived selflessly and showed kindness and generosity toward others. Anna was one of four surviving siblings; seven others died in early childhood and Anna's mother mourned those seven children throughout her life. Anna never married and never had a child of her own. Her work to establish a day to honor her mother persuaded President Woodrow Wilson to proclaim the second Sunday in May as a national holiday honoring all mothers.

Finally, newly bereaved mothers commonly have some questions that are acute on this day. For those who have no surviving children, so far as I am concerned, you are a mother. For the rest of you, each one has to decide how to answer the question of "how many children do you have?"

I am still the mother of three children although one is no longer on earth with me.

I hope each of you find some peace on this Mother's Day and that knowing it specifically honored

a bereaved mother will make each succeeding one a little easier.

MEMORIAL DAY was established to honor those who died in the military defending our nation but has become a time of general remembrance. I pass one small cemetery in southwest Arkansas fairly frequently and always see that fresh white stones have been spread before Memorial Day and every grave appears to have a new flower arrangement. As a child, my parents would take me with them, but I had never known any of the relatives whose graves we visited. Perhaps, as we get older, we think that someday we will do this for our parents or grandparents but never our children. My son was cremated, and I don't have a grave to visit but this holiday has far more impact on me now.

May also brings GRADUATIONS. Whether from kindergarten, grade school, high school, or college, this is a rite of passage that some of our children never reached. If your child was close to graduation, the school may recognize him or her in some way. Or another child (sibling, cousin, friend) may be graduating and receiving their announcement may bring a special ache.

We hope you all plan ahead and discuss with family members and caring friends so that you can get through these events with a minimum of pain.

Lovingly borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER –
NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA –
VOLUME VII NO. 2, SPRING 2002 (April, May and June)

SECOND YEAR

Why is my grief different in the second year?
Why do I feel so much more empty in the second year?

Why do I cry more, again, in the second year?
Is it because I am more alone, and the world has moved on?

Has the world forgotten that you ever lived?
Is it because I realize "with my heart" that you are not coming back?

That forever is a long time?
Is it because all of the "firsts" are over, and I must move on?

Why is my grief different in the second year?
Because, my child, you are still gone.

Eleanor Oberle/TCF
In memory of her son Dan Oberle

LIVING LIFE IS STILL AN EFFORT

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when the time came to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And I will be a different person in another year. I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still, I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted, such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic". What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent, yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well-balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.



Annette Mennen Baldwin in memory of my son,
Todd Mennen TCF, Katy, TX
Lovingly borrowed from A JOURNEY TOGETHER
– NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF
THE USA – VOLUME VII NO. 2, SPRING 2002
(April, May and June)

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

NEWSLETTER PRINTING & MAILING Toni Nesheim 847-204-7585 toninesheim@gmail.com & Denny Salomonson, 847-223-7353 drdreno@gmail.com - Daughter, Rachel Salomonson, 19 Auto accident

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