



The Compassionate Friends Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Wyandotte & Johnson County

Feb., March, April 2019 Volume 7 Issue 2

God Works in Wondrous Ways-or Does He?

If you're like me, you've heard so many tired, trite, religiously oriented phrases and quotations, you find yourself nothing short of furious when someone happens to launch another one in your direction.

I am truly sorry, deacons and preachers, along with all you visitors from the Ladies Auxiliary, but I can tell you for an absolute fact that the God I worship is a loving FATHER.

He does NOT have some kind of an "Angel Quota" system whereby He has to send down each day and snatch up one of our children just so He can maintain the status quo.

My God understands that I am almost consumed with anger that my child is with HIM and not ME.

My God realizes just how shattered my heart is now that MY dreams and future have been totally blotted out. My God does not expect me to stoically resign myself to this turn of events. He understands that it may be months or even years before I can once again be able to effectively kneel and pray.

My God understands of all the injuries that can occur to the human body, a heart broken by the loss of a child not only takes the longest to heal, but also has the deepest permanent scars.

I'll grant you that God does work in wondrous and often mysterious ways. But the death of my child was NOT one of them!

Our children died because of a drunk driver, or an undeveloped heart or lung. They died from a gun shot, a knife blade, or a foolish dare. They were born too premature or they were victims of SIDS. They had a rare genetic disorder or some deadly acquired disease.

But the one thing they were NOT was killed by the God that I know and love.

-Jack Frost, TCF, Bowling Green, KY

Do your Mourning Now

Don't postpone or deny or cover, or run from your pain. Be with that pain. NOW. Everything else can wait. An emotional wound requires the same priority attention as a physical wound.

Set time aside for mourning.

The sooner you allow yourself to be with your pain, the sooner it will begin to pass.

If you resist the mourning,
you will be interfering with the body's natural stages of repair.

If you postpone the healing process,
grief can return months or even years later to haunt you.

-TCF, Oklahoma City, OK

WYANDOTTE COUNTY

Eisenhower Community Center

2901 North 72nd St., KCKS

Richard Moore 913-238-1890

Marlene Moore 913-238-5348

1st Tuesday @ 7PM

JOHNSON COUNTY

Advent Lutheran Church

11800 W. 151st St.

Olathe, Ks

Gay Kahler & Brian Janes

913-764-2669

WWW.JOCOTCF.ORG

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *Keith McFadden Memorial Golf Tournament*
May 11th, 2019
www.kmangolf.com
- *Breakfast With Dad's 2/2,*
3/2, 4/6, 2019

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

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HOPE DURING THE LONG ROAD OF GRIEF

There seems to be a constant waterfall of emotions in those first days, weeks, months and even the first few years of grief. You are wondering if you can even survive the excruciating pain you feel when losing a child. How can I move forward, how can I continue to live, how can I function like I always did? The questions are never-ending and they can consume you to a point of wanting to give up on everything. The goal in the very beginning is just to get out of bed and face a new day. Take one step at a time and find a way to live again.

I'm here to offer some hope. This Super Bowl Sunday, February 3, 2019, will mark twelve years to the day since I lost my only two sons, Jake and Travis ages 12 and 9. I will never forget the haunting phone call from a local hospital when a sheriff's deputy was on the other end telling me there had been an accident. He didn't say what kind of accident, if the boys were okay or anything; just to get to the hospital right away. You can imagine the horror of getting to the hospital only to find out that our oldest son Jake did not make it. Travis was taken to a different hospital in downtown Indianapolis in extremely critical condition. Needless to say, Travis passed away later that night.

I found out that earlier in the night, that the accident involved our friend's SUV being hit by a train at a crossing that had no flashing lights or cross arms. Somehow he missed seeing the train which forever may be a mystery. But I am thankful that the three members of the other family (husband, wife and 9-year old son) all survived this horrific accident even though that in itself didn't make sense. It's like you don't want anyone to die, but why did my two boys have to die?

I can remember how loud the house felt in the early morning hours when my wife and I got home. The silence was deafening and I knew at that moment it would always be that way, never to be like it was ever again. I was reeling in disbelief and denial...how was I going to survive this?

First and foremost, my faith was my foundation and I leaned on that even though it made me wonder what the point of faith was. I had thoughts of why would I even have faith if God is going to let these types of things happen? It's not uncommon for some to give up totally on faith, throw their Bibles in the trash and shake their fists at God and put all their anger on God. Nothing makes sense, especially faith in those moments. But once I got myself out of the way, I realized that events in our lives like this are exactly why we have faith. Without faith, I would not be where I am today and there is no way I would have survived the tragic loss of my sons.

I also found a group of dads on the north side of Indianapolis that met weekly at a coffee shop. They all had lost a child and being able to talk and share with other men who had gone through a tragic loss like this was invaluable. They helped walk me through my early stages of grief and it helped me in ways no counselor or expert could. These men became my brothers and this group has actually saved some of their lives because they give hope that you can live again. We also have written two books, both on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). "Tuesday Mornings with The Dads" and "More Mornings With The Dads". Both books contain our individual stories and have helped many men and their families.

In the years to come, I had more disappointments. I went through a divorce and basically felt like I was starting over. The divorce was necessary however. For years, I was involved in an unhealthy environment with verbal and emotional abuse and disconnection from my family. So, my life was centered on my boys, trying to bring them up right, going to church and teaching them about God, being involved in their school and sports activities and coaching them as well. I spent most of my free time just being their dad and loving on them. I will never regret all the time I spent with them. I have so many great memories.

After the divorce, I moved across the country to Scottsdale, AZ just taking a chance on what was to come and what I had left of my life. I had no idea what would happen, so I kind of was doing my own thing and leaving God out of the picture at that time. I soon realized after dating a girl I had known in college who also went through a divorce that this was not the right situation and not what I wanted for my future. We were not on the same page about many big issues and I had to remove myself from the situation.

(Cont. on Pg. 3)

(Cont. from Pg 2)

While in Scottsdale, AZ I found a great church and participated in a men's Bible study that eventually evolved into a men's group where men shared their testimonies about being in the darkest hole possible and then how only God brought them out of it. It was while in this group I got on my knees very often praying to God to show me the light and bring me a godly woman that I could spend the rest of my life with. From those moments on I was going to let God guide me and I put my trust completely in him.

In early 2015 I moved to California after passing the Series 7 to work with my brother at Lincoln Financial Advisors. It was a new start but this time I was letting God lead the way. After about five months in California, I was visiting family in Indiana and a very special friend from college was also in Indiana. We talked basically through text and realized I was heading back to CA before we could get together. We decided that I would call her on her long drive from Indy to Kansas City.

It was during that three-hour phone call, we both realized that there was something very special there. We were able to talk so easily about so many different things. We talked every day after that for about a month before I finally was able to make a trip to Kansas City. Once I made the trip, we hit it off immediately and picked up right where we had left it after not seeing each other for several years. The rest is history. After dating for a year and a half and falling totally in love, we were married in 2016, have a beautiful marriage and I finally feel like I can live life again. It is has been an amazing journey.

This is where the hope comes in. After losing my two sons, getting divorced and not really knowing what my life was going to be or where I was going, I felt my prayers had finally been answered. I have an amazing wife and feel happiness like I've never had before. My wife, Andrea, coincidentally, has two sons who are around the same ages as to what my boys would be now so I feel like a dad again as well in some ways. Andrea also loves to hear stories about Jake and Travis and we celebrate them together every chance we have. To have a wife that is so in tune with my situation and my boys is a tremendous blessing.

Nothing will ever replace Jake and Travis or the hole I have in my heart and I will miss them every single day. I know they would want me to be happy so I remember their bright spirits and happiness and let that shine through me. My advice to anyone who wants to give up....DON'T! Believe me, I know what it is like to feel like that but I also know the beauty of second chances and being able to live life again. You just never know what can happen if you just hang in there. Life is precious and fragile as we all know. Everything can be taken away from us in the glimpse of an eye. So cherish each day, treat it like a gift and make the most out of it. Try to be positive even in the worst circumstances. Let your love flow and your light shine. Our tragedies do not have to be the end of the story. Don't end your story, you never know what chapters you can still write.

Of course, life is hard and we know that better than most. There will still be extremely difficult days, special dates and holidays where tears will flow and you will feel the pain of missing your child or children. Just never forget that there is always hope. A hope that we don't always see, a hope that we may not know yet. Live life cherishing hope. Our kids would want that for each and every one of us.

Chuck Findley
Shawnee, KS

Breakfast With Dads

A breakfast for men started several months ago and has been very well received by the men who have attended. It's scheduled for the 1st Saturday of the month (subject to change) at Buddy McFadden's house, 8625 Baska Ct., Lenexa, Ks

The men sign up to bring a casserole or some breakfast dish, fruit, rolls, etc.

The time is from 8:30-10:30

If you are interested and would like to be added to the e-mail group for updates to the meetings,

Please contact Buddy at 913-481-9581 or Chuck Findley at 913-302-2954

Johnson County Information
Our Children & Siblings; Loved & Remembered

Births*February*

- 7th *Breanna Fletcher, daughter of Amy & Billy Leiker*
 12th *Robert Leiker, son of Kim & Randy Leiker*
 13th *Craig Howlett, son of Davie & Elaine Howlett*
 20th *Amy Batson, daughter of Barbara & Don Batson*
 27th *Peter Daniel Downey, son of David & Christine Downey*

March

- 1st *Denny Apple, son of Dennis & Buelah Apple*
 9th *Jana Elizabeth Pinker, daughter of Bob & Rebecca Pinker*
 10th *Joel Streufert, son of Sherry Streufert*
 12th *Kevin Babson, son of Rick & Susan Babson*
 23th *Mikie Bowman, brother of Rick Bowman*
 28th *Becca Menzel, daughter of David & Robin Menzel*

April

- 4th *Shane Day, son of Melody Gau*
 5th *Gus Girardi, son of Debbie Hestand*
 15th *David Edmonds, son of Christine Edmonds*
 17th *Elisabeth Legrande, daughter of Rick & Cheryl Shook*

A Name for My Pain

I have given a name to my pain—
it's called "Longing."

I long for what was,
and what might have been

I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.

I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.

I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.

I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons too.

I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.

Will they?

IT WILL BE ANOTHER BIRTHDAY WITHOUT YOU

The sun will shine roses bloom,
geese fly throughout the sky

stocks will trade, the weatherman predict
politicians debate

it'll seem like another day just a day,
same 24 hours not a special holiday

But to this mother who will stand at the grave
lifting balloons into the sky

serving angel food cupcakes
with rainbow icing coated with tears

fluctuating between emotions:
the grief over death, the celebration over birth

For this mother it will be yet another birthday without you.
In Memory of Daniel

June Williams-Muecke
TCF Houston West, TX

Alice J. Wisler
TCF Wake County, NC

Johnson County Information
Our Children & Siblings; Loved & Remembered

Deaths

February

- 1st Tanner Lewis, son of Hayley Lewis*
- 1st Katie Reynolds, daughter of Mark & Liz Reynolds*
- 3^d Jake Findley, son of Chuck Findley*
- 4th Travis Findley, son of Chuck Findley*
- 6th Denny Apple, son of Dennis & Buelah Apple*
- 7th Deana Lori Kaitala, daughter of Rochelle Jones*
- 10th Nathan James Heavilin, son of Marilyn & Glen Heavilin*
- 10th Curtis M.G. Gilmore, son of Anita Gordon-Gilmore*
- 12th Erika Jaremko, daughter of Stephanie Post*

March

- 4th Peter Daniel Downey, son of David & Christine Downey*
- 9th Andrew Caraway, son of Shera & Jeremy Grimm*
- 10th Becca Menzel, daughter of David & Robin Menzel*
- 11th Gregory B. Dermer, son of Diane L. Dermer*
- 12th David Edmonds, son of Christine Edmonds*
- 13th Collin Scott, son of Mark & Cindy Scott*
- 19th Sarah Batson, daughter of Barbara & Don Batson*
- 23^d Mikie Bowman, brother of Rick Bowman*

April

- 1st James Ernest Watkins III, son of Arlene & Jim Watkins*
- 2nd Jenny Anne Johnson, daughter of Susan & Jeff Johnson*
- 3^d Jason Holmes, son of Kathi & Mike Holmes*
- 4th Breanna Fletcher, daughter of Amy & Billy Fletcher*
- 9th Adam Ward, son of Sharon Ward*
- 15th Brian Cupp, son of Kathy Grassy*
- 16th Ian Matches, son of Terri Matches*
- 22nd Laura Michelle Travis, daughter of Gay Kahler & Brian Janes*
- 24th Dalton Hawkins, son of Shawn & Rhonda Hawkins*
- 25th Bryan Bandera, son of Janet Bravo (Alexa, sister)*
- 28th Sam Delay, son of Kathy Coggins*
- 28th Jace Boxberger, son of Tyler & Kelli Boxberger*

A Valentine's Day Wish

How I wish I could bring our children back to us for Valentine's Day—24 hours we could spend telling our children of our love.

But, alas, we are doomed to spend another Valentine's Day without our beloved children. Others who have not lost a child, tend to take for granted these special days. A card that says "I love you, Mom and Dad" should be carefully folded and saved in a special place. All too many parents consider these cards to be renewable commodities. There's no need to save this one—"we'll always get another one next year."

For many of us, next year came and there was no card. Tears of sadness replaced tears of joy on this special day. But for many of us the memories remain of those Valentine's Days gone by. Because our child's love remains with us, our child will never truly be gone.

This year on Valentine's Day, let us shed tears of joy that we were given even a short time with our child—for this, no matter how short, can never be taken from us.

Wayne Loder, TCF Lakes Area, MI

Our Child's Birthday

Many bereaved parents begin to have trouble as the time of their child's birthday grows near. Even those whose child has died a number of years ago. The ache that is in their heart is always there and the yearning for their child is never more strong than around the time of their child's birth. The greatest gift you could give to a parent who has lost a child is to listen intently as they reminisce and share memories of their child. Call a special friend who has lost a child on that child's birthday and encourage them to talk about him or her. Or better yet, invite your friend to coffee or lunch so you can look into their eyes and they can feel your compassion and empathy. Many parents relish the opportunity to share pictures of their child with others. If your friend likes doing this, ask that they bring photos, a scrapbook or mementos of their child. It will help to spark fond memories of a happier time. Make your list ahead of time. Ask your friend questions in order to draw them out such as; do you remember how you felt when you were anticipating the birth of your child? How did you feel when they were born? How did you come to pick your child's name? What was your child like as a baby? How old was your child when they took their first step? What was their first word? Do you remember your child's first day at school? What was their favorite color? What was their personality like? Did your child take after someone in your family? Did your child have a beloved pet? Did your child enjoy a special hobby or activity? Do you have any stories to recant about a memorable family vacation or gathering? What was their favorite holiday? Did your child have a favorite book, song or movie? Do you remember any heartwarming or funny stories about your child? What was your child's personality like? The list could go on and on. Just stop and think for about it for a moment. You can also make your own list and give it to a trusted family member or confidant to ask you when it's time for your child's birthday. The point is to draw the parent out. Try and get your friend to remember the beautiful sweet story that was their child's life and not to focus only on their passing. Once they get started they will recall wonderful things that were once forgotten. A child's death is only a small moment of time in their short lives. Remembering a child's life in this way can be a very cathartic and healing experience for a parent whose child has died. As bereaved parents, we know all too well that most of the people in our lives do not want us to speak of our child. I can't think of a better gift to give to another parent who is like we are than to talk about, honor and celebrate the life of their child.

Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

*There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept,
things we don't want to know but have to learn,
and people we can't live without but have to let go. ~ author unknown*

TO OUR NEW COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared at meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return. We would like to let you know that these feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel" .

Please give us at least **three** tries before you decide whether or not the meetings are for you. You will find a network of caring and support which will help you as you travel your grief journey, and most assuredly, you will find hope along the way. We truly care about you and want to make certain that no bereaved parent ever needs to walk this path alone.

SIBLING GRIEF

My First Five Years as an Only Child

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I have aged 30 years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I have accomplished the many things of a typical young adult learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career.

Every one of my accomplishments has been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone, and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I have learned to accept that he is not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changing to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I am angry about all the things that we have missed and all the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I have been forced to grow up too fast. I have been forced into a new outlook on life. I have felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. Maybe I am a better person because of what I have been through. Five years ago I never thought I would survive, but I am still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I have made it this far.

Kristin Steiner
TCF Staten Island, NY
In Memory of my brother, George

10 Ways to Help Grieving Children

1. Take care of you.
2. Be honest with your child
3. Listen
4. Acknowledge your child's grief
5. Share
6. Be creative
7. Maintain clear expectations
8. Reassure your child
9. Create rituals and new family traditions
10. Be patient

TCF "ONLINE SUPPORT COMMUNITY" OFFERS

OPPORTUNITY FOR GRIEF SHARING

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

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" listed under the Find Support menu.



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends
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JOHNSON COUNTY WEBSITE
www.tcfkc.org

The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The Weaver

The pattern of my life as changed, for live has brought a sorrow:

The pattern must be rearranged, to fit a new tomorrow.

Altho' my eyes are blind with tears, altho' my heart is weary,

Tomorrow's duties still appear, even though today is dreary.

The pattern of my life is mine, a thing that must be finished.

Though time has altered its design, its brightness has

diminished.

A little kneeling by my bed, some hours of quiet grieving,

And then I must take up my thread of life, & carry on the weaving

-Huntington Beach, Ca

-S. S. Simon & Jude, Blessing of Memories Service

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us.

Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.

We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief,

but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share,

just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together.

We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace,

share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

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