



# *The Compassionate Friends*

*Central Indiana Chapter*  
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

**May 2024**

**The Compassionate Friends (TCF)** is a non-profit, self-help organization that provides comfort, hope, and support for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. We cordially invite you to attend our meetings.

**Southside Meeting** is the 1<sup>st</sup>

Wed. of each month @ 6:30 pm  
New Hope Church  
5307 W. Fairview Road  
Greenwood, IN

**Facilitator:** Angie Groover  
[angie.groover@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:angie.groover@tcfcentralindiana.org)  
(317)777 4258

**Upcoming Meetings:**

May 1st & June 5th

**Northside Meeting** is the 3<sup>rd</sup>

Tues. of each month @ 6:30 pm  
Epworth United Methodist  
6450 Allisonville Road  
Indianapolis, IN

**Facilitator:** Peggy Johnson  
[peggy.johnson@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:peggy.johnson@tcfcentralindiana.org)  
(317) 850 2559

**Upcoming Meetings:**

May 14<sup>th</sup> & June 18th

**CENTRAL INDIANA TCF CHAPTER**

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**Treasurer:** April Leo  
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**Regional Coordinators:**

Position Open

**Secretary:** April Leo  
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**Special Events Coordinators:**

Position Open



Every year on the first Sunday in May, International Bereaved Mother's Day honors mothers who have lost a child. It's also a day to recognize women who cannot be a mother due to infertility or other health reasons.

One of the hardest days for many women around the world as Mother's Day. These women suffer greatly on this day because they have lost a child. According to psychologists, losing a child is one of the worst traumas a human being can experience. When a child dies, a mother loses a piece of her own heart. Not only that, she loses all that she looked forward to in seeing that child fulfill their potential.

Besides suffering psychologically and biologically, mothers face a host of other challenges. They might mourn the loss for many years. They may experience triggers from well-meaning questions like, "how many children do you have?" Or, "How old are your children now?" According to studies, mothers who lose children are more likely to suffer from physical and mental health issues. If the grief is unresolved, it could turn into a serious illness, like cancer and immune disorders.

For these reasons, it's imperative that mothers that have lost children seek help. Joining a support group with other bereaved mothers can be especially helpful. A bereaved mother will never again be able to hold that child in their arms. But they will forever hold that child in their heart.

## INTERNATIONAL BEREAVED MOTHERS DAY HISTORY

Carlie Marie Dudley started International Bereaved Mother's Day in 2010. She started the day in honor of her stillborn son, Christian. Carlie is from Australia. Since its inception, the day has helped bereaved others around the world connect, heal, and find hope for their future.

## HOW TO OBSERVE INTERNATIONAL BEREAVED MOTHER'S DAY

Spend the day doing things to comfort yourself and things you enjoy. If that means being with others today or on Mother's Day then do that; if it means not going to a Mother's Day gathering do that. Do whatever feels right for you. If you need to seek out support, whether from family, friends, those online who have had similar experiences, or professionally, do so; it is a healthy part of the healing process. You can also remember and pay tribute to your child in some way. Do something in their honor, or make a special place in your house where they are remembered.

[www.stillstandingmag.com](http://www.stillstandingmag.com)



## STILL A MOTHER

by Angela Miller

Mother's Day can be a wonderful day for many woman. A day of celebration, honor and love. But for those of us who are mothers of children gone too soon, Mother's Day is often filled with dread, sorrow and insatiable longing. It's marketed by a visceral ache that spills from our heart to the depths of our bones. It's punctuated by an ever-present hole in our hearts, in our lives, so deep and wide, that no one and nothing can fill it.

Our arms are empty, yet we long for them to be full. We are mothers, but the world often forgets – especially if we no longer have living children to carry and hold outside our hearts.

As bereaved mothers, our deepest cry and longing is for our motherhood to be honored and recognized. For *all* our children, in heaven or on earth, to be remembered. Honored. Celebrated. For someone to yell from the rooftops, or to quietly whisper in the silence: *Yes, you are still a mother!*

You'd think this would be a simple request, something that would surely happen. You'd think anyone and everyone would give us this gift. But year after year, on this seemingly special day, bereaved mother's feel left out. We're left out of the pastor's sermons at church. Left out of the montage of flowers and chocolate and Mother's Day well-wishes. Left out of the conversations and celebrations of motherhood. Left out of the "Happy Mothers' Day" messages that flood social media.

And we bleed.

It's hard being the mother of a dead child on Mother's Day. By hard, I mean torturous, and even that word fails short.

You want your child recognized by name, validated as a real person who lived. You want someone to step in and offer to carry a piece of your pain for just a minute, an hour, a day – especially on this day. This day that is supposed to honor and celebrate *all* mothers. You want a shining soul to see you, to truly get it (for even just one second.) You want a brave and daring heart to compassionately climb into the ditch with you, lie down beside you, and just *be with* you, smack you in the middle of the whirlpool of Mother's Day tears.

The sad truth?

There are few who can do this. And even fewer who will.

I remember my First Mother's Day after the death of my only son like it was yesterday. Every cell in my body was dreading the day. The mere thought of Mother's Day filled me with palpable anxiety from the tips on my hair all the way down to my toes.

You see, as loss moms we know and anticipate that the world will forget us. We *know*. We know because it happens all day, every day in our post-loss life. Our motherhood denied. Ignored. Stomped on. Crushed. Not recognized, honored or even simply stated. We know on Mother's Day people will forget how to count. *All* of our children. We know our children gone too soon will no longer be included in the routine 'how-many-kids-do-you-have' count. We know the gaping hole in our family tree will go unnoticed. We know the most important names will be missing from our Mother's Day cards. We know it's going to happen. Our children, forgotten – their existence, denied.

And yet? No amount of preparing prepares the broken heart for the excruciating pain of more salt poured in its wounds. Even if it is with the *best* of intentions.

It *burns*.

Knowing our motherhood and our children won't be recognized does not make it one ounce more bearable. At all, in fact, it makes the anticipation of, and the day itself, filled with dread.

The thought of "celebrating" Mother's Day feels impossible. Surviving it is generally the goal. And even that feels like a lofty one. The Mother's Day landmines are too many to count.

For some, staying in bed with the covers overhead until the day passes is the most reasonable solution. Having your motherhood ignored on a daily basis is torture; but on Mother's Day, the one day of the year all mothers should be celebrated, honored and recognized? There aren't words for the ache, for the pain of being forgotten, for the dread of knowing you will be.

All I wanted my first Mother's Day after the death of my son, was simple: for someone to remember him, for someone to remember I was a Mother, with a capital M. To have both my motherhood and my son acknowledged was the only gift I wanted and needed that year. For anyone to kindly say, "Yes, you are still a mother" For someone to say, "I see you. I love you. You are an amazing mother to your precious son."

Unfortunately, most people didn't remember that year. Most people didn't remember I ever had a son. Even though it had only been a few short months since he had walked the earth beside me. Most people forgot I was ever a mother, and still a mother, on a day that ironically was in fact founded by bereaved mothers themselves.

The world's message to me was loud and clear: "No, you are not still a mother."

That year I received one Mother's Day card.

One.

It came from someone I didn't even know well, but let tell you, that card made my year. It made my life. It made breathing a little easier, a little lighter, every hour of that wretched day, and every day for the rest of that year. Inside the fibers of that paper held hope.

I still have that card. And I will always keep it. That one acquaintance decided to step out in bravery and in the love to acknowledge what no one else could or would: not only was I still a mother, but I always would be. Always.

It was a message my heart longed for and desperately needed to hear. One I clung to and cling to still.

That \$3.99 Mother's Day card became my lifeline.

It glided the cracks of my heart with love. With honor. With pride. To be acknowledged as the mother of my precious son still – and always – was the gift of all gifts.

Someone finally saw me, all of me, and my broken open heart will never, ever forget it.

To every courageous loss mama, with an aching heart and empty arms, I leave you with this: Yes, you are still a mother, and you always, always will be. The love you two share is forever, just as your motherhood is forever. No one can take that away from you. Not today, not on Mother's Day, not ever.

You will always be your precious child's mother. Always.

Even though heaven and earth separate you, even if no one remembers, even if the world tells you you're the not.







<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
David Baker	May 02	May 27
Erin Davis	May 04	Oct 24
Darcy Celestine Dunne	May 04	Jun 08
PFC Devon Compton	May 06	Sep 17
Allison Schwomeyer-Koers	May 09	May 15
Benjamin Andrew Withem	May 09	May 06
James Rowland	May 12	Aug 19
Riley Hankins	May 13	May 13
Michael Edward Toomer	May 13	Jul 21
Ruby Amarech Sharer	May 13	Jul 24
Aoife McGowan	May 14	Feb 13
Braden Caldwell	May 15	Jun 03
Nate Stewart	May 15	Oct 23
Kristopher Hesler	May 16	Sep 29
Tyler Wilson, MD	May 16	Jul 18
James Andrew Day	May 17	Jan 16
William Matthew Lawrance	May 17	Sep 10
Joseph Paul Lawrance	May 17	Oct 30
John Michael McGuire	May 18	Oct 11
Paul C. Miller	May 18	Mar 08
Blair Sinchai	May 18	Sep 01
Laura Van Dyke	May 19	Feb 24
Jennifer Church	May 21	Mar 11
Isabelle Mackenzie	May 21	Jul 27
Edith Marie Vincent	May 22	Dec 13
Clinton Ettinger	May 24	Mar 12
Ty'Shawn Boyd	May 25	Aug 22
Sascha Nolan Simpson	May 28	Sep 15
Robert Oswald	May 28	Nov 27
Sophia Harshbarger	May 29	Sep 24
Trey Elzy	May 30	Aug 27



<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
Gary Robert Denien	Sep 12	May 02
Shelby Fink	Aug 10	May 03
Paul Michael Cain	Jun 12	May 05
Benjamin Andrew Withem	May 09	May 06
Emily Brooke Lewellyn	Aug 28	May 11
James Johnson	Feb 15	May 12
Jerrold Lee Bridges	Jun 30	May 13
Riley Hankins	May 13	May 13
Rylie Surack	Mar 13	May 13
John David Woods	Oct 25	May 14
Morgan Lynn Gummer	Jul 09	May 15
Danielle Krapinski	Jan 24	May 15
Allison Schwomeyer-Koers	May 09	May 15
Ryan Huter	Apr 21	May 17
Morgan Gaither	Apr 17	May 18
Genesis Eppert	Jun 03	May 20
Jacob Steele	Sep 25	May 20
Kyle Satterthwaite	Jun 09	May 20
Caleb Harvey	Oct 02	May 21
Dean Leavell II	Oct 28	May 21
Jonathon	Oct 22	May 22
Timothy Beard	Aug 10	May 25
Kasey Wayne Willis	Jul 07	May 25
Hugo Debolt	Jan 12	May 26
David Baker	May 02	May 27
Ryan Allen	Jun 25	May 29
Brian Andrew Jackson	Oct 20	May 29
Eric S. Jackson	Feb 20	May 31
Blake Jamison	Apr 27	May 31
Kimberley Ross Weston	Oct 27	May 31





# *The Compassionate Friends*

*Central Indiana Chapter*

**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

## *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 we 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 the gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for our children who have died.

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

We welcome submissions for the newsletter from any of our members. If you have a poem or some other writing that has helped you, or just some helpful insights of your own, submit them to [april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org). Please be sure to include the author's name, whether it's someone else or yourself.

Love gifts are much appreciated.  
You can mail them to our  
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