



# *The Compassionate Friends*

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

## **Central Indiana Chapter Newsletter**

**May 2025**

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  
(317) 777 4258

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

May 7<sup>th</sup> & June 4<sup>th</sup>

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

Tues. of each month @ 6:30 pm

Epworth United Methodist

6450 Allisonville Road

Indianapolis, IN

**Facilitator:** Melanie Stewart  
melanie.stewart@tcfcentralindiana.org

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

May 20<sup>th</sup> & June 17<sup>th</sup>

### **CENTRAL INDIANA TCF CHAPTER**

**Chapter Leader:** April Leo

[april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org)

**Treasurer:** April Leo

[april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org)

**Webmaster:** Larry Gardner

[larry.gardner@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:larry.gardner@tcfcentralindiana.org)

**Regional Coordinators:**

Position Open

**Secretary:** April Leo

[april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org)

**Special Events Coordinators:**

Position Open



**Melanie Stewart and Kelli Clarke are the new Northside Meeting Facilitators. Melanie will take the lead and Kelli will co-host as needed. We are extremely grateful for these two who have come forward volunteering their time to support our families.**

**For those of you who attend the Northside Meetings at Epworth United Methodist Church, please be advised the group will now meet in room #6. It is located in the church basement. There is a sidewalk, to the right of the main entrance and next to the playground, which leads from the parking lot to basement door. Meetings will continue to be held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month and begin at 6:30 pm.**

# STILL A MOTHER

by Angela Miller

Mother's Day can be a wonderful day for many women. 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 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 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 preparation 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 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 not.



## International Bereaved Mother's Day: A Day to Acknowledge Loss Moms

International Bereaved Mother's Day is a day of remembrance and support for mothers who have lost a child, and it is observed on the first Sunday of May each year. This day acknowledges the profound grief of losing a child, no matter the circumstances. **This year, International Bereaved Mother's Day will be observed on Sunday, May 5, 2024.**

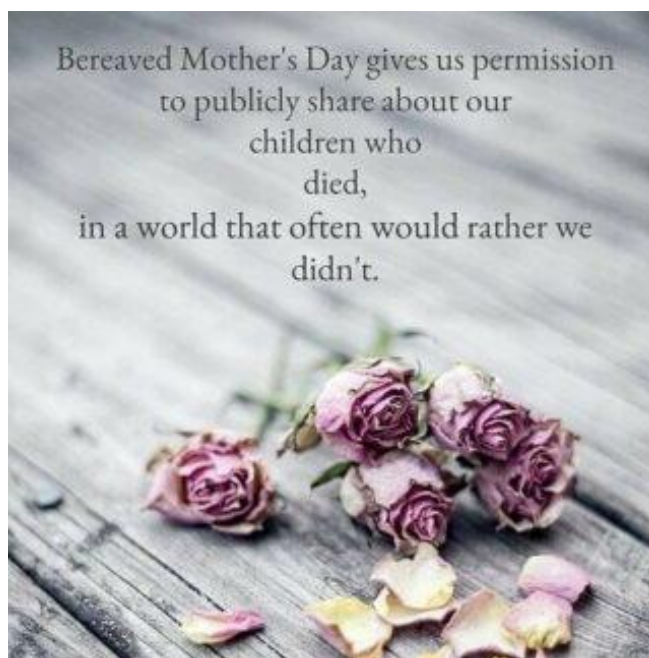
## History of International Bereaved Mother's Day

Loss mom Carly Marie Dudley created international Bereaved Mother's Day. Carly Marie's son, Christian, was born still in 2007. After Christian's death, she began documenting her journey through grief through her blog, artwork, and grief projects and found a community of parents who experienced similar losses.

In 2010, Carly Marie organized the first International Bereaved Mother's Day as a way to honor and validate the motherhood of those who have also experienced pregnancy and child loss. The day is now recognized around the world as a time to remember and support these beautiful mothers.

## Importance of International Bereaved Mother's Day

Losing a child is one of the most devastating experiences a mother can go through. It can be a lonely and isolating experience, as many people do not know how to support someone who is grieving the loss of a child. International Bereaved Mother's Day allows mothers to connect with others who have gone through similar experiences, share stories, and offer comfort and support.



Carly Marie wrote about the importance of International Bereaved Mother's Day: "The traditional Mother's Day has proven to be an emotionally exhausting day for so many mothers around the world. Just because your child died does not mean that you are not a mother anymore. You are your child's mother forever, and people need to start recognizing

this fact. On Bereaved Mother's Day each year, we come together to celebrate our connection, our babies and children, and our hope for the future."

This day also raises awareness about the impact of child loss to break the silence around the topic. Many mothers feel that their grief is not validated or recognized by society, which can make the grieving process even more difficult. By acknowledging International Bereaved Mother's Day, we show these beautiful mothers that their pain is real and that they are not alone.

While many loss moms find comfort and validation in International Bereaved Mother's Day, other loss moms prefer to be [recognized on Mother's Day](#). Each person has their own grief journey and preferences, so check in with your loved ones about which day they would prefer to be recognized. They maybe want to be remembered on both days.

## Ways for Loss Moms to Spend International Bereaved Mother's Day

1. Reach out to other bereaved mothers in your community, either in person or through online communities.
2. Write a letter or do a special memory project to continue bonds with your child who died.
3. Light a candle in memory of your child and all the children who are gone too soon.
4. [Make a donation](#) to a nonprofit that supports loss families, like Pregnancy After Loss Support, in memory of your child or in honor of your motherhood.
5. Unplug for the day, rest, and practice self-care. Be gentle with yourself and all of the feelings you may have about your loss and your motherhood journey.

[pregnancyafterlosssupport.org](http://pregnancyafterlosssupport.org)



# The Compassionate Friends 48<sup>th</sup> National Conference

July 11<sup>th</sup> – July 13<sup>th</sup>

Hyatt Regency  
Bellevue  
900 Bellevue Way NE  
Bellevue, WA 98004

We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 48<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference in Bellevue, WA! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief, all while making friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

Unique and cherished highlights of our conference include our heartfelt Saturday evening Candle Lighting Program, Sharing Sessions, Keynote Addresses, Healing Haven, Butterfly Boutique, Crafty Corner, and Silent Auction. Our weekend of inspiration, sharing, and learning is followed by the Walk to Remember on Sunday morning.

If you would like to attend the conference, please use the "Register Now" button at the top of this page to complete your registration. Registration for your hotel room is separate. You can reserve a room as part of our hotel block with our special conference rates.

This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated [reservation link](#). Our discounted room rate with the Hyatt is \$165 per night plus applicable taxes and fees. Please note that each attendee can reserve a maximum of two rooms. Many attendees arrive on Thursday since the conference begins early on Friday morning. We also have pre-conference activities that are offered on Thursday evening, that attendees find beneficial. We look forward to seeing you in Bellevue!

More detailed information regarding workshops and event guest speakers can be found at [www.compassionatefriends.org/events](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/events)





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



<u>Loved One's Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
Gary Robert Denien	Sep 12	<b>May 02</b>
Shelby Fink	Aug 10	<b>May 03</b>
Paul Michael Cain	Jun 12	<b>May 05</b>
Benjamin Withem	May 09	<b>May 06</b>
Emily Brooke Lewellyn	Aug 28	<b>May 11</b>
James Johnson	Feb 15	<b>May 12</b>
Jerrod Lee Bridges	Jun 30	<b>May 13</b>
Riley Hankins	May 13	<b>May 13</b>
Rylie Surack	Mar 13	<b>May 13</b>
John David Woods	Oct 25	<b>May 14</b>
Morgan Lynn Gummer	Jul 09	<b>May 15</b>
Danielle Krapinski	Jan 24	<b>May 15</b>
Allison Schwomeyer-Koers	May 09	<b>May 15</b>
Alaina Dildine	Dec 12	<b>May 16</b>
Chloe Melisa O'Gwynn	Apr 19	<b>May 16</b>
Ryan Huter	Apr 21	<b>May 17</b>
Morgan Gaither	Apr 17	<b>May 18</b>
Genesis Eppert	Jun 03	<b>May 20</b>
Jacob Steele	Sep 25	<b>May 20</b>
Kyle Satterthwaite	Jun 09	<b>May 20</b>
Caleb Harvey	Oct 02	<b>May 21</b>
Dean Leavell II	Oct 28	<b>May 21</b>
Jonathon	Oct 28	<b>May 22</b>
Timothy Beard	Aug 10	<b>May 25</b>
Kasey Wayne Willis	Jul 07	<b>May 25</b>
Hugo Debolt	Jan 12	<b>May 26</b>
David Baker	May 02	<b>May 27</b>
Ryan Allen	Jun 25	<b>May 29</b>
Brian Andrew Jackson	Oct 20	<b>May 29</b>
Eric S. Jackson	Feb 20	<b>May 31</b>
Blake Jamison	Apr 27	<b>May 31</b>
Kimberley Ross Weston	Oct 27	<b>May 31</b>



# *The Compassionate Friends*

*Central Indiana Chapter*

**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

## *The Compassionate Friends Credo*

We need not walk alone. We are 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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7133 Nostalgia Lane  
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(317) 681 4292  
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