



# *The Compassionate Friends*

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

## **Central Indiana Chapter Newsletter** **June 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](mailto:angie.groover@tcfcentralindiana.org)  
(317) 777 4258

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

June 4<sup>th</sup> & July 2nd

### **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](mailto:melanie.stewart@tcfcentralindiana.org)

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

June 17<sup>th</sup> & July 15th

### **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

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**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 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 the basement door. Meetings will continue to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month and begin at 6:30 pm.**

## To the Dads grieving on Father's Day: We see you!



Nothing can be said that can fix this pain or mend the hole in your heart that is the exact shape of your child. There is nothing that can be done to fill that void. But, what those of us who grieve our children who died want to tell you is this.

### **To the dads who grieve on Father's Day:**

A day like today is bittersweet. It is a day of celebration and honor, a day set aside to say thank you, to you. But the one (or ones) who should be thanking you, giving you cards, presenting you with yet another tie, are not here. It is a day filled with what should be, but what is not. Of what could have been, but instead is so different.

What can we say on this day, where words fall short and no Hallmark card can express the depth of what this day holds? Nothing can be said that can fix this pain or mend the hole in your heart that is the exact shape of your child. There is nothing that can be done to fill that void. But, what those of us who grieve our children who died want to tell you is this.

We see you. We know you. We are here for you. We love you.

### **We see you.**

The one with the brave face. The one who carries on about his days in the same way that he did before. The one who can compartmentalize and stay in the routine because that is what is comfortable. We also see you turn away and sometimes step aside. We see you take a deep breath and put your arm around your partner or go to lift the spirits of your other children

because the way you see it, you need to be there for them; they are your priority. We see you putting others before yourself. We see you doing the best that you can, day after day. We see your passion. We see your hurt. We see your love.

### **We know you.**

We know that behind that stoic smile and the way you go about your day, there is a heart that yearns for the child that you can not wrap your arms around. We know you feel like you must be the strong one, the one who thinks that you cannot break down because if you break down, who will be there for everyone else? We know you are the fixer, but now there is nothing about this that can be fixed.

We know you hurt; we also know our culture does not give you permission to know that it is OK to grieve and to show your feelings and speak how you truly feel. We know that when someone asks, "How are you?" you lie, because you know that the other person would likely be uncomfortable with your truth. We know you, and we know your heart is breaking but that your heart is also bursting with the joy of being your child's father. We know you, and we know this grief journey is anything but comfortable or easy.

### **We are here for you.**

This is a lonely journey. Most people are unable to sit with pain, sadness, anger and uncertainty. But there are many who can and many who will. We want you to grieve in a way that is meaningful and helpful and in a way that allows for expression of all of your feelings, because they are real. It is OK to not be OK. You are living the unimaginable and yet it is your reality. You do not have to walk this road alone. We want to walk the journey with you. We want to remember with you. We want to listen, cry, sit with you and celebrate you because you are an incredible father.

### **We love you.**

No one grieves the same. No one can fully understand how you feel because no one is you. You are often the overlooked one. After a child dies, most people focus on the mom while you are left to find your own way. But you are equally as important. Your feelings matter. Your relationship with your child matters and continues to matter. We may not be perfect in the way that we care for you but hear this: We love you.

No matter how long your child lived, we know that it never could have been long enough. Father's Day is a bittersweet day. But, you, you are a father, nothing in life or in death can take that from you. You are theirs and they are yours and that is something to celebrate today and every day.

### **Happy Father's Day.**

[www.amemorygrows.org](http://www.amemorygrows.org)



## *A Dad Hurts Too*

People don't always see the tears a dad cries,  
His heart is broken too when his child dies.  
He tries to hold it together and be strong,  
Even though his world's gone wrong.  
He holds his wife as her tears fall,  
Comforts her through it all,  
He goes through his day doing what he's supposed to do,  
But a piece of his heart has been ripped away too.  
So when he's alone he lets out his pain,  
And his tears come like falling rain,  
His world has crashed in around him,  
And a world that was once bright has gone dim.  
He feels he has to be strong for others,  
But Dads hurt too, not just the Mothers,  
He searches for answers but none are to be found,  
He hides behind a mask when he is feeling down.  
He smiles through his tears,  
He struggles and holds in his fears,  
But what you see on the outside is not always real,  
Men don't always show how they really feel.  
So I'd like to ask a favor of you,  
The next time you see a mother hurting  
over the loss of her child,  
please remember.....a Dad hurts too.

all-greatquotes.com

# How to Support a Grieving Father this Father's Day

Father's Day is all about showing love and appreciation to the amazing dads in our lives. But if you know a father who's lost a child to suicide, substance abuse, or sudden loss, that can be easier said than done.

For these dads, Father's Day can bring about heightened feelings of grief, loss, and sadness, as well as more complicated feelings like anger, disappointment, and guilt.

Whether it's his first Father's Day since the child passed away or his 50th, it's normal and expected for these feelings to arise.

Supporting a grieving parent after the devastating loss of a child is never easy, but days like Father's Day can make it even harder. So, what should you do if you want to support and honor a father who's lost a child this Father's Day?

## Acknowledge Them and the Day

Bringing up Father's Day to a grieving dad can feel uncomfortable. You might want to avoid causing or worsening painful feelings by mentioning fatherhood or the loss they've experienced. But one of the most important things you can do for a grieving dad on Father's Day is to acknowledge their experience as a father, including their loss and the difficulties that Father's Day can cause.

Whether the father has surviving children or they lost their only child, it's important to recognize their fatherhood and honor them on Father's Day, just as you would any dad. (If they do have surviving children, make sure to let them know what a great father you think they are.)

## Show Patience and Compassion

Grief has no set timeline, especially after losing a child to suicide, substance abuse, or sudden loss. Feelings of grief can steadily improve over time, or they can come in ebbs and flows.

No matter how long it's been since a father lost his child, he'll always cope with a profound sense of loss, especially around holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays.

It's important to meet a father where he is in his grief if you want to lend him support and love on Father's Day. Try not to assume that this Father's Day will be any less difficult than the last just because time has passed.

Try to approach any perceived "setback" in the grieving process with understanding and patience, and let him know that his feelings are valid and normal.

## Use the Child's Name

It's common to feel like you shouldn't use a deceased child's name around the grieving parents and other family members. You might worry that speaking their name will cause even greater feelings of grief in the bereaved parent.

However, a grieving father's greatest fear is often that his child will be forgotten. You can help alleviate that fear by using the child's name when you talk about them.

## Encourage Seeking Support

Friends and family can offer a huge amount of support to grieving dads on Father's Day. But it's also important to encourage seeking outside support when needed.

Let the father in your life know that there are resources available in the form of professional grief counseling and support groups.

## Create Space to Talk About the Child

Some fathers won't want to talk about their child on Father's Day, while others will embrace any opportunity to share stories and remember their child. Both of these responses are healthy and valid.

While you shouldn't push a father to talk about their departed child, you can open the door for him to share his most cherished memories. For example, you could send a text that says, "I'm always just a call away if you want to talk about Jenny or anything else on your mind."

## Support Surviving Children

Grief is often a lonely and isolating experience. Although Father's Day is centered around supporting fathers, surviving siblings may feel left out and forgotten on days like this. They might also feel increased pressure to make Father's Day special for their grieving dad.

If the father has surviving children, you can support him this Father's Day by supporting the kids. Show them extra care and compassion around the date and let them know that you're there for them.

## Support Self-Care

Let the father in your life know that it's OK to spend some time caring for himself this Father's Day. He might feel pressured to spend the day with family or to behave in a specific way.

However, it's important to take time to himself, too.

You could offer to spend the day together doing something fun and relaxing, like enjoying the outdoors or going out for lunch. Alternatively, you could offer to take care of his other children or run an errand so that he can spend some alone time.

## Let Him Know You're Thinking of Him

Fathers can get forgotten and left behind when it comes to grieving a child, especially after miscarriage or pregnancy loss. One of the best ways to support a grieving father on Father's Day is just to reach out and let him know he's in your thoughts.

## Ask Him What He Needs

Only the grieving dad himself can know exactly what would help him on this day. Although you can offer support in various ways, the best way to offer the right type of support is to ask what you can do to help and what he's comfortable with.

The key is not to make assumptions about what he might be feeling on this date, but to allow him to express what he's feeling himself. Don't assume he doesn't want to talk about his child, and don't assume that he does. Meet him where he is, and support him based on that.





# 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>
Michelle Clark	Jun 01	Dec 15
Addley Rae Cushing	Jun 02	Jun 03
Logan Scherer	Jun 02	Sep 15
Genesis Eppert	Jun 03	May 20
Brian Apman	Jun 04	Oct 05
Kevin Wiley	Jun 06	Feb 27
Kyle Richardson	Jun 08	Jul 30
Elizabeth Rudie Laura	Jun 08	Mar 28
Matthew Hidding	Jun 08	Jul 13
Kyle Satterthwaite	Jun 09	May 20
Jackie Quandt	Jun 09	Nov 05
Luke Faul	Jun 10	Nov 19
Jeff Risner	Jun 11	Mar 06
Paul Michael Cain	Jun 12	May 05
Mark Campbell	Jun 12	Mar 21
Colin McHargue	Jun 13	Oct 08
Nicholas Herran	Jun 14	Jan 04
Lindsey Anne Wilkins	Jun 15	Dec 08
Maxwell Jacobson	Jun 16	Apr 02
Melissa McBride	Jun 16	Jan 14
Jasper Carter	Jun 17	Jul 05
Chloe' Nicole Corbin	Jun 17	Oct 28
Robin ("DD") Johnson	Jun 17	Oct 21
Matthew Luedeman	Jun 20	Apr 21
Shauna Lydy	Jun 21	Apr 14
Ryan Allen	Jun 25	May 29
Linsey Parsley	Jun 27	Nov 26
Luna Passow	Jun 28	Jul 28
Jerrold Lee Bridges	Jun 30	May 13
Abby Scheibelhut	Jun 30	Dec 06



<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
Kevin Jay Elkins	Apr 13	Jun 01
Harold Lynn Shelton	Sep 21	Jun 02
Addley Rae Cushing	Jun 02	Jun 03
Shane Alexander Elmore	Aug 26	Jun 03
Braden Caldwell	May 15	Jun 03
Connor Emery	Apr 09	Jun 04
Anthony Pahl	Mar 25	Jun 04
Honesty Kiley	Feb 22	Jun 06
Benjamin Lowry	Mar 23	Jun 06
Darcy Celestine Dunne	May 04	Jun 08
Jacob Churchia	Dec 19	Jun 09
Jean Ann Ervin Gruber	Mar 13	Jun 09
Lindsay Marie Johnson	Nov 17	Jun 09
Crystal Olin	Oct 06	Jun 10
Tyler Rowland	Aug 01	Jun 13
Henry Tucker	Dec 29	Jun 14
Nichole Danielle Ross	Feb 13	Jun 15
Melissa Runnels	Jul 10	Jun 15
Andrew Moreland	Aug 25	Jun 16
Kairi Maxson	Aug 26	Jun 17
Miles Hartman	Feb 25	Jun 17
Wyatt Bush	Jul 31	Jun 18
Luke Hess	Dec 04	Jun 18
Suzanne Binder	Sep 05	Jun 19
Kayla Goggins	Feb 11	Jun 19
Allece Tyshea Walker	Oct 25	Jun 20
Andreas Gaynor	Dec 21	Jun 21
Eric Ward	Apr 13	Jun 22
Kristen Fleckerstein	Feb 02	Jun 23
Nicco Picchetti	Feb 28	Jun 24
Mason Cole Garvey	Oct 27	Jun 25
Andrew "Drew" Sims	Jan 19	Jun 27
Jonathan Titchenal	Sep 05	Jun 27



# *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  
Treasurer, April Leo  
7133 Nostalgia Lane  
Indianapolis, IN 46214  
(317) 681 4292  
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