



# *The Compassionate Friends*

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

## **Newsletter July 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:**

Aug. 6<sup>th</sup> & Sept. 3<sup>rd</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:**

July 15<sup>th</sup> & Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **CENTRAL INDIANA TCF CHAPTER**

**Chapter Leader:** April Leo

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**Treasurer:** April Leo

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**Webmaster:** Larry Gardner

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

**Regional Coordinators:**

Position Open

**Secretary:** April Leo

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**Special Events Coordinators:**

Position Open



**There will be no Southside Meeting on Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will reconvene on Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>.**

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 mothers 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.



## 7 THINGS I'VE LEARNED SINCE THE LOSS OF MY CHILD

Child loss is a loss like no other. One often misunderstood by many. If you love a bereaved parent or know someone who does, remember that even his or her "good" days are harder than you could ever imagine. Compassion and love, not advice, are needed.



## **1. Love never dies.**

There will never come a day, hour, minute or second I stop loving or thinking about my son. Just as parents of living children unconditionally love their children always and forever, so do bereaved parents. I want to say and hear his name just the same as non-bereaved parents do. I want to speak about my deceased child as normally and naturally as you speak of your living ones.

I love my child just as much as you love your — the only difference is mine lives in heaven, and talking about him is unfortunately quite taboo in our culture. I hope to change that. Our culture isn't so great about hearing about children gone too soon, but that doesn't stop me from saying my son's name and sharing his love and light everywhere I go. Just because it might make you uncomfortable doesn't make him matter any less. My son's life was cut irreversibly short, but his love lives on forever. And ever.

## **2. Bereaved parents share an unspeakable bond.**

In my seven years navigating the world as a bereaved parent, I am continually struck by the power of the bond between bereaved parents. Strangers become kindreds in mere seconds — a look, a glance, a knowing of the heart connects us, even if we've never met before. No matter our circumstances, who we are, or how different we are, there is no greater bond than the connection between parents who understand the agony of enduring the death of a child. It's a pain we suffer for a lifetime, and unfortunately, only those who have walked the path of child loss understand the depth and breadth of both the pain and the love we carry.

## **3. I will grieve for a lifetime.**

Period. The end. There is no "moving on," or "**getting over it.**" There is no bow, no fix, no solution to my heartache. There is no end to the ways I will grieve and for how long I will grieve. There is no glue for my broken heart, no elixir for my pain, no going back in time. For as long as I breathe, I will grieve and ache and love my son with all my heart and soul. There will never come a time where I won't think about who my son would be, what he would look like and how he would be woven perfectly into the tapestry of my family. I wish people could understand that grief lasts forever because love lasts forever; that the loss of a child is not one finite event, it is a continuous loss that unfolds minute by minute over the course of a lifetime. Every missed birthday, holiday, milestone, should-be back-to-school school years and graduations, weddings that will never be, grandchildren that should have been but will never be born — an entire generation of people are irrevocably altered *forever*.

This is why grief lasts forever. The ripple effect lasts forever. The bleeding never stops.

## **4. It's a club I can never leave but is filled with the most shining souls I've ever known.**

This crappy club called child loss is a club I never wanted to join, and one I can never leave yet is filled with some of the best people I've ever known. And yet we all wish we could jump ship, that we could have met another way — *any* other way but *this*. Alas, these shining souls are the most beautiful, compassionate, grounded, loving, movers, shakers and healers I have

ever had the honor of knowing. They are life-changers, game-changers, relentless survivors and thrivers. Warrior moms and dads who redefine the word brave.

Every day loss parents move mountains in honor of their children gone too soon. They start movements, change laws, spearhead crusades of tireless activism. Why? In the hope that even just one parent could be spared from joining *the club*. If you've ever wondered who some of the greatest world changers are, hang out with a few bereaved parents and watch how they live, see what they do in a day, a week, a lifetime. Watch how they alchemize their grief into a force to be reckoned with, watch how they turn tragedy into transformation, loss into legacy.

Love is the most powerful force on earth, and the love between a bereaved parent and his/her child is a lifeforce to behold. Get to know a bereaved parent. You'll be thankful you did.

#### **5. The empty chair/room/space never becomes less empty.**

Empty chair, empty room, empty space in every family picture. Empty, vacant, forever gone for this lifetime. Empty spaces that should be full, everywhere we go. There is and will always be a missing space in our lives, our families, a forever-hole-in-our-hearts. Time does not make the space less empty. Neither do platitudes, clichés or well-wishes for us to “move on,” or “stop dwelling,” from well-intentioned friends or family. Nothing does. No matter how you look at it, empty is still empty. Missing is still missing. Gone is still gone. The problem is nothing can fill it. Minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after heartbreaking year the empty space remains.

The empty space of our missing child(ren) lasts a lifetime. And so we rightfully miss them forever. Help us by holding the space of that truth for us.

#### **6. No matter how long it's been, holidays never become easier without my son.**

Never, ever. Have you ever wondered why every holiday season is like torture for a bereaved parent? Even if it's been five, 10, or 25 years later? It's because they really, truly are. Imagine if you had to live every holiday without one or more of your precious children. Imagine how that might feel for you. It would be easier to lose an arm, a leg or two — *anything* — than to live without your flesh and blood, without the beat of your heart. Almost anything would be easier than living without one or more of your precious children. That is why holidays are *always and forever* hard for bereaved parents. Don't wonder why or even try to understand. Know you don't have to understand in order to be a supportive presence. Consider supporting and loving some bereaved parents this holiday season. It will be the best gift you could ever give them.

#### **7. Because I know deep sorrow, I also know unspeakable joy.**

Though I will grieve the death of my son forever and then some, it does not mean my life is lacking happiness and joy. Quite the contrary, in fact, though it took a while to get there. It is not either/or, it's both/and. My life is richer now. I live from a deeper place. I love deeper



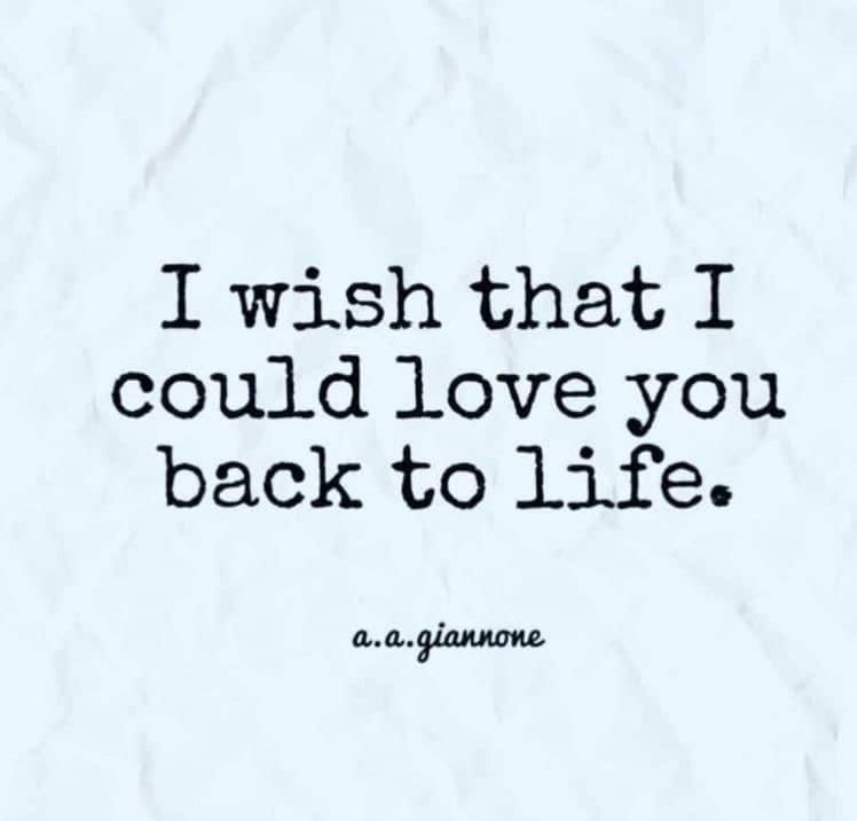
still. Because I grieve I also know a joy like no other. The joy I experience now is far deeper and more intense than the joy I experienced before my loss. Such is the alchemy of grief.

Because I've clawed my way from the depth of unimaginable pain, suffering and sorrow, again and again — when the joy comes, however and whenever it does — it is a joy that reverberates through every pore of my skin and every bone in my body. I feel all of it, deeply: the love, the grief, the joy, the pain. I embrace and thank every morsel of it. My life now is more rich and vibrant and full, not despite my loss, but *because* of it. In grief there are gifts, sometimes many. These gifts don't in any way make it all "worth" it, but I am grateful beyond words for each and every gift that comes my way. I bow my head to each one and say *thank you, thank you, thank you*. Because there is nothing — and I mean absolutely *nothing* — I take for granted. Living life in this way gives me greater joy than I've ever known possible.

I have my son to thank for that. Being his mom is the best gift I've ever been given.

Even death can't take that away.

Angela Miller, *A Bed for My Heart*



I wish that I  
could love you  
back to life.

*a.a.giannone*

# 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</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
Sean Gilson	<b>Jul 02</b>	Feb 04
Jackson Ellis	<b>Jul 03</b>	Mar 02
Adam (brother) Bowles	<b>Jul 04</b>	Sep 11
Katie Adkins	<b>Jul 05</b>	Jul 19
Barry L. Pavy	<b>Jul 05</b>	Sep 11
Steven Brown	<b>Jul 06</b>	Sep 10
Matthew (Matt) Fritz	<b>Jul 07</b>	Jan 26
Kasey Wayne Willis	<b>Jul 07</b>	May 25
Roxannae Young	<b>Jul 07</b>	Nov 12
Morgan Lynn Gummer	<b>Jul 09</b>	May 15
Melissa Runnels	<b>Jul 10</b>	Jun 15
Jacob Alan Davidson	<b>Jul 11</b>	Oct 07
Brooke Raufeisen	<b>Jul 11</b>	Oct 19
Xhaiden Strauser	<b>Jul 12</b>	Jul 16
Landen Branam	<b>Jul 13</b>	Jul 13
Lisa Roberta Poppleton	<b>Jul 13</b>	Jun 11
Alex Cummings	<b>Jul 14</b>	Apr 15
Dustin Mullins	<b>Jul 16</b>	Apr 19
Ashley Marie May	<b>Jul 18</b>	Nov 26
Ann 'KATE' Kathleen Mowery	<b>Jul 20</b>	Jan 12
Carson Query	<b>Jul 09</b>	Aug 08
Tayler Shields	<b>Jul 27</b>	Dec 22
Charles D Jackman	<b>Jul 30</b>	Dec 16
Marvella Jean Love Barton	<b>Jul 31</b>	Aug 02
Wyatt Bush	<b>Jul 31</b>	Jun 18
Eric Edgell	<b>Jul 31</b>	Oct 04
Jeremiah Goldsby	<b>Jul 31</b>	Apr 30





<u>Loved One</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
Caleb Joseph Keyes	Sep 26	Jul 01
Stephen Allen Pavy	Oct 07	Jul 01
Zachary Voelz	Sep 27	Jul 01
Tim "TJ" Rich, Jr	Sep 09	Jul 02
Clinton Ron Walker	Jan 31	Jul 02
Gary Ward	Aug 25	Jul 03
Jasper Carter	Jun 17	Jul 05
Devin Michael Leo	Sep 25	Jul 09
Stephanie Michelle Toof	Nov 13	Jul 09
Ezekiel James	Feb 01	Jul 10
Ahmari Smith	Sep 21	Jul 10
Natalie Donlan	Aug 09	Jul 12
Landen Branam	Jul 13	Jul 13
Matthew Hidding	Jun 08	Jul 13
Jeremy	Aug 22	Jul 13
Dodi Mills	Sep 19	Jul 14
Brice Thompson	Oct 26	Jul 15
Robert Land	Feb 15	Jul 16
Xhaiden Strauser	Jul 12	Jul 16
Tyler Wilson, MD	May 16	Jul 18
Katie Adkins	Jul 05	Jul 19
Brad Clark	Dec 02	Jul 19
Megan	Dec 17	Jul 20
Tyler Rugg	Nov 09	Jul 24
Ruby Amarech Sharer	May 13	Jul 24
William B. Jones	Dec 21	Jul 25
Michael Faust	Mar 04	Jul 26
Damon Joachim	Dec 29	Jul 26
Anthony J Elder	Mar 18	Jul 27
Isabelle Mackenzie	May 21	Jul 27
Jesse Walton	Oct 21	Jul 27
Luna Passow	Jun 28	Jul 28
Christopher "Cody" Pea	Mar 18	Jul 28
Corey	Mar 07	Jul 30
Kyle Richardson	Jun 08	Jul 30



# *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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