



# ***The Compassionate Friends***

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

**September 2026**

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:**

Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> & Oct. 7<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:**

Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> & Oct. 20<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)

**Secretary:** April Leo  
[april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org](mailto:april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org)



## **ANNUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING**

Please join us on Sunday, December 13, 2026, for The Compassionate Friends 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony.

If you have not submitted your loved one's photo for the slideshow presentation, please email it to: [tcfindy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tcfindy@sbcglobal.net). The cutoff date for submitting a photo is Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.

Please include the following information with photo: name, birthdate and angel date. Photos and information should be submitted as soon as possible to allow an ample amount of time to update the slideshow presentation.

If your loved one's photo was in the 2025 Slideshow Presentation you do not need to resubmit a photo unless you want to update the photo used in last year's annual service.



**New Hope Church**  
5307 W. Fairview Road  
Greenwood, Indiana 46142

**Sunday, December 13th**  
Time: 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

**Program Leaders:**  
April Leo, Central Indiana Chapter Leader  
Melanie Stewart, Kelli Clarke & Angie Groover Support Group Facilitators  
Larry Gardner, Webmaster

**Fellowship Hour:**  
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm  
Make an ornament for the holidays in memory of your loved one.  
Please bring your favorite finger food for the refreshment pitch-in.  
Drinks provided by TCF of Central Indiana.

**Candle Lighting Ceremony:**  
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Chapter Leader & Support Group Facilitators  
Readings, Slideshow Presentation, Music & Reading of Children's names.

**Photos:**  
Every family is welcome to bring a photo as well to place on the remembrance table.

# Helping Yourself Heal When Your Child Dies

*The experience of grief is powerful. So, too, is your ability to help yourself heal. In doing the work of grieving, you are moving toward a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in your life."*

~ ~ ~

## Allow yourself to mourn

Your child has died. You are now faced with the difficult, but important, need to mourn. Mourning is the open expression of your thoughts and feelings regarding the death of your child. It is an essential part of healing.

With the death of your child, your hopes, dreams and plans for the future are turned upside down. You are beginning a journey that is often frightening, painful, and overwhelming. The death of a child results in the most profound bereavement. In fact, sometimes your feelings of grief may be so intense that you do not understand what is happening. This article provides practical suggestions to help you move toward healing in your personal grief experience.

## Realizing your grief is unique

Your grief is unique. The unique child you loved and cared for so deeply had died. No one, including your spouse, will grieve in the same way you do. Your grief journey will be influenced not only by the relationship you had with your child, but also by the circumstances surrounding the death, your emotional support system and your cultural and religious background. As a result, you will grieve in your own unique way. Don't try to compare your experience with that of others or adopt assumptions about just how long your grief should last. Consider taking a "one-day-at-a-time" approach that allows you to grieve at your own pace.

## Allow yourself to feel numb

Feeling dazed or numb when your child dies may well be a part of your early grief experience. You may feel as if the world has suddenly come to a halt. This numbness serves a valuable purpose: it gives your emotions time to catch up with what your mind has told you. You may feel you are in a dream-like state and that you will wake up and none of this will be true. These feelings of numbness and disbelief help insulate you from the reality of the death until you are more able to tolerate what you don't want to believe.

## This death is "out of order"

Because the more natural order is for parents to precede their children in death, you must readapt to a new and seemingly illogical reality. This shocking reality says that even though you are older and have been the protector and provider, you have survived while your child has not. This can be so difficult to comprehend.

Not only has the death of your child violated nature's way, where the young grow up and replace the old, but your personal identity was tied to your child. You may feel impotent and

wonder why you couldn't have protected your child from death. Such thoughts are normal and will naturally soften over time as you explore and express them.

### **Expect to feel a multitude of emotions**

The death of your child can result in a variety of emotions. Confusion, disorganization, fear, guilt, anger and relief are just a few of the emotions you may feel. Sometimes these emotions will follow each other within a short period of time. Or they may occur simultaneously. As strange as some of these emotions may seem, they are normal and healthy. Allow yourself to learn from these feelings. And don't be surprised if out of nowhere you suddenly experience surges of grief, even at the most unexpected times. These grief attacks can be frightening and leave you feeling overwhelmed. They are, however, a natural response to the death of your child. Find someone who understands your feelings and will allow you to talk about them.

### **Be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits**

Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you fatigued. Your ability to think clearly and make decisions may be impaired. And your low energy level may naturally slow you down. Don't expect yourself to be as available to your spouse, surviving children, and friends as you might otherwise be.

Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Nurture yourself. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. Lighten your schedule as much as possible. Caring for yourself doesn't mean you are feeling sorry for yourself. It means you are using survival skills.

### **Talk about your grief**

Express your grief openly. When you share your grief outside yourself, healing occurs. Ignoring your grief won't make it go away; talking about it often makes you feel better. Allow yourself to speak from your heart, not just your head. Doing so doesn't mean you are losing control or going "crazy." It is a normal part of your grief journey.

### **Watch out for clichés**

Clichés—trite comments some people make in attempts to diminish your loss—can be extremely painful for you to hear. Comments like, "You are holding up so well," "Time heals all wounds," "Think of what you have to be thankful for" or "You have to be strong for others" are not constructive. While these comments may be well-intended, you do not have to accept them. You have every right to express your grief. No one has the right to take it away.

### **Develop a support system**

Reaching out to others and accepting support is often difficult, particularly when you hurt so much. But the most compassionate self-action you can do at this difficult time is to find a support system of caring friends and relatives who will provide the understanding you need. Seek out those people who encourage you to be yourself and acknowledge your feelings, whatever they are.

A support group may be one of the best ways to help yourself. In a group, you can connect with other parents who have experienced the death of a child. You will be allowed and gently encouraged to talk about your child as much, and as often, as you like.

Sharing the pain won't make it disappear, but it can ease any thoughts that what you are experiencing is crazy, or somehow bad. Support comes in different forms for different people — support groups, counseling, friends, faith—find out what combination works best for you and try to make use of them.

### **Embrace your treasure of memories**

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of a child. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring these memories, share them with your family and friends. Keep in mind that memories can be tinged with both happiness and sadness. If your memories bring laughter, smile. If your memories bring sadness, then it's all right to cry. Memories that were made in love — no one can take them away from you.

### **Gather important keepsakes**

You may want to collect some important keepsakes that help you treasure your memories. You may want to create a memory book, which is a collection of photos that represent your child's life. Some people create memory boxes to keep special keepsakes in. Then, whenever you want, you can open your memory box and embrace those special memories. The reality that your child has died does not diminish your need to have these objects. They are a tangible, lasting part of the special relationship you had with your child.

### **Embrace your spirituality**

If faith is part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you are angry at God because of the death of your child, realize this feeling as a normal part of your grief work. Find someone to talk with who won't be critical of whatever thoughts and feelings you need to explore.

You may hear someone say, "With faith, you don't need to grieve." Don't believe it. Having your personal faith does not insulate you from needing to talk out and explore your thoughts and feelings. To deny your grief is to invite problems to build up inside you. Express your faith, but express your grief as well.

### **Move toward your grief and heal**

To restore your capacity to love you must grieve when your child dies. You can't heal unless you openly express your grief. Denying your grief will only make it become more confusing and overwhelming. Embrace your grief and heal.

Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself. Never forget that the death of your child changes your life forever. It's not that you won't be happy again, it's simply that you will never be exactly the same as you were before the child died.

**by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.**

## *I am Still Near*

Please don't remember only  
the day I had to leave,  
or let my final moment  
be the story that you grieve.  
Remember all the laughter,  
the ordinary days,  
the love we shared so freely,  
in quiet, simple ways.  
I know your heart is aching,  
I know you miss me too,  
but I am not as far away  
as it may seem to you.  
I live within the memories  
that time can never take,  
within the love still left behind  
in every heart I shaped.  
So speak my name with gentleness,  
let stories bring a smile,  
and when the tears come, let them fall,  
then rest with them awhile.  
Do not think you must be strong  
every single day,  
grief is just love reaching out  
when words get in the way.  
And though my life on earth is done,  
my love has not gone too,  
for every life I touched still holds  
a piece of what is true.  
So carry me with tenderness,  
but let your heart live too,  
for every step you take in love  
keeps part of me with you.



| <u>Child's Name</u>  | <u>Birthdate</u> | <u>Angel Date</u> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Steven Carroll       | Sep 01           | Dec 14            |
| Summer Barndt        | Sep 05           | Jan 02            |
| Suzanne Binder       | Sep 05           | Jun 19            |
| Jonathan Titchenal   | Sep 05           | Jun 27            |
| Makenlee Anne Bibb   | Sep 06           | Sep 06            |
| Molly Jayne Day      | Sep 06           | Dec 28            |
| Brian Kercheval      | Sep 08           | Sep 03            |
| Sonrisa Moring       | Sep 08           | Jan 31            |
| Jamie Smiley         | Sep 08           | Jan 26            |
| Abigail Rejer        | Sep 09           | Mar 30            |
| Tim "TJ" Rich, Jr    | Sep 09           | Jul 02            |
| Christy Burdsall     | Sep 10           | Oct 08            |
| Kyle Kania           | Sep 10           | Nov 01            |
| Christopher Marcum   | Sep 10           | Mar 02            |
| Rachel Litherlaud    | Sep 11           | Jan 02            |
| Mark Andrew Nadelin  | Sep 11           | Dec 24            |
| Gary Robert Denien   | Sep 12           | May 02            |
| Kortney Reid         | Sep 16           | Sep 16            |
| Nikahlas D. Fischer  | Sep 19           | Feb 24            |
| Lori Diane Sherrill  | Sep 19           | Jan 27            |
| Peyton Belling       | Sep 20           | Feb 05            |
| Tristan M Hughes     | Sep 21           | Mar 26            |
| Harold Lynn Shelton  | Sep 21           | Jun 02            |
| Ahmari Smith         | Sep 21           | Jul 10            |
| Christopher Hunter   | Sep 22           | Oct 03            |
| Paul Wilson          | Sep 22           | Sep 22            |
| Jessica Humpf        | Sep 23           | Nov 08            |
| Cayden Mooney        | Sep 23           | Jan 05            |
| Jacob Steele         | Sep 25           | May 20            |
| Devin Michael Leo    | Sep 25           | Jul 09            |
| Kendall Scout Wood   | Sep 25           | Nov 16            |
| Caleb Joseph Keyes   | Sep 26           | Jul 01            |
| Matthew Michael Daum | Sep 27           | Sep 28            |
| Zachary Voelz        | Sep 27           | Jul 01            |



| <u>Child's Name</u>      | <u>Birthdate</u> | <u>Angel Date</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Blair Sinchai            | 05-18            | 09-01             |
| Brian Kercheval          | 09-08            | 09-03             |
| Kenneth Davis III        | 04-20            | 09-03             |
| Steven "Isaiah" Edwards  | 05-17            | 09-03             |
| Coleen Paravicini        | 01-19            | 09-05             |
| Makenlee Anne Bibb       | 09-06            | 09-06             |
| Drew Nichols             | 04-22            | 09-06             |
| Matthew Krenzke          | 03-24            | 09-09             |
| Steven Brown             | 07-06            | 09-10             |
| William Matthew Lawrance | 05-17            | 09-10             |
| Adam (brother) Bowles    | 07-04            | 09-11             |
| Barry L. Pavy            | 07-05            | 09-11             |
| Allison Lardin           | 01-18            | 09-11             |
| Cooper Tonte             | 02-26            | 09-13             |
| Logan Scherer            | 06-02            | 09-15             |
| Sascha Nolan Simpson     | 05-28            | 09-15             |
| Kevin Slusher            | 01-12            | 09-15             |
| Kortney Reid             | 09-16            | 09-16             |
| PFC Devon Compton        | 05-06            | 09-17             |
| Iziah Suhre              | 12-05            | 09-19             |
| Ted Schlechte            | 04-24            | 09-19             |
| Redell Pierre McClaine   | 06-08            | 09-20             |
| Derek Hickman            | 04-30            | 09-21             |
| Paul Wilson              | 09-22            | 09-22             |
| Sophia Harshbarger       | 05-29            | 09-24             |
| Austin Robinson          | 11-14            | 09-26             |
| Michael R. LoCicero      | 12-20            | 09-27             |
| Megan Krzmarzick         | 02-14            | 09-28             |
| Jamison MacKenzie Bell   | 01-11            | 09-28             |
| Matthew Michael Daum     | 09-27            | 09-28             |
| Zachery Groover          | 11-26            | 09-28             |
| Rashid Conteh            | 01-01            | 09-29             |
| Kristopher Hesler        | 05-16            | 09-29             |



# *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 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@tcfccentralindiana.org](mailto:april.leo@tcfccentralindiana.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  
[april.leo@tcfccentralindiana.org](mailto:april.leo@tcfccentralindiana.org)

**TCF National Headquarters** – P.O. Box 3696,  
Oak Brook, IL 60522  
(877) 969-0010 (toll free)  
Email: [nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)  
Web Address: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
  
Local Website: <http://www.tcfccentralindiana.org/>