



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Sioux Falls Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

May 2015

Upcoming Meeting: May 5, 2015

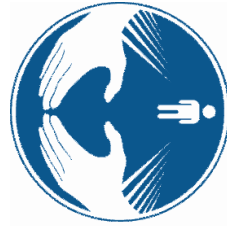
Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:15 with the exception of December.

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
3801 E. 26th Street  
Sioux Falls, SD

*There is no religious affiliation.*

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

**The Compassionate Friends** is a support group for those who have experienced the death of a child at any age, for any reason.



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Friends**  
Sioux Falls Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

*If you are no longer interested in receiving this newsletter,  
please contact us at:  
rstoecker53@gmail.com*

The Compassionate Friends  
Sioux Falls SD Area Chapter  
2804 South Kingswood Way  
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

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**TCF “Online Support Community” Offers Opportunity**

The Compassionate Friends national website offers “Virtual chapters” through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support and encouragement and encourage conversation and friendship among people who understand what you are going through. The different sessions have either general or more specific focuses. The sessions have trained moderators present and most last one hour. For more information, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org), select “Find Support” and click “Online Support” in the Online Community Column.

<b>MON</b>	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 8AM—9AM	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 8PM—9PM	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 9PM—10PM
<b>TUE</b>	Bereaved Less than 2 Yrs. 8PM—9PM	Bereaved More than 2 Yrs. 8PM—9PM	
<b>WED</b>	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings	
<b>THU</b>	No Surviving Children	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings	
<b>FRI</b>	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 9AM—10AM	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 8PM—9PM And 9PM—10PM	Pregnancy/Infant Loss 8PM—10PM
<b>SAT</b>	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 8PM—9PM	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 9PM—10PM	
<b>SUN</b>	Survivors of Suicide 7PM—8PM	Parents/Grandparents/Siblings 8PM—9PM	

*All times listed are in central time. Please note that some times are AM.*



**A Stranger . . . My Friend**

I don't remember who, but someone called me to the phone that day.

A lady said she didn't know me, but just wanted to say:

That she had lost a child, too. She would pray for my deep pain.

My days that had been sunny were now filled with crashing rain.

Her voice was kind and soothing as she spoke to me with care.

I grasped each word intensely that the stranger was willing to share.

Her child died in a way similar to mine, a passenger in a car.

She knew rage, shocking sorrow and recognized my new, deadening scar.

She said we have a mutual friend in the funeral director there.

For he had buried her child too and now mine – I could not bear.

I cried and cried as she talked to me that sad, heartbreaking day.

But she quickly instilled in my mind right then and there – that crying was okay.

She briefly spoke of brighter days to come somewhere along the way.

She assured me, too, that God was there, if only I could pray.

I don't remember all she said, my mind was so far away.

But I thank God for sending her, a stranger – my friend – that day.

She called me again a few days later to see if I was alive.

Still in shock, I remembered her, the lady who had survived.

Such grief, such devastating sadness: I was totally in despair.

But my new friend called again, keeping me in her care.

We came to meet, this lady and I, in life's ungracious bend

I love her now, this total stranger:

She is my Compassionate Friend

*Diana Gridler*

*TCF, Kokomo, IN*

As part of remembering our children, we will have a table set up for you to bring pictures and anything you wish to share about your child during the month of your child's birthday.

TCF Leaders for Sioux Falls:

Ruth Stoecker 605-201-1426

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kristin.tcf@gmail.com

### **The Compassionate Friends**

National Office: 877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

The meeting of The Compassionate Friends was held on April 7, 2015, with twelve members present. A questionnaire was filled out regarding where each member is currently in his or her grief. The questionnaires will be brought out in one year so that members can review it and compare.

### **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 they 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 this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a 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.



### *The Gift of Love*



Please send in love gifts by the 5th of the month so that they may be included in the following month's newsletter.

Your donation is greatly appreciated.

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Love Gift Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your love gift to:

Tami Meeker  
48424 Beaver Valley Rd  
Valley Springs, SD 57068

From Bill and Mary Beth Mueller



In loving memory of



**Gretchen Mae Mueller**

## Graduation Time

It's June and graduation time again. Your child would have been among those wearing the cap and gown, walking down the aisle to the ever stirring "Pomp and Circumstance." Now there is a vacant spot in the line. Should you attend? Can you stand the pain? Will people think you are strange?

As always you must follow your heart. So, go if you'd like to and don't hide your tears. It's quite all right to miss your own child while celebrating the achievements of others.

Just remember: That your instincts are the most important ones; that no one else can make this decision for you, and that it doesn't really matter what other people think.

It was your child who died. This is your pain and you have the right to feel it and deal with it in your own way – and may a bit more healing take place in the doing.

*Peggy Gibson,  
TCF Nashville, TN*

### HONORARY ASSOCIATES OF COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Sponsors are considered Honorary Associates of our organization and are recognized at the level of their donation. We would like to offer our sincere and grateful appreciation to the following supporters:

<b>DIAMOND (\$500)</b>	<b>GOLD (\$150)</b>	<b>SILVER (\$100)</b>	Fiberglass Repair
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		Dr. Richard Howard	

Special thanks to:

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—hosting our monthly meetings

MILLER FUNERAL HOME—providing cookies for our meetings

AVERA—donating the printing of our newsletters

## Thoughts about Mother's Day

As I think about Mother's Day this year I become very nostalgic. Every spring during my elementary school days, I looked forward to the day the order form for our plants for Mother's Day came from our local florist. I always ordered pansies for my mom, the ones with purple and yellow or yellow and brown. I could hardly wait for the delivery day to come, so that I could present them to my mother. She always received them with much surprise and appreciation, as if it were a gift she had never received before or even expected.

As a child, Mother's Day was an important occasion to my family. My dad always insisted we wear the traditional carnations: white if one's mother was deceased, red if still living. He would make a special trip to the florist to purchase them. We would attend church, and then drive to a nearby city for lunch.

I remember clearly my first Mother's Day being "the mom." Our Anna was only about three weeks old, so I had a very limited idea of what it really meant to be "the mom." But I do remember being treated like a queen and enjoying every minute of it.

Over the next several years as we raised our two daughters, my husband continued to affirm the women of our family. On Mother's Day he always bought roses for each of his girls. Anna would get a yellow one. Debbie would get a peach-colored one. The red roses were for me. When the girls were young I would receive and treasure their hand-made cards. As they grew into young adults, their choices in purchased cards were just as significant. Every year as Mother's Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories... That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. Our daughter, Anna, died. How could those special days of love and togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away or stay in bed with the sheets over my head. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by "intact" families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

The feelings that I have shared are not uncommon in the early years of grief with those who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. If you or someone you care about has experienced the death of a child, I offer some suggestions from those who have been there to help you do to make it through this time.

Realize this day is full of potential for a multitude of feelings to sneak up on you and catch you by surprise.

Especially during those early years, do whatever works for you. This may be a time of being in "survival mode." Trying to please everyone else can cause undue stress.

If you have surviving children who want to honor you, communicate your feelings to them. Let them know that while you are grieving the death of their brother or sister, you still love them.

Try to keep things simple and uncomplicated.

You may choose to pretend the day just does not exist and do something completely unrelated to Mother's Day. Clean the house, take a nap, get out of town. One of my Compassionate Friends spends Mother's Day at Home Depot. No one bothers her there or mentions Mother's Day.

Have a good cry. If you have trouble crying, just stop by a card shop and read a card or two. Maybe even buy the card that you believe your child would give you.

Go to the recycle bin and break glass into the proper receptacle.

Know that the days before the holiday may be worse than the actual day.

As with all holidays, be reassured that what you do this year does not have to be what you do next year. As my Compassionate Friends and I have found, with proper grief work over time, the intensity of our feelings has softened. This will happen for you, as well. In the meantime, be gentle with yourself. And remember, "you need not walk alone."

*Paula Funk*

*TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI  
In loving memory of my daughter, Anna*

## Love Lives On

Every second, of every minute, of every hour, of every day ... I think of you!  
Why you left? What I could have done? ... And now, what do I do?

For the first eight months you left me ... my heart knew it was true,  
But my mind kept saying "you're not gone" ... the pain made me the fool!

For the second eight months, I told myself ... that you were just away.  
I knew that you were coming home ... and I waited for that day.

These last few months I've seen the truth ... you will not be coming home!  
For God has called you to his side ... and left me on my own.

If I'd have known you'd be gone this long ... I'd have tried to face my fears.  
That only my dreams would hold the door ... where I'd see you through the years.

We're not meant to bury our babies ... it's life's most tragic flaw.  
For it takes a piece of each of us ... and the wounds ... so deep ... so raw.

It's been two years since you chose to leave ... I pray God holds you near.  
I hope he knows the man you are ... gentle and sincere!

I'm not sure what to do with my life ... now that you are gone.  
Each day is filled with emptiness ... and the pain continues on.

The sleepless nights are much the same ... as the numbness brought by day.  
I walk the walk ... talk the talk ... let life bring what it may.

The two years that you've been away ... I've searched my heart and soul.  
I've learned that I must carry on ... to keep your memory whole.

So I pray to God he keeps you safe ... until he brings me home.  
For I promise, Son, in life or death ... you will never stand alone.

Moving on is unimaginable ... but it's what I have to do.  
I know that God will hold my hand ... and, in time, bring me home to you.

It truly is a walk for one ... one that none else can share.  
Just promise me, when my time comes ... you'll be waiting for me there.

I love you Brice, more than words can say ... and this I know is true.  
That when my journey comes to end ... I'll be standing there with you!

Betsy P. Rush Kron

TCF Anchorage, AK

In Memory of my son, Brice Bobby Kron

## A Mother's Lament

If I had known	He taught us all
The pain I'd bear	So much you see
The sadness and the great despair	Through his kindness,
Would I have chosen the path I did	Love and generosity.
To have this child	Though he's gone
Who so briefly lived?	From us physically
Yes, I am certain	He lives on in our hearts
That I would	Eternally.
For all the laughter	
All the good.	

Sandy Roush

TCF Lakes Area, MI

## Mother's Day Revisited

Many of us in TCF do not look forward to Mother's Day. On this holiday, when the whole nation is celebrating the joys of parenthood, grieving parents often feel a special anguish.

Mother's Day this year looms as a particularly difficult milestone for me, Sunday, May 10, 1998, is not only Mother's Day but also the second anniversary of the death of my ten-year-old son, Jacob. Because this day of private sadness also happens to be a day of public celebration, I decided that I should start thinking early about the occasion. I engaged in a little research about the holiday and learned a story that I think is worth sharing.

Mother's Day was the creation of a woman named Anna Jarvis in the early years of this century. Anna, who never married and never had children of her own, devoted herself to establishing a national Mother's Day as a way of honoring her beloved mother, who died on May 9, 1905. In Anna's view, her mother deserved a memorial because she had lived selflessly and endured considerable suffering - seven of her eleven children had died in early childhood. According to historians, Anna's mother mourned the deaths of her children throughout her life.

Anna insisted that the holiday always fall on a Sunday so that it would retain its spiritual moorings. Because of her efforts, President Woodrow Wilson finally proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Although Anna couldn't prevent the new holiday from quickly becoming a marketing phenomenon, she did try. Speaking out against "the mire of commercialization" that threatened to engulf Mother's Day, Anna attempted to preserve her creation as a true "holy day," a time for solemn reflection and prayer.

Mother's Day, then, was borne of a daughter's grief and love. More importantly, it was intended as a tribute to a bereaved mother-a brave woman who lost multiple children but who managed to live with an abiding kindness and generosity toward others. I like knowing this background, and my attitude towards Mother's Day has been colored by the knowledge. The holiday now makes me think of the common sorrow that links all bereaved parents. I feel a bond with Anna's mother that stretches over time and space. In a broader sense, the woman for whom the holiday was founded reminds me of people I've met at TCF who have continued to live productive, meaningful lives in the face of unthinkable loss.

Finally, Mother's Day in its origins symbolizes both the joy and the vulnerability inherent in parenthood. Anna's mother knew all too well that from the moment a child is born, hope and the possibility of tragedy go hand in hand. She understood the fragility of life.

Enriched by its own history, Mother's Day is easier for me to tolerate. The coincidence of dates this year-Mother's Day and the anniversary of my son's death-is not as jarring as it once seemed. Although the commercial images of the modern Mother's Day still make me wince, I can turn off the television and envision the kind of day that Anna Jarvis had in mind: a time for quiet reflection and the sharing of cherished memories.

*Barbara Atwood  
In memory of Jacob  
TCF, Tucson, Arizona*



## Our Children Remembered—May

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Parents
Samantha Jo Miller	2-May	9-May	Bret & Tammy Miller
Maria Louise Meyer	3-May	27-Feb	Cal & Cindy Krueger
Kennedy Reagan Alfson	3-May	18-Mar	Rich & Stacy Alfson
Brandon James Ganun	4-May	30-Nov	Angie (Ganun) & Rich Hubbling (step-father)
Evan Oleg Kagarmanov	4-May	24-May	Alex & Michelle Kagarmanov
Mason James Karpinen	5-May	5-May	Josh & Jan Karpinen
Robert James Redder	5-May	1-Aug	Jim & Deb Redder
Lee David Strameyer	7-May	1-Mar	Dave & Juliane Strameyer
Christian Hohn	7-May	31-Dec	Kevin & Billie Hohn
Brienne Nicole Dykstra	9-May	21-Feb	Gordon & Julie Dykstra
Lanny Schlim	11-May	15-Oct	Roger & Janyce Schlim
Carson Elliot Powell	12-May	11-Oct	Greg & Terri Powell
Linda Lee Hofer Leaf	15-May	12-Jul	Irene & Orville Hofer
David Karlson	16-May	11-May	Jean & Kenneth Karlson
John Bernhard	17-May	23-Oct	Betty & Ed Bernhard
Lyndsey Dayle Wehrkamp	17-May	1-Nov	Evangeli Wehrkamp
Kathryn Fellbaum	19-May	12-Dec	Ann Lynn Graham - grandmother
Dr Richard (Dick) Marnach	19-May	5-May	Gene & Gail Fellbaum
Codi Dawn Meier	20-May	27-May	Lorraine Marnach
David Michael Miller	21-May	5-Jan	Melody Schoon & Kelly Straw
Ashley Ann Engel	23-May	18-Jul	Wanda Burgers & Mark Miller
Steven P. Tyrrell	23-May	17-Aug	Joel & Jolene Engel
Gretchen Mae Mueller	24-May	22-Apr	Rose & Tom Tyrrell
Travis Osborne	24-May	26-Jun	Bill & Mary Beth Mueller
Joel Oltmann	24-May	13-Aug	Danny Osborne & Linda Andrews
Justin Henry Maass	26-May	9-Dec	Lynn & Anita Oltmann
Billy C. Arens, Jr.	27-May	3-Jun	Brenda & Lynn Maass
Maddie Thompson	28-May	30-Aug	Bill & Marlene Arens, Sr.
Michael James Stevens	28-May	30-Dec	Jeri Lynn (Thompson) Howe & Chris Thompson
Camie Stomeling	29-May	17-Aug	Cheryl Stevens-Pool
Marcus Don Gross	8-Oct	1-May	Jerry & Jeannette Stomeling
Wayne Hof	26-Jul	3-May	Don & Pat Gross
David James Barg	27-Oct	3-May	Darwin Hof
Paula Jo Brockhouse-Johnson	16-Jun	5-May	Fred & Peggy Barg
Johan Johnson	19-Dec	5-May	Butch & Judy Brockhouse
Jill Kathleen Jorgensen	3-Apr	6-May	Dan & Gayle Johnson
Beverly Osterman	16-Sep	7-May	Milt & Eunice Jorgensen
Jacob Michael Hayes	24-Dec	9-May	Artine Mustar
Kendall Jerrod Cressman	27-Jun	9-May	DeVern & Michelle Berkland
Eric David Kroneman	3-Oct	12-May	Camille & Paul Cressman
Clara Mae Ortman	21-Jan	12-May	Larry & Bonnie Kroneman
Robbie Jacobson	25-Jan	14-May	Chris & Missy Ortman
Travis Bakke	5-Oct	15-May	Karla & Bob Jacobson
Alicia Erin Moriarty	14-Dec	18-May	Marte & Greg Bakke
Carrie Christine Nelson	13-Dec	20-May	Mike & Kay Moriarty
Timothy Dean Thielson	10-Aug	22-May	Mike & Nan Karr Kaufenberg
Adam Lee Thompson	19-Mar	23-May	Kathy Hines
Troy Trankle	21-Aug	25-May	Troy and Ann Thompson
William Brooks Nichol	26-Sep	27-May	Ron & Jo Trankle
Jessi Heiberger	15-Jun	28-May	Cleo & Gloria Nichol
Kevin William Koenig	15-Jan	30-May	Tim Heiberger
John Michael Pittman	16-Jul	30-May	Sandy & Jack Koenig
Joseph Allen Cavallaro IV	17-Sep	30-May	Jeralyn Harfer
Pam Stewart Ortman	6-Jun	31-May	Jennifer Lynn Tomanio
Jerry Ortman	15-Jun	31-May	Shirley & Bob Stewart
			Arlyss & Alvin Ortman