

NATIONAL OFFICE
The Compassionate Friends
48660 Pontiac #930808
Wixom, MI 48393
Toll Free
1/877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org
email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org



The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies
Oscoda Area Chapter

The Compassionate Friends of
Oscoda Area
4087 Forest Rd.
Oscoda, MI 48750
989-254-5888
Email: tcfoscoda@gmail.com

Issue 84 September/October ~ 2025

Monthly Meetings

2nd Tuesday of the Month
Sacred Heart Church Family Center
5300 N US 23
Oscoda, MI 48750
Meeting time 7:00 pm

**If Oscoda Area Schools is closed due
to weather our meeting is canceled.**

September 9th @ 7pm

October 14th @ 7 pm

November 11th @ 7 pm

You need not walk alone!

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Chapter
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750
Phone: 989-254-5888
Email: tcfoscoda@gmail.com
Web: www.tcf-oscoda.org



The Compassionate Friends Oscoda Area

Co-Leaders: Fran Ommani
Charlie Negro
Secretary: Charlie Negro
Treasurer: Jane Negro
Outreach: Tracey Toppa
Director: Vicky Stadler

REGIONAL COORDINATOR



Gail Lafferty
734-306-3930

Kathy Rambo
734-748-2514

There will Come a Day

*There will come a day when
the tears of sorrow will softly flow
into tears of remembrance...
and your heart will begin
to heal itself...
and grieving will be interrupted
by episodes of joy
and you will hear the whispers of hope.*

*There will come a day when
you will welcome
the tears of remembrance...
as a sun-shower of the soul...
a turning of the tide...
a promise of peace.*

*There will come a day when
you will smile and laugh and
tell your story without tears
as you remember.*

~TCF Chapter Bronx, New York



Wake Me Up When September Ends

Summer has come and passed. The innocent can never last. Wake me up when September ends.

Even without looking at the calendar, my body and soul take note. I know the time of the year by heart. It is the beginning of the school year. For nearly my whole life this time of year has signaled a fresh start, anticipation of things to come. A time for new shoes, fresh notebooks, sharp, unchewed pencils. All these things beckon of hopes and dreams, plans and goals for success and achievement.

Our son, Jake died two months short of his high school graduation. We received his college acceptance letter on the day of his funeral. Last fall, we watched his friends and classmates head off to college. Many of them came to say goodbye to us; after all, we had "adopted" them as our sons and daughters now. Of course, we wished them well with a smile and a hug. Our hearts were aching to be lugging things into a dorm room, too.

So, September is here once more, and I think about what Jake would be doing now. I think about all the parents for whom this time of year is difficult, also. I think of those parents who would be putting crayons into a cute little backpack, those who would be watching that first ball game of the season, and those who would maybe be encouraging a college grad to find that first job and begin paying off student loans.

Our sons and daughters have gone straight to the "Head of the Class" but we wish we were able to give them a hug as they achieve glorious dreams beyond our imagination!

As my memory rests
But never forgets what I lost...
Wake me up when September ends.

~Laurie Dreier TCF, St Paul



Changing Of the Seasons

The summer heat is fading, and the evenings begin to cool, autumn whispers in the wind. Labor Day often signals the last 'hurrah' for days-off as school buses resume their familiar routes and leaf gathering chores are added to our days.

In our journey towards recovery, there are also seasons. For many, autumn is a reflective time, when nature begins its own cycle of shutting down and dying. A time of quiet melancholy may fill your heart. Distant shadows of the approaching holidays begin to creep into your mind.

But if you look closely, you will notice autumn sings loudly her song of beauty and rebirth. She puts on her finest wardrobe, filled with colors of warmth and comfort. Different colors are than bright spring and summer florals, but how beautiful and peaceful. I see autumn as a season of inner strength, with roots reaching deep into the heart of the earth for nurturing.

So, as we gather leaves and find long forgotten jackets, my wish is that the harsh edges of pain will begin to recede, and your memories bring you warmth and comfort.

~D. Barta TCF Portland, OR





Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas & Even New Year's Day

Once again, the time of celebrations is upon us. Ghosts, goblins, and a wicked witch or two express our farewell to October and prepare us for turkey, family reunions, and pumpkin pie that mark Thanksgiving. Then comes a most cherished holiday-Christmas, followed by New Year's Day.

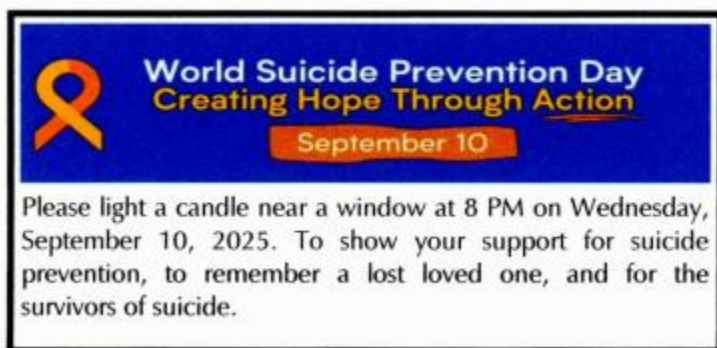
For many parents these occasions are almost unbearably difficult because our memories give us glimpses of excited costumed children voicing a timid "trick or treat" at neighbors' doors. We remember the fondness of a family Thanksgiving and chuckle at recalling best clothing smeared with the color of cranberry. But, perhaps most of all, we live again the search for that favorite story or book, or the vibrancy of a child's eyes drinking in the Christmas tree.

It is wonderful to remember, but in the first years at least, the pain overshadows most of the happiness we have in recall. But even for those along in years and growth from the time of bereavement, there is a longing that is forever barren, a hope that cannot be realized. The pain may be less wrenching, less totally consuming, but it is always there.

There are ways to help yourself if you wish, but it is very hard at first. You can curse the darkness, holding the pain close to you to protect what little seems to remain of you, and we who are also bereaved will understand, for we have gone on that lonely road as well. Plan to give yourself lots of latitude and learn to tolerate your own behavior. If you spend all, one, or two of these days in tears, depression or yearning, it simply means that you are not ready to face the task that the holidays have become. Perhaps in the future you will.

When I think of my son Olin or the children, we have all lost, I think of light and dreams, joy and laughter. There is no holiday memory or activity, beautiful present or well-intentioned relative that will compensate for the life, the light, or the splendid future forever lost to eternity. Yet, as I grow older in my grief, I also remember that my child's light and dreams gave birth to my own joy and laughter. These were gifts he gave me every holiday, together with limitless love that defies all time and space, even death itself. So, I have promised him a laugh back this Christmas, at least, and on the other holidays if I can. It's not a gift to put in a box or stocking and the packaging will still be the same old me. But he'll have my gift this year-a smile, a laugh, some joy from me. As I write this it seems very strange, for that gift is but a return of many he gave, colorful packages, invisible to all but me, nestled in splendor beneath our tree.





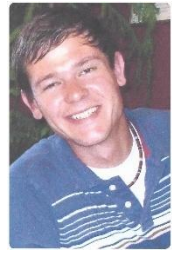



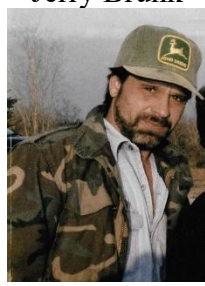



~Don Hackett TCF Plymouth, MA





"Forever In Our Hearts"
Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings
Loved and Missed



 Birthday		Remembered	
September Drew Alan Preston 	October Samuel Martin 	September Andrew Carroll 	September Kyra Goodman Swiatek 
October Amanda Grace Wilkinson 	October Audree Ball 	October Jerry Brunk 	October April White 
October Daniel Cleary 	<p><i>"Our loved ones are still and always will be a part of us. They are the threads in our fabric, and we cannot lose their love"</i> ~Darcie Sims</p>	October Matthew Rheahme 	<p><i>"Though they are no longer with us, the memories of our loved ones live on in our hearts forever."</i> ~Unknown</p>

Watch the sunrise Remember the laughter Celebrate what was
~Sascha Wagner





Honoring Sibling Loss

The discussion centers on the deep pain and continuing impact of losing a sibling. The conversation gathers heartfelt stories, personal reflections, and practical advice from those who have

experienced such a loss. The dialogue touches on the challenges of grief, how sibling loss shapes personal identity, and ways to remember those who have passed. The speakers share how these losses have altered the course of their lives and offer inspiration for others dealing with similar emotions.

Sharing Personal Journeys

Several individuals recount their experiences with sibling loss. Among the speakers is a host who is a doctor, along with her daughter, who also co-hosts the conversation. They invite two guests, both of whom have lost siblings at a young age. Their honest testimonials bring forward the pain, confusion, and eventual acceptance that many feel in the wake of such a tragedy. One guest, a seasoned writer, recounts the loss of her only sibling in 1999 when he passed away due to complications involving drugs and alcohol. At 24, she returned to her childhood home to support her grieving family and soon observed that the loss was often minimized by others.

“People kept telling me to be strong for my parents. It felt like there was an invisible script that everyone recited at my brother’s memorial service,” she stated. Her experience left her with the feeling that the grief of siblings is frequently overshadowed by the focus on parental loss. Another guest recalled the tragic hiking accident that claimed her brother’s life when she was only 10 years old. Despite growing up surrounded by family, she was left with a lingering sense of isolation. The casual dismissal of her emotions by even close relatives deepened her sorrow. She remembered moments when her overwhelming feelings were met with impatience, as one cousin urged her to “get over it” shortly after the memorial.

Living with Loss and Honoring Memories

The speakers discuss how memory and remembrance serve as powerful tools to keep the connection with lost siblings alive. They stress that speaking the name of a deceased sibling can evoke a comforting presence and make the loss feel acknowledged. One guest shared, “When I started saying my brother’s name aloud, I felt a presence that brought me both tears and a sense of comfort.” Another guest who lost her brother as a young child noted that over time, her life has become a living tribute to him. She explained that even though the pain has not disappeared, she has learned to live with it. The process has led her to develop a deeper appreciation for life and to treasure the memories shared with her siblings. These emotions demonstrate that while the sorrow of loss remains, it can also inspire personal growth and resilience.

Reflecting on Life’s Milestones Without a Sibling

The speakers reflect on the bittersweet nature of life milestones. They discuss how moments such as weddings, graduations, and family reunions are permanently marked by the absence of a sibling. These events are filled with mixed emotions where pride and celebration are intertwined with a palpable sense of loss. In recounting their personal experiences, one guest explained that she continually feels the gap left by her sibling during important moments. Another described the complex feelings that arise when a loss in one area of life reawakens memories of a sibling who is no longer present to share these experiences. The ongoing impact is a reminder that even as life moves forward, the memory of a sibling stays with us. Their influence persists in shaping values, memories, and personal identities.

An expert from *Honoring Loss* by Gloria Horsley Dr. Gloria Horsley is an internationally known grief expert, psychotherapist, and bereaved parent. <https://www.opentohope.com/honoring-sibling-loss/>



Keep Child's Memory Alive Through Words and Celebrations

Louise is a mother to three: two sons, Eric and James, and her daughter Keren, who died in 2006 at the age of 23.

<https://www.opentohope.com/keep-childs-memory-alive-through-words-and-celebrations/>

Keep Child's Memory Alive

Four years ago, I lost my beautiful 23-year-old daughter, Keren. Therefore, I know firsthand how painful it is to lose a child. At first, I really didn't think I would survive and almost didn't. I knew I needed help and reached out through the internet to find other grieving parents, who would understand my pain and grief. I needed to know that I was not alone.

At that time, I couldn't bring myself to attend a grief group or even leave my house. I felt that I could barely stand up because I was so weighed down by grief. So for me, the computer was the only avenue to reach out for help. I found the help I was seeking, and I wanted to give back by reaching out to aid other grieving parents. So, I started an online grief support message board, <http://griefsupport.proboards.com/> with my friend and fellow bereaved mother, Gladis Alcorta.

I felt so alone till I started bonding with other bereaved parents. Even though I was surrounded by family and friends, I did not personally know another parent who had lost a child. I was beginning to feel bitter and rejected by life, everything I believed in or thought I knew didn't seem to make sense anymore. I was withdrawing into myself and even questioning if life was still worth living after the loss of my beloved daughter.

Simple Steps

It really helps to keep your child's memory alive and share with others. Some ways you can do this are:

- Doing something in your child's name
- Create a memorial (Online or elsewhere)
- Share your memories of your beloved child with others who want to listen

There are a few things I learned the hard way after my loss. It is **very important** to know:

- The first two years after losing a child are hell on earth.
- What you are feeling is **perfectly normal**.
- Sharing and bonding with other parents along the grief path helps.

Our Children are Still with Us

The **worst thing** you can do is listen to the advice of people who have not experienced the loss of a child. Unfortunately, there are people out there that think they are right, and something is wrong with you. Many of them do not understand and will tell you things such as, "You need to get over this and move on" or "You shouldn't celebrate your child's life."

To celebrate, talk and write about our children keeps them alive to us. You need not feel so alone and that is why groups like ours can be so helpful. We are here for you, we understand, we know. For our pain is yours and after a bit of time you will see a little light come back into your life. We are survivors and I truly believe with all my heart that our children want us to heal and always remember the good times. Our children are still with us and watching over us.



Watch the sunrise Remember the laughter

Celebrate what was

~Sascha Wagner

A Mother's Thoughts

YESTERDAY...

We dreamed of how our future would be,
Of times we'd share, my child and me.
Whether joy or pain, laughter or tears,
We'd stand together throughout the years.
A promise of what life should always be,
Of a child so dear, ever loving me.

TODAY...

My heart sobs with uncontrollable grief.
I search for answers but find no relief.
The skies have darkened, no longer bright,
For my child is gone, forever from sight.
The dreams we shared can never be,
They're left to linger in my memory.

TOMORROW...

My heart will push aside this cloud
That darkens my life like a heavy shroud.
Once again, I'll see the dawning light
And I know my child's love still burns bright.
I'll remember the moments we both shared.
I'll remember our love and how we cared.
I'll remember my child now lives in me,
And his YESTERDAYS shall always be.

~Carol Cichella TCF Rockford, IL

Grandparents Day September 7



Memories

Memories are flowers growing in the heart

Flowers picked on happy days
That time arranges in bouquets
To warm the heart in tender ways
By feelings they impart.
Memories are pictures taken through the years,
Pictures of a smiling face.
A happy time, a favorite place...
These pleasures time cannot erase.
They are kept as souvenirs.

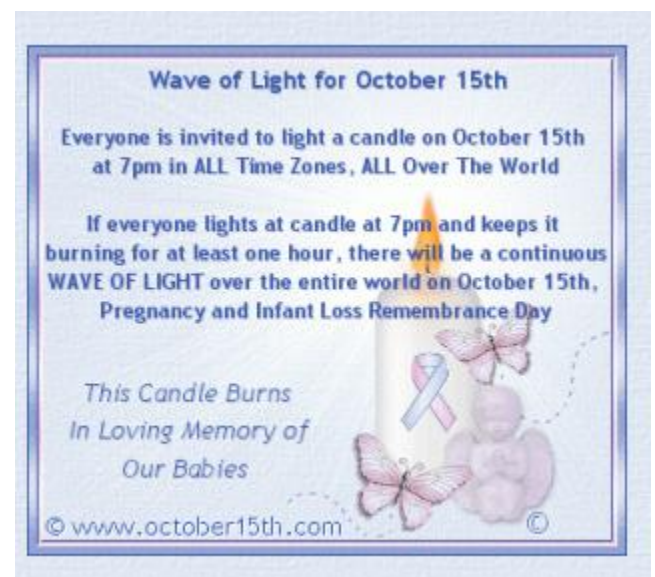
~Laura Rogers TCF Northfield, NJ

October's Memories

October's here, the air is bright
The leaves decked out in fancy dress,
The clouds in shapes of animals Hang in the sky so blue.
This was our time of year, your favorite. How many times
did you come in, cheeks glowing, eyes sparkling, smelling
of the leaves you jumped through as a child and even after
you grew up.

"Just smell, just feel the air. I love it, crisp,
With a hint of winter coming."
Our time, but now only my time.
Time to dream dreams that won't be.
Time to wish wishes that can't come true,
Time to remember & treasure each day we had together.
Time for October's memories.

~Arden Lansing TCF Northfield, NJ





The 11th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting is December 14 @ 6:30 at the Sacred Heart Family Center in Oscoda. Candles will be lit in memory of our children, grandchildren and siblings gone too soon.

Bittersweet Memories

One of the most precious things to a parent who has lost a child is the memories. Without them, it would be as if their child never was. Without them, it is so bittersweet that it can make a parent laugh and cry, rejoice and anguish, touch the sweetness to the lips and taste the salt from the tears.

Memories keep the heart from crushing under the weight of sorrow. They give a parent the chance to be with their child again. They can walk through their memories like they were in a movie. When the memories are so vivid, you can almost feel them. It is so bittersweet when the reality comes and you realize it is just a memory, a thought, and you are reminded of what you have lost.

If you asked a parent if they would give up the memories so they did not have to feel the pain of knowing their child is gone, they would tell you no. As painful as it may be, not having the memories or feeling of their presence is just as unbearable as losing them.

There is no happy place to go to, but here is a place to be with your child. You know before you step into that realm that it will be painful, but you know that it will be joyful too.

So, as we let the memories take us to a time when our child was safe with us, just rest a while until it is time to go and the next time try not to think of what is gone but what is still in your heart and will always be.

~Vickie VanAntwerp
TCF, "We Need Not Walk Alone" Vol. 34, No 1/2

