



***The Compassionate Friends***  
***Rochester Chapter***  
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

November / December 2017 [www.tcfrochester.org](http://www.tcfrochester.org)



**Thanks**

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say:

"There is a group in town that might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."

Thanks to the mother who went to that first meeting knowing it would really hurt to talk — and talked.

Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back — but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."

Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies — for her "Compassionate Friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people — who became a facilitator.

Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men — and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know — next month.

**John DeBoer**  
**TCF, Greater Omaha NE**

**Candles in the Night**



Candles flame in darkness,  
flicker, steadily glow,  
bringing light from shadows  
and help to soothe me so.

My daughter, like the candles,  
gave my life true light.  
I use the candle's beacon  
to connect us in the night.

As I light the candles,  
my wish and my request  
is that she'll see my signal  
and know my love's expressed.

As her light joins my lights,  
our worlds touch and flame.  
As I snuff out the candles,  
I softly say her name.

**Genesse Bourdeau Gentry**  
**from *Stars in the Deepest – After the Death of a Child***

**Rain Can't Erase You**

Dark, depressing like a winter solstice night.  
Rain falls every so slightly like feather drifting in the wind,  
But stings as if sharp needles are puncturing my heart  
endlessly.

Rain hurts and heals.  
It won't heal me.

Your smile big and bright,  
Gave my life a kind of light.  
The light is burnt away,  
If only you could stay.

Sitting in the rain to weep,  
Knowing if I could, I'd keep.  
You have gone and left me none,  
My heart and words gone undone.

Silence is starting to suffice  
But the stained stars of scars remain.  
The pain of not seeing you day to day,  
Your silent tomb, grey and dull,  
Not even rain can make my heart full.

**Amber Taggart**

**In loving memory of her Uncle, Philip J. DeFranco II**

Today marks three years since he's been gone. He wrote this poem when I headed off to college, and it hurts to think about how much he has missed since then. My college graduation, my season with Onyx, moving out and living on my own, adopting my first pet, and so on. It pains me even more to think about everything in my future he'll miss. I'd give anything to have one more conversation with him, one more hug. But for now, it will be my turn to miss him, and continue to try to live a full and adventurous life that he'd be proud of.



Facebook posting on 8/22/17 by Jenna DeFranco  
In loving memory of her father, Philip J. DeFranco II

Shared by Myra & Phil DeFranco  
in loving memory of son Philip J. DeFranco II  
TCF, Rochester NY

**Someone Asked Me ...**

Someone asked me about you today

It's been so long since anyone has done that

It felt so good to talk about you

to share my memories of you

to simply say your name out loud

She asked me if I minded talking about  
what happened to you

or would it be too painful to speak of it

I told her I think of it every day

and speaking about it helps me to release

the tormented thoughts whirling around in my head

She said she never realized the pain

would last this long

She apologized for not asking sooner

I told her, "thanks for asking"

I don't know if it was curiosity

or concern that made her ask

But I told her, "Please do it again sometime – soon"

**Barbara Taylor Hudson**

**TCF National Newsletter, August 2017**

*"Light to lead you, Love to lift you"*



## Thirteen Years

Thirteen years without hearing your voice, your laugh, and foot steps.

Thirteen years of one sided conversations. Although you answer in your way. A butterfly, a hawk, a license plate, murals, and special greetings. The license plates with DGC on them, to let us know you are with us. Today a special one, a truck with a faded "Dave's Handyman" sign, just as I was thinking about you.

We know you are with us and we know you have your fun, and prank us, sometimes.

At Sampson State Park you put the tangle in the fishing line. Then as I took it off the reel to fix, it "somehow" got all tangled around my foot! You caught the BIG ONE that day!! As usual since you have been gone, I didn't catch anything. My heart isn't in it, like when we fished together.

Then the Labatt's Mom bought has the Zubaz design. It made your declaration from years ago come right to my mind..." You're not cool enough to wear Zubaz pants, Dad. " But Gary was , since he was in a band,

Thanks for dropping the "Library Handle" in the camper. When I went to fix it I found my wallet. I have never put it in the library before. We may have still been looking for it. I still knock on the board under your bed, sometimes. Old habits are hard to break.

Now though there is no "DAAAD!!!" from you complaining. I miss that. I want to hear it.

We miss you David, and always will. We keep you in our hearts.

Our love for you will be eternal.

LOVE YOU FOREVER DAVID

Mom and Dad



## A Loss for 13 Years

Thirteen years ago we lost our son.  
Does it really matter if it is a son or daughter?  
The hurt, grief, and pain are all the same, no matter boy or girl.  
All three emotions remain, along with others, thirteen years later, although they have changed.

Most times less intense, but some times the loss hurts like the first day, week, month or year, that we lost David.

Memories, good and bad remain. Strange how both good and bad memories can make me tear up. WHY? Because David is not here sharing the memories, laughing, and maybe being a little embarrassed.

He would help us with bad memories, he was always helping us, and others. Listening, befriending them, sharing with them.

All parents miss their child, whether it is one day, thirteen years, or more. Whether the child was an infant or older, we miss them. Miss their smiles, their voices, their input to our lives.

What would they bring to the world? Who would they be? We'll never know.

I was going to use the word, "Thirteen" and make a list of words, off each letter, like a crossword puzzle. That didn't work, 8 words describing the feelings and emotions of a parent who lost a child was too few. The pain and grief we feel, we feel, it is hard to express the feeling in words. Especially 8 words.

A hurt, pain, something off. How would 8 words be able to express what a parent feels. It is not easy to express the feeling, especially to a civilian, people that have not lost a child.

A parent, grandparent, or sibling dying is different, A different pain and grief. Yes it hurts, but there is no hurt larger than losing a child.

For all the parents, who have lost children, I hope you find a way to handle the pain, and grief.

I hope others are understanding, and supportive.

I know your children are watching over you, and send their love.

Be open to see and receive their love, and help.

They will love you forever, as we love them forever, and keep them in our hearts forever.

'LOVE YOU FOREVER DAVID

Mom and Dad



**George Carafos**  
**In loving memory of son, David George Carafos**  
**TCF, Rochester NY**

**December**

Feelings heavy,  
tears and tears.  
Will the darkness last?  
Or is it –  
only December?

Hadn't past months  
brought peace and hope?  
Where is the strength  
of October –  
and November?

Lights, carols, ornaments on trees,  
cards from friends,  
happy times in seasons past.  
We remember.  
We remember.

Will January bring  
light at last?  
Will we be stronger then,  
for making it through  
this December?

When people ask  
how I'm doing I say,  
Well . . . you know . . .  
it's December.

**Genesse Bourdeau Gentry**  
from *Stars in the Deepest Night- After the  
Death of a Child*

**After October**

and if there be a perfect month,  
for me, it is October...  
with days and nights like laughing fauns,  
with mornings bright and sober.  
when wind will dance in sudden glee  
to do the autumn-sweeping  
or cloud and fog and wistful rain  
can move a heart to weeping.  
and in October You were born,  
four days before November...  
and four years later you were gone,  
my little son, my only son,  
I love you.  
and remember. . .

**Sascha Wagner**  
© **The Compassionate Friend**

**Autumn**

In the fall  
When amber leaves are shed,  
Softly—silently  
Like tears that wait to flow,  
I watch and grieve.  
My heart beats sadly in the fall;  
'Tis then I miss you most of all.

**Lily de Lauder**  
**TCF, Van Nuys CA**



**THIRTY YEARS**

Thirty years ago today  
 On a cold snowy winter day  
 You came into my life, my son  
 And changed my life in many ways

You taught me unconditional love  
 And what a mom should feel  
 You taught me compassion in many ways  
 The kind only the heart reveals

You taught me how to smile  
 When heart prints ruled my days  
 You taught me so much laughter  
 My love was endless in so many ways

I taught you, as you taught me  
 The years flew by too fast  
 And then God's Angels called you home  
 All I had left, was memories of the past.....

Today's your 30th birthday, Andy  
 And I sit here all alone  
 Wondering how you're spending yours  
 While I spend my at home

Thinking of the ones we had,  
 The double birthdays we once shared  
 I close my eyes and remember  
 It makes my eyes begin to tear

I remember when you were one  
 And I was twenty-seven  
 If I'd known then, in four years  
 God was calling you to heaven.....

I'd held you even more tightly,  
 I'd have kissed you even more  
 And probably went to school with you  
 Each day you went out the door

I'd have tucked you in more tightly  
 I'd have read more stories at night  
 And had I known what life held  
 I'd never let you out of my sight

But none of us knows what life holds  
 Or what our future will be  
 God gave us five great years  
 I treasure those precious memories

Happy Birthday Andy  
 I love you with all my heart  
 One day again we will share this day  
 But for now, I'll share you in my heart  
 I'll love you forever my son.....  
 on air, land, and sea  
 and through eternity

**Sharon J. Bryant**  
**In Memory of Andy Dunbar's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday**  
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**Love's Lasting Touch**

Don't weep for me when I'm gone,  
 Because I'll always be there.  
 My spirit will exist in all the earth,  
 In the water, trees, and air.

You'll hear me say, "I love you",  
 In the whisper of a breeze.  
 You'll know that I'm beside you,  
 With the rustling of the leaves.

You'll feel my arms caress you,  
 In the warmth of each sunrise.  
 The moon will be my goodnight kiss,  
 The stars my watchful eyes.

Your life will be my legacy,  
 Your memories my epitaph.  
 These ties will bind us together,  
 Till we meet on heaven's path.

I'll not ever desert you,  
 We'll never be far apart.  
 I'll live within you always,  
 Nestled deep inside your heart.

**Jacquelyn M. Comeaux**  
**In Memory of My Angels...**  
**Michelle, Jerry & Danny**  
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*We want to share this support group information:*

**Face 2 Face Friendship Group, Rochester NY.** [face2facerochester.com](http://face2facerochester.com) Providing support & hope to families coping with miscarriage, stillbirth, & infant loss.

**Healing after Loss to Addiction** A bereavement support group focused on living and healing after loss related to drug use or overdose. Please call Lifetime Care for more information ... 585-475-8800.

**Bereaved Parents.** Bereavedparentsusa.org A national non-profit self-help group that offers support, understanding, compassion, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents, & siblings. Shared by Pat Loomis.

**Alive Alone.** Alivealone.org. Support for now childless parents. Shared by National TCF.

**“Healing the Grieving Heart” Web Radio Show.** Compassionatefriends.org (left side of the home page, link to “Healing the Grieving Heart”). Live shows are at 11:00 am on Thursdays. The archived shows are available 24 hours per day.

### Love Gifts



**Support for the meeting on October 10th was donated by**  
**Bonnie Corbett, in loving memory of daughter Kelly Lynne Forrest**  
**Mary Ann & Tom Dobbins, in loving memory of granddaughter Colleen Josephine Dobbins**

**Support for the meeting on October 24th was donated by**  
**Margaret Conti, in loving memory of grandson William Tyler Conti**  
**Pat & Sue Vitek, in loving memory of son Jefferson Patrick Vitek**

**Linda & Scott Haines, in loving memory of son Zackary Monroe McCarthy**

Thank you to Jason & Christine Price for printing the newsletters via Paychex, Inc.

Thank you to Myra & Phil DeFranco for always keeping the candy jar full ☺



***Upcoming Event******The Compassionate Friends Rochester Chapter Candlelighting Ceremony***

*Tuesday, December 12, 2017 7:00 pm First Unitarian Church of Rochester (our TCF Chapter location)  
220 Winton Road South Rochester, New York*

*Dedicated to all our children "that their light may always shine"*

Support Compassionate Friends Rochester, Inc. when you shop at: [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)  
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/16-1129742>

**Meeting Location:**  
First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South  
Rochester, New York

**Meeting Days :**  
Tuesday the 14th & Tuesday the 28th (November)  
**Tuesday the 12th Candlelighting Program**  
& Tuesday the 26th (December)  
7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - social  
7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. – meeting

**Contacts:**  
Mary Ann Dobbins 585-872-0566  
[tcfcoleader.maryann@gmail.com](mailto:tcfcoleader.maryann@gmail.com)

TCF Regional Coordinator:  
Jacquie Edwards-Mitchell 718-451-0814  
TCF National :  
877-969-0010 or  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Send newsletter inputs or web comments to:  
Joan Carafos, [jcarafos@photikon.com](mailto:jcarafos@photikon.com)

If you would like to contribute to our Compassionate Friends Chapter, please forward your Love Gifts and Donations to:  
The Compassionate Friends of Rochester  
C/O 3446 Rush Mendon Road Honeoye Falls, NY 14472  
Please make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, New York

Sincere Thanks!

To receive this newsletter via e-mail, please contact  
Alice Torres at [alice3970@gmail.com](mailto:alice3970@gmail.com)

***Welcome New Friends***

*At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief.*

*Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.*

***Rochester Chapter TCF Mission:***

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family. Adopted 2-25-12

## Our Children Remembered November 2017 Birthdays and Remembrance



### Birthday

|                             |          |    |
|-----------------------------|----------|----|
| Katie Lyn Fields            | November | 1  |
| Lisa Ann Rupp               | November | 5  |
| Justin Adam Rifenberg       | November | 5  |
| Christopher Robert Crawford | November | 7  |
| Dale Bovay                  | November | 16 |
| Michael Matthew Brown       | November | 20 |
| Terah Lee Gates             | November | 21 |
| Joshua Lee Prescott         | November | 24 |
| Andrew Clay Parkhurst       | November | 27 |
| Grant Matthew Lintala       | November | 28 |

### Remembrance

|                        |          |    |
|------------------------|----------|----|
| Slade Gerstner         | November | 1  |
| Stephanie Anne Oliva   | November | 4  |
| Alexander K. Ketchek   | November | 8  |
| Graham Wilson Smith    | November | 13 |
| Greta Elinor Lindboom  | November | 14 |
| Richard Marrion Nelson | November | 16 |
| Jeffery James Yates    | November | 22 |
| Everett Patrick Hong   | November | 25 |
| Terah Lee Gates        | November | 25 |



## Our Children Remembered December 2017 Birthdays and Remembrance



### Birthday

|                            |          |    |
|----------------------------|----------|----|
| Richard John Tanner        | December | 2  |
| Richard Marrion Nelson     | December | 6  |
| Matthew R. Loomis          | December | 7  |
| Brian Charles Oster        | December | 7  |
| Taylor Leigh Allen         | December | 9  |
| Christian Patrick Lester   | December | 11 |
| Peggy Jane O'Neill         | December | 13 |
| David J. Hughes            | December | 13 |
| Alexander Ryan Fitzpatrick | December | 14 |
| Matthew McDonald Denk      | December | 14 |
| Melissa Ann Harris         | December | 15 |
| Joel Ayite Ajavon          | December | 16 |
| Michael David Mueller      | December | 19 |
| Elaine Marie Liddell       | December | 21 |
| Matthew James Straton      | December | 23 |
| Clarence L. Ross, II       | December | 23 |
| Shawn Patrick Viola        | December | 29 |

### Remembrance

|                                   |          |    |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----|
| Douglas M. Slocum                 | December | 2  |
| Dale Bovay                        | December | 6  |
| Nate Riley                        | December | 7  |
| Christopher "Chris" D. Fitzgerald | December | 7  |
| Steven L. Britt                   | December | 7  |
| Jennifer Lynn McNeil              | December | 7  |
| Tristan Foley Hanna               | December | 10 |
| Ethan Emerson Price               | December | 16 |
| Taylor Leigh Allen                | December | 22 |
| Matthew Gabe Fogarassy            | December | 22 |
| Joel C. Stuhler                   | December | 24 |
| Elaine Marie Liddell              | December | 30 |



## Surviving the Holidays

*The holidays are among the most difficult times for bereaved families grieving the death of a child. Below are some helpful suggestions that may aid you in surviving the holidays:*

1. Call a family meeting and discuss your plans for the holiday season, understanding that it would be unusual for you not to feel emotionally, physically and psychologically drained. Don't set your expectations too high or you may find yourself disappointed.
2. Well-intending friends and family may want to include you in their plans, believing it is best for you to 'get away' from grieving your loss. They do not understand that you cannot escape the grief that you feel. There is no obligation to say 'yes'. Only participate if you truly want to.
3. Try to take care of your health. It's important that you eat and drink properly, exercise and get plenty of rest.
4. Take time to do the things you as a person want to do. You may want time alone to reflect or to write your thoughts.
5. Consider eliminating such things as the festive decorations, cooking and baking you may normally enjoy. People will understand if you're not in a merry or joyous mood or simply don't have the energy. You may try placing an electric candle in your window in memory of your child. Don't feel obligated to send out holiday cards.
6. If it is necessary for you to buy gifts, consider ordering them over the internet or by phone. Most who are bereaved find it draining to go out and fight through crowded stores bustling with holiday cheer.
7. Many families that are in mourning may use the money they would have spent on gifts for their child to buy gifts for a child who would not be able to celebrate the holidays otherwise.
8. It is not unusual for you to want to include your child during the season. You may want to do something like: Ask friends and relatives who knew your child to send you a story about your child that you may not have known; ask friends and relatives to create an ornament or remembrance of some type that reminds them of your child so that you can place it around the house or on a holiday tree. If it was your tradition, include placing a stocking with those of other children in your house, even if you do not fill it like the others—this is a symbolic gesture in memory of your child.
9. If you have other children who normally celebrate the holidays, you may consider continuing to do so to create some sense of normalcy in the house and so they will not feel forgotten.
10. Consider attending a Compassionate Friends meeting or a memorial event such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. Most families find some comfort by being with others who have experienced a similar loss.
11. Remember that the anticipation of a holiday is often worse than the holiday itself.
12. Be kind to yourself, and remember it is okay to cry.

*From the Compassionate Friends website, [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)*

*Shared by MaryAnn Dobbins, in loving memory of granddaughter Colleen Josephine Dobbins*

*The Compassionate Friends*  
*Rochester Chapter*  
*Candlelighting Ceremony*

*Tuesday, December 12, 2017*

*7:00 pm*

*First Unitarian Church of Rochester*

*(our TCF Chapter location)*

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