



The Compassionate Friends

Southwest Florida Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOL 1, 2ND QUARTER APRIL-JUNE
Chrissy Hutchison & Linda Wallace
Chapter Co-Leaders

FINALLY The Newsletter: I have been attempting to do this since February never realizing what a challenge I was volunteering for. A lot more to be aware of, copyrights, helpful material, remembering our children, etc. There will be mistakes and I apologize in advance. We are all grieving parents who are volunteering our time doing the best we can on any given day. I welcome any ideas, articles, poems, anything you feel would be helpful for our Chapters' readers. Our goal is to produce a newsletter every quarter (3 months) The deadline for the 3rd Quarter's Newsletter will be July 20th so we can have it done by Aug 1st

Newsletter Editor—Linda Wallace ljwallace16@yahoo.com or swflcf@live.com

OUR SOUTHWEST FLORIDA CHAPTER'S PAST & PRESENT

The Compassionate Friends of SWFL Chapter started "passing the torch of love" in 1982, even before there was a national organization. Through the loss of their precious son, John T. III in 1978, Mary & Woody Loughray began reaching out to local families suffering the loss of a child. Their friendship, understanding, and hope spurred lifelong friendships steeped in love & support. Mary & Woody passed their torch of love to Elizabeth Lake sometime after her precious daughter Tanya passed in 1990. Elizabeth was supported by Mark's beloved parents, Shirley and John Cooledge, who joined the group in 1996 and who continue to provide the punch at our Candle Lighting event annually. They are currently training their grandchildren to carry on their "punch legacy" in memory of Mark for years to come.

Terese Walker said yes to carrying, the torch after losing her precious son, Colin. She, Colin's sisters, and a core group of dedicated, loving, passionate families infused their support to new families for many years. In 2004, Terese welcomed David's mother, Anne Arbelaez, into the group with all her love. Anne accepted the torch in 2006, and has since passed it to our chapter's current leaders; Patrick's beloved Mom and Dad, Chrissy & Mark Hutchison and Michael & Benjamin's beloved mother, Linda Wallace to Co-Lead the group as of January 2015

Through friendship, understanding, and hope provided by The Compassionate Friends of SWFL, family, friends, co-workers, and our community are able to survive this most terrible of nightmares.

Chapter Leadership Team Linda Wallace (Co-Leader) I am Michael & Benjamin's Mom. My husband Ben & I have 4 children. Our 2nd child Michael died 11 hours after he was born in 1985 and our oldest child Benjamin died in 2011, at the age of 30. We along with their sisters, Amanda & Annie, miss them every day. We came to our first meeting in 2011, and have been supported, loved & encouraged by this chapter & by National The Compassionate Friends.

Christine Hutchison (Co-Leader) Hi I am Chrissy, Patrick's Mom. I have been a TCF member since 2009, after my 19 year old son was killed in 2009. This has been a very difficult journey and I honestly do not know where I would be today without this group and the people I have met through The Compassionate Friends.

Mark Hutchison (Steering Committee Chairman) I am Patrick's Dad. I went to my first meeting only to support my wife. To my surprise I have found The Compassionate Friends was the best thing I could have done for myself after the loss of my son. We have a large number of Dads who attend our chapter and I find it helps to be able to talk to others who are going through a lot of the same things I am.

Alicia Mobley (Loving Listener) Hi I'm Alicia, Christopher's Mom. Christopher passed away 2009, at the age of 37. Finding The Compassionate Friends group has been a lifesaver for me.

Donna Langer (Treasurer) I am Jennifer's Mom, Donna. My daughter Jennifer was 32 when she was having serious back issues that required several surgeries. Days after the last surgery, she passed away. I have been a member of this organization since Jennifer passed away in 2012. The Leader of a Chapter in North Carolina works for the same company as I do, so he told me about The Compassionate Friends. I can't tell you how much I appreciate his advice. I don't know what I would have done if it hadn't been for all the support I have received from my new friends and "family" here.

Anne Arbelaez (Previous Chapter Leader, Current Community Advisory Board Chairwoman & Active Facilitator) Hi, I'm David's mother, Anne... I was blessed with David for 23 years, he passed in 2004. Since then, I was blessed to find this group. All of my The Compassionate Friends keep me on my feet and participating.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

2nd Monday of each month

YMCA Naples

5450 YMCA Rd, Naples, FL 34109

7:00-8:30 PM

Sunrises of our Chapter's children are read at this meeting.

4th Saturday of each month

Unity Church of Bonita Springs

28285 Imperial Pkwy,

Bonita Springs, FL 34135

9:00-10:30 AM

Sunsets of our Chapter's children are read at this meeting.

We also have 2 "Go Out to Eat Groups"

Girls Night Out is the 1st Tuesday of each month usually at The Pewter Mug 12300 Tamiami Trail, Naples starting at 6:00 pm

Guys Night is the 2nd Thursday of the month at Ruby Tuesdays, 8777 Tamiami Trail N, Naples @ 6:15 pm



New Leadership Team

Donna, Alicia, Linda Chrissy & Mark

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 21 Happy Fathers Day
- June 22 Steering Committee Mtg 6:30 pm @ Sovran 5692 Strand Ct Ste 1, Naples, FL
- July 10-12 38th National Conference in Dallas, TX "Hope Shines Bright Deep In the Heart of Texas"
- Sept 13 Happy Grandparents Day
- Dec 13 Worldwide Candle Lighting St. John the Evangelist Church

FATHER'S DAY JUNE 21 YOU ARE ALWAYS A DAD

Father's Day

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father's Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday.

Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son's life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan's arrival,

but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die.

Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child's death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex's memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might.

So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but some-

thing more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother's needs on Mother's Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husbands this Father's Day as well. It is frequently said that we males don't often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and 'warm fuzzies' when we hurt also. Please remember us on Father's Day Sunday, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonalds, Hallmark, and AT&T.

Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.

Doug Hughes
TCF Cincinnati, OH
In Memory of my son, Alex

THE BEAUTIFUL NAME OF PARENT

People often ask why there is not a word for someone who has lost a child. For me the answer is quite simple; I am and always will be a parent. The death of our child does not take that precious title away from any of us. Nothing and no one can ever change the fact that we are parents. We gave life to, nurtured and raised our children, for however long or short their lives were. "Parent" is a living word. It is an eternal word.

Our children would want us to remember that we are their parents now and forever. They would want the name of "parent" that was bestowed on us at their birth to live on in our hearts. We are still actively parenting our children. We continue to bring life to our children by loving them now and forever. There is not and should never be a word to signify the endless love of a parent.

Janet G. Reyes

TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

VIRTUAL WALK @ The National Conference in Dallas, TX, Sunday, July 12

Our Chapter needs YOU to join our team in the Virtual Walk. All donations for the Virtual Walk come back to our chapter. Please join our team in memory of your precious child(ren) you can create your own page or contribute to our chapter, every \$ makes a difference! Thank you all for your support and participation. Your support makes it possible for us to help others so they "Do Not Walk Alone"

<http://www.kintera.org/faf/search/searchTeamPart.asp?> On this page go towards the bottom and click on the "The Compassionate Friends of SWFL... Team Captain Chrissy Hutchison

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

SUNRISES

April

- 3-Perry Bracuti son of Norman & Elaine Planer
5-Sean Michael Stewart son of Ron Stewart
5-Robert "Rob" Edward Kerrigan son of Bob & Linda Kerrigan
6-John Anthony McMullin Jr son of John & Donna McMullin Sr
8-Bryan Hettrick son of Carolyn Gooden
10-Dewayne Peter Williams son of Eunice Williams
12-Ryan Jeffrey Sedberg son of Kim Carollo
12-Rachel Lauren Danks daughter of Shawn Danks
15-Stephanie Lorraine Billings-Williams daughter of Sharon Billings
15-Charlie Michele Buford daughter of Charles & Teresa Buford
15-Luke Joseph Burns son of Ellen & David Burns
19-Mark Richard Daniher son of Frank & Kit Daniher
19-Joseph "Joe" Mark McCann son of Lynne McCann
19-Reggie Destin son of Marcelle Raff
20-Samantha Nicole Kepsel daughter of John & Cheryl Kepsel
23-Richard Earl "Richie" Marquis grandson of Sue Bernier, son of Linda Belyea-Spurlock
23-Carmen Suzanne Paszek daughter of Denise Paszek
25-Robert Schultz son of Joanne Holt
26-Tom Schott son of Bob & Julie Scott
26 Nathaniel "Nate" Ketcham son of Deborah Ketcham
29-James Guffey son of Rebecca Guffey

MAY

- 2-Hugo Castro son of Nile Castro Costa
2-Nicole Lorraine Chapman daughter of Ron & Janet Chapman
2-Gordon "Buzz" Busby son of Diane Diehl
3-Tracey Henault Kleinpell daughter of George & Donna Henault
4-Jennifer Leigh Pope daughter of Donna Langer
5-Christian John DeMarco son of Gus DeMarco
7-Tressa Danielle Gaines daughter of Barb Gaines & John Douglas
9-Ivy Rose Scholtz daughter of John & Mary Scholtz
24-Dell Merryman son of JoAnn Brown
24-Brandon Garner son of Rod & Barbara Garner
25-Nicole Rochelle Martinez Costa daughter of Leilany Costa Haskett
28-Stephen Robert Rummler son of Bill & Judy Rummler
29-David Arturo Mercado son of Michele Sanguinetti Delgripo
31-Joshua Gavin Signs son of Don & Bobbi Signs

JUNE

- 1-Troy Goode son of Jimmy & Sally Jones
1-Wilson Scholtz son of John & Mary Scholtz
2-Caitlyn Landers daughter of Don & Sandy Landers
3-Mindy Marzano daughter of Eleanor & Victor Marzano
3-Adrienne Renee Hernandez daughter of Mario & Caridad Perez & Jeff & Marcy Sagorac
4-Blake Vincent Montague son of Scott & Renay Montague
6-Phillip Carulli son of Annette Carulli
10-Betsy Moran daughter of Patti Moran
12-Cory Gotti grandson of Is Cloak
14-Scott Schultz son of Carl & Dana Schultz
17-Gloria Marzano daughter of Eleanor & Victor Marzano
18-Kyle Fernstrom son of Fred & Shelby Church
21-John Matthew Grimes son of Ellen Grimes
22-Shellie Plotkin daughter of Ron & Caren Plotkin
23-Ashlee Miller granddaughter of Mark & Joyce Buch
25-Daniel Rivera Carvajal son of Roger & Beatriz Filipiak
28-Andrew Morello daughter of Mario & Caridad Perez

TODAY I AM THANKFUL

By Tanya Lord

Today I am thankful for tears
Though an ocean I have cried
They speak of our connection
Reminding me that love has not died

Today I am thankful for the memories
They brighten the road of grief
They remind me of love shared
And provide a small relief

Today I am thankful for love
Felt strongly in my soul
Love continues living forever
Keeping us together and whole

Today I am thankful for friends
Those who didn't walk away
They saw my broken heart
And chose to sit and stay

Today I am thankful for time
For the moments that were too few
Through the tears that are shed
Today I am thankful for you



©www.TheGriefToolbox.com Taken from "We Need Not Walk Alone" magazine

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

SUNSETS

APRIL

- 1 **Rain Lee Schliska** son of Loni Pines
- 4-**Maximillian Raymond Krumm** son of Terry & Laura Krumm
- 4-**Brooke Ashley Miller** daughter of Tink Bechtol
- 8-**Sean Terry** son of Wendy Terry
- 11-**Michael McSorley** son of Marcie Spencer
- 12-**Ashley Erin Kelly** daughter of Tom & Sherri Kelly
- 12-**Matthew Christian Haller** son of Tim & Cindy Haller
- 13-**Anthony Parrott** son of Bill & Renae Martin
- 14-**Gary Tepe** son of Dennis & Jan Tepe
- 20-**John C. Eckhold, III** son of John & Peggy Eckhold
- 21-**Christopher Allen Mobley** son of Bob & Alicia Mobley
- 21-**Tom (Thomas) Stephen Lossia** son of Angela Lossia
- 22-**Bill Bishop** son of Joann Bishop
- 23-**Chad Lund** son of Karen Lund
- 26-**Phillip Scott Starling** son of Lynn Connor
- 27-**Amber Dawn Phillips** daughter of Bill & Martha Marland
- 27-**Tanner Cullen Browning** son of Thad Browning
- 28-**Christian DeBiasi** son of Diane DeBiasi
- 28-**Carrie Belyea** daughter of Bill & Martha Marland
- 29-**John Anthony McMullin, Jr** son of John & Donna McMullin Sr

MAY

- 7-**Tracey Henault Kleinpell** daughter of George & Donna Henault
- 13-**Michael Lawrence Weinstein** son of Matthew & Christine Weinstein
- 16-**Steve** son of Janice
- 16-**David Paul Plamondon** son of Time & Janet Plamondon
- 17-**Joshua Gavin Signs** son of Don & Bobbi Signs
- 20-**Marcy** daughter of Ozzie & Marcia Santos
- 24-**Daniel T. Giampa** son of Joel & Cathy Giampa
- 25-**David Addison** son of Connie & David Addison
- 29-**Daileen Alfonso** daughter of Maharani DaCosta

JUNE

- 1 **Katie Raines** daughter of Lenora Raines
- 4-**Jonathan Guffey** son of Rebecca Guffey
- 9-**Rachel Lauren Danks** daughter of Shawn Danks
- 9-**Tyler Kelce** son of Suzy Nania Kelce & Scott Kelce
- 9-**John McVey** son of Judy McVey
- 9-**Prescilla Penteadó** daughter of Joana Penteadó

JUNE cont'd

- 9-**Ivy Rose Scholtz** daughter of John & Mary Scholtz
- 9-**Wilson Scholtz** son of John & Mary Scholtz
- 12-**Kane Lee Mills** son of Mary Mills
- 14-**Anthony Ray Baker** son of Mary Baker
- 15-**Jane Frances Fodale** daughter of Patricia Yasbeck Pike
- 16-**Ian Forrest Kirk** grandson of John & Wilba Wallace
- 17-**Nicholas Andrew Kelce** son of Suzy Nania Kelce & Scott Kelce
- 18-**Daniel R. Michalik** son of Tony & Patti Michalik
- 19-**Jennifer Leigh Pope** daughter of Donna Langer
- 19-**Nicole Rochelle Martinez Costa** daughter of Leilany Costa Haskett
- 20-**Jay Yedwofski** son of Sharon Gaozala
- 22-**Michael DiSebastiano** son of Carmine & Vivian DiSebastian
- 22-**Andrew Carr Howard** son of Mary Moran
- 23-**Bo Rogers** son of Kay Howerton
- 23-**Dean** son of Ozzie & Marcia Santos
- 25-**Charlie Michele Buford** daughter of Charles & Teresa Buford
- 28-**Daniella Alexander Pantoja** sister of Jennifer Pantoja
- 29-**Malissa Balcom** daughter of Pamela Balcom
- 30-**Kalin Marie King** daughter of Tom & Edie King



If we have made any errors in your child's information we sincerely apologize or if you would prefer to not have your name listed here please contact us at our email swflcf@live.com or visit our Website <http://tcswfl.org> under "Resource" fill out updated member form so we can honor all of our children

WOW Look what our team has done since January:

- ◆ **DATABASE-** Using ACT, Hours of work updating allow us a “current” listing of our chapter’s members and their correct information. If you haven’t already done so, please go to the website under RESOURCES “Whats New” and fill out the Member Form
- ◆ **WEBSITE-** Thanks to Chrissy & Mark’s hard work we have a beautiful website that can be a wonderful resource for all of us <http://tcfswfl.org>
- ◆ **WALK TO REMEMBER-** Held on February 22, 2015 we had an amazing response and raised much needed funds so we can continue to help others. This will be an annual event in February. Watch for future details.
- ◆ **WELCOME PACKET-** provided for people who call or email us requesting information either for themselves or friends. We have our business card with our info, and different brochures from the National office covering different topics.
- ◆ **STEERING COMMITTEE-** has been meeting to give our Chapter direction. Everyone is welcome, with the next meeting Monday, June 22. Currently working on the Candle Lighting, Fundraising and Chapter Goals
- ◆ **NEWSLETTER-** Revived the newsletter with a “goal” of putting it out once a quarter as another tool to communicate and provide support so we do not walk alone. If you have suggestions please email us.
- ◆ **Naples Meeting-**we have secured a room at the Naples YMCA. We are now able to have 2 meetings a month.
- ◆ **Special Speaker-** *Mitch Carmody, Kelly’s dad* presented his workshop “Proactive Grieving” at our March meeting. It was a real inspiration to all who attended. We purchased many materials from Mitch so if you are interested email us and we can share these with you!



Walk to Remember Group

MY PRECIOUS GRANDCHILD

By *Connie Sheets*

I waited for that moment and it arrived one special day.
My first glimpse of you nearly took my breath away.

I was apprehensive about being called a grandma it’s true,
until the first time I was called grandma by you.

Being a mother was a wondrous joy for me,
I gave it all I had with great responsibility.

Then I watched my child become of father of his own,
Now I could be a grandma and explore the great unknown.

You brought so much joy when you entered this world;
You were grandma’s pretty angel and daddy’s little girl.

I loved to take you shopping, I loved to brush your hair,
In fact I loved taking you with me almost anywhere.

All those years of joy were filled with promise of much more,
How we could have known that sadness soon would be in store

The ringing of the telephone, a knocking at the door,
In an instant all that mattered most didn’t matter anymore.

The hurt was great for me and for my child so wracked with pain,
Without my pretty angel life would never be the same.

We gave each other comfort and we held each other tight,
Somehow we have weathered the darkest of the night.

Today we still cry and we always ache for you,
But we also take some time remembering that you lived too.

Your smile forever sparkles and your laugh will always be,
Because my precious grandchild you are still a part of me.

From “We Need Not Walk Alone” magazine Autumn/Winter 2014

LOVING LISTENER

Chris’s mom, Alicia has taken on our Chapter’s phone (239)690-7801. We so appreciate her willingness to do this task.



GUYS & GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Provides a social gathering with others who have similar circumstances. “We Get It” Come check it out. Guys meet at Ruby Tuesdays, 2nd Thursday of the month and the Girls gather at the Pewter Mug the 1st Tuesday of the month.

A Sibling's Feelings

The pain of a sibling is so real we sometimes hide it deep inside of ourselves. As we watch our parents hurting we see the pain in their eyes. We are also hurting not only for the loss of our brother or sister but also for our own parents. We need to reach out to each other to let each other know we are hurting inside.

Our lives have all changed forever. I know they lost a son but I lost my younger brother I loved, and as siblings we share a special bond that will never have anymore for he no longer lives...my brother, my friend.

I will always miss you and I will never forget you for you will always live in my heart, and I have wonderful memories no one can ever take away from me. In my heart you will stay, love you forever.

Marie Porreca TCF Rockland County, NY

There is a TCF Facebook page specifically for Siblings it is **The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings**



The Compassionate Friends Southwest FL Chapter
P.O. Box 112524
Naples, FL 34108

Chapter Phone: 239-690-7801
Chapter E-mail: swflcf@live.com
Join us on MeetUp
www.meetup.com/compassionatefriends/

[HTTP://TCFSWFL.ORG](http://TCFSWFL.ORG)

The mission of The Compassionate Friends: 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.

GETTING UNSTUCK: FINDING HOPE THROUGH GRIEF

Every day I drive by a quaint antique shop. It might be my imagination, but it appears to be the same charming furniture outside every single day. In the morning the antique treasures are carefully placed in the front yard, and every evening they are brought back inside. A few Coca-Cola chairs may have been added since the turn of the century, but otherwise, it seems the process is repeated every day.

The death of someone you care about deeply is one of life's most difficult challenges. It's easy to fall into a rut of doing the same things day after day, leaving you lonely and feeling stuck in the sorrow. If you're struggling to move forward, would you consider trying something different to help break through the intense sadness? Hopefully, one of these ideas will help:

Remember: Memories of your loved one's life are treasured gifts to keep close in your heart. Take some time to record memorable stories and save photos in a notebook or journal. Remembering happier times is a beautiful way to honor the person you're missing, and allow some light into a painful season of life.

Get Help: People who have been where you are now can be a great source of hope and encouragement. It might take a few visits to know if a support group is a good fit for you, but don't give up. A caring group or maybe professional grief counseling will provide a safe place to process traumatic loss.

Find Hope: Regardless of your religious beliefs, deep sorrow often draws us to seek spiritual help. In my darkest season of loss, I realized I was drowning in the sadness. When I finally called for help, a friend

Offered to pray when I couldn't find the words. Admitting your inability to cope and allowing someone to be strong for you can be a powerful turning point toward healing. Dr. Gloria Horsley, executive director of the Open to Hope Foundation, puts it beautifully: "If you have lost hope, we invite you to lean on ours until you find your own." You don't have to go through grief alone.

Beth Marshall is the author of A Time to Heal: A Grief Journal and a guest writer for Open to Hope.

Article from "We Need Not Walk Alone" Winter 2012 / Spring 2013

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