



# The Compassionate Friends

**Topeka Chapter**

**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

*Published Bimonthly by The Topeka TCF Chapter*

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

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:  
[www.tcftopeka.org](http://www.tcftopeka.org)

July ~ August 2020  
Editor: Susan Chan  
3448 S.W. Mission Ave.  
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This newsletter is sponsored by:

*Don & Susan Arnold in loving memory of their son  
Matthew W. Arnold who was born on July 28<sup>th</sup>*

*Ralph & Judy Lundin in loving memory of their daughter  
Amy Lundin who died on July 28<sup>th</sup>*



*Penny Lumpkin in loving memory of her son  
William H. "Hank" Lumpkin who died on August 19<sup>th</sup>*

*Bill & Diana Sowers in loving memory of their daughter  
Rachel Diana Sowers who was born on July 30<sup>th</sup>*

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

We hope this newsletter finds you well and managing to successfully deal with the isolation, uncertainty and challenges we are all facing as the Covid-19 pandemic keeps a tight hold on our country. TCF is an organization of caring, comfort and concern and it has been very difficult not to be able to hold our monthly meetings where we can share and support one another as we travel our individual grief journeys. Please know you have been in our thoughts over the past few months and we hope you and your family are doing OK. Because our meeting place is still not allowing groups to meet, and the fact that it would be very difficult to maintain effective social distancing, we cannot say when we will be able to have an in-person meeting. We certainly hope it will be soon. Please check our Chapter website ([tcftopeka.org](http://tcftopeka.org)) in the menu bar under "Meetings" to see the current status of upcoming meetings.

In light of the current situation, the Steering Committee has decided not to move forward with plans for a picnic gathering in September. We know this special memorial event is important to all of us and regret that it cannot happen this year. We will keep you apprised through this newsletter and on our website about whether a December Candle Lighting Memorial will be possible.

We hope you found the pages of Online Support Resources published in the May/June newsletter helpful and have been able to find support and comfort through TCF's many Online Communities and Facebook groups. If you do not have this listing or have misplaced it, I have put a PDF of it on the Chapter website under "Newsletters" in the menu bar. Again, the website is [tcftopeka.org](http://tcftopeka.org).

While the National TCF Conference in Atlanta was canceled, the organization will be hosting a Virtual National Conference featuring speakers, workshops, sharing sessions, etc. later this month. There is more information elsewhere in this newsletter and also on the National TCF website ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)). We hope you can check it out.

Please take good care of yourselves, stay safe, and know that while we cannot be physically together, we are holding you all in our hearts.

~Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

*The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purposes are to promote and aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experience following the death of a child of any age, from any cause; and to foster the physical and emotional health of all bereaved parents, grandparents and surviving siblings.*

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**TCF Mission Statement:** *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.*

**We Need Not Walk Alone**

# Love Gifts

**Your Love Gifts Help Spread  
the Message of Hope & Healing ~ Won't You Help Today?**

What is a Love Gift? A Love Gift is a gift of money (or books, etc.) to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child, grandchild or sibling who has died, but it may be from individuals who wish to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanks that their children are alive, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help. The Compassionate Friends charges *no individual dues* or fees and depends on such Love Gifts to meet the Chapter's expenses, including the printing and mailing of this newsletter. **When you make a donation, make sure to check to see if your employer may have a "matching gifts" program** as this could double the amount of your donation. If you are not sure whether your company has such a program, check with your Personnel Department. This month we thank the following:

♥ *Don & Sue Arnold in loving memory of their son Matthew Arnold*

♥ *Dick & Janie Elliott in loving memory of their daughter Amy K. Eaton*

♥ *Mary Harrington in loving memory of her daughters Juliet Faith Harrington and Clara Harrington-Jones*


♥ *Mark Neddermeyer in loving memory of his stepdaughter Maddie Rae Naill*

♥ *Seaboard Corporation of Shawnee Mission, KS as a matching gift for donation by employee Mark Neddermeyer*

Your gifts enable us to print this newsletter and reach out to newly bereaved families. Donations are our only source of income and are **tax deductible**. If you would like to sponsor a newsletter, the cost is \$30.00. If we have more than one sponsor, we recognize all of them. If you wish to send a Love Gift, any amount is appreciated. It is whatever you feel you can give. Donations of books that you have found helpful to the Topeka Chapter Library are also greatly appreciated, and it is a nice way to remember your child or other loved one. If you would like to send a Love Gift or a Newsletter Sponsorship, you may do so by sending it to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. For Newsletter Sponsorships, please indicate which issue you wish to sponsor (Jan/Feb, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, or November/December). Makes checks payable to "TCF".

The only people who think  
there's a time limit for grief,  
have  
**NEVER**  
lost a piece  
of their heart.

**TAKE ALL THE TIME  
YOU NEED!**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

~Author unknown

.....  
**Dillions Community Rewards Program Helps Fund Chapter Expenses - A REMINDER** - Have you signed up for the Dillions Community Rewards Program yet? If not, we encourage you to do so as it really helps to bring income into our Chapter to help meet expenses. The more participants we have, the more income we can generate. I encourage you to go to [www.dillions.com/community](http://www.dillions.com/community) rewards and click on "Register" at the top of the page. When you enroll you will be asked to designate which charity your wish to support. **The Topeka Compassionate Friends Chapter NPO number is TC248.** Once you have done so and have a Dillions Shopper's Card, every time you make a purchase at Dillions a portion of your total will be donated to the Topeka TCF Chapter. Participating in this program **costs you nothing** and **does not affect your fuel points** for gasoline purchases. If you need assistance in setting up your account, call toll-free at 1-800-576-4377 and select Option 3.  
 .....

**Our Thanks to:** Midland Care Connection for giving us a mailbox and Most Pure Heart of Mary Church for allowing us to meet at their facility. A special Thank You to ProPrint for helping to underwrite the printing cost of this newsletter.

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# Pro Print

## DIGITAL PRINT AND COPY SERVICES

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**785.272.0070**

# And We Remember.....

*Because of the potential for the hurtful crime of identity theft, TCF Chapter Newsletters will now only publish the date of a child's birth or death without listing the year of each event. This is a directive from the National TCF Office to protect all TCF members. **Due to space constraints, only those families who remain current on our newsletter mailing list will be included in the We Remember section***

Charlie Allen, son of Tanya Allen, who died on September 18<sup>th</sup>

Tyler James Baker, son of Barbara Baker, who was born on August 2<sup>nd</sup>

Jon Bieker, brother of Andrea Smith; son of Don & Sheryl Bieker who was born on August 5<sup>th</sup>



Alexander Birchmeier, son of Khristine Henderson, who was born on September 11<sup>th</sup>; and died on September 19<sup>th</sup>

Terry Edward Burns, son of Kenneth and Eleanor Burns, and brother of Kathy Kaesewurm, born on September 17<sup>th</sup>

Aaron M. Campbell, son of Marilyn Campbell, who was born on September 6<sup>th</sup>

Christian K. Charay, son of Alfred Charay and Laurie Charay who was born on September 30<sup>th</sup>

Carly Kathleen Cornelison, daughter of Corie Green, who died on September 15<sup>th</sup>

Rebecca Lynne Smith Crismas, daughter of BobbyJean Smith, who was born on August 13<sup>th</sup>

Kevin Lee Cronister, son of Richard and Judy Cronister, who was born on August 8<sup>th</sup>

Wendi Sue Cushing, daughter of Scott and Denise Cushing; sister of Deana and Dylan Cushing, died on August 9<sup>th</sup>



Jeffrey Darrell Darting, son of Gerry and Judy Darting and brother of Sarah Escobar and Jenny Darting, died on August 29<sup>th</sup>

Gerald (Jerry) Eberhardt, son of Duane and Mary Eberhardt, who was born on September 1<sup>st</sup>

Amber Fleeer, daughter of Darla Hughes and Terry Fleeer, who was born on September 21<sup>st</sup>

Carter James Friess, son of Jennifer Friess, who was born on August 11<sup>th</sup>

Jeremy Scott Goehl, son of Danny and Kim Goehl; brother of Jason Goehl, who was born on August 29<sup>th</sup>

Tyler Grame, son of Amanda Grame and brother of Brendan and Jacob Grame, who was born on August 9<sup>th</sup> and died on August 18<sup>th</sup>

Rex McCarthy, son of Janet Hamilton, who was born in August.



Juliet Faith Harrington, daughter of Mary Harrington, born on September 2<sup>nd</sup>; died on August 25<sup>th</sup>

Colby Deab Harris, son of Chris and Dana Harris; grandson of Marquita Baxter and Mary K. Harris, who was born on August 10<sup>th</sup>

Spencer Mark Hastings, son of Steve and Sue Hastings, who died on September 28<sup>th</sup>

Vernon A. Jamison, Sr., son of Eugene A. and Mayverdis Jamison born on August 30<sup>th</sup>

Clara Harrington Jones, daughter of Mary Harrington and John Jones, born and died on August 26<sup>th</sup>



Jonathan Kaspar, son of Jeffrey and Susan Kaspar; sister of Jen Kaspar, who was born on September 17<sup>th</sup>

Riley Kern, son of Emily Kern and brother of Mary Gifford, who was born on August 4<sup>th</sup>

Michael "Mike" Dean Kidney, son of Forrest and Susan Kidney, who was born on September 14<sup>th</sup>

Joel Andrew Knight, son of Jim and Gloria Knight, who died on August 23<sup>rd</sup>

William Henry "Hank" Lumpkin, son of Joe and Penny Lumpkin, who died on August 19<sup>th</sup>

Nicholas Artck McCarthy, son of Sabrina Cruz, who died on August 19<sup>th</sup>

Belinda Meier, daughter of Maggie Walshire, who was born on September 14<sup>th</sup>

Sharis Thompson Meyer, daughter of Gary and Margaret Thompson, born on September 15<sup>th</sup>; died on August 25<sup>th</sup>

Russ Moreland, son of Barb Moreland, who was born on August 24<sup>th</sup>



Morgan Myers, daughter of Alta and Rocky Myers, who was born on August 20<sup>th</sup>

Robin Lynn Paulson, daughter of Frank and Brenda Bissey and sister of Brad Bissey, and Greg Lee Paulson, son-in-law of Frank and Brenda Bissey and brother-in-law of Brad Bissey, both died on August 27<sup>th</sup>

Krystil M. Pearson, daughter of Patti Cox and sister of Kendall Pressler, who died on September 24<sup>th</sup>

Kasey Pike, grandson of Grace Reichle, who died on August 7<sup>th</sup>

Kadillak Marie Poe, granddaughter of Cindy Poe, who was born on September 4<sup>th</sup>

Morgan Marie Pollak, daughter of David and Shelley Pollak; granddaughter of Mark and Linda Marling, born on August 14<sup>th</sup> and died on August 27<sup>th</sup>

Abbey Rubottom, daughter of Darcey Evans, who died on September 15<sup>th</sup>

Gregg W. Scott, son of Garry and Jo Scott, born on September 11<sup>th</sup>

Cory Sprecker, brother of Chelsea Sprecker, who died on September 26<sup>th</sup>

Keith Strathman, son of Don and Julie Strathman, brother of Becky Strathman, born on September 10<sup>th</sup>

Brandon Toler, son of Marty Tyson, who was born on August 18<sup>th</sup>



Dawn Lee Wilson, daughter of Don J. and Dixie Lee Wilson, born on September 19<sup>th</sup>

(Once you have submitted your listing you **do not** have to do so every year as long as you remain active on our mailing list. Your child's name and dates will remain on the We Remember database unless you request their removal or choose to discontinue receiving this newsletter. (This month's listing includes birth and death anniversary dates for August & September)



# *What it means to love a dead child*

*By Jacqueline Dooley  
March 2020*

You must forget all you thought you knew about grief when the landscape of your life has been demolished.

First, forget everything you think you know about grief. The rules do not apply when it is your child that dies. The landscape of your life has been demolished and now you are standing in an unrecognizable place. It expands in every direction. You do not know where to go. You are completely alone.

This is the place you find yourself in when your child dies. It is desolate. You are desolate. People keep saying things like, "I can't imagine" and "This is my worst nightmare" and you realize that your life is now unrecognizable, not just to them, but to yourself.

You have become your own worst nightmare.

You do not want to live, but you wake up and get out of bed every day, slogging forward and trying to learn the rules of this new life. You do this because that is what it means to love a dead child.

## **The gift**

Ana was beautiful. She was smart and funny and determined to live life for as long as she could live it. I had the gift of Ana in my life for almost 16 years.

Then, one day, Ana was simply gone.

Sometimes I think about the person I was in the years before I became a mother. I recall the people who knew me back then and wonder how many of them are luckier than me.

I think, "What if I'd known that, 20 years down the road, I was the one who would run out of luck? Would I have changed everything about the course of my life?"

But I know I would do everything all over again - even losing her - if it meant I could relive the years I had with her. This is a selfish thought because I am selfish. Would she want to relive it - the pain, the fear, the sadness?

That I would even consider putting Ana through it again just for the chance to see her face is what it means to love a dead child.

## **Pixelated memories**

My memories of Ana are pixelated. They are embedded in the photos on my laptop. She appears before me when I log into Facebook - young, smiling, healthy. Ana is real on the screen, but when I step away from my computer or put my phone down, I am acutely aware that she is fading from the world's memory, though never from mine.

Indelible. That is the word that best describes motherhood. It is permanent, even after our children grow up and become parents themselves. Motherhood is indelible - even if (even when) our child dies.

My love is indelible ink and Ana was the paper. The paper is gone, but the ink remains, crumbling, purposeless. It has no place to land.

Paper is so fragile.

Memories are fragile too. Before Ana died, my memories of her bloomed, vivid. They lingered, then faded into new ones. I followed each year of her life as if it were a shining path to a certain future: prom, graduation, college, career, love, marriage, a family of her own. I anticipated Ana's lifetime, stretched in front of me, a certainty.

What use were the old memories in the bright light of the new ones?

Death claimed Ana's future. Now all I have are the old memories and I am holding onto them too tightly. They disintegrate under my scrutiny, slipping away like sand through my desperate fingers, showing me the truth whether I want to acknowledge it or not.

So much of Ana's childhood exists in my unreliable, uncertain mind. The nuances of her are blurred, the memories are disappearing, and she is not here to replace them.

We remember Ana on her birthday and the day she died by inviting people to fold origami cranes, write her name on their wings, and leave them in places for strangers to find. We burn candles on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. We make space for her, in these small ways, even though she no longer takes up space. The remembering gets harder as time passes.

It is up to me, as her mother, to actualize Ana, to keep her fully realized, to hang onto the precious bits of her that remain even though I am dealing with the limitations of a brain that cannot hold onto everything. But what can I say? That is what it means to love a dead child.

## **A secret between us**

After she died, I found a tiny replica of a book that Ana had moulded from polymer clay. She had carefully sculpted the clay into a rectangle, painted it blue and etched the word "Book" on the front to serve as the title. The book was slightly concave from the shape of her fingertip when she had tried to press it flat. This flaw remained after she had baked it into the finished piece.

I carried the tiny sculpture around in my coat pocket for more than two years. I liked to rest my thumb in the curve where her finger - her warm, slender, living finger - had made that slight indent. It felt like a secret between us. I had thought the sculpture was safe, but this past January when

I reached into my pocket to touch the little book, it was not there. It had fallen through a hole in my pocket, as things do.

I fell to my knees and searched for that book, needing to feel the shape of Ana's fingertip one more time. I knew it was a lost cause, but I hunted for it anyway. I retraced my steps, casting my eyes down - on the lawn, on the kitchen floor, in the back seat of the car - I did this for days and my grief rose as my desperation grew until, finally and with a sob, I had to admit what I had known all along. The sculpture was gone forever, along with the girl who made it.

That is what it means to love a dead child.

### **A living echo**

I walk on nature trails in a semi-rural, semi-suburban part of New York located about 90 miles north of Manhattan.

On my cold, quiet walks, I study the sky and the leafless trees looking for owls or hawks or woodpeckers. I bring my dog with me even though he pulls on the leash, impatient as I drag my feet, looking up at the sky. He eyes me anxiously when I stop to study a bird or take pictures of the clouds. Sometimes I lift him and carry him along the path and he settles into me, content to go where I take him.

He was our family's first dog, adopted when Ana was 14. She had begged for a puppy and she had been so sick. How could I say no? Ana loved the dog and now I love the dog. He comes with me on almost every walk. He is like a tiny surrogate of Ana, a living echo of her love. He is all joy and warmth and pink tongue kisses.

I imagine her approval as I slip him into his harness and take him outside.

When I walk, I look up. I tell myself it is because I want to see the birds. I tell myself it is because Ana loved the sky and by taking the time to notice its beauty, I am honouring her. I tell myself these lies because I know the truth makes me sound crazy.

The real reason that I keep looking up is because I am searching for a sign that Ana still exists, that her soul survives above the painful reality of the physical world. I hope with all of my heart that she is there, floating behind a veil that is just beyond my sight.

I look down, too - for feathers and rocks shaped like hearts and that lost sculpture that might miraculously find its way back to me. As the years pass, I have stopped caring if this makes me seem crazy because believing in the impossible is what it means to love a dead child.

### **A burden too heavy to carry**

In the ebb and flow of a given day, I am perpetually hanging on and letting go, finding my footing only to discover that I am lost. It is exhausting, but it is not all sorrow all the time. How could that be the case, when Ana brought me so much joy?

I am aware of life now. I do not mean my life. I mean the miracle of everything: the way the mist curls up from my humidifier in gentle spirals like cirrus clouds, how the birds sing their morning chorus about 10 minutes after the sun comes up, the quiet hum of the pellet stove, the way my younger daughter's hair shines beneath the glow of her fairy lights.

The world presents itself to me in stark relief and I am perpetually in awe of how much of it I had missed before my life stopped and I had to figure out how to start it again.

On the days when the burden is too heavy to carry - which is most days by 1pm - I crawl into bed full of gratitude because I work from home. I can pause whenever I need a break.

As I lie in bed, I imagine all the people in all the offices throughout the globe, click, click, clicking away on their computers while I let my weary bones rest on a bed that helps bear the weight of my grief. I doze beneath the soft warmth of a beige Berber throw until the exhaustion passes and I can stand up again and finish the day.

### **Joy and sorrow**

First, forget everything you think you know about grief and now, reimagine it.

It may take three years or five or 20, but there will come a time when you fully recognise the landscape that was once so strange it seemed impossible to comprehend - life without your dearest one, life without your baby.

You will understand, with time, how to navigate the darkest parts of your new normal and you will begin to recall your child with joy. This will happen slowly at first, but with increasing frequency. You will notice the light returning, like a faint line of breadcrumbs on a barren, winter trail.

You will accept the contradiction that joy and sorrow are inextricably linked, twisted together in a brand new emotion that keeps your child alive and present within your heart. You will welcome this, in the end. There is no way to go back to the life you once knew because you will understand, at last, that this is what it means to love a dead child.

***About the author:** Jacqueline Dooley is a freelance writer located in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley. Her essays on parenting and grief have appeared in the Washington Post, Longreads, Pulse, Folks, Modern Loss, and elsewhere. She writes about grief on Medium where she has been featured in GEN and Human Parts.*

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/profile/jacqueline-dooley.html>  
March 20, 2020

***The children who were with us  
In the rush of life,  
Let them now be with us  
In the peace of spirit.***

*~ Sascha Wagner in Wintersun*

## **We Are Excited To Announce TCF's First Virtual Conference**

### **Please Save The Date – Friday, July 31, 2020 To Sunday, August 2, 2020**

Because the in-person National TCF Conference scheduled to take place in Atlanta, GA had to be canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, TCF is planning on hosting a virtual conference this month. TCF's Virtual Conference will provide an important opportunity for our community to connect in a way that is feasible right now. It also offers the opportunity for many people to attend who may not have been able to do so in the past for a variety of reasons.

#### **The three-day conference will include:**

- Keynote Speakers
- 70 plus workshop choices
- Sibling Sunday
- Candle Lighting Ceremony
- Sharing Circles
- Silent Auction
- Entertainment
- Additional regular conference activities that are suitable for a virtual environment.

#### **Additional information:**

The conference will take place on a Zoom platform with an online registration system.

Registration fees for the three-day event will be \$65 per person (early bird registration) and \$85 per person after July 17th, 2020.

Training and orientation will be offered prior to the conference for attendees who may need some extra technology support in order to participate.

Although we would all love to be together in person, we can still connect, support, and gather as a community through a virtual event. We will continue to navigate this new environment we're in and we hope you will join us!

Registration will open soon, and we will make an announcement with a registration link provided when that happens. For now, please save the dates and look forward to connecting virtually with your TCF family through an enriching and inspiring virtual event. Check the National TCF website ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)) for further information and registration information. Hopefully this should be online soon -- online registration was not set up at the time of the printing of this newsletter, so keep checking the site.



### **CELEBRATION**

I went to the fireworks tonight.  
I thought of you.  
Some were yellow, like your hair,  
Some were blue, like your eyes.  
Some were red, like your passion for life.  
And some were gold, like the warmth you spread.  
A few fizzled, barely clearing the ground,  
But most catapulted a thousand feet into the sky,  
Then burst into brilliance, like most ideas you'd try.  
I went to the fireworks tonight.  
It was an exceptional celebration.  
We were all deeply touched, enriched.  
I thought of you.  
It should have lasted longer.



*~ Terry Stepp, in memory of his nephew Jon Campbell*



## A Gentle Reminder to Go on Living

Finally, I have a platform to complain, vent, accuse, and generally make my thoughts known on how wrong everything is. The only problem with that is that I find myself with little to complain about. I have a wonderful wife and two great kids. I get along with my parents and in-laws. I'm good at my job and like my neighbors.

Don't get me wrong. I could search for things to complain about. My dog won't obey me and has since trained my kids not to obey me. There is a petition circulating my neighborhood requesting that my truck be banned from the streets during the daylight hours. Then, of course, there are the real things I could complain about: the war with Iraq, drought, forest fires, the economy, the presidential election campaign, and so on. And last, but certainly not least, my infant son dying three months ago.

To be honest, not much else has mattered since my son died. I miss him terribly, but I don't feel right complaining. I've always been a happy-go-lucky, loud-talking, fun-loving, self-deprecating sharp wit (or is that half-wit?). I'm the jolly fat man who is quick with a joke and quicker with a beer. The happy Daddy, ready to wrestle, play trucks or Barbie. I'm a lot like Santa -- only not as organized or as generous.

Or should I say, I was. What surprised me and helped my shattered heart was the generosity and compassion shown by almost everyone I knew. The support my wife and I received enabled us to hold our lives together for each other and for our other children. The kind word or open ear comes a long way when recovering from something like this. It's a long process, recovering from the death of anyone you love, but it is longer when it is a child. It's a journey that we are just beginning and one that will never end. I know that it will get easier -- because it can't get any harder.

I often go to my son's grave during my lunch hour from work. I read him the sports page, stressing the current plight of the Avalanche, hoping for some divine intervention. During one of these sessions, I was sitting under the tree that shades his grave, complaining how unfair it was for a father and son to be separated by six feet of earth. I was most of the way through my diatribe when a bird pooped on my shoulder. I didn't look up because I wasn't sure he was done yet, but I did scramble to my feet, cursing and threatening. As I stood there griping and wiping, I thought to myself that this was a sign. Not immediately, mind you. I mean, lightening bolts and thunderclaps are traditional signs from the afterlife. Bird poop generally doesn't have any existential significance.

However, the bird bombing was a message from my son. I can see you, rolling your eyes, but I believe it was my son's way of telling me to get back to being myself. It's all right to mourn and grieve; in fact, it is a must. There is no timetable for grieving, but I need to wipe it off and get back to work.

I'm not so quick to complain about it anymore. Nothing can change the fact that he is gone. If I'm not going to complain about my son dying, I shouldn't be complaining about anything else. Because of my Irish blood and poet's heart, it won't surprise anyone when I raise a glass to toast my angel on occasion. But no longer will I complain about my loss -- because I carry him in my heart and in my head. Besides, there are many large geese in the cemetery, and I don't need my son to send me a bigger message.

~ Andrew Padden in "Colorado Voices", Denver Post 2/2/03

## There is a Haunting Grace

There is a haunting grace  
In one grief-painted face.  
Pools of eyes adrift with unshed pain.

There is a haunting grace  
In one-grief-painted face.  
Tracks of tears make streams of sorrow,  
Rivulets running,  
Into an endless sea of tomorrow.

There is a haunting grace  
In one grief-painted face.  
Seeking solace from all those others.  
Sorrow's companions,  
Grief's sisters and brothers.

There is haunting grace  
In one grief-painted face.  
I've seen it many times, and can it be,  
That I have seen it mirrored back to me.

~Arleen Simmonds, TCF, Kamloops, BC, Canada  
(Reprinted with permission from *Grief Digest*, Centering Corporation,  
Omaha, Nebraska, 866-218-0101)

## Grief is Like a Jigsaw Puzzle

Grief is not a smorgasboard where you go down the line picking a little of this and a little of that. Grief is like a jigsaw puzzle. Some people get all the edge pieces together first and work from the outside in. Others dump everything out on the table at once and dive right into the middle. Some never even open the box at all. They just look at the pictures on the lid and wonder why what's inside the box doesn't match or make sense.

You meet a lot of people when you start a jigsaw puzzle. Some are full of advice, or they may try to make the puzzle look the way it ought to be instead of the way it is.



But once in awhile, you meet someone who shares their own finished puzzle and helps you to make some sense of yours. Then you find it is not as hard as before. Some of the pieces fit together easily, and you sigh with relief..... and remember.

~Victoria Guthrie, Tampa, FL

# **The Compassionate Friends**

Topeka Chapter, c/o Midland Hospice Care., Inc.  
200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, KS 66606-2800

**A self-help organization offering friendship and  
understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.**

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## **TCF 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.