



**January  
2022**



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***If this is your first Newsletter:***

*If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, it is because someone has told us it might be helpful for you. We also invite you to our monthly meetings at Hayes Barton Baptist Church. At these meetings you may talk or choose not to say a word. There are no fees or dues. We are sorry you have had to experience the death of a child (or children) but we are here for you. We, too, are on this journey of grief and extend our hearts and arms to you.*

Our Wake County TCF Chapter meets every second and fourth Tuesday nights of the month at 7:00pm in Room 224 at Hayes Barton Baptist Church, 1800 Glenwood Avenue (at the corner of Glenwood Avenue and Whitaker Mill Road at Five Points) in Raleigh. Enter from Whitaker Mill Road into the Main Entrance of the Family Life Center.

**In-Person Meetings  
Are Back**

**Tuesday  
January 11th  
7:00pm**

**Tuesday  
January 25th  
7:00pm**

***January Warmth***

*Like a tree in winter, which has lost its leaves, we look forward ahead to spring for new growth and the warmth of the sun to heal our hearts. Let us make January a time to reach out to each other and give that warmth from our hearts, and in return—we will see new growth.*

*—Pat Dodge, TCF Sacramento Valley, CA*

**ANOTHER YEAR**

**2**

This is another year just beginning — afresh with new days, new opportunities, new challenges. It occurs to me, however, that it is a very difficult task to keep from concentrating on past years and the sadness we endure just because it is a new year and the calendar has flipped the page.

**0**

Moving on to a brighter tomorrow and letting go of the pain of yesterday is a gradual process. We cross that threshold one step at a time — a small step, at first, faltering and stumbling — but somehow getting there. With patience, effort and persistence, once again we will be able to celebrate life as the year stretches on before us, putting behind us our sadness, our guilt, our failures and our pain.

**2**

We will be able to smile again. We will be able to remember our precious children in life rather than death. We will recognize in our days many little blessings and will be able to share our joys with others.

**2**

*Alice Weening, TCF, Cincinnati, Ohio*



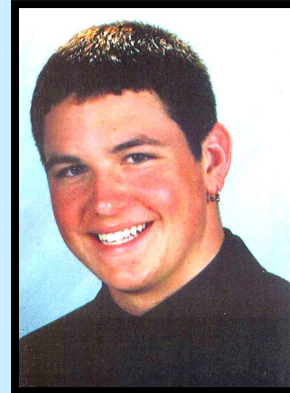
**IN MEMORY  
JANUARY LOVE GIFTS  
Given In Loving Memory Of Children**



Barbara Watkins  
In Loving Memory of My Daughter  
**Melissa Gray Watkins**

Gary and Susan Yurcak,  
and Meredith & Grayson Ulsh  
In Loving Memory of Our Son, Brother,  
and Uncle  
**Matthew William Yurcak**

*In Loving Memory of*  
**Matthew William Yurcak**



In Memory of a Wonderful Son,  
Brother, and Uncle  
Mom & Dad  
Gary & Susan Yurcak  
Meredith & Grayson Ulsh

Please send Love Gifts to: Love Gifts—Wake County Chapter, TCF, P. O. Box 6602. Raleigh, NC 27628-6602.  
Send pictures & articles to Pattie Griffin at [pattie.grif@gmail.com](mailto:pattie.grif@gmail.com) or 30 Shepherd Street, Raleigh NC 27607.



At the beginning of this New Year we want to thank all the parents who sent Love Gifts last year. Your Love Gifts provide us with the money to send out our newsletter, to cover all our chapter expenses, and to cover the costs involved with providing our Candle Light Service at the end of every year. **They are much appreciated because without them we would have to figure out some way to raise money to keep our Wake TCF group going.** *These Love Gifts are a special tribute to your child and we would like to make them even more special by also putting pictures, articles or poems in memory of your child in our newsletter whenever you send them. So thank you for the Love Gifts you send and for sending special memories of your children as well.*

*At this time we also want to thank all those who have volunteered to help our group throughout the past year. We thank Judy and Vince Schneider for being our group leaders, Charlene Peacock for contacting newly bereaved parents with letters and e-mail communications, Gary Yurcak for being our Treasurer and taking care of our finances, Pattie Griffin and Griffin Printing for printing and sending out our newsletter (and especially Cindy Jeffries for all her help with the newsletter), Cathy Joostema for her commitment to keeping our phone line answered, Sarah Riggs for keeping our website up to date, and the volunteers of our Steering Committee including Charlene Peacock, David Tatum, Dawn Cullom and Christine Torricelli. All of you were so helpful on our meeting nights and in setting up for our Candle Light Service. **Thank you to All!***



## **THIS CAN BE A CONSTRUCTIVE IF NOT A HAPPY YEAR**

HAPPY NEW YEAR??? "How can it ever be again?" "How will I ever make it through another year of this torment?"

When we are hurting and so terribly depressed, it is hard to see any good in our new year, but we must try. First we must hold on tightly to the idea that we will not always be this miserable, that we will some day feel good again. This is almost impossible to believe, but even if we don't believe it, we must tell ourselves over and over again that IT IS TRUE - BECAUSE IT IS! Many parents whose children have died in the past will attest to this. Remember, also, no one can suffer indefinitely as you are suffering now.

Second, we must face the new year with the knowledge that this year offers us a CHOICE: Whether we will be on our way to healing this time next year or still be in the pit of intense grief. We must remind ourselves that if we choose to be on our way to healing by the following year, we must work to get there and that work entails allowing ourselves to go through our grief, to cry, to be angry, to talk about our guilts, to do whatever is necessary to move towards healing.

Third, we must look for good in our lives and find reasons to go on and accept the fact that our continued suffering will not bring our child back. Many of us have other children and a spouse for whom we must go on. More important, we have our own lives that must be lived. Most of us know that our dead children would want us to go on!

No, this coming year may not be a happy one, but it can be a constructive one. Through our grief we can grow and become more understanding, loving, compassionate, and aware of the real values in life. LET US NOT WASTE THIS NEW YEAR.

—Margaret H. Gerner TCF, St. Louis, MO

## **THOUGHTS ON WINTER**

January, February, so cold, so crisp, so leafless. Beginning a NEW year, and NEW BEGINNING. You never lived in this year and that is new. Sometimes new is painful. January is also the month of resolutions and the only resolution we must make is that we must learn to live without our child. What a profound sadness that is! To love them so deeply, so passionately, so completely, only to have us part.

My child, did I ever tell you enough how much I loved you? I've wondered. Do we tell those we love how very much their life has meant to us? Probably we do not. Somehow we arrogantly believe that time goes on forever. It does. It's just that people do not. We fail to recognize how entirely too brief some lives can be. You were not supposed to die. Death is reserved for others. How could you disappoint me? Didn't you know that I had such plans for you? I didn't want to face my own mortality. How cruel life was, using you to prove to me that we do indeed come to an end.

I don't want to accept your death, but what choice have I left? Oh, I'll mend, although mending sometimes means forgetting. I cannot put you aside, but already memories of you are fading. You know what I like best. When I'm given little tidbits of your life by those who knew you. What a bittersweet delight. Each piece of my jigsaw puzzle will eventually fit together. You will be the only missing piece.

—Dorothy Worrell, TCF Palo Alto, CA

# ***Some Days Are Like This***

*by Charles Eadie  
(In memory of his son Austin)*

***Some days are like this:***

*Dulled  
Slow to move  
Immobilized*

*With heavy arms, and still body  
I feel the pull of loss  
Quietly I sit, not sure if I own it, or if it owns me  
My racing pace of circling thoughts winds down  
Gradually spinning slower and slower  
Time stretches out, almost to a stop.*

*Why is loss such an oppressor, squeezing breath and life away?  
Why does this oppressor possess me when I know only too well  
how precious life's spark is  
And how limited my time is to have it?*

*Of course there are other days, too, when loss has melted away  
And the leaden net has lifted just magically, or so it seems  
On those days my feet walk lightly  
And laughter comes easily.*

*Today is Christmas  
So we gather with our loved ones, embracing each other  
Maybe warmly, maybe tentatively  
Yet each embrace is shadowed by who is missing  
And what has been lost  
And all that we miss.*

*The shadows never leave us  
Such loss cannot be outrun or outwitted  
It only can be held and felt,  
merged and submerged in a deep pool of wisdom  
And so we gather, we hold, we wonder, we ache.*

***Some days are like this.***

**TCF *We Need Not Walk Alone*, Autumn/Winter 2021**

## **Our Children**

Our children have gone on journeys that they must go on alone. But they are not alone and they have gone to a place where they will continue their destiny. We have never been there and it is unknown to us. We feel the loss because we have always been the one to guide them, but now there is a love greater than ours Who says "Welcome Home". They unpack their luggage of grief and sorrow and throw it away and replace it with a joy and a happiness that we can never know until we get there. We long to go where they are but we know until our luggage is fully packed we must remain here. Our loss of the physical is great but our continuing love is greater and it keeps them in our hearts and minds forever.

—Carolyn Bethea, Waccamaw SC TCF Chapter

## Resolutions for A Bereaved Parent:

- ♦ I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and I will not let others put a timetable on my grief.
- ♦ I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.
- ♦ I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now".
- ♦ I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.
- ♦ I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how it feels.
- ♦ I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.
- ♦ I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.
- ♦ I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and I won't feel compelled to explain this communication to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.
- ♦ I will try to eat, sleep and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.
- ♦ I will know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.
- ♦ I know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.
- ♦ I will let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.
- ♦ I will remind myself that the grief process is circuitous - that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods, too, will pass.
- ♦ I will try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit. I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.

*by Nancy Mower, TCF Hawaii*



## Wishes for Bereaved Parents for the Coming Year:

**To The Newly Bereaved**, we wish you patience – patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

**To The Bereaved Siblings**, we wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.

**To Those Of You Who Are Single Parents**, we wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.

**To Those Of You Who Are Plagued With Guilt**, we wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.

**To Those Of You Who Have Suffered Multiple Losses**, those who have experienced the death of more than one child, we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life again.

**To Those Of You Who Are Deeply Depressed**, we wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."

**To Those Experiencing Marital Difficulties** after the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

**To All The Fathers**, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, to cry.

**To Those With Few Or No Memories Of Your Child**, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and **THAT YOUR GRIEF IS REAL.**

**To Those Of You Unable To Cry**, we wish you healing tears.

**To Those Of You Who Are Tired, Exhausted From Grieving**, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

**To All Others With Special Needs** that we have not mentioned, we wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.

*—by Joe Rosseau, former National TCF President*

# The Journey Through Overdose

by Diane Imus

I have lived every parent's nightmare. In 2018, twelve days before Christmas, I walked into my son's bedroom at dawn to wake him up. Our agreed upon plan for the day was to check him into a detox facility, however, in the early morning hours, between the time I'd said goodnight to him and the alarm went off, Peter left the house, met up with his drug dealer, crawled back into bed and died in his sleep from a fentanyl overdose.

In that moment, when I touched his shoulder and knew he was gone, my life, and the life of our family was forever changed.

No one can prepare you for what it feels like to lose a child, whether it's to addiction, illness, suicide, or to a freak accident. In the midst of my anguish there was an empty peace, because I knew Peter no longer had to struggle in an exhausting and consuming battle. I realized my fight had ended too, and I no longer had to hide the shame of his addiction from others, it was out. I was stripped bare, and all that time and energy that I'd spent hiding the truth from the world was meaningless. I was left having to face the human toll of shock from those who were discovering the truth at the same time they learned of Peter's death.

Peter was an artist—a sensitive soul, and we live in a fast-paced world where you're bombarded with terrible news and social media that can make you feel desperate and lonely, doubting yourself, even though you're surrounded by friends and family telling you the complete opposite: you are loved, you are important, you will make it in this world. Questions plague me as well—could I have stopped him that night? Would he have tried another way to go and get one more hit? Could I have forced him to go to rehab again? Was I a good mother? I know the answers to these questions, and my journey, my uphill battle every day, is to reaffirm to myself that sometimes things happen that are beyond your control, and every day there are tragedies that simply cannot be prevented. But it's how we face adversity and grief that makes the difference between living life well, or just barely living.

It took me more than a year to acknowledge to myself that at 24, Peter was an adult who made his own decisions, and it wasn't my failure as a mother that caused him to do drugs in the first place. And oddly, I never for a second blamed him or felt anger

at him for dying—I knew that if he could have stopped, he would have. The anger I felt was towards myself, where I took all those years I'd spent working, desperately trying to hold our family of five together in one perfect piece and never feeling 100% present, and wished I could redo it. I was always frantic, always calculating in my mind what had to be done next, who had to be picked up from which game, what I was going to make

for dinner, if I had clean laundry and if I'd paid the babysitter. Hindsight is cruel—I tormented myself with doubts that I had truly done my very best as Peter's mother. However, the more people I share my story with, the more people I open up to and expose the deeply hidden shame I felt about his addiction, the more I am certain that I did everything I could have done. The fight against addiction was Peter's fight, not mine. All I could do was hand him weapons.

In the early days of my journey, I did a lot of mental bargaining to reduce the sense of shame I felt. It was my way of justifying to myself why I was able to move forward.

*"Peter was an adult, you know," I would say when describing how we were coping.*

*"He moved away years ago. We're used to him being gone."*

*We'd lost Pete as a child already. "You can't understand because your kids are young and still at home."*

*"We only saw him three or four times a year."*

*"It was impossible to force someone his age to do something they didn't want to do."*

*"Peter made his choices. He thought he could control it."*

*"He lived his whole life in 24 years. Most people don't do half of the things he did. He knew who he was."*

In 2020, 94,000 people died of an overdose in the United States, a 20% increase from the year before. According to the CDC, nearly 850,000 people have died from overdoses since 1999, and that number is climbing, with the percentage of cases involving fentanyl increasing six times. These numbers don't tell us how many overdose fatalities were prevented by Narcan. All of these people who overdosed and died had family who loved them, that tried mightily to stop them, but couldn't. I look at these numbers and now realize that the shame of Peter's addiction doesn't



# Lessons on Living with Grief

by Lynn Jaffee

Here's the thing about grief. You can't really know it completely until you experience it firsthand. It's like visiting the Grand Canyon for the first time. Before I ever visited it I imagined what it would be like from pictures I'd seen and what I'd been told. Ultimately, when I got to the rim of the canyon that first time and began hiking down one of its trails, it was nothing like what I had imagined. Grief is like that, too.

My husband and I lost our 28-year old son Andrew in 2018 to a rare and aggressive kind of cancer. While I have lost aging parents, the kind of grief experienced after losing our son took me to an entirely different place altogether. I've found that even though it's only been three years since our son died, time has helped soften the edges of my sorrow and allowed me to look back at some of the preconceived ideas I had about losing a child and about grief in general.

I know a number of parents who have lost children. Before Andrew died, I had always thought of these parents as being forever sad and unable to enjoy life ever again. I couldn't imagine how they could get up in the morning and complete their day, being so injured by the loss of their child—how could they possibly go on?

Through no choice of my own, I've learned how they go on. Like the Grand Canyon, I've gone to a place that I could never know without visiting it firsthand. And in going there, deep into a canyon of sorrow, I've learned not only what it's like to lose someone who is so dear to me, but I've discovered so much more.

Having traveled to the depths of mourning has given me a different understanding of life. I'm able to connect with others who have experienced this kind of grief. We recognize each other, speak the same language and exist in a vaguely different reality. Having faced a place of profound sadness has enabled me to experience life more fully. It's like when you travel deep enough into the canyon, you find the river. The Dalai Lama says that without experiencing great grief, you can't know great happiness, and I've found that to be true. While I will always grieve the loss of my son, I can also find incredible happiness when I hear the peepers first thing in the spring, when I visit a beautiful garden or when I hear from a close friend from far away.

In the past I have tiptoed around parents who have lost a child. I was afraid that I'd say the wrong thing. Or worse, I'd remind them of their loss and ruin their day. As if! Trust me when I say that there's nothing you can say that will remind me that Andrew is no longer alive—that knowledge is always there. Even when it's not at the front of my mind, the loss of my son isn't something I will ever forget. I've also hesitated to talk to other people about their loss because I've assumed that they just don't want to discuss it. However,

most of the time it helps me to share memories of my son, and I've discovered that other parents welcome talking about their lost love one, too.

The Grand Canyon, like grief, is made up of many different pathways. Some trails stay close to the rim and others crisscross deep into the inner gorge. Each visitor to this place has a different experience, which is also true of grief. There is no right or wrong way to process a devastating loss. After Andrew passed, my husband buried himself in his work while I wanted to go deep and rehash everything that happened. Both ways of coping got us through.

The Canyon is also made up of many geological layers, from the white Kaibab Limestone at the rim to the deep purple Vishnu Schist deep in the inner gorge. These varied layers are thick in some places, thin in others and non-existent in many stretches. In a perfect world, these bands of rock would stack up evenly, one on top of the other, but they don't. When it comes to the phases of processing, grief is like that too. Researchers have identified stages, such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, that grieving people experience. However, one stage may last a long time, another briefly, and others may not happen at all. These stages may also come and go out of order, can repeat and are often nuanced. Again, every person grieves differently.

I was surprised to find that grief does some really weird stuff to your body and your brain. I know that because in the months after we lost Andrew I had tons of migraines, smell hallucinations and disabling vertigo. I was so achy that I thought I had developed fibromyalgia—until I came across a grief website that told me flat out that it was grief, not fibro. And my brain! In the first few weeks after Andrew died, I was numb. It was amazing that I could function as well as



## The Journey Through Overdose *(continued from page 6)*

belong to me—it belongs to society and how we treat drug addicts. We don't talk about them the way we should, and people and families struggle silently, too ashamed of what they perceive as failure to shine a light on it and contribute to the larger discussion.

Peter is a statistic, and I hate it. It doesn't tell his story, that he was an original, beautiful person with endless love for friends and family, an artist who touched so many with beauty, and the tragic truth that our time on this earth is brief—sometimes too brief. He tried to become the best version of himself, to live authentically, play, explore, and dream. Those lessons he left me

have made a difference—they are helping me shine the light to conquer the shame and doubt so I can move forward. I know Peter is now handing me weapons—and every day I fight to live well, not just live.

Diane Imus (Peter's mom) lives in Hoboken, NJ, with her husband Jay and their college-aged kids. Peter, an artist, died from an overdose in 2018, after a long struggle with addiction. Diane dreamed of a career change. She took creative writing courses until she became the mother of three, her most important job. Writing has been her salvation and launched her healing journey. She's currently enrolled at the Gotham Writer's Workshop in Manhattan and is working on her first book.

**TCF *We Need Not Walk Alone*, Autumn/Winter 21**

## Lessons on Living with Grief *(continued from page 7)*

I did at the time, but was later told by a grief counselor that your brain only gives you as much shock as you can handle. As the weeks went on, more grief got though, and I couldn't think straight. There were moments driving when I had absolutely no clue where I was. I was forgetful and couldn't concentrate. The counselor said, "Be careful out there, this is your brain on grief!" And so it was.

In experiencing Andrew's passing I learned that grief is universal, and the death of my son doesn't diminish anyone else's loss. More than a couple of times I've had interactions with people who hesitated to talk about losing a parent or a beloved pet fearing that their loss might sound insignificant compared to the passing of my child. Grief isn't a contest. Just because my loss was devastating, it doesn't make

your bereavement any less painful, and I'm capable of acknowledging your grief. In fact, I'm more capable now than I ever was.

We're all meant to visit the deep canyon that is grief. Loss is a part of life, and we're meant to experience loss in order to learn and grow. But it's painful. Traveling deep into that canyon can feel endless and scary, but just when you feel like you can't go any deeper, you come across a tiny creek of clear water passing through a grove of willows.

*Lynn Jaffee is a freelance writer and retired acupuncturist. She and her husband lost their 28-year old son, Andrew, in 2018 to a rare form of cancer. Lynn is working on a collection of stories about caregiving her adult son, grief and surviving loss. The Moments You Remember is an excerpt from that collection. Lynn and her husband live in Minneapolis.*

**TCF *We Need Not Walk Alone*, Autumn/Winter 2021**

## FOR THE NEW YEAR:

**Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them:**

- ◆ **Let us not try to imagine the future — take one day at a time.**
- ◆ **Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.**
- ◆ **Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.**
- ◆ **Try to be realistic about your expectations: of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. Each of us is an entity, therefore different. So how can there be perfect understanding?**
- ◆ **When a good day comes, relish it; don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. IT WILL come again and multiply.**
- ◆ **Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Help your body heal as well as your mind.**
- ◆ **Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you. As you find you are caring about the pain of others, you are starting to come out of your shell — a very healthy sign.**



**I know following these won't be easy but what has been? It's worth a try, don't you think? Nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.**

**— Mary Ehmann, TCF Valley Forge, PA**



# The Voice Heard In My Silence

by Rick Jacobs

The pandemic we are all facing is challenging but allows for some rare opportunities of self-discovery. I have taken many walks by myself where I contemplate the events and meaning of my life. My future seems uncertain. There is concern as to whether the company I work for will stay in business. Do I retire or find another job if that is even possible? The feeling of isolation from family, friends, and a normal reality weigh heavily upon me. I worry about loved ones getting sick and possibly dying. From this train of thought it is a short leap to thinking about my entire life. What have I done, where am I now, and what do I want for my future? My honest contemplations of life led to a deepened desire to examine it all. What stands out the most in my life review is my son Adam's passing and the emptiness it has created.

Quarantine, six feet of separation and social distancing are the terms dominating our consciousness in 2020 and continuing in 2021. Feeling isolated is natural under present circumstances. When Adam passed away eleven years ago, I felt isolated in my grief and pain. I was surrounded by many loving people, but their love could not penetrate my numbing hurt. There was a numbness that encased my heart and caused an emotional paralysis. I was alone within myself. My thoughts were foggy, my feelings were numb, and a sensation of a surreal reality permeated my consciousness. Looking back, I realize how similar things are today to what I experienced eleven years ago. I was socially distant from all people and quarantined within my own essence.

Because of the pandemic I spend a great deal of time by myself. Self-imposed isolated is difficult and I need to frequently think of the long-term goal. Stay healthy because a grandchild is on the way. Stay healthy because you have potential to live for many years and can be productive.

Stay healthy to honor Adam's spirit.

Isolation is challenging but offers the opportunity for self-contemplation.

# Help is Out There

by Dr. Pamela Gabbay



In the past 20 years, there has been a rise in suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and suicide deaths. There has also been a rise in feelings of anxiety and fear, especially since the pandemic. Because of this, more people are struggling. Grievors, already vulnerable and hurting, are even more susceptible to feeling alone and isolated. We all understand the intense sorrow and pain-filled days and nights after the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling. At times, the intense grief can cause one to feel like there is no hope and that life is no longer worth living. Sometimes, when these feelings emerge, so does suicidal ideation.

What is suicidal ideation? Suicidal ideation is when someone is having thoughts of suicide. It is not uncommon to hear this, especially in the early days and months following loss. Of great concern, however, is that we don't always know if someone is serious or not. The best thing to do if someone you know is expressing suicidal ideation is to help them to get help right away. Take them seriously. Let them know that you care about them and that you believe them. This is imperative. If they are in imminent danger, call 911.

If you are not sure about their intent but want to ensure that they have someone to talk to, help them by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline with them. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is there to talk to the person and to assist them with finding immediate (and possibly lifesaving) support in their community. The number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255 and their website is: [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org). There is also a Crisis Text Line. Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor. Their website is [crisistextline.org](https://www.crisistextline.org). Both suicide prevention services are available 24 hours a day and are staffed with trained volunteers and professional staff. They provide free and confidential support when people are in crisis.

Being bereaved due to a child, grandchildren or sibling dying by suicide is often a very lonely experience.



LOVED & ALWAYS REMEMBERED  
 OUR JANUARY CHILDREN  
 Birthdays



Ian Kirk	Son	Kevin & Stormie Kirk
Timothy Reedy	Son	Kelly Boutwell
Jill Perlette	Daughter	Maureen & Charles Perlette
Kyle Evan Shaw	Son	Judy & Doug Brunk
Eric Metcalf	Son	Kim Berthiaume
Zachary Michael Arata	Son	Mike & Karen Arata
Sarah Tatum	Daughter	David Tatum
Danielle Surabian	Daughter	Judy Surabian
Lynn Williams	Daughter	Wilson & Ann Williams
Pam Demaree	Daughter	Mary Demaree
Jason Yasser	Son	Donna Tyson
Meredith Ann Forlenza	Daughter	Elizabeth "Ann" Riddick
Gregory William Smith	Son	Ann Conlon-Smith & Shepherd Smith
Larry E Stafford	Son	Alvah & Rachel Ward
Kaitlyn Hassard	Daughter	Richard & Korey Hassard
Karl "KJ" Davis II	Son	Selina & Karl Davis
Malcolm McCaskill	Son	Terrell & Candice McCaskill
Joseph Tanner	Son	Jackie & Michael Tanner
James (Jay) Edmund Spence IV	Son	Ed & Becky Spence
Isabella Hedge	Daughter	Amber Silvers & James Hedge
Avery Smithies	Son	Shannon & Silas Smithies
Kevan Hill	Son	Beth & Mike Hill
Christopher (Chris) Pecoraro	Son	Anthony & Betty Dodd Pecoraro
Gabriella Alba	Daughter	Dantavia Alba
Charles "Chuck" Turlington II	Son	David & Nancy Turlington
Matthew Yurcak	Son	Gary & Susan Yurcak
Casey Edens	Daughter	Kimberly Edens
Blake Lemaster	Son	Sandra & J.B. Lemaster
Michael Mendy	Son	Kathleen & Mike Mendy
Jacob Lee	Son	Terri & Bill Holt
Abigail "Abby" Cox	Daughter	Betsy Whaley
Jonathan Latham	Son	Catherine (Cate) Forrester

## A NEW YEAR

The year is coming to an end.  
 Please lend an ear to my thoughts, my friend.  
 May I really tell you how I feel  
 about another year with which I'll deal?

I won't always ask that you understand.  
 And when you don't, just hold my hand.  
 If I look ahead with a sense of dread,  
 help me look again with hope instead.

If on New Year's I shed a tear  
 for that precious child no longer near,  
 Just know I need a little time  
 to blink back tears, then I'll be fine.

This hurt will last my whole life through  
 but I can manage with God and you.  
 And I know again my child will shine  
 because he's in your heart, *and in mine.*

—Nan Gurski, TCF Houston, TX



LOVED & ALWAYS REMEMBERED  
**OUR JANUARY CHILDREN**  
 Anniversaries



Mike Helfant	Son	Susan & Larry Helfant
Reece Michael Melton	Son	Debbie & Chris Strickland
Dillon Jeffreys	Son	June Jeffreys
Bill Richardson	Son	Rick & Dolly Richardson
Michael Joy	Son	Nicholas & Amber Joy
Pam Demaree	Daughter	Mary Demaree
Priya Balagopal	Daughter	Geetha & Nair Balagopal
Ayden Champion	Son	Mechelle & Eric Champion
Ann Myers	Daughter	Gretchen Wrigley
Michael Mihalik III	Son	Jody & Michael Mihalik, Jr
Christopher Cyr	Son	Teresa Cyr
Carol Stamper	Daughter	Mark & Lynn Stamper
Jake David Breland Jr.	Son	Kathleen & Jake Breland
Sean Hurley	Son	Christine & Vincent Torricelli
Jill Perlette	Daughter	Maureen & Charles Perlette
Benjamin A. Thorp IV	Son	Barbara Thorp
Kyle Kozlowski	Son	Kimberly & Chris Kozlowski
Jeannie Crusen	Daughter	Jean Pritchard & George Boley
Jason Yasser	Son	Donna Tyson
Terrance Norwood	Son	Joyce Reed
Keenan Cozzolino	Son	Natalie & Chris Dunigan
William "Will" Hayes	Son	Wanda Hayes
Adriana Toro Zaid	Daughter	Sandra Zaid
Heidi Lynn Bauer	Daughter	Mimi & Merle Bauer
Malcolm McCaskill	Son	Terrell & Candice McCaskill
Kevin Harlan	Son	Sosan Harlan
Isabella Hedge	Daughter	Amber Silvers & James Hedge
Sean Ryan	Son	Frank & Suzanne Ryan
Tony Thompson	Son	Susan Thompson
Kaitlyn Hassard	Daughter	Richard & Corey Hassard
Christopher Alan Brothers	Son	Ronda & Rank Marshall
Jamie Lynn McLeod	Daughter	Brenda Yates
Gabriella Alba	Daughter	Dantavia Alba
Jeff Miller	Son	Carol Shelton
Hannah Victoria Pearce	Daughter	Lisa Pearce
Lisa Diane Gatlin	Daughter	Jo Ann & Miller Gatlin

**When Grieving Friends Meet**

*We are here together,  
 In the radiance of our memories, and in the darkness of our loss.*

*The memories of days gone by can be like northern lights,  
 outshining distance and night, rising in wonder.*

*And sometimes, the radiance of our memories  
 overcomes the darkness of our loss.*

by Sascha Wagner (from her book "Wintersun")





# *The Compassionate Friends*

*Wake County Chapter*  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**The Compassionate Friends, Inc.  
Wake County Chapter  
PO Box 6602  
Raleigh, NC 27628-6602**

*Happy  
New  
Year*  
♥

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.  
Wake County Chapter  
PO Box 6602  
Raleigh, NC 27628-6602**

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Chapter Leaders  
Bereavement Letters  
& Hospitality

Treasurer  
Newsletter Editor  
& Membership Info  
Wake TCF Phone Line  
Website

Greeter & Social Planner  
Social Planner

Vince and Judy Schneider

Charlene Peacock...919-395-4107  
Gary Yurcak...919-847-1780

Pattie Griffin...919-829-1982  
Cathy Joostema...919-833-4022  
www.TCFWake.com

David Tatum...919-623-3428  
Dawn Cullom...919-247-9649

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