

# The Compassionate Friends



## Boca Raton Chapter, April 2009 561-368-0324

The Compassionate Friends, Inc., is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to all bereaved parents. TCF is non-denominational and all bereaved parents are welcome. TCF National headquarters is P.O. Box 3686, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522. Telephone 630-990-0010, toll free 877-969-0010, Fax 877-969-0010.

<b>Schedule of Meetings:</b> Held at St. Paul's Church 701 W. Palmetto Park Rd., Boca Raton All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.	<i>Chapter Leader</i>	<i>Gail Schroeder (Engel's Mom)</i>
	<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	<i>Gail Schroeder (Engel's Mom)</i>
	<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Ina &amp; Cary Winters (Randi's Mom &amp; Dad)</i>
April 6                      April 20	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Jerry Flax (Brett's Dad)</i>
May 4                        May 18	<i>New Members</i>	<i>Nate Kimbleton (Robin &amp; Melinda's Dad)</i>
June 1                        June 15	<i>Greeter</i>	<i>Eileen Kesnig (Eric's Mom)</i>

### ***Fund Raiser***

***Friday, April 17, 2009***

***7:00 pm – St. Paul's Church***

***Invite your friends and family***

***Come and support your chapter***

# Special Days

We call them "Special Days" and there is really nothing special at all about a child dying. The important thing is that we never forget them and by listing their birthday and the anniversary of their death, we always acknowledge their existence...that they were HERE, that their lives had MEANING, and they were LOVED, and that they are MISSED.

Marc, son of Flornece & Rube Freedman, birthday 4-1-52  
Andrea, daughter of Sylvia Zeimer, date of passing 4-2-08  
Christopher Ferro, son of Grace & Ed Owsian, date of passing 4-3-04  
Daniel, son of Pat Rizzo, birthday 4-3-79  
Mark, son of Sara & Morrie Hoff, date of passing 4-4-02  
Brandon, son of Joey Naudic, birthday 4-4-87  
Luciano, son of Silvia & Eduardo Ranallo, birthday 4-4-89  
Laurie, daughter of Helene & Leo Gladstein, date of passing 4-6-03  
Mitchell, son of Doris Young, birthday 4-10-60  
Jonathan, son of Lorraine & Herb Michaelis, date of passing 4-11-07  
John, son of Cathy Baiori, date of passing 4-12-03  
Kathleen, niece of Patricia Monahan, date of passing 4-12-07  
Chad, son of Josie Durasa, date of passing 4-14-06  
Parker, son of Cynthia Meyer, birthday 4-16-98  
Andrew, son of Marlon & Michele Chin Shue, birthday 4-17-84  
Nancy, daughter of Civia Yellin, birthday 4-17  
Randi, daughter of Ina & Cary Winters, birthday 4-18-73  
Laura, daughter of Carla & Richard Genender, birthday 4-19-86  
Matthew, son of Lillian Kaminer, date of passing 4-20-00  
Shaun, son of Debbie Thomas, date of passing 4-20-07  
Gregory, son of Laretta Patton-Mungroo, birthday 4-23-71  
Christopher, son of Janet & Daniel Roy, birthday 4-26-00  
Morgan, son of Renae VanWagner, date of passing 4-26-08  
Sandy, daughter of Roe & Irv Gale, date of passing 4-27-08  
Jack, son of Arlene Steinberg, birthday 4-27-61  
Irine, daughter of Medeta Belke, birthday 4-28-66  
Mitchell, son of Doris Young, date of passing 4-29-60  
Joseph, brother of Anthony Peragine, date of passing 4-29-08  
Charles, son of Karen Grande, date of passing 4-30-07

## **New Members:**

**Larry Forrest, son Jeff 8-16-62 2-22-09**

**Laura & Henry Friedlander, son Craig 5-14-82 1-21-09**

**Lois & Michael Krul, son Eric 12-3-77 2-24-07**

### **To Our New Members**

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person – or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

### **To Our Old Members**

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting, we have new parents. THINK BACK...what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldie” to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “your pain will not always be this bad; it does get softer.”

Telephone Friends...if you need to talk

Gail Schroeder	561-901-0483
Jerry Flax	954-341-8657
Ronda Fryburg	954-753-0493
Nate Kimbleton	561-414-0811

If you would like the entire current month newsletter dedicated to your child, please call the chapter line of 561-368-0324. A donation of \$100 is requested.



*A love gift is in honor of a child who has died. All gifts are of no charge to our members and you may either submit one by calling the chapter phone number or by leaving one at any meeting. Remember you may use this tool in our newsletter for your child or in memory of other's children. This is a wonderful way for others to say, "I am remembering your child."*

Dear Brandon:

You are always in our hearts and will be loved forever.

Mommy, Daddy, Brian and Jaime

Dearest Engel: Happy Easter, baby. As always, you are so missed, but especially when a holiday comes near. The celebration is difficult without your presence and love. I wish you were 9 years old again, living with us and decorating Easter eggs and looking for your Easter basket on the morning of. Life was filled with your joy then.

Love Mommy and Daddy

## **A Message From The Chapter**

**Yearning for some rational explanation after the death of your child is as normal as breathing. Asking “why” is a common part of the grief recovery process, but it represents just one step along the way to wholeness. Recovery depends upon, among other things, letting go of the “why” questions and turning to questions that begin with words such as “how” and “what.” “How do I go on with my life now that this has happened?” and “What can I do to recover a sense of joy and meaning in my life?”**

**Questions beginning with “how” or “what” imply an acknowledgement of the loss and an affirmation of survival.**

**When we experience a major loss, the only answer to the question, “why?” is that this is a mortal, frail, imperfect world in which the word *fair* doesn’t always apply. The world is not perfect and life does not follow a perfect script. This is a world that operates by the laws of gravity and physics. Therefore, accidents do happen; deaths do occur. It is a world in which human beings have free will. Therefore, mistakes will be made and cruel, violent acts will take place.**

**Whatever our religious orientation, the message is the same: Experiencing major losses, even though painful beyond words, is not optional. There is no grand plan or purpose to every loss we face. There is neither a divine nor a demonic plot to “get us”. It is just part of living in this less-than-perfect world.**

**Grief begins with a terrible and painful loss, but it can end with the discovery of a “new normal.” Grief is not a door-closer. Grief is also a door-opener. Once you have faced your grief squarely and taken the necessary steps to get directly through the center of it, you will see new sources of happiness that you couldn’t see before.**

**Grief is not something you can avoid. True, it is more difficult and painful than anything else you will face in life. It takes a long time to get through the experience. But grief can also be an unparalleled occasion for discovery of your own strength of character.**

**Enduring the stresses and challenges of grief recovery calls for a discipline that can add a valuable dimension to your life. You can emerge from it considerably stronger and more compassionate than you were before. Grief is as much about finding as it is about losing.**

*Gail*

**I think about you each day and night  
I have to know that you are alright  
I need some proof, I need a sign  
I have to know that you are fine  
What's it like where you are  
Is it close or is it far  
Are you happy, I have to know  
Where are you now, where did you go  
Is there really a heaven, what's this all about  
I have to know that you are safe  
I yearn to know that you're in a better place  
My mind is going 24/7  
I have to be sure that there is a heaven  
It eats me up wondering if you are  
Truly safe and sound  
Did your soul leave when you were  
Place gently in the ground  
Please give me the answers, let me know that you are in a wonderful here after  
Where your life is filled only with joy and lots of laughter  
Because my child you are the best  
I pray you are happy when you were laid to rest  
I miss you more each and everyday  
I need the proof that you're okay  
How do I achieve these answers that I need so very much  
Now that I can not feel your tender touch  
It is hell on earth with you not here  
If only I could have these answers it might be easier to bear  
For you are my child and I want you  
To be caressed in happiness and joy  
For you are my precious son, my amazing boy  
You died with a beautiful smile on your face  
I pray that means you are in a better place  
They say life is a journey that ends with a new beginning  
I hope yours is fantastic, happy and secure  
I hope you were greeted with this and so much more**

*From 'Loving You Bigger Than A Big Bus' by Susan Bell*

**When trying to comfort grieving parents**

**DO:**

- Acknowledge the child's death by telling the parents of your sadness for them and by expressing love and support; try to provide comfort.
- Visit and talk with the family about the child who died; ask to see pictures or mementoes the family may have.
- Extend gestures of concern such as bringing flowers or writing a personal note expressing your feelings; let the parents know of your sadness for them.
- Attend the child's funeral or memorial service.
- Remember anniversaries and special days.
- Donate to some specific memorial in honor of the child. Offer to go with the parent(s) to the cemetery in the days and weeks after the funeral, or find other special ways to extend personal and sensitive gestures of concern.
- Make practical and specific suggestions, such as offering to stop by at a convenient time, bringing a meal, purchasing a comforting book, offering to take the other children for a special outing, or treating the mother or father to something special.
- Respect the dynamics of each person's grief. The often-visible expressions of pain and confusion shown by grieving parents are normal. Grief is an ongoing and demanding process.

**DO NOT:**

- Avoid the parents or the grief. Refrain from talking about the child who died or referring to the child by name.
- Impose your views or feelings on the parents or set limits for them about what is right or appropriate behavior.
- Wait for the parents to ask for help or tell you what they need.
- Tell them you know just how they feel.
- Be afraid to let the parents cry or to cry with them.

**There are several myths that circulate in our society about grief and mourning. By becoming aware of these myths and the truths behind them you can prepare yourself to move through the grief process more smoothly.**

### **Myth #1: Grief and Mourning are the same experiences.**

**Truth:** Although people will often use these words to describe the same thing, there is a very important distinction. Grief is the composition of thoughts and feelings that one feels after sustaining a loss while mourning is the process one takes of moving towards healing. Grief happens within the person while mourning happens externally.

### **Myth #2: The stages of grief and mourning happen in a progressive, predictable order.**

**Truth:** Grief and mourning are as unique as the individual itself. Everyone will feel different emotions and express them in a way that is uniquely their own.

### **Myth #3: One should move away from grief, not towards it.**

**Truth:** Often times grief is viewed as something one needs to overcome or avoid, not experience. Someone who shows outward signs of grief can be perceived self-pitying or weak. The truth is that grief needs to be experienced, not repressed, for healing to ever take place.

### **Myth #4: The goal is to get over your grief as soon as possible.**

**Truth:** A person mourning the loss of a loved one needs to mourn at their own pace. Instead of focusing on getting over the grief, one could focus on growing through it. The truth is, we never "get over" our grief. We only become reconciled to it.

### **Myth #5: Tears of grief are a sign of weakness.**

**Truth:** Crying is a way of releasing tension and emotion. It also communicates to others the need to be comforted. One who expresses tears shows their willingness to work through their grief.

## **Why Do You Need The Compassionate Friends?**

**Where can a bereaved parent turn to for understanding and hope? The Boca Raton Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is a support group for parents to provide**

friendship, understanding and hope for all parents who have lost a child, no matter what age or circumstances. Here is a place where parents meet other parents who truly know the grief journey. A place where it is okay to talk about your child who has died. A place where other parents understand the need to tell your story of what happened and it is okay to cry and to laugh. Everyone at The Compassionate Friends “gets it.” We have all been there. We are all going through the same pain and overwhelming grief. We all have questions, doubts, guilts, sadness and we all share with each other whatever we are feeling. Each parent can truly relate as we listen, talk and share. It is all “the worst” – we are living a life that has been turned inside out and upside down. We are struggling and trying to piece a life back together without our child. We are struggling to even find the desire to want to live our life again spiritually and in memory, not physically, not the way he or she is supposed to be. It is just not natural for a parent to outlive their child and when this happens and our world is not normal, the questions, tears and aching for our child just doesn’t go away magically one day. A bereaved parent will never “get over” losing a child. We learn to cope, to come up with survival techniques, to rediscover contentment in our lives, but it can be a very long and lonely road without someone to walk beside us, to hold our hand, give lots of hugs and hope and understanding. The Compassionate Friends support group provides a warm, comforting place where bereaved parents can bridge the gap between their emotional world and their real, working world. None of us are professionals. We are just bereaved parents with experience. The Compassionate Friends does not have all the answers to the multitude of questions that bereaved parents daily struggle with, but we believe that through our sharing, by telling each other how we cope and how we manage to find the strength and energy to survive another day, another month, another year and how we reinvested our lives for ourselves and our child helps each other to find some semblance of answers to pick up the pieces and put our lives somewhat back together again.

## **Meeting Schedule and Topics**

**January 5**

**Coping-Moping-Hoping (post holiday meeting)**

*Presented by Gail Schroeder*

**January 19**  
**Men on one Side, Women on the Other**  
*Presented by Jerry Flax*

**February 2**  
**Religion and Spirituality**  
*Presented by Walt Schroeder*

**February 16**  
**“Am I Making Progress”**  
*Presented by Nate Kimbleton*

**March 2**  
**Coping With Grief**  
*Guest Speaker Abby Mosher*

**March 16**  
**Beyond Tears Book Presentation**  
*Special Guests – Authors and Panel Discussion*

**April 6**  
**Surviving Passover and Easter**  
*Presented by Nate Kimbleton*

**April 20**  
**Marriage Survival after the lost of a child**  
*Presented by Ronda Fryburg*

**May 4**  
**Grief of Mothers and Grief of Fathers**  
*Presented by Gail Schroeder*

**May 18**  
**Myths about Grief**  
*Presented by Gail Schroeder*

**June 1**  
**Share a Story about your Child**  
*Presented by Gail Schroeder*

**June 15**  
**What’s Bothering Me?**  
*Presented by Jerry Flax*

**The Compassionate Friends Credo**

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes but our love for our children unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life and many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds. 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 we feel hopeless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt, or in deep depression; others radiate an inner peace. But whatever the pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is a pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and 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.