



The Compassionate Friends

Eastern Jackson County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

July - August 2026

Chapter Leader: Theresa Phillips

24-Hour Help Line: (816)229-2640

Private Facebook Page: Eastern Jackson County TCF

Website: www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org

TCF National Headquarters
48660 Pontiac Trail #930808 Wixom, MI 48393
Website: www.compassionatefriends.org
(877)969-0010

Upcoming Event:

Our Annual Walk to Remember

will be held September 26, 2026

At Waterfall Park (just behind Bass Pro) In Independence, MO.

Registration will start at 8:30 am
walk will start at 9 am. Shirts will be available the day of the walk for purchase. Invite friends and families to walk with you and remember...



I will carry you with me into everyday you've never lived and every year you've never known.
- Molly Mattocks

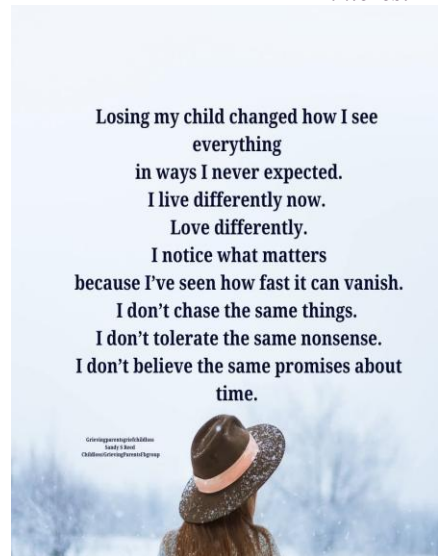
"I will carry you with me into every day you've never lived and every year you've never known" isn't a promise made lightly. It's not poetic comfort. It's the reality of grief after the numbness wears off, when loss settles into the long stretch of living. You carry them into mornings they never woke to, seasons they never aged into, changes they never witnessed. Every milestone comes with a quiet awareness: you're stepping into something they were meant to be part of.

Carrying someone like this isn't sentimental. It's heavy. It means making room for them in a life that no longer holds their body, their voice, their future. It means holding their memory alongside new experiences, knowing they don't cancel each other out. Joy doesn't

replace grief. It coexists with it, often uncomfortably.

This is what it means to keep loving someone who didn't get to keep living. You don't leave them behind as time goes on. You take them with you, into days they never lived, into years they never knew and you keep going, not because it's easy, but because love made them part of who you are and always will be.

*Artwork Credit: Unknown via
Pinterest*



Summerwind

*The one who owns this summer is
not here,
not here to know the tender
summerwind,
not here to share the glowing and
the song.*

*The one who owns this summer
did not live
to touch the richness of this day,
this day in summer when you are
alone.*

*Weep to the summer wind,
weep and love again
the one you remember.*

The Sun Will Shine

I sat in the darkness in the living room, for dawn was only just arriving. Through the picture window I watched the trees slowly outline the opposite shore of our little lake. Then magically, a warm shaft of light appeared behind the trees, flooding the horizon with gold. "It will be a beautiful day for our picnic," I thought.

But as the daylight grew stronger, I saw that a thick, gray fog blanketed the lake and the lawn between it and the house. "Oh, no," I moaned, "I was so hoping for good weather." Then a ball of fire peeked over the horizon and rose majestically into full view. Within an hour it had burned off the mist, and the picnic day emerged bright and clear under the cloudless sky.

Life is like this, I thought, when grief ... darkens our days. It is then we must keep hope burning in our hearts. We must believe that if the sun is not shining at the moment, it will shine again, and we will have a richer appreciation of the bright days for having experienced the darkness.

I Feel the Joy

Never let there be a time when
I cannot feel the pain
When hurt and sadness are
blocked out,
And only numbness reigns.
At least with pain I am alive
But numbness will destroy
For if I cannot feel the pain,
Then I cannot feel the joy.

--Joanetta Hendel, TCF, Indianapolis

Summer Breezes

There's a hint of girlish laughter
Wafting past the porch.
For a moment I pause to listen.
In the warmth of summer sun
Memories are to bask in.
Trees you climbed, kites you flew,
Bikes you raced,
Waves you splashed in.
At night we wrapped time around us
As we blanketed the grass
And gazed toward heaven.
The stars were full of wonder then,
And lazy days seemed endless.
Life spread before you,
Laughter filling the wind with
happiness.
Just now I thought I heard you
once again.
How pleasant this breath of summer?
The breezes hold such memories
Of life, of you.

--Karen Nelson, Box Elder County, UT

When you walk through a storm,
keep your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark,
At the end of the storm is a golden
sky
And the sweet silver song of a
lark.
Walk on through the wind,
Walk on through the rain,
Though your dreams be tossed and
blown.
Walk on, walk on,
with hope in your heart,
And you'll never walk alone...
You'll never walk alone.

--"You'll Never Walk Alone"
by Oscar Hammerstein II

Time is the passing of moments
lived one at a time. Our recovery
depends on what we do with each
moment. We cannot sit back and
say "TIME will heal me."
TIME is merely the movement of
the clock.
Our successful return to
comfortable living is what we do
while the clock is moving.
We have to look at the beauty left
us in life instead of what we no
longer have.

We must find reasons to go on.
—Margaret Gerner, TCF St. Louis MO

I don't know why... I'll never know
why...

I don't have to know why...
I don't like it...I don't have to like it...
What I do have to do is make a choice
about my living.
What I do want to do is accept it and go
on living.

The choice is mine.
I can go on living, valuing every moment
in a way I never did before.
Or I can be destroyed by it and, in turn,
destroy others.
I thought I was immortal,
that my children and my family were
also,
that tragedy happens only to others.
I know now that life is tenuous and
valuable.
I choose to go on living,
making the most of the time I have.
And valuing my family and friends
in a way I never experienced before.

--Iris Bolton, TCF, North
Atlanta

Where Do I Go?

Now that you're gone, where do I go
to see your fair smile
to hear your tinkling giggle
to smell your damp hair after a swim
to listen to your questions
to touch your gentle cheek
to feel your bear hug?

Where do I go
to share all my years of wisdom
to find someone who'll tell me the
truth
to answer the phone that won't ring
to tell you I'm sorry
to know that I am loved and
to pour out my love and my tears?

I shall go
to the pictures that hold you forever
to the books we shared
to the music you taught me to love
to the woods we explored as one
to the memories that never fail
to the innermost reaches of my heart
to where we are always together.

--Marcia Alig, TCF, Mercer, NJ

The Lonely Attic

There's a private part of me no one
can enter.
A place of sadness, pain and
memories.
On special days of peace, I'll find
myself there.
And the moments of my laughter
fade away.

This place will be a part of me
forever.

And the peaceful days will never be
secure,
As in solitude I drift into the attic,
and feel the loneliness no one can
share.

--Cathryn Haywood

From Sascha Wagner:

Summer Soon...

Sunlight dancing on the branches
Of the birch tree at my door.
Meadow stretching smug and lazy,
Darker, greener than before.

Wind as warm as hugging children,
Clouds so round and very close--
And on one small grave there
trembles
Lovingly an early rose.

August

This summer runs to harvest—Do
you ask
How could a harvest be without my
child?

Friend, someday soon
the harvest in your life
will bring you home and wealth,
from love remembered.

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month,
And she chose this month to die.

Like the bright and beautiful
fireworks

Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was
she—

Having been, and left her mark,
A glorious, incandescent life.

A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.

The July birth, the July death
Of my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my
heart...

With love that never dies.

--Sally Migliaccio, Long Island, NY



WELCOME TO THE MEETING NONE OF US WANTED TO ATTEND

Before we begin...
 Would you pull up a chair?
 If this is your first meeting, I'm so
 deeply sorry you're here.
 No one walks through these doors
 because they want to.
 No one asks for a seat in this room.
 No one dreams of becoming "the
 parent whose child died."
 And yet...
 Here you are.
 Maybe your heart is racing because
 saying the words out loud somehow
 makes it all feel real.
 Maybe you're afraid to speak
 because you're scared people will
 think you've lost your mind.
 Maybe you're exhausted from
 hearing,
 "They're in a better place."
 "At least you have other children."
 "Everything happens for a reason."
 Maybe you've smiled when you
 wanted to scream.
 Maybe you've told people, "I'm
 okay," simply because explaining the
 truth takes more strength than you
 have left.
 Can I tell you something?
 You're safe here.
 Hi...
 I'm Tammy.
 I'm Brandi's mom.
 Fifteen years ago, I walked into this
 room too.

Not an actual room...
 The room every bereaved parent
 eventually finds.
 The room where every heart has
 been shattered.
 Where every chair holds someone
 who still reaches for a child who isn't
 physically here.
 Where silence is understood.
 Where tears don't need an apology.
 I never wanted this membership.
 I still don't.
 And if I could, I'd tear up every
 membership card that's ever been
 handed out.
 But since we're here...
 Let's make one promise to each
 other.
 Let's leave our masks at the door.
 You don't have to be strong today.
 You don't have to protect everyone
 else from your grief.
 You don't have to have the right
 words.
 You don't even have to speak.
 You can cry.
 You can be angry.
 You can question everything you've
 ever believed.
 You can sit in complete silence.
 We'll understand.
 Because we've all lived through the
 moment that split our lives into two
 parts...
 Before.
 And After.
 Maybe no one has told you this yet...
 You'll become terrified of forgetting
 the sound of their voice.
 You'll replay conversations until you
 know every pause by heart.
 You'll reach for your phone to call
 them before reality catches up.
 You'll wonder how the sun had the
 nerve to rise the morning after your
 child died.
 You'll feel guilty for laughing.
 You'll feel guilty for smiling.
 You'll even feel guilty on the days
 you don't cry.
 None of those things make you a bad
 parent.

They make you a parent whose love
 had nowhere to go after your child
 died.
 So here's the only thing I ask of you.
 Bring your tears.
 Bring your questions.
 Bring your anger.
 Bring your silence.
 Bring your memories.
 But most of all...
 Bring your child's name.
 Because here, we won't avoid saying
 it.
 We won't pretend they never existed
 because it makes other people
 uncomfortable.
 We will speak their name.
 We will remember them.
 We will honor the life that made you
 a mom.
 Or a dad.
 If today all you can do is sit...
 I'll sit beside you.
 If all you can do is cry...
 I'll hand you the tissues.
 If all you can do is breathe...
 We'll breathe together.
 Because, while none of us wanted to
 become members of this club...
 No parent should ever have to carry
 this membership alone.
 If you're comfortable, tell me your
 child's name in the comments.
 Not how they died.
 Tell me their name.
 Tell me what made them laugh.
 Tell me something that made them
 uniquely them.
 Today, let's fill this room with names
 that will never be forgotten.
 I'll begin.
 My daughter is Brandi.
 She changed my life forever.
 And I will speak her name for as
 long as I have breath.
 "We're listening."
 Tell me about your child.
 I promise... we'll remember them
 with you.

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Disbelief. Numb. Frozen in time. Blank stares. Unable to think. Moving in slow motion. Living in a fog. These are just a few of the ways we respond to initial knowledge of child loss. After the numbing phase, when the thawing out begins, the pain settles on our broken hearts and the raw fear of not having our child with us takes over and controls us for a long, long time. In the meantime, society as a whole expects grieving parents to function "normally" at work, at home, and in social settings. Nothing about child loss makes sense!

Clara Hinton - author of *Silent Grief*

TheAfterloss.com

The Ten Commandments for a Grieving Parent:

1. You shall not tell them to get on with their Life.
2. You shall not tell them to be strong for their family.
3. You shall not tell them they have other children.
4. You shall not tell them to forgive.
5. You shall not tell them that their child is in a better place.
6. You shall not tell them to stop crying.
7. You shall not tell them to move on.
8. You shall not tell you know how they feel.
9. You shall not tell them that they need closure.
10. You must be their friend and stand by them.

Some Nights Grief Feels Different

You're okay.
You laugh.
You scroll.
You think maybe your heart is finally getting lighter.
And then-
An old photo.
A familiar song.
A random memory.

And suddenly...

You miss them all over again.
Not because you're not healing.
But because memories don't disappear.
And neither does love.
That's the strange thing about grief-
The memories that make you smile

Are often the same ones
that make your chest hurt.

Because for a moment...

You remember what it felt like
When they were still here.

-Valerie Hearts

Mama, I'm Right Here

Mama...
I see you.
You don't always know I'm there,
but I am.
I hear you when the world is quiet...
when you wait until everyone is asleep,
when you slip into the shower
because the sound of the water hides
your tears.
I hear the sobs that rise
from somewhere deeper than your lungs—
the ones that come from a heart
that still carries the weight
of the day you lost me.

Mama...
I wish you knew.
You don't have to whisper my name.
Heaven hears it before it ever leaves
your lips.
When the hot water washes over
your shoulders,
I'm wishing I could wrap my arms
around them instead.
When you slide down the shower
wall,
too exhausted to stand,
I'm kneeling beside you.
You can't feel my hand...
but I promise,
it's there.
Please don't worry because you still
cry.
Your tears don't tell me you're weak.
They tell me I was loved.
Every tear is another way
your heart remembers mine.

Mama,
I'm not trapped in yesterday.
I'm dancing where there is no pain.
I'm laughing where there is no fear.
I'm whole.
I'm free.

And one day...
oh, what a day that will be...
The tears you've cried for years
will disappear in a single heartbeat,
because you'll look up,

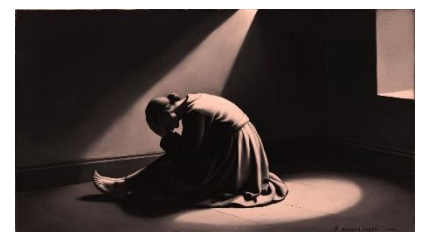
and I'll be running toward you.
Not as a memory.
Not as a photograph.
Not as ashes.
But as your child.

Until then...
When a song suddenly reminds you
of me...
that's love.
When you smile through tears
telling someone my story...
that's love.
When you choose kindness
because you know what broken
hearts feel like...
that's me living through you.
Don't spend your days searching the
sky for me.

Mama...
I'm living in your heart.
Every beat carries a piece of me.
Every act of love speaks my name.
Every time you help another hurting
mother,
I smile.
You wonder sometimes
if you've made me proud.

Mama...
You always did.
And you still do.
So, when the tears come,
let them come.
Then lift your face.
Feel the warmth on your skin.
Take one more breath.
Keep living.
Keep loving.
Keep telling my story.
Because until Heaven calls you
home...
I'll be walking beside you,
loving you from eternity,
and waiting for the day
I get to call out...
"Mama... you're finally here."
Love you 2 Pieces
Brandi.

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As the months and years pass after the death of someone deeply loved, life continues for everyone else.

For the person who is grieving, however, life has been permanently changed.

Not everyone will understand that.

Some people will quietly step back because they don't know what to say anymore. Others may believe enough time has passed and wonder why the grief is still so present. Some will become uncomfortable with the ongoing sadness, while others may unintentionally minimise it in the hope that encouraging someone to "move forward" will somehow ease their pain.

It rarely does.

Grief isn't something that asks to be understood by everyone. It simply asks to be acknowledged.

There are, however, those who stay.

The people who don't need to have the right words. The people who understand they can't fix what happened but choose to keep showing up anyway. The people who continue to say your loved one's name, remember important dates, sit with the tears, and accept that grief doesn't disappear simply because time has passed.

Their presence matters more than they may ever realise.

Not everyone will be able to walk this road alongside someone who is grieving, and that is a reality many bereaved people come to understand.

But for those who do stay ... who continue to walk beside you, even when the path is long and there is no finish line ... they become part of what helps make carrying grief just a little less lonely.

Sometimes, the greatest gift isn't knowing what to say.

It's simply choosing not to walk away.

- TCF Victoria

You can shed tears because they are gone, or you can smile because they lived. You can close your eyes and pray they will come back, or you can open your eyes and see all that they left for you. Your heart can be empty because you can't see them, or you can be full of the love you shared. You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday. You can remember only that they are gone, or you can cherish their memory and let it live on. You can cry and close your mind and feel empty, or you can do what they would want. Smile, Open your heart, Love... and go on.

—Elizabeth Ammons
lessonslearnedinlife.com



*Losing my child
broke me in ways
no one can truly see or
understand.*



One of the things many of us discover through grief is that loss affects far more than our emotions. It changes the way we experience the world. Grief can impact memory, concentration, sleep, energy levels and even the way our bodies carry stress and tension. It is not unusual to feel exhausted, overwhelmed or disconnected from life long after the initial shock has passed. For many bereaved people, the greatest challenge is not the moment their loved one died, but the permanence of their absence. The reality that they are not coming back. The birthdays, milestones, ordinary days and changing seasons that continue without them. From a lived-experience perspective, we know grief is not something you simply get over. It is a natural response to

loving someone who mattered deeply. Their absence does not disappear because time has passed. Over time, many people find they become more familiar with carrying their grief, but that does not mean it becomes easy. Some days you may feel steady. Other days may bring you to your knees. Both are normal. If you are struggling, please remember there is nothing wrong with you. Grief is not a sign of weakness. It is a reflection of love, loss and the ongoing bond you share with your person who died.

— TCF Victoria

Someone asked me about you today

It's been so long since anyone has done that. It felt so good to talk about you to share my memories of you to simply say your name out loud. She asked me if I minded talking about what happened to you or would it be too painful to speak of it. I told her I think of it every day and speaking about it helps me to release the tormented thoughts whirling around in my head.

She said she never realized the pain would last this long
She apologized for not asking sooner
I told her, "Thanks for asking"
I don't know if it was curiosity or concern that made her ask
But told her, "Please do it again sometime - soon"

~ Barbara Taylor Hudson

I didn't just lose someone I loved.

I lost someone
other people loved fiercely too.

Someone who left marks
on everyone he touched.

And I get to carry
the privilege of being the one
he called Mom.

Heaven Holds My Son

I often joke that no one asks me how my day is because they are afraid I might actually tell them.

The truth is, most people don't want to talk about what I do every day because what I do requires us to acknowledge something many of us spend our lives trying to avoid: death. It remains the elephant in the room, not because it is rare, but because it is universal.

Yet I have always believed that if we talked about death more openly, it would lose some of its power to frighten us.

Imagine having these conversations long before a diagnosis, a medical crisis, or an unexpected loss.

Imagine knowing what matters most to the people you love because you took the time to ask. Imagine them knowing what matters most to you because you had the courage to share it.

These conversations are not about giving up. They are about showing up.

Talking about death does not make it happen sooner, just as avoiding the conversation does not keep it away. Death is not waiting for an invitation, nor is it discouraged by our silence.

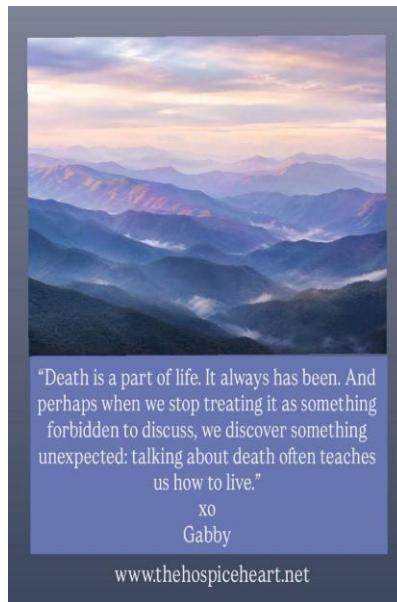
What talking does provide is clarity. It gives us the opportunity to share how we want to be cared for, what brings us comfort, what music we want playing, who we want nearby, and how we hope to be remembered. Most importantly, it gives the people who love us a gift. When difficult decisions arise, they are not left guessing. They are able to honor our wishes with confidence instead of carrying the burden of uncertainty. Death is a part of life. It always has been. And perhaps when we stop treating it as something forbidden to discuss, we discover something unexpected: talking about death often teaches us how to live.

When we acknowledge that our time is finite, we tend to waste less of it.

We love a little harder, forgive a little faster, worry a little less, and savor a little more.

And I am absolutely in favor of savoring a little more.

xo
Gabby



It's Okay To Be Happy

After you lose someone you love...negative feelings can often be all-consuming...which is why it's okay to search for small moments of happiness wherever you can find them.

Grief is hard and it takes time to find a place for it. Even though you may feel sadness associated with your loss, you can also feel joy. But sometimes when you do feel the least bit of happiness, you can also automatically feel guilty about having those feelings.

How can you feel happy when someone you love has died?

Impossible...right?

It's important to first face the reality of the situation by identifying all the bittersweet emotions of losing a person you love...while at the same time appreciating the value of life. It could be anything from the laugh of a child, the nature around you, or even a kind act from a stranger. Whatever it is...embrace it...even if it's only temporary.

Here's the thing...these are the moments that will get you through your grief.

Remember that your grief is fluid and changing all the time. Feeling sad and happy are emotions that will come in waves. They become part of your everyday life. This is normal.

Because when you get stuck in your grief...there's no fluidity and it remains unchanging. Having feelings of happiness and joy can ease the pain, even for a moment, as it helps to move you forward.

It's okay to be in a place of sadness when you're missing someone you love...just don't stay in that place until you get stuck. How you navigate the pendulum of sadness and joy will make all the difference in your grief journey.

It's okay to be sad...but it's also perfectly okay to be happy.

Gary Sturgis - "Surviving Grief"

A Special Thank You for the Love Gift we received from Nancy Talley in memory of Craig.

Please help us help others. Make a LOVE GIFT today. Tax deductible Love Gifts may be sent to: TCF C/O Theresa Phillips 6200 Kentucky Ave, Raytown, MO 64133

Remember when you came to your first meeting, and someone was there who was a little farther down the road and gave you a hug or shared something that made you feel like you are not crazy. Well, if you are a little bit farther down the road, please feel free to come back to our meetings and help families that are just starting their grief journey.

*Please visit our website at, www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org
Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1582699755290182>*

We have several volunteers who write remembrance cards to families on birthdays and death dates. Just a reminder if you have an address change, please email phillipsplace@aol.com or mail a note to TCF, C/O Theresa Phillips 6200 Kentucky Raytown, MO 64133 so the roster can be updated.

Please remember that you can give to The Compassionate Friends through your United Way pledge at work or as a single gift, but you MUST WRITE IT IN.