



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of Green Bay

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter by and for Bereaved Parents

Mar/April 2008

## Our Mission Statement:

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families who have experienced the death of a child. The primary purpose is to assist them in the positive resolution of the grief experience upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health. The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved families. The object is to help those in their communities to be supportive, including family, friends, employers, co-workers and professionals.



### The Green Bay Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.  
at First United Methodist Church, 501 Howe Street, Green Bay.  
(Enter the parking lot off Monroe at Doty  
and use the covered entrance on the north side of the church.)

#### For further information, or just to talk, contact one of our Steering Committee members:

Dave Wilkinson, Chapter Leader, weekdays at 920-437-9252  
Dave or Donna Wilkinson at other times at 920-391-0734  
Phyllis Calder at 920-468-4820  
Bruce Shafer, Treasurer, at 920-469-1661  
Georgia Schroeder, Newsletter Editor, at 920-437-9252  
Dan Davis, Webmaster, at 920-496-0629

Website: [www.tcfgreenbay.org](http://www.tcfgreenbay.org) E-mail: [TCF@fumcgb.org](mailto:TCF@fumcgb.org)

## Ramblings from the Chapter Leader

By Dave Wilkinson

Okay, that's not a very original heading, but it is indicative of the contents of this article this month. It's been a long, hard winter and, as one bereaved parent describes on page 3, one that reminds us of our grief in the early stages -- numbing cold. But Spring is coming and I'm looking forward to it! I love the signs of new birth that Spring brings. It is a time of hope and anticipation, two things bereaved parents are in short supply of.

I am also looking forward to the **Regional Conference** that we are hosting here in Green Bay -- "Creating Ripples of Hope in the Waters of Grief." I hope you are planning on attending. Don't miss this opportunity right in our own back yard! Our planning team, headed by Jeanne Davis, has done an outstanding job of putting together a conference that will "explore ways of bringing hope and peace back into our lives after the death of a child." *It's not too late to sign up.* See page 2 for details.

Our **support group meetings** have consistently been well attended. If you have never been, or have been just once, I would encourage you to try it in March or April. We say that you need to give a support group of this nature three visits to know whether it can be of help to you. TCF offers a unique support and understanding that only another bereaved parent can provide.

Note on our **sibling page** a new contact name. Erin Lund, whose sister Kristen died in 2001, has volunteered to be a sibling contact to anyone who may be struggling with sibling grief.

Finally, if you haven't done so, check out our new **website** at [www.tcfgreenbay.org](http://www.tcfgreenbay.org). Dan Davis is our webmaster and would value your feedback. There are so many ways to get support from TCF. We need not walk alone!

## Monthly Support Group

Thursday, March 20, 7 p.m.

Video "*Invincible Summer*". Returning to life after someone you love has died. The video will be followed by discussion and sharing.

Thursday, April 17, 7 p.m.

Linda Schwallie, a Behavioral Care Therapist in private practice, will talk on "*Dealing with anxiety and depression in grief*." Following the presentation we will have our usual time for sharing.

**Cancellation of our monthly meeting in stormy weather:** If the Green Bay Public Schools are closed for the day, or have early release, due to a snow storm, the TCF meeting will be cancelled that evening.



***There's still time to register for the  
Regional Conference of The Compassionate Friends***  
to be held in Green Bay

*March 7-9, 2008 at the Comfort Inn and Suites*  
Cost: Adults-\$75, Children (under 12)-\$35

***Creating Ripples of Hope in the Waters of Grief***

*Exploring ways of bringing hope and peace back into our lives after the death of a child.*

Keynote Speaker: **Paul Alexander**

Paul Alexander is a nationally recognized Bereavement Counselor, Certified Social Worker, singer and songwriter. Paul will be presenting the General Session Saturday morning, ***Ups and Downs of Grief***, 9 – 10:15 am, as well as a workshop titled *Signs of Hope*.



The conference begins Friday evening at 7 pm with opening remarks from Green Bay Mayor Mike Schmitt, a bereaved parent, and continues with a workshop from 8 – 9 pm.

The conference continues Saturday morning and runs through Sunday at 11 am.

Additional speakers include:

- Bonnie Groessel, MSN, APNP – Bridge to Health  
*(Finding Peace in Difficult Times)*
- Lisa DeSieno, MSE, LPC – Director of Outreach, Unity Hospice  
*(Navigating the Waters of Grief)*
- Patricia Poole - Reconnective/Healing Practitioner  
*(Signs and Connecting with Our Loved Ones)*
- Dave and Donna Wilkinson – Green Bay TCF Leaders and bereaved parents  
*(Sticks and Stones – Men's and Women's Grief and Using Creativity to Grieve [Donna])*
- Pat Shafer – teacher and bereaved parent  
*(Scrapbooking Memories)*
- Plus a representative from the National Organization of The Compassionate Friends

**Go to our website at [www.tcfgreenbay.org/regionalconference](http://www.tcfgreenbay.org/regionalconference) for a complete brochure.  
For further information call Jeanne Davis, 920-496-0629.**

# Finding Spring Again

We are nearing the end of what has often been a brutal winter. While gazing at the mountains of snow piled high in my front yard and the foot-long icicles hanging from my roof, it is hard to imagine that spring will ever come. We have endured bitter cold winds that have chilled us to the bone and treacherous roads that we have cautiously traveled. The days have been long and dark and often free of sunlight. No matter how long you have been a native of the Upper Midwest, I know we all will be glad when it comes to an end.

However, as I described these thoughts about winter, I felt as if I was describing the days of my early grief. At that point, I did not believe that a day would ever come when I would thaw from the chill that had overtaken my body and mind. The bleakness of my existence during those early months after Nina died is almost frightening to remember; it is so difficult to even conceive of that much pain. I was anesthetized from some of its cruelty by the protective blanket of numbness that blessedly shielded me from the gale force of such over-powering sorrow. How could I ever feel spring in my heart again?

Spring had always been my favorite season. The air had a certain freshness to it that I would drink in. Simply put, it always made me feel happy and light of heart. Spring was our reward for surviving the freezing winter months that preceded it. It brought a smile to my face and a bounce to my step. However, it was the spring of the year where my heart was irretrievably broken. It was during this exquisite season of warm, lilac-scented breezes and sun-kissed mornings where my sweet daughter Nina's life would end.

I wondered if my thoughts about spring would ever be the same. Rather than anticipate with gladness the coming of spring, I dreaded it with the knowledge

that it contained the anniversary of her death. The smell of the air and the look at the sky that I once found exhilarating now brought me back to my darkest day. I know that anyone, who has lost a loved one to death, no matter the season, understands. Will spring come again to your life? In the almost six years since Nina died, has it come to mine? Looking back at my description of the winter of my early grief, I know that I have come a long way from that time of desolation. I have found, especially after the first two years, that with each subsequent spring, I have rediscovered some of the

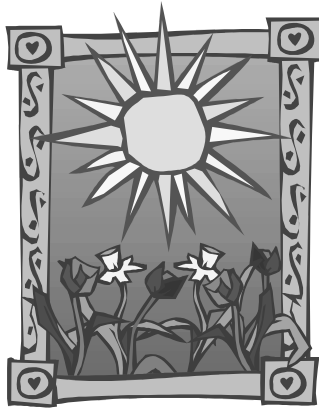
pleasure I used to feel. I have learned that, just because I have found things to feel joyful about again, it doesn't mean I am dishonoring my daughter's memory. I now take her along with me in my mind and my heart. I try to retrieve memories of the dandelion bouquets she so carefully gathered and presented to me, the rides to the park in the Radio Flyer, our talks while sunning on the deck, and, of course, shopping for spring clothes! Her favorite pastime! I will always feel tenseness, apprehension and sadness as May 11 draws near, but I no longer hold it against spring.

It is a slow, difficult journey, this grief pathway we travel. It is as treacherous as the roads we maneuvered following the winter storms, never knowing when we will hit an icy patch on the road and be thrown into a tailspin.

Yet, we must travel it if we are to find any measure of peace and healing. Please be patient with yourself as you are working hard to survive this winter in your heart. Trust that spring, though a much different one than the one we knew before our beloved child died, will come again.

With gentle thoughts,

*Cathy Seehuetter  
TCF/St. Paul, MN*



## Love gifts were recently given by:

*Lynn & Steve Marcks and the nlc Foundation in loving memory of Nicolas Resch*

*Dave & Donna Wilkinson in loving memory of Dustin Wilkinson*

*Rita Linde in loving memory of Luke Linde*

*Doug and Renee La Violette in loving memory of Brian*



## Swimming to Light: Finding peace after the death of a child

*By Ken Martin*

It's Easter Sunday and I am 75 feet below the ocean's surface off the south coast of Cuba. For an ordained United Church of Canada minister, this is a strange place to be on Easter Sunday morning. Some former parishioners fervently believe that I should be in the pulpit helping them sing the themes of new life and resurrection. A few even think I should preach a sermon on the subject. But no, I am underwater looking at the profound beauty of the coral formation in front of me, and up toward an old fishing boat wreck jutting over the edge of the continental wall. Bright shafts of sunlight refract in the sea above the boat. For the first time in several years, peace is returning to my soul.

January 14, 2002. The body of my beautiful 34-year old daughter, Shari Lynn, was discovered. In a deep depression, unknown to my wife and me, and likely brought on by burnout from very long hours in a Toronto law office, she had taken her own life. The scene before us was ugly and unbelievably painful.

Four weeks after her funeral, a parishioner asked how it was that I, as a minister and former college teacher of clinical psychology, could have "missed seeing this coming in your own daughter." I kept myself together just long enough to blurt out: "Whatever is it that makes you think I don't torture myself with that question every day and night?" As the months went by it became clear from actions and comments that even good Christian people have no idea how to deal with tragedy when it invades the life of their minister.

Fellow clergy avoided us. It still surprises me that those trained, as I was, in pastoral care and counseling did not know what to say or do when another clergy family experienced tragedy. One member of the ministerial association, to which I had belonged

for six years, suggested that those who commit suicide end up in hellfire – a truly medieval and horrid theology. And so we retreated physically, spiritually and psychologically to our home, our garden and our companion animals.

After several months, though, my physical health broke. A heart condition reappeared after several years' absence. On what would have been Shari's 35<sup>th</sup> birthday, an angry parishioner told me: "It has been almost a year since your daughter died. It is time to get over it!" That's when I decided to go on medical leave and have since resigned my position. For months, I worked hard with the help of professionals to rebuild my physical and psychological health. Always, I thought of Shari and how we might have intervened if we had known. The guilt was overwhelming.

Several times during those months, I drove past a scuba dive shop in Peterborough, Ontario. One cold day in December 2004, I stopped and went in. There was a warm welcome at Adventure Divers that afternoon and encouragement to once again take up the sport. A refresher course followed in January 2005.

And so on Easter Sunday that year, I was under the Caribbean Sea, looking up past the remains of a ship. I swam into the light, and suddenly there was a peace that I had not felt in more than three years – a profound spiritual experience not confined to church or dogma. I know that someone said, "I'm alright, Dad. It is beautiful here, too." An Easter moment! And so I thank those new friends who unwittingly helped bring me back from the darkness of despair to the light and a new life.

*Rev. Ken Martin is a retired United Church of Canada minister living in Cobourg, Ontario.*

*During the two months that each newsletter covers, we include your child's birthday and the anniversary of your child's death – if we know those dates.*



## **Birthday:**

**Stacie Lepp** 3/1/60  
(daughter of Ginny Lepp)  
**David Staude** 3/1/60  
(son of Irv & Bev Michaud)  
**Mark Louis Starr** 3/4/74  
(son of Ruth Schmidt)  
**Molly Klika Zarnoth** 3/6/79  
(daughter of Bob & Barb Klika)  
**Erin Larscheid** 3/11/97  
(daughter of Maribeth & Timothy Larscheid)  
**Andrew Lesch** 3/11/05  
(son of Marge Lesch)  
**Bailey Hartmann** 3/20/66  
(son of Pamela Phillips)  
**Cezonne Upton** 3/23/87  
(son of Maria Smith and Frank Smith)  
**Steven Vosters** 3/26/82  
(son of Patti & Marvin Vosters)  
**Matthew Daley** 4/1/76  
(son of Mary Daley)  
**Rick Strombach** 4/2/57  
(son of Donna Strombach)  
**Hannah Lynn Flauger** 4/2/93  
(daughter of Daniel Flauger)  
**Jason Ison** 4/4/75  
(son of Rene Ison)  
**Rebecca Sommers** 4/5/91  
(daughter of Tim & Donna Sommers)  
**Elizabeth Turek Bigley** 4/6/58  
(daughter of Albert & Mary Turek)  
**Mylisha Klapatch** 4/6/76  
(daughter of Tamara Walker and Dennis Klapatch)  
**Craig Kozloski** 4/9/75  
(son of Bobbie & David Kozloski)  
**Jason Kurey** 4/9/83  
(son of Deb Kurey)  
**Brandon Scheider** 4/10/84  
(son of Deb Scheider)  
**Cody Green** 4/10/87  
(son of Dan & Gwen Green)  
**Kevin Kazik** 4/11/83  
(son of Sally Kazik & Charlie Kazik)

**Tammie Gustman** 4/12/76  
(daughter of Marvin Gustman and Victoria Fifield)  
**Rebekah Puzen** 4/14/78  
(daughter of Larry Puzen and Carol Schroeder-Puzen)  
**Jacob Peters** 4/15/97  
(son of Jerry & Natalie Peters)  
**Joel Bagneski** 4/19/99  
(son of Bill & Kelly Bagneski)  
**Jeffrey Van Lieshout** 4/21/75  
(son of Dave & Connie Van Lieshout)  
**Joshua Calaway** 4/24/79  
(son of Bonnie Calaway)  
**Kaitlyn Schley** 4/24/97  
(daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)  
**Jacob Engel** 4/24/03  
(son of Billie Jo Engel)  
**Justin Plate** 4/25/89  
(son of Mark & Grace Plate)  
**Katie Zeitler** 4/26/84  
(daughter of Vickie & Mike Radue)  
**Catherine Strom Schmidt** 4/30/68  
(daughter of Pete & Karen Strom)

## **Anniversary:**

**Mike Neddo** 3/1/99  
(son of Debra Neddo)  
**Matthew Blazek** 3/3/69  
(son of Betty & Bill Blazek)  
**Elizabeth Turek Bigley** 3/13/03  
(daughter of Albert & Mary Turek)  
**Erin Larscheid** 3/14/04  
(daughter of Maribeth & Timothy Larscheid)  
**Josh Gilson** 3/17/07  
(son of Ron & Cindy Gilson)  
**Alexia Prosecky** 3/18/02  
(daughter of Wayne & Jennifer Prosecky)

**Rebekah Puzen** 3/19/00  
(daughter of Larry Puzen and Carol Schroeder-Puzen)  
**Randy Blazek** 3/25/83  
(son of Betty & Bill Blazek)  
**Dustin Wilkinson** 3/29/98  
(son of Dave & Donna Wilkinson)  
**Andy Bell** 4/2/88  
(son of Patrick & Debbie Bell)  
**Joshua Calaway** 4/2/01  
(son of Bonnie Calaway)  
**Kayla Lego** 4/2/05  
(niece of Christine Newtols)  
**Hannah Lynn Flauger** 4/3/95  
(daughter of Daniel Flauger)  
**Nicolas Resch** 4/4/05  
(son of Lynn & Steve Marcks)  
**Rick Strombach** 4/6/02  
(son of Donna Strombach)  
**Eric Barlament** 4/7/03  
(son of Jim Barlament and Penny Maraccini)  
**Justice Delveaux** 4/7/03  
(granddaughter of Sarah Wirtz)  
**Wendy Johnson** 4/8/95  
(daughter of Tom & Debbie Johnson)  
**Amy Laedtke** 4/11/03  
(daughter of Debra & Fred Laedtke)  
**Jon Daniel Strawser** 4/13/04  
(son of Brenda Choat)  
**Shane Lardinois Malliet** 4/14/97  
(son of Debbie Lardinois)  
**Jared Gehm** 4/15/07  
(son of Mary Gehm)  
**Travis Christenson** 4/18/99  
(son of Cherie Buhr)  
**Kaitlyn Schley** 4/19/98  
(daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)  
**Marisa Nelson** 4/22/99  
(daughter of Amy Nelson)  
**Catherine Strom Schmidt** 4/24/97  
(daughter of Pete & Karen Strom)  
**Evan Van Lanen** 4/26/00  
(son of Dan & Peg Van Lanen)  
**Crystal (Falish) Peterson** 4/30/98  
(daughter of Steve & Darlene Enderby)



# Newly Bereaved...

God can heal a broken heart, but He has to have all the pieces.

Author unknown

## Handling Easter and Passover

This is the season of celebrating Easter and Passover, family holidays and family gatherings. Again, as bereaved parents, especially if we are newly bereaved, we pause and must make a decision as to how and if we are going to proceed, as we have in former years, before the death of our children. For both holidays, there is the "CHILDREN'S HOUR" so to speak for Easter, there have always been the Easter parade, Easter eggs, and the Easter bunny. For Passover, there has been matzo, the Seder with the participation of the youngest child. So again what to do?

Both Easter and Passover are holidays in which children are strongly involved. To see that empty chair at the table, to know that the missing child is no longer with us can be devastating, especially after the first and second anniversary of the death; as with other holiday's. There are no magic formulas. If you can, talk about your child during the holidays. At our home we have made it a ritual to remember our son at the beginning of the Passover Seder. Please handle the holidays any way you can; there are no rules.



~Loving lifted from the TCF Bucksport, PA  
Dave Ziv

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## Other TCF Contact Information

**The Door County Chapter of TCF** meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month at the Door County Memorial Hospital in Sturgeon Bay. Call Dawn Sandusky at 920-868-1488 for info.

**The Kewaunee County Chapter of TCF** meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month at St. Hedwig Church, lower level hall, located at E3306 Krok Road, in Kewaunee. Call Dorothy Konop at 920-863-8003 for information.

**The Fox Valley Chapter of TCF** meets at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month in Neenah at Faith United Methodist Church, 1025 Tullar Road. Call Deb Schultz at 920-725-6340 for information.

To contact the **National Organization:**

**The Compassionate Friends, Inc.**

P.O. Box 3696,

Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696

Phone Toll-free: 877-969-0010

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

To contact the **TCF Regional Coordinator:**

**Jim Staniforth**

4705 Eisenhower St

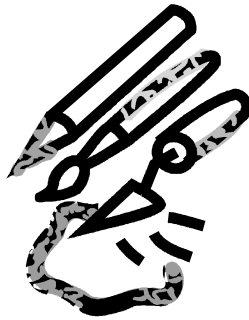
Oregon, WI 53575

Phone: 608-835-7493

## Creativity and Sibling Loss

When adults are asked what helped them survive the loss of their brother or sister, they often credit creative pursuits such as writing, painting, or singing.

A psychologist named George Pollock made a study of creative individuals who had lost siblings during their childhood or adolescence. He thought that creativity could be both the result of resolving grief or part of the grieving process itself. Others, such as Melanie Klein, suggested that creativity helps to take the place of the relationship with the lost loved one. She said that drawing and painting could be used to repair a psychological injury. She also notes that not everyone becomes creative in this way, but becomes more productive in a different way – by becoming capable of appreciation of life and more tolerant of others – in others words, wiser.



Pollock stresses again and again how the surviving sibling is confronted by the reactions of the parents and other siblings as well as their own responses when the death occurs. The children can feel “unloved, alone, ignored during the bereavement period, or they may become overprotected, over-invested with care and apprehension. The children may feel pushed aside, ignored, abandoned at a crucial time. Pollock says that “not all children and adolescents emerge from this family tragedy with psychopathology or distorted personalities. Some become very creative and deal with their mourning for the dead siblings in a positive way.”

Like many bereaved siblings, I have found that writing about my experience with loss has helped me to heal. (See *Sorrow* piece below).

~ P.G. White

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## SORROW

*She rises out of nowhere, like a wave from the sea,  
Slowly at first, silently, then crests and peaks;  
Still I have a choice*

*I can turn away, go to work, watch a movie, play a game...  
But I know sorrow well.*

*Though I turn away, she will wait,*

*Perfectly patient,*

*Until I am still,*

*Then crush me with all of her accumulated power.*

*Once I had angry walls to shut her out,*

*But her incessant pounding tore them down.*

*So now, when she rises,*

*I turn to her and say,*

*Here I am, I know you, sorrow.*

*She crashes on my shoreline, and sorrow and I are one*

*Until, trailing frothy whitecaps, she sweeps away.*

~ P.G. White

### Sibling Contact for TCF Green Bay:

**Erin Lund**

E-mail: [EML1015@aol.com](mailto:EML1015@aol.com)

Phone: 920-562-232

### Resources for siblings:

The national organization of TCF  
has resources for siblings.

Visit the online Sibling Resources Page  
at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).

**HELP US FILL THIS PAGE!** If your child, of any age, would like to contribute an article, poem, drawing or website they've created about their sibling or their grief journey, please send it to us, either by mail or email. Please include your child's name and age. If you are an adult sibling reading this, we invite you to share your reflections about losing a brother or sister. It will help others on their journey.



The  
**COMPASSIONATE  
 FRIENDS**  
*of Green Bay*  
**501 Howe St.**  
**Green Bay, WI 54301**

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Our monthly  
 support group  
 meets next on

**Thursday,**  
**March 20**  
**at 7 p.m.**

at First United  
 Methodist Church,  
 off Monroe at Doty.

Call 920.437.9252  
 for information.

**We need not walk alone!**

### The Jelly Bean Poem for Grieving Families

- ϕ **Red** is for my love for you that will never sever; for love is not measured by the time we had together, but what's in our hearts forever.
- ϕ **Green** is for memories that I always will treasure; although time may pass, our memories will last forever and ever and ever.
- ϕ **Yellow** is for sunshine that you have given to me; you brightened up my life and made my world shine and will continue to shine brilliantly for the rest of time.
- ϕ **Orange** is for the candle flame I light in memory of you; a flame that glows so bright as I speak your name in prayer asking God to hold you close until I join you there.
- ϕ **Black** is for my grief from my broken shattered heart; taking each day one at a time as I keep your memory alive. Life is different; I am different but I Can and Will survive.
- ϕ **Purple** is for tears I shed as I remember you; precious memories you left behind preserved deep inside. You will always live on through our family forever by our side.
- ϕ **White** is for my hope and faith in God above; the promise of resurrection knowing we will reunite above the clouds over the rainbow in His everlasting light.
- ϕ **Pink** is for the signs you send from Heaven up above; lighting my path wherever I go and whatever I may do. My precious child I will always love and always remember you. I will remember you on Easter as always.



~Footprints Ministry, Inc.