

The Primrose

TCF Broome County Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2026

VOL.46 Issue 1

- You are no longer the same person -

“Your identity shifts, even when you wish it wouldn’t. You are no longer the same person—and inevitably, some of your relationships will feel different too. The truth is, grief doesn’t just take away; it reshapes. One of the most overlooked aspects of grieving is redefining who you are after losing someone deeply cherished.

Building a new identity isn’t easy—it’s messy, raw, and often lonely. But it’s necessary. It’s okay to be someone different than you were before the loss. In fact, it’s inevitable. Loss changes us in ways we can’t anticipate, forcing us to confront questions about who we are now and how we want to move forward.

So ask yourself: How has this profound loss altered your sense of self? What parts of you remain intact, and what needs rebuilding? Who do you want to become in the aftermath of this pain?

Rebuilding your identity doesn’t mean forgetting or leaving behind what was. It means integrating the loss into your story while creating space for growth, healing, and transformation. You are allowed to evolve. You are allowed to change.

Because here’s the truth:

You won’t ever go back to being the person you were before—but maybe, just maybe, the person you’re becoming is stronger, wiser, and more resilient than you imagined.”

Deep feelings – Facebook group

Treasurer

Dianne Cappiello is our new treasurer
Love Gift donations can be sent to her
at this address:

2221 Glenwood Rd. Vestal, NY 13850

e-mail:

tcfbroome@gmail.com

Make Checks out to:

The Compassionate Friends Broome

Newsletter Editor and Publisher Jim Pratt

tcfbroome@gmail.com

Email Jim with any poems or articles
you would like to be included in the
newsletter.

Please provide proper credits to the author.

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Parents Resource Corner

Please feel free to call the following people if you wish to speak to someone whose child's death was caused in a manner similar to your child's

Accidental - Pam Kroft - Ph:607-427-4043

Illness - Open position

Adult Child - Karen Yeager - Ph:607-757-1852

Suicide - Sherry Bailey - Ph:607-797-8990

Substance - Shelley Levchak - Ph:607-759-0852

The Compassionate Friends of Broome County

1250 Front Street, # 147 Binghamton, NY 13901

Web Address:

<https://www.stny.info/tcfbroome/>

**For information pertaining to the
The Compassionate Friends of Broome County,
call: Donna Cunningham (607) 725-8574**

Monthly Meetings

First Monday of each month 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Third or fourth Saturday 10 AM – 12 PM

Nimmonsburg United Methodist Church

918 Upper Front Street Binghamton, NY 13901

(across from BCC)

Steering Committee

Chapter Leader & Delegate -

Donna Cunningham **607 725-8574**

Assistant Chapter Leader - Shelley Levchak

Outreach - Jody Pangburn

Library - Liz & Brian Leonard

Hospitality – Jean Scolaro

Treasurer – Dianne Capiello

Newsletter Editor – Jim Pratt

Social Media -

FB - Pam Kroft & others

Website—Jim Pratt

Secretary- Barbara Paugh

**Please join our
Steering Committee**

We need Volunteers!

---MARK YOUR CALENDAR---

Meetings:

First Monday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Third or fourth Saturday 10:00 A.M.

NIMMONSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

918 Front Street, Binghamton

(Across from BCC, next to the Credit Union.

Parking in the rear, enter through rear door.)

CALENDAR SPRING 2026

March 2nd	Monday 7:00 p.m.	“Memory Night”
March 21st	Saturday 10:00 a.m.	“Open Sharing”
April 6th	Monday 7:00 p.m.	“Hope is in the Air”
April 18th	Saturday 10:00 a.m.	“Open Sharing”
May 4th	Monday 7:00 p.m.	“Mom’s Day”
May 16th	Saturday 10:00 a.m.	“Open Sharing”
May 21st	Thursday 5:30 p.m.	“Steering Committee Mtg”
June 1st	Monday 7:00 p.m.	“Time for Dad’s”

NOTICE

If you receive this newsletter,
forwarded from a Funeral Home
Please e-mail Dianne Capiello
tcfbroome@gmail.com
with Your correct address so
new issues can be mailed to you directly

The Primrose is published quarterly

Deadline for newsletter materials:

February 1st: May 1st: August 1st: November 1st

Please send material to Jim

jpratt483@aol.com

The Chapter Letter

Hello everyone,

As I'm writing this it's the end of January and most of us have just endured storm Fern, she wreaked havoc on 19 states dumping heavy snow mixed with freezing rain and very low temperatures. Fern left Maryland 10-15 inches, putting my mind in a nostalgic mood, certainly reminding me of upstate NY winters and how much I miss home. As I was finishing up this letter, I flipped to the weather channel and the Carolina coastline was getting blasted upwards of 12 or more inches of the white stuff, the meteorologist is referring to it as a cyclone bomb. They haven't had this much snow since 1980. For all our longtime Broome County residents that was the time IBM transferred many of our local employees to NC. I remember many were so surprised they had snow their first winter there. February I'm sure graced us with more cold weather and fluffy white. Now that March is near, we certainly know whether Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow or not, as if our fate was that simple.

Our candle lighting in December was a night filled with compassion, love, friendship and most of all hope. The candles were lit as the names of our beloved children, grandchildren, siblings, nieces, nephews and friends were read aloud. Each candle held tight while waiting for one or two special names to be read with love and grace. The music, the slideshow, the readings, the candles, the food and the people attending all made this evening a special tribute to those no longer on earth. It takes many dedicated parents, grands and siblings to make this evening memorable for everyone attending. In December we had some new parents join the behind the scenes "cast"; from helping in the kitchen, putting together our program with copying and folding, stepping up to enhance our slide show and just doing whatever was asked of them, many at the last moment. So thankful that we have so many beautiful, caring people who continue to keep their child's, grandchild's and sibling's memory alive. Without all of you this wonderful, yet solemn evening would not be possible.

Monday March 2nd will be memory night at group, a special evening set aside each year to share funny stories, photos, favorite foods and whatever else you might come up with. It's a way of getting to know our precious loved ones better. How blessed we are to have a group that is clearly driven to find the hope needed to survive and to keep all precious memories safe. Because of the many dedicated souls that came before us we are able to continue helping others. April will put us back into springtime allowing us the opportunity to get outside and free our bodies from the winter cobwebs. Listening to the laughter of children, bringing us back to a happier time. May and June allow us to show favor to our moms and dads.

Unfortunately, I do not have an update from the new committee concerning our angel and new pavers. Sometime this spring, probably closer to a May or early June time frame we will have a clean-up day at the angel. It will be posted on our FB and by private text. We will do our diligence by doing our part to keep the angel looking beautiful for all eyes to see. Everyone is welcome to come and share in the day of clean up, lunch will be provided after our tasks are finished. To be perfectly honest we are in the dark on what our future responsibilities and duties will entail, but will continue to watch over and care for our garden. Thanks to all who have been keepers of the angel past and present, fulfilling a promise made by our own Claudia Simonis, who now watches over us from heaven. The weekend after 9/11, eight of us stopped in a little town, Northampton in Massachusetts laying our eyes upon on our very first Christmas Box angel and Claudia said, "We too shall have an angel". Within three years and a very hardworking, devoted committee lead by Claudia and her dream our angel became a reality. On July 11th, 2004 we dedicated our Christmas Box angel.

As I reread my words, I realize the love, compassion and hope that resonates within our group is truly a gift. So many of us, including myself, would have been lost wandering in grief darkness without the guidance, the listening ears and the hugs of our fellow members. I know our children, grandchildren and siblings gone too soon are looking down knowing we have never forgotten them and will always say their name. We carry much of our sorrow within our broken hearts unbeknownst to those around us, only sharing our pain with the ones we trust. Our door will always be open to those who want a seat at our table.



- Continued -

- The Chapter Letter Continued -

Come when you can, stay as long as you wish. We encourage you to come one time to feel the compassion that fills the room. There is no “cure” for grief, but being with others definitely lifts some of the burden you bear, easing your pain.

Hugs to all,
Pam Kroft
(Sean’s mom)

When Your Adult Child Leaves This Earth”

They weren’t supposed to go first.

Not the one you carried, taught to walk, watched grow, and stood beside as they became their own person.

Losing an adult child is a sorrow few can fully understand. The world often forgets that no matter how old our children get, they are still our babies. We carry every version of them inside us—the toddler with sticky fingers, the teenager with big dreams, the adult still figuring life out. And when they are gone, it’s all those versions we mourn.

You lose not just their physical presence, but their voice on the other end of the phone, the text that said “I made it home,” the plans that would have unfolded over years. You lose their future, and a piece of yours. Grief after losing an adult child is quiet but heavy. You might still go to work, smile in public, cook dinner—but the ache never fully leaves. You find yourself reaching for a phone call that will never come, scrolling through photos, or whispering into the silence, “I miss you.”

If you’re walking through this pain, please know you are not alone. There is no timeline for grief and no right way to carry it. Be gentle with yourself. Speak their name. Share their story. Let their memory live in your every breath.

Even though they are no longer here, the love remains. It always will.
By Kellie Cunningham Sipos

Just when the caterpillar thought her life was over, she began to fly

- Author Unknown -

Wings of Hope – Living forward Inc.

Hi, Mama.

I know your heart feels like it's been torn in half. I know every breath takes more strength than you think you have. But I need you to know - I'm still with you. Just in a different way now.

You don't have to be strong all the time. Not for them. Not even for me. I never needed you to hold it all together - just to keep loving me, the way you always did. And you do. Every single day.

I see you when you cry in the quiet. When you say my name out loud just to hear it. When you think the world has forgotten, but your love for me refuses to fade.

That love?

It reaches me.

You're doing more than surviving, Mama - you're carrying a love that even death couldn't touch. And I am so proud of you for that.

When you're ready, laugh again. Live again. Not because you're moving on, but because love like ours doesn't end - it becomes something else.

It becomes strength.

It becomes light in your darkest moments. It becomes the reason you keep going.

And I'll be right there.

In every sunrise you pause to watch. In the songs that make you smile through the tears. In the quiet moments when you think of me, and feel a warmth you can't explain.

That's me.

Still loving you.

Still yours.

Love always, your son

Author Chris Tine

Where You Are...

Are my tears holding you back, is my pain holding you down,
do you yearn to fly... to be free? But you are no longer here...

I hope you are where you need to be to fulfill your destiny and not hold back to appease
my sadness...

In actual time, on this plane... it has been a long time...

in my heart time has stopped...

you were here just a short while ago...

in whatever plane and space your spirit dwells, I desire nothing but peace for you...

I set you free from a place of deep love...

a place of gratitude for having chosen me as your mother during your brief stay this time around...

I see you in my mind,

I feel you in my heart...

that will never, never change...

I will know, when the time is right, where you are...

I imagine that will come to be when I leave this
place I know as life... Until then...

Mama

By Kitty Forstner, TCF Marin County Chapter

Our Children Remembered



As long as we live, our children too shall live, for they are part of us in our memories.
We lovingly remember the following children on their Anniversary.

03/02 Edward son of Mary Vaninwegen Chenango Forks, NY
03/03 TJ son of AlyceLuck Fredrick MD
03/04 Kain son of Scott Hall & Bee Thongpa Marathon, NY
03/06 Justin son of Mary Vaninwegen Chenango Forks, NY
03/08 John son of Margaret Turna Binghamton, NY
03/09 Annette daughter of James Pratt Binghamton, NY
03/09 CJ son of Charles & Shelley Levchak Kirkw ood, NY
03/13 Brian son of John & Shelly O'Neill Vestal, NY
03/14 Andrew son of Ray & Lori Benjamin Binghamton, NY
03/15 Mary daughter of Martin & Olivia Curtin Endicott, NY
03/16 Jessica daughter of Darlene Cady Binghamton, NY
03/17 Michael son of Paul & Jean Scolaro Endicott, NY
03/22 Christina daughter of Frank & Kathy Rumpel Binghamton, NY
03/25 Stavros son of Peter & Barbara Metritikas Vestal, NY
03/25 Dillion grandson of Toni & Larry Sherling Endicott, NY
03/26 Sarah daughter of Kate Chambers Nichols, NY
03/28 Melissa daughter of Cindy Freita Endicott, NY
03/29 Christopher son of Robert & Kim Carroll Binghamton, NY
04/02 Michael son of Barbara Lewis Binghamton, NY
04/04 John son of Carol Gabriel Binghamton, NY
04/09 Christopher son of Kathleen Jones Vestal, NY
04/09 Frank son of Monica Heren Apalachin, NY
04/12 Joseph son of Michael & Christina McAfee Binghamton, NY
04/15 Ryan son of Ron & Sherry Bailey Johnson Cit y, NY
04/16 Destiney daughter of Sherry Klenotiz Ow ego, NY
04/19 Teresa daughter of Jim & Lynda Shirlen Adamstow n, MD
04/20 Jaimie daughter of Toni & Larry Sherling Endicott, NY
04/20 Jacob son of Sharon Gana Little Meadow s, PA
04/21 Aurora Rose daughter of Jason & Stephanie Blaisure Binghamton, NY
04/21 Aurora Rose granddaughter of Patty Boorom Binghamton, NY
04/22 Kelli daughter of M/M George Ford New ark Valley, NY
04/22 Brett son of Nanci and Adam Johnson Hallstead, PA
04/24 Samantha daughter of Carlo & Samantha Carlini Endicott, NY
04/27 Daniel son of Trina Caputo Glendale, NY
04/29 Ben son of Dave Schmidt & Martine Barnaby Glen Aubrey, NY
04/29 Ben son of Melanie Schmidt Binghamton, NY
05/01 Joshua son of Valerie Ambrose Binghamton, NY
05/02 Adam son Dale & Wendy Finch Binghamton, NY
05/05 Nate son of Becky Hopper Binghamton, NY
05/05 Allan son of Samuel & Shelley Allegrino Endicott, NY
05/05 Anthony son of James Vazquez Binghamton, NY
05/06 Ashley daughter of Jacqueline Anderson Binghamton, NY
05/08 Anatolio son of Dora Mancini Endicott, NY
05/17 Tiffany daughter of Kathy and Jeffrey Stark Binghamton, NY
05/22 Matthew Stacey son of Charles & Susan Taft Byron, MI
05/30 Philip son of William & Kate Stacy Greene, NY
05/31 Dacey daughter of Elaine Madigan Binghamton, NY
05/31 Teresa daughter of Sylvia Behal Johnson City, NY

Navigating The Ebb and Flow Of Grief

At almost four years after the death of my daughter, I had thought it would be easier than this. In those early days and months when my grief made it feel like I simply couldn't survive this loss, I saw others in support groups who had lost their loved ones many years before, and they seemed ok. They looked almost "normal" again. They told me it wouldn't always be like this. They said you learn to live with the pain, and it would lessen over time. They said you will eventually find joy and happiness again. They said you create a "new normal." And they were right.

I have worked hard for almost four years on working through my grief. I have faced it head on through continual counseling and support groups and still seek out ways to express my pain, so as not to hold it in and let it consume me. Along the way, I have given myself permission to smile once more, and even to allow joy to enter my heart again. I have enjoyed my other children. I have volunteered my time with The Compassionate Friends. I have created my own grief support website. I have consciously tried to focus my energies on remembering my daughter's life rather than only looking at the pain her death has brought.

And yet grief remains a constant part of my life. Grief is fickle. Unpredictable. And indifferent to what ever mood I'm in. Most days my grief lies dormant under the activities of everyday life. Little triggers will continually remind me it's there. A sad news story on the TV. A girl at the park who reminds me of my daughter. But I can go about my regular routines with no interruptions. Other times, the triggers are bigger, and the grief bubbles up and takes over my mood. Tears well up behind my eyes, ready to release at the first opportunity. My patience seems to evaporate and everyday tasks become cumbersome, meaningless, and even difficult. Usually the bursts of grief from larger triggers only last a few hours or at most a few days. But sometimes it lingers and grows. What I didn't expect is that even coming on four years after her death, I still find myself in situations where grief becomes so overwhelming again that it feels like I've gone right back to the debilitating early days of grief. Feelings of sadness, pain, lethargy, disinterest in things I normally enjoy. Going to work becomes a struggle. Even taking care of my kids feels like a burden. I know these periods require extra attention and care, and I navigate through the best I can, asking for support along the way. I just wonder if these episodes will ease over time, or if I should just expect them to become a permanent fixture of my "new normal" life? If the death of my daughter has taught me anything – and it has taught me A LOT– it has taught me that we have more inner strength than we can ever imagine, and that with time, attention, and support, we can navigate through just about anything life might throw at us.

Maria Kubitz TCF Contra Costa County, CA
In Memory of my daughter, Margareta

What Goes On At A Compassionate Friends Meeting?

A question that is asked frequently by newly bereaved parents who have never attended a meeting is, "What do you do?" or rather, "What will you expect me to do?" In answer to the last question, we expect and require nothing more than your name. Our meetings are informal. We open the meeting with introductions by mentioning our name and child's name, but if you feel that you can not do this, it is okay, also. We have all, at one time or another, choked up on the mention of our child's name or the circumstances of his or her death.

Some people attend meetings several times and do not enter any discussion or voice their feelings. They absorb some ideas and discard others that do not meet their immediate needs. But, inevitably, someone around the table will say something that is tuned to the exact way you feel. Then the realization comes that one is among friends, people who really understand and care about them and their sensitive feelings. Some parents are more vocal from the start, and they find willing listeners who neither criticize or pass judgment on them. We most likely have the same feelings of anger, despair, longing, pains, and a multitude of others.

Now a word about crying. PLEASE don't stay away because you are afraid you will cry! We have all cried many times. Perhaps we've attended several months and didn't shed a tear. Then something is said or a memory comes back that brings tears to our eyes. Compassionate Friends can accept the gamut of feelings from tears to laughter. Laughter? Of course! We are, after all, human and our emotions are many and varied. If we can accept each other's feelings, this must include all ranges of emotions.

In the course of discussion, you may hear the answer to a question or problem that has been plaguing you. Several parents may tell you how they handled the question of what to do with their child's possessions - clothes, toys, books, etc., or how they have gotten through holidays, birth- days, and other difficult days. Maybe you will pick up something that will be helpful in dealing with your surviving children's problems; how to deal with a seemingly uncaring relative or friends- to hurtful remarks, or how to answer the question "How many children do you have?" Sometimes what has helped one may not have worked for another, but what is important is the open and honest discussion and the chance to decide for yourself.

Please don't let the word meeting intimidate you. Perhaps we should call it a gathering. Whether our gathering consists of a program featuring a film, a speaker, a tape, or general discussion, please don't hesitate to join us! A parent who has "survived" the loss of their child will always be there to greet you and understand.

--Verdugo Hills, CA newsletter

No More Secrets

After quite a number of years living with the grief of suicide loss, I took the chance of talking about it with selected individuals. These were people I thought I could trust. Up to that point, I was convinced that it was a horrible secret I would just have to carry for the rest of my life. Instead what I heard surprised me. Many of the people I spoke to were either, wrestling with their own grief over suicide loss or knew someone who was. They ended up asking-me- for-advice! I knew then that I was not alone in my dilemma. So many people are hurting from suicide loss. And secrets just compound the pain. Today, I know that trusting people and reaching out to people is my lifeline to healing from suicide loss.

-Reprinted from Healing the Hurt Spirit, Daily Affirmations for People Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide by Catherine Greenleaf.

I will never see my
daughter grow old
I will never see wrinkles form or
silver take over her hair.
I will never again hear her laughter
or hold her when she weeps.
Her love is embroidered in every
part of who I am.
And on the days I miss her the most
I close my eyes and whisper all the
things I didn't get to say. Whisper all
the things I am grateful we shared.
Her story didn't end ... it will
continue through the words of her I
speak... in the memories of her I
share. To keep a little part of her
alive through me... she the will not
be forgotten

Author Unknown

You Did Not Die

You live in the beautiful wind that blows. You live in the sound of birds that crow. You live in the sun that shines so bright. You live in the peaceful dark at night. You live in a star I see in the sky. You live in ocean waves that come in with the tide. You live in the smell of flowers and grass. You live in the summer that goes so fast. You live in my heart that hurts so much. You did not die, we only lost touch.

Shari Swirsky TCF Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Gifts of Love

Our chapter is a self-help group with no required dues. We rely solely on contributions. Your donations help us pay for the cost of this newsletter, the postage, all the books in our library, meeting and event supplies which are a great help to bereaved parents.

Your contributions are tax deductible and very sincerely appreciated. The following donations were received since the last Primrose deadline:

Frank & Kathleen Rumble- in Memory of their daughter Christina
Sam & Shelley Allegrino – in Memory of their Son Allan
Kate & William Stacy- In Memory of their son Phillip
Luann & George Ford - In Memory of their daughter Kelli
Ivy Carroll - In Memory of her daughter Stacy
Carol Radice - In Memory of her son Jason
Michael & Christina McAfee - In Memory of their son Joseph
Jeannine Wells - In Memory of her daughter Kathleen
Renee & Steve Spicer - In Memory of their son Joel
Shirley Rigo - In Memory of her son David
Tom & Diane Ellis - In Memory of their son Matthew
Carlo & Samantha Carlini - In Memory of their daughter Samantha
KathyBeers - In Memory of her son Jason
Charles & Shelly Levchak - In Memory of their son CJ Levchak
Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home in memory of all of our children

Time Will Ease The Hurt

The sadness of the present days
Is locked and set in time, And moving to the future
Is a slow and painful climb. But all the feelings that are now
So vivid and so real
Can't hold their fresh intensity
As time begins to heal.
No wound so deep will ever go
Entirely away,
Yet even hurt becomes
A little less from day to day. Nothing can erase the painful
Imprints on your mind,
But there are softer memories
That time will let you find. Though your heart won't let the
Sadness simply slide away.
The echoes will diminish
Even though the memories stay.

Bruce B. Wilmer

Thanks

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town that might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."

Thanks to the mother who went to that first meeting knowing it would really hurt to talk — and talked.

Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back — but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting,

put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help." Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies —

for her "Compassionate Friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people — who became a facilitator. Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men — and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know — next month.

John DeBoer TCF Greater Omaha, NE

**** NOTICE ****

There are no monetary dues or fees to receive The Primrose, the TCF Broome County's newsletter. Our largest expense is the printing and mailing of newsletters to our members.

Your tax deductible Love Gift donation enables the chapter to continue our mission of reaching out to the newly bereaved and providing ongoing support to all our members.

Send donations to: Dianne Cappiello 2221 Glenwood Rd. Vestal, NY 13850 - tcfbroome@gmail.com

Make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends Broome

Name _____o Please check if new address

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Child's name _____ Date of death ____ \ ____ \ ____

Newsletter\$ _____ Supplies\$ _____ Postage\$ _____ Other (Specify)\$ _____

Please specify the fund you want to donate to

Please specify if there is a specific fund you want the money used for (Newsletter, Postage, Supplies, Etc)

For the THREE of US

As long as we can,
We will look at this world for all three of us,
As long as we can.
We will laugh with the birds,
We will sing with the flowers,
We will pray to the stars,
For the three of us.
As long as we can
We will remember how many things
On this earth were your joy,
And we will live as well
As you would want US to live
As long as we can.

Author Unknown

“What we have once enjoyed we can never lose...
and all that we love deeply becomes a part of us”

~ Hellen Keller

“It's so curious: one can resist tears and 'behave' very well in the hardest hours of grief. But then someone makes you a friendly sign behind a window, or one notices that a flower that was in bud only yesterday has suddenly blossomed, or a letter slips from a drawer... and everything collapses.” ~ Colette

“To love is to will the good of the other.”

—Thomas Aquinas

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The Compassionate Friends
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Supporting Family After a Child Dies
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