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



**The Compassionate Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies  
Oscoda Area Chapter

ISSUE 42 MAY/JUNE 2019

The Compassionate Friends of  
Oscoda Area  
4087 Forest Rd.  
Oscoda, MI 48750  
989-254-5888  
Email: [tcfoscoda@gmail.com](mailto:tcfoscoda@gmail.com)  
[www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org)

## Making Mother's Day and Father's Day Special

by Elaine Stillwell, Rockville Centre, NY

*posted May 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 TCF*

Here are a few hints to help you through these days after the loss of a child.

- 1) Pamper yourself-this is a special day in your life. You are a parent forever and your child is your child forever.
- 2) Do what you need to do-what helps you. Grieve your way.
- 3) Be with those who surround you with love, not demands or advice.
- 4) Plan ahead-do things that make you feel good or give you a moment's peace.
- 5) Start new rituals to make new memories.
- 6) Share your thoughts with family members; decide together what the day should include. (If you are alone, find a good friend.)
- 7) Include deceased children in the day-through prayer, lighting a candle, telling stories about them, looking through pictures, planting flowers or a garden, doing a good deed, writing about them, making their favorite recipe.
- 8) Join with another bereaved family to honor this day and have mutual support.
- 9) Start a garden or add to a special garden in memory of your child.
- 10) Use this day to plant spring flowers so you can always see your child in each bloom and each bouquet that you cut.
- 11) Visit the cemetery if that helps your heart on this day.
- 12) Plant a flower or shrub that will come to bloom this time of year.
- 13) Do something special for someone else or something special in your child's name (helping Cancer Care, MADD, a Compassionate Friends' Chapter, Scouting, a nursing home, etc.)
- 14) Listen to music that makes your heart feel good.
- 15) Cook some favorite recipes that your child enjoyed or cooked for you.
- 16) Buy a present for yourself from your child and enjoy the comfort it brings you.
- 17) Write a poem or article in memory of your child, sharing memories or whatever has helped you.
- 18) Attend a family gathering of relatives - their love and support can give you a lift on this day.
- 19) Make a booklet of favorite poems that help your heart, and give copies to dear relatives and friends in memory of your child.
- 20) Take part in a special church ceremony honoring Mother's Day and Father's Day.
- 21) Pray to your child-talking is the best medicine and prayer is simply talking.
- 22) Set aside some special time to grieve, unloading all the frustration and sadness that can envelop you on such a day giving you time to meditate alone.
- 23) Write a letter to your child, telling what's in your heart (perhaps some unfinished business or some new blessing that has enriched your life).
- 24) Allow the tears to flow- crying is healing and allows a release for your feelings.
- 25) Think of a way to "share your child with the world"-making sure his or her memory lives on through scholarships, writing, good deeds.
- 26) Give and get plenty of hugs.

### MONTHLY MEETING

*2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month  
Sacred Heart Church Family Center  
5300 N US 23  
Oscoda, MI 48750*

*Meeting time: 7:00 pm*

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 14th:**  
"Forget Me Not"

**June 11th:**  
Forgiveness

**June 30<sup>th</sup>:**  
Butterfly Release

### CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Mail: TCF-Oscoda Area Chapter  
4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750  
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Email: [tcfoscoda@gmail.com](mailto:tcfoscoda@gmail.com)  
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**The Compassionate Friends Oscoda**



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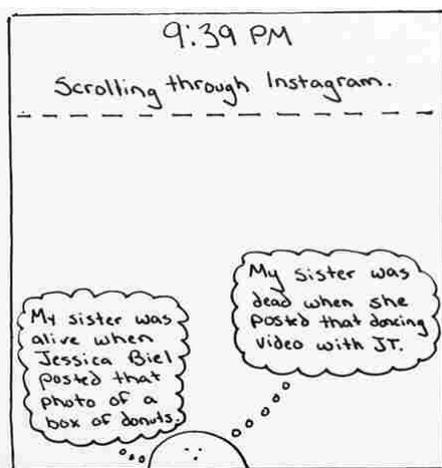
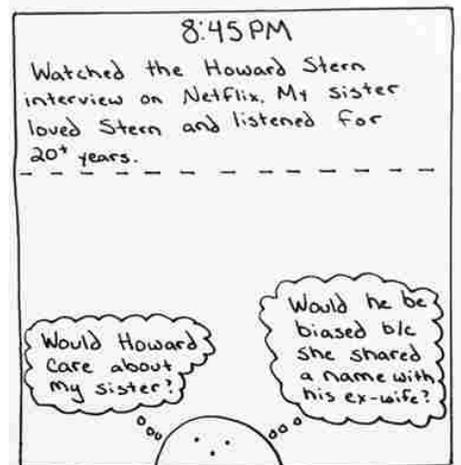
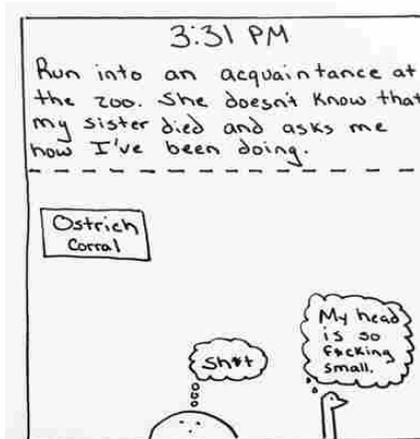
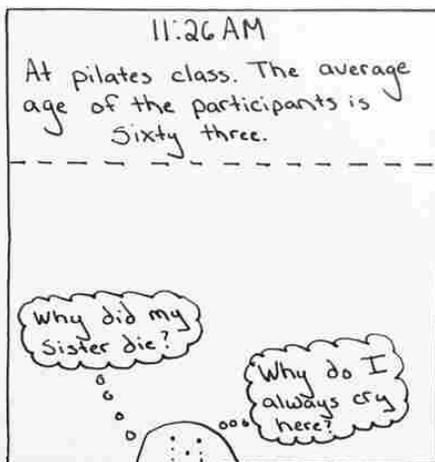
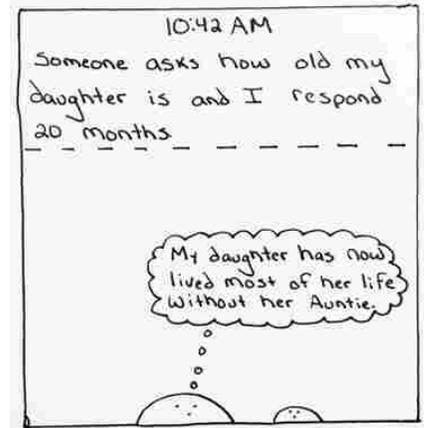
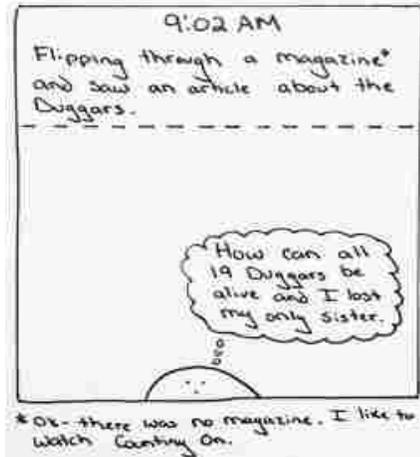
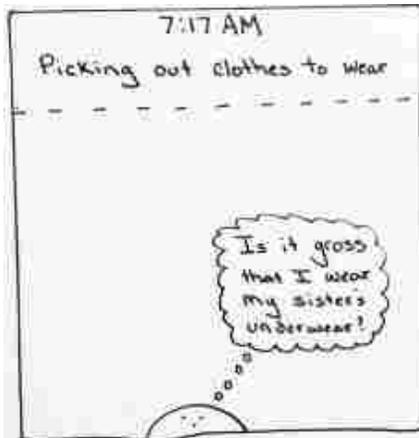
## "You Need Not Walk Alone"

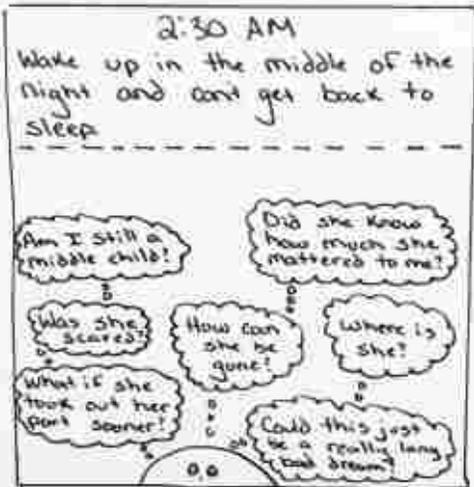
### A Day in the Life of My Grief--Illustrated

In which I wonder, 'How can all 19 Duggers be alive and I lost my only sister?'

By Kellyn Shoecraft

My sister, Alison, died unexpectedly in August 2017. Some people would be surprised at how frequently I connect her to the mundane moments of my life. Even the most seemingly benign decisions and encounters are about Alison. What follows is a small sampling of a day in my (grieving) life.





Kellyn Shoecraft has been intimate with grief since 2004, when her dad died after two decades of autoimmune illnesses. She is now navigating life without her sister, who died unexpectedly in 2017. Inspired by these losses, Kellyn is a co-founder at Here for You, a company thoughtfully presented practical care packages (think toilet paper) for people living through life's toughest moments. Published on March 9, 2019  
 Modern Life—candid conversations about grief



### The Grief of Fathers Strength

In the early days of my grief, a tear would well up in my eyes, a lump would form in my throat, but you would not know—I would hide it, for the strong do not cry...

#### AND I AM STRONG

In the middle days of my grief, I would look ahead and see that wall that I had attempted to go around, as an ever present reminder of a wall yet unscaled. Yet I did not attempt to scale it, for the strong will survive...

#### AND I AM STRONG

In the later days of my grief, I learned to climb over the wall step by step—remembering, crying, grieving. And the tears flowed steadily as I painstakingly went over. The way was long, but I did make it...

#### FOR I AM STRONG

Near the resolution of my grief, a tear will well up in my eyes, a lump will form in my throat, but I will let that tear fall—and you will see it. Through it you will see that I still hurt and I care.

#### FOR I AM STRONG

~Terry Jago

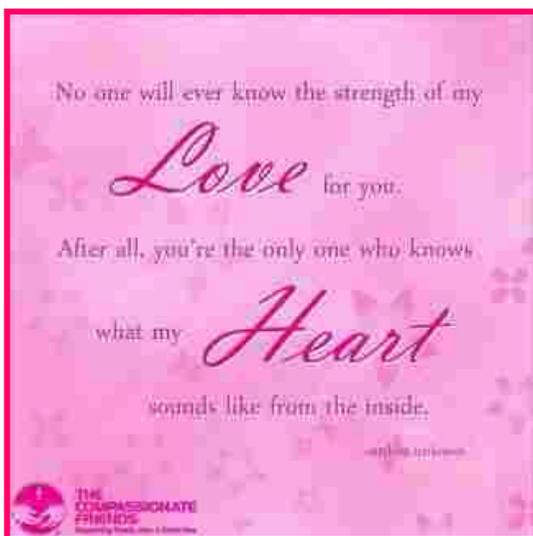
TCF Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada



### A Mother's Love

I need no pictures to remember your warm smile  
 the lines of your face are embedded in my memory of you.  
 I gave you life in one second of pain,  
 for which you returned 13 years of yourself—  
 sometimes quiet, sometimes noisy.  
 Sometimes I hear a voice that sounds like you, and I pause.  
 That page of hurt stems from a tiny, empty spot you have left in my life.  
 I carried you in my womb, then later in my arms.  
 But I will carry you in my heart forever.

~Joy Morning, written for friend  
 Ginny Petczynski, TCF- Phenix, AZ





*"Forever In Our Hearts"  
Our Children/Siblings Remembered*



**Birthdays**



**Remembrances**



May  
Katie Kirkpatrick



June  
Elise Schenk



May  
Mark Negro



May  
Steve Valentine



June  
Christian Gonzales



June  
Tommy Draper



June  
Aaron Gonzales



June  
Bradley Hilberg



June  
Mark Negro



*Like a bird  
Singing in the rain,  
Let grateful memories  
Survive in time of  
sorrow.  
~Robert Lewis  
Stevenson*

June  
Ronald Lewis



*The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.*

# HOW I CONTINUE TO PARENT MY SON SINCE HIS DEATH

*Kelly Cote*

When you have a baby, heck—when you find out you are expecting a baby, parental instincts kick in. Instincts to protect them, to nurture them, to help them grow, and to encourage them to leave their unique mark on the world.

When a baby dies, that biological instinct does not go away. That can be confusing. You might be thinking, “I can’t parent my dead child, how the heck does that work?”

Yes you can! And you do. It might look different, but you can find ways to parent your child after death. Here are some ways I continue to parent my son after death.

*I make sure he is not forgotten.*—Since my son is no longer here, I can no longer protect his physical body. What I can still protect is the memory of his short life. I do this in many ways. Each time I share his story with someone I meet, I am protecting the memory of his life. Every time I include him in my child count, I’m protecting him from being forgotten. With every family photo and card, I include him I’m letting the world know he mattered and existed. He is and will forever be loved. If that isn’t parenting, I don’t know what is.

*I include him in holidays and special occasions*---He doesn’t get to part take in our holidays and celebrations, so I make sure to include him. I make sure he feels special, where ever he is. I nurture his urn’s place in our home instead of nurturing his growing body. Each holiday, I place something festive by his urn. A candle is always lit in his honor.

*I care for a special garden dedicated to him.*—Each spring I plant a garden for him and care for it until winter rolls in. Carefully, watering it, weeding it, wiping the dirt that collects on the engraved stone placed there in his memory. I make sure it’s perfect. This provides me with an outlet for my need to nurture him.

*I grow the love for him within his younger siblings.*---He was my first child. He was also stillborn, robbing me of the chance to watch him grow. He has two younger brothers who did not know him. I focus on growing the love they have for their brother. Through talking about him to his younger brother and sister, I see the love for him blossom as they grow. My son talks to him and tells me “Parker lives in my heart.” They play with our Parker Bear, which is the Molly Bear we received after he was stillborn. He’s included in pictures they draw, and they don’t hesitate to say we have a family of five despite everyone else seeing only four. As they get older, the love for him continues to grow.

*I ensure that although his life was brief, he will leave a mark on this world.*—My son existed. I don’t want his short life to be for nothing. Creating meaning through helping others ensures he will get to leave a mark on this world. I donate items in his honor. Carefully packing school supplies for kids his age and dropping them off at the school. We make extra Valentines with his name on them and deliver them to children in the hospital. Everything I do has a touch of him in it. Through that, he will love on forever.

*I write him letters.*—I have a unique journal just for him. It’s a special place where I can continue to bond with him. I write to him on his birthday. And on days he is heavy on my mind. Documenting all the milestones I missed with him and how we’ve not forgotten. I write letters telling him about his siblings, about his family, about our life on earth without him. I express my love to him and tell him all the things I want him to know.

You see, my son will always be my son. And I will always be his mom. Death will not take that away. I will continue to parent him my entire life; it just doesn’t look the same.

*Kelly is the owner and therapist at Evolve Counseling, LLC and proud mother of three children, including her son Parker.  
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### The Far Side of the Rainbow

We have shared our tears and our sorrow,  
We have given encouragement to each other,  
Given hope for a brighter tomorrow,  
We share the title of grieving mother.

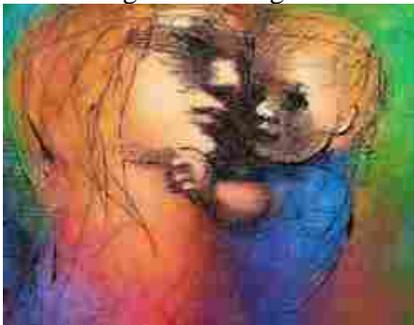
Some of us have lost older daughters or sons,  
Who we watched grow over the years,  
Some have lost their babies their lives begun,  
But no matter the age, we cry the same tears.

We understand each others pain,  
The bond we share is very strong,  
With each other there is no need to explain,  
The path we walk is hard and long.

Our children brought us together,  
They didn't want us on this journey alone,  
They knew we needed each other,  
To survive the pain of them being gone.

So take my hand my friend,  
We may stumble and fall along the way,  
But we'll get up and try again,  
Because together we can make it day by day.

We can give each other hope,  
We'll create a place where we belong,  
Together we will find ways to cope,  
Because we are Angel Moms together we are strong!



~Judi Walker

*"Mother and Child" painting by Clare Szalay  
November 13, 2018*

## 42nd National Conference Registration Open

The 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019 at the Philadelphia 201 Hotel. "Hope Rings Out in Philadelphia" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great National Conference experience. We'll keep you updated with details on the national website as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

### Conference Registration

Pre-registration Rates (ends June 15th)

Adult - \$125.00

Senior (65+) - \$115.00

Military with ID - \$75.00

Full-time College Students (with ID) - \$60.00

Full-time College Students (with ID) - \$80.00

Child - \$80.00

### Hotel Reservations

Philadelphia 201 Hotel

201 N. 17th St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Call **215.448.2963 ext. 6415** to reserve a room and use group code **TH1326**. Room rate is \$145 for guest room with Queen/King or 2 Doubles.

Visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) for more information.



Check out our website [www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org) facebook <https://www.facebook.com/thecompassionatefriends.oscoda/>

iGive is an amazingly simple, no cost to you, donation platform. Check it out at

<https://igive.com/TheCompassionateFriendsofOscodaArea>



Check out the over 1,000 on-line stores that when you shop donate money to TCF

### Support

#### The Compassionate Friends Of Oscoda Area 2440

When you shop at smile.amazon.com  
Amazon donates

Go to: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/35-2493920>

## 2019 TCF Oscoda Area Calendar of Events

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month 7:00 pm @ Sacred Heart Church Family Center, Oscoda, MI

- May 14 Don't Forget / Forget Me Nots Mother's / Father's Day  
What do I want to remember about the child I lost?
- June 11 Forgiveness
- June 30 1:30 pm Butterfly Release – Community Activity Sacred Heart Church**
- July 9 Dog Days of Summer / Grief  
Grief can be worse than the hottest days of summer, come on suddenly, cause lethargy and make us mad. How are the dog days of summer and our grief journey similar?
- August 13 The Story of Sea Glass
- September 10 Dealing with Grief Constructively  
Realize how destructive grief can be and hear some suggestions that others have found to deal with their grief constructively.
- September 15 ? 10:00 am Walk to Remember - Community Activity Memory Garden**
- October 8 The Storm  
This activity will compare the grief journey to that of a boat trying to make progress in a storm.
- November 12 Candle Making activity  
We will make candles to share with attendees of the WW Candle Lighting
- December 8 6:45 pm World Wide Candle Lighting – Community Activity**
- December 10 Celebrate our CHILDREN / Bring your child's favorite snack to share with the group  
An informal gathering of sharing and celebrating our children.





## The Compassionate Friends of Oscoda Area 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Release

Sunday June 30, 2019  
1:30 pm  
Sacred Heart Church Lawn  
(located 5300 N HWY US 23, Oscoda, MI)

*This event is an opportunity for families, as well as extended family and friends, to come together to remember children who have been taken too soon.*

Painted Lady Butterflies must be reserved in plenty of time for ordering. Butterflies this year are \$5.00 each. Please send your check made out to TCF of Oscoda Area and your child(ren)'s name to

TCF of Oscoda Area, 4087 Forest Rd., Oscoda, MI 48750

**RSVP by Monday June 17<sup>th</sup>**

Email [tcfoscada@gmail.com](mailto:tcfoscada@gmail.com) any questions or more information



A special time of refreshments and visiting will follow the release of butterflies. Bring a picture of your child, grandchild or sibling for the sharing table.

**Please come and join us in this celebration of life!**

For more information check us out at [www.tcf-oscoda.org](http://www.tcf-oscoda.org) and on 

