



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
RVA Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Email: tcfrrva@hotmail.com Website: www.compassionatefriendsrva.org Phone: (804) 458-9000

"I love you every day. And now I will miss you every day."

- Mitch Albom

MEETING INFORMATION

Monthly Meetings are held at 7:00 pm on the last Tuesday of each month at

**St. Matthias' Episcopal Church
11300 W. Huguenot Road
Midlothian, VA 21113**

UPCOMING MEETING TOPICS

January 29 – Newly Bereaved Men and Grief

The Next 12 Months, Honoring our Loved Ones



**Need to Talk?
We're here to listen!**

We know that meeting once a month is not enough for some people. If you need someone to talk to in-between meetings please call us! We do our best to answer every call as it comes in, however, sometimes we are not able to do so. If that happens, please leave a message and we will return your call within a day. Please call us anytime at (804) 458-9000.

A Day with Alan Pedersen

Saturday, February 2nd

[Alan Pedersen](#) is considered by many to be the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the world on rebuilding life after loss. His powerful presentations draw from his lifetime of experience as an award-winning song writer, humorist, performer and radio reporter. Since the death of his 18-year-old daughter, Ashley, in 2001, Alan has traveled to more than 1,500 cities speaking and playing his original music. Alan also successfully served four years as the Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends and is currently on the road with [The Angels Across the USA Tour](#) where he will speak and perform in over 100 cities in 2019, and Richmond is one of them! Alan will present two workshops, "Everything You Never Wanted to Know About Grief" and "Does It Ever Get Any Better?". Please [click here](#) to learn more and to register for this life changing event! You can also learn more about Alan, by reading this article he wrote in May 2014, "[I Lost My Daughter and I Lost My Hope; Until I Faced My Grief](#)" and watching [Episode 77: Proactive Grieving](#) from the Open to Hope organization.

FREE EVENT – LUNCH INCLUDED

REGISTER BY 1/31



CONTACT INFORMATION

The Compassionate Friends RVA

Co-Leaders:

Wanda Moser & Carolyn Perrin

Phone: (804) 458-9000

tcf RVA@hotmail.com

www.compassionatefriendsrva.org

Mailing Address:

1119 Worsham Green Terrace

Midlothian, VA 23114

Meeting Address:

St. Matthias' Episcopal Church

11300 W. Huguenot Road

Midlothian, VA 21113

<http://compassionatefriendsrva.org>

Regional Coordinator

Kathy Collins

(703) 425-9504

email: tiffaniesmom@verizon.net

TCF National Office

The Compassionate Friends

PO Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

(877) 969-0010

<https://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA>

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

www.compassionatefriends.org

READ THE LATEST ISSUE OF

“We Need Not Walk Alone”

The Autumn/Winter 2018 issue is available for free on [TCF's website](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). You can also sign up for future issues. May you find the articles, poems and other information in it - written by grief professionals and other bereaved family members - to be helpful and inspiring as you journey towards hope and healing.

Grieving in the New Year

Written by Claire Bidwell Smith on January 7, 2018

If you're like me, the new year always brings an opportunity for renewal and a fresh start. Except when you're grieving. When you've lost someone you love – recently, or even years ago – the new year can bring on a tidal wave of emotions and expectations. The idea of starting over in the new year can feel unwanted or even just overwhelming.

New Year's Resolution: Be less sad.

Impossible. If you have this one on your list strike it out right now! I've heard so many clients tell me stories of trying to “quit” grieving at the beginning of the year, only to have this resolution fall flat on its face.

New Year's simply looks different for those who are grieving. You may find yourself feeling more alone than ever as you watch your friends and loved ones carry on celebrating and making resolutions to embrace the year ahead. Because when you're grieving there is a poignancy that comes with the passing of time, and nothing feels like more of a reminder of this than the new year.

I'll never forget the first new year after my mother died. She had been gone for almost a year but when the clock struck 12 that night and the minutes carried forth into a year in which she was not alive, I literally sank to my knees in pain in the back hallway of a nightclub.

The intense pain I felt in that moment was unexpected for me. For most of that first year, I had felt numb. But when the hands of the clock began to move forward and I realized I was entering a year in which she would not be a part of, I felt overcome with searing grief. The club patrons carried on celebrating around me and I curled into a corner of the hallway sobbing into my hands, missing my mother more than I could stand, and not knowing how I would get through an entire lifetime without her.

Allow Grief to be Part of Your New Year

Be kind to yourself in the new year. You don't have to make the traditional fresh start, embrace diets, work out regimes, or start a daily gratitude list. Whether this is your first year without your loved one or whether it's been many years since the loss, it's important to honor your feelings and give yourself the proper time you need to grieve. There will be other years in which you can feel celebratory again. But this year be gentle with yourself.

Let your resolution be one of vulnerability. So many of us are afraid to feel all the big emotions that come after a loss. These feelings can be

WELCOME

though we are sorry you're here

It is always hard to say "Welcome" to people coming to our meetings for the first time because we are so very sorry for the reason which made you eligible for membership in The Compassionate Friends (TCF). However, we are glad you found the courage to come. We cannot take away your pain, but we can offer our friendship and support. We ask that you attend 3 – 4 meetings to see how TCF can help you. It might be that you hear just the right words or make just the right connection with another parent which will make a world of difference to you. Discover the special acceptance that occurs with those who truly do understand!



A Balanced Approach to Coping with Grief in the New Year

January 23rd at 7:00 pm EST

In this interactive session, we will discuss the challenges people face when coping with grief, how to realistically conceptualize your progress in grief, and assist participants in creating a strengths-based, balanced, and practical coping plan for 2019.

To Register:

<https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1adf1caa19929e6d34538d7d4481ef37>

overwhelming and also make you feel like you are not functioning like everyone else around you, but let that be okay for now.

I've had many people tell me years after a loss that they feel they missed an opportunity in their grief – that they did not let it in when given the chance, and that it hardened something about their relationship with their loved one.

Use the new year to take a deep breath and to embrace who you are in this moment. We change so much more than we realize. So, remember that you will not always be in this space, but while you are, allow yourself to feel all that comes with loss. There is undeniably an identity shift that comes with losing someone close to you. Be it a friend, family member, spouse, or child, their absence in your life will force change upon your soul. Most of us try to resist that change, thinking that the answer to getting through the pain is to try to remain exactly the same, to try to retain the person you were before the loss. But in fact, the opposite is true.

When we can allow ourselves to let the loss shape us and change us, we will grow with experience, rather than against it. And whenever we stop resisting something then we can give ourselves the opportunity to heal.

The Year of Letting Go

Let this be the year of letting go. Not of your loved one, but of your expectations of yourself. You will never get over your loved one and you do not ever need to let go of them, but in order to heal you do need to release the idea that you can remain unchanged.

Each time you find yourself judging your grief process – whether it's thinking you are too sad or too angry or simply too consumed by it all – let go and know that whatever you are feeling right now is normal and natural. You will eventually reach a state of less pain and sadness and anxiety. You will find a new normal. Until then, be gentle with yourself.

HOPE SMILES FROM
THE THRESHOLD OF THE
YEAR TO COME,
WHISPERING,
"IT WILL BE
HAPPIER..."

ALFRED TENNYSON

"We are all broken. That's how the light gets in." – Ernest Hemingway

We Remember – January 2019



MALCOLM ARASKI LINDSEY	JANUARY 1
ERIC MERTENS	JANUARY 6
PAUL W. KOHLER II	JANUARY 12
GREGORY SPENCER	JANUARY 13
DONNIE MANSFIELD	JANUARY 16
"J" GOOSS	JANUARY 17
NICHOLAS RYAN BUDD	JANUARY 18
MATTHEW SPENCER	JANUARY 18
MASON M. REID	JANUARY 20
CHARLIE & AUSTIN DUSETT	JANUARY 22
WILLIAM PATRICK GORMAN	JANUARY 22
SHANNON DENISE MITCHELL	JANUARY 25
JONATHAN READ	JANUARY 27
CHRISTIAN WOOD	JANUARY 28
ALEX KESSERY	JANUARY 31
BRITLYN WEINSTOCK	JANUARY 31

JOSEPH ANDREW ARMSTEAD	JANUARY 2
BRENDEN FINLEY	JANUARY 4
MARCUS JOHN WEBER	JANUARY 7
TOM MCCAULEY	JANUARY 10
BRENNA JEAN VORHIS	JANUARY 10
DEREK STRINGFELLOW BEST	JANUARY 13
JEFFREY D. NEBLETT	JANUARY 13
TOMMY T. ABRAMS	JANUARY 17
AUSTIN CAPECE	JANUARY 17
"J" GOOSS	JANUARY 17
MADISON GRACE NESTER	JANUARY 17
DENNIS ROMAGE	JANUARY 19
LANCE VISNICH	JANUARY 21
CHARLIE & AUSTIN DUSETT	JANUARY 22
JORDAN KUZIK	JANUARY 23
PETER HUFSCHMIDT	JANUARY 24
CATHERINE ROSE DORSEY	JANUARY 25
JACOB THOMAS LEE LITTLE	JANUARY 25
GREGORY JOHN LYNCH	JANUARY 29



"Goodbyes are not forever, are not the end; it simply means I'll miss you until we meet again."



The Compassionate Friends

**Supporting Family
After a Child Dies**

Please show your support by donating now.

OVERDOSE LOSS GROUP

Full Circle Grief Center provides a grief counseling group for those adults grieving the death of a loved one due to overdose. This group meets weekly for 8 weeks and is offered free of charge. Deadline to register is January 21st, contact Stacia Macklin at 804.912.2947 Ext. 104 or stacia@fullcirclegc.org. Connect with them on [Facebook](#).



Our memories build a special
bridge

When loves ones have to part,
To help us feel we're with them still
And soothe a grieving heart.

Our memories span
The years we shared,
Preserving ties that bind,
They build a special bridge of love
And bring us peace of mind.

by Emily Matthews

LOVE GIFTS

Never expected. Always appreciated.

There are no fees or dues to belong to The Compassionate Friends. As parents, grandparents, and siblings find help within the group, they sometimes make a "Love Gift" to our chapter. It is a way to honor special people in their lives or remember children and others who have passed on. Love gifts allow us to offer resources such as this newsletter, books, and brochures to assist grieving families. They also allow us to provide information to professionals and others who impact the lives and feelings of the bereaved. Love gifts are just that, gifts. They are not required of anyone, but they are very helpful and very much appreciated. We are grateful for all of the generous gifts that have been provided that allow us to continue to support our [mission](#).

The Compassionate Friends is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and your donations are fully tax deductible. If you would like to make a love gift you can either [click here to donate](#) via PayPal or you can complete and print this form and mail it with your donation to:

The Compassionate Friends Richmond Chapter #1422
1119 Worsham Green Terrace, Midlothian, Virginia 23114

Contributor's Name:

Address:

Phone and/or Email Address:

This gift is made In Memory / Honor of:

This is a Chapter Gift (without memorial or honorarium)

Donations may also be made from our website by visiting:

http://www.compassionatefriendsrva.org/support_our_chapter.aspx