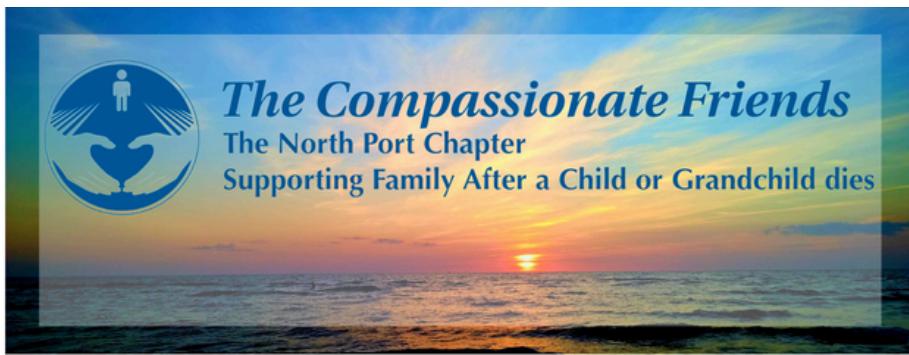




The Compassionate Friends

The North Port Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child or Grandchild dies



Fall 2025 Edition

NEW MEETING LOCATION



Shannon Staub Library
4675 Career Lane
North Port, FL 34289

Please join us on October 21st at 6pm in the conference room.

Going to a meeting with other parents who have also lost children can be incredibly healing because you're surrounded by people who get it.

In these groups, you don't have to explain or hide your emotions. You can cry, talk, or just listen, and everyone there knows what that feels like. It's a safe place to share your story, your child's memory, and your struggles without fear of judgment.

Hearing from others who are further along in their grief can also give a sense of hope — showing that while the pain never completely goes away, it does become more bearable. Sometimes just realizing you're not alone in this unimaginable loss can lift a huge emotional weight.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Third Tuesday of the month

Next Meeting:

October 21, 2025

6pm

• • • • •
LOCATION:

Shannon Staub Library
4675 Career Lane
North Port, FL 34289

• • • • •
LEADER:

Beth Wooten
bethwootenlcsw@gmail.com

(469)-475-1650

• • • • •
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Dawn Stephens
Morningofthesun@aol.com

Have something to share? A poem, a story, what you did in honor of your child?
Email Dawn!

• • • • •
Our meetings provide a supportive space to grieve, remember, and honor your child, grandchild, or sibling. We are happy to have you in attendance!

Please join us for our upcoming Candle Lighting. This is a pay in advance event. Please RSVP by 12/5/25.

Please note, we will not have a December meeting. Just our candle light event for the month of December.



Please join us and bring your family to our North Port Chapter Candle Lighting & Dinner event at 5:15pm.

**Please bring a favorite framed photo of your child to our gathering to display!
Cost: \$15 per person for Italian dinner, desserts, and refreshments.
Full cash bar available.**

Must RSVP & pay in advance by 12/5/25

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone.

Sound healing provided by Lynne Cabibbo

American Legion Northport
6648 Taneytown Street
North Port, FL 34291

**Please RSVP to Beth by 12/5/25
Cash payment at meeting or reach out to Beth for payment link.
Bethwootenlcs@gmail.com
1-469-475-1650**

A Mother's Tapestry

Written by: Jo Marie, North Port Compassionate Friends Member.

A child weaves a tapestry of love and awe on a mother's soul.

With each breath, new step, accomplishment and milestone

The images become deeply colored and complex.

The bond warms and nourishes the mother's soul.

My son's patterns were predictable and strong:

Excelling in school,

Becoming an engineer,

Steadfastly supporting his family,

Giving me my only grandchild.

**Memories of his presence at each birthday, holiday, vacation and reunion,
Intertwined with dreams for his future, magically strengthened my mother's
soul.**

My son's scenes of the future were bright with promise:

Weekly calls to share life's stories,

Being there for special occasions,

Rushing to help in emergencies,

Living closer in my declining years.

**To the man who recklessly tore my son's bright yellow row boat in half,
Gashed a hole in my son's head and sent him to the bottom of the lake,**

You burned a deep hole in the tapestry of my very being

Leaving only the smoldering fabric of a son's memories on my mother's soul.

You left the beautiful, shining filaments of future promise in shreds

No weekly FaceTime updates

No raucous family Christmases

No treasured big family vacations

No lifetime of care by a loving son

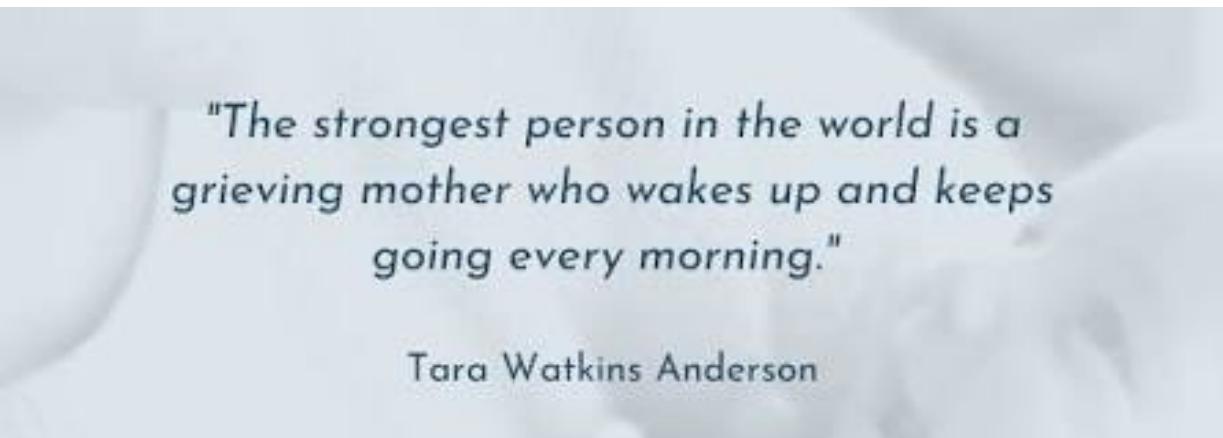
(Continued...)

You left me fragile and broken.
You stole my past that was so carefully stitched
by countless moments of sharing between a son and his mother.
You stole my present, leaving me unable to restitch my soul
as there is no longer a life to be shared with my son.
You stole my future, filled with dreams of a big family coming together
with laughter and love
and my son to support and protect me in old age.

To the Judge who tries this case and the citizens of Carolina
Please don't allow such violence to snuff out the life of another good
and peaceful person.

Answer this tragedy with justice and resolve to make things better.
Support legislation to increase penalties for reckless boating that cause
death or serious injury
So that your parents, spouses, children and grandchildren will be safe
on the waters of Carolina.

By Jo Marie, mother of Jim (1977-2023)



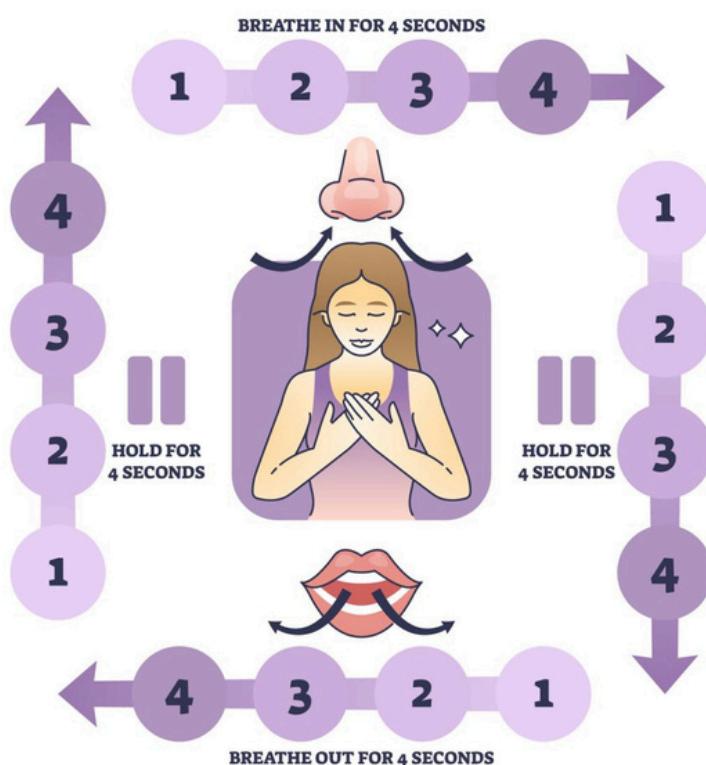
*"The strongest person in the world is a
grieving mother who wakes up and keeps
going every morning."*

Tara Watkins Anderson

Square Breathing

Square breathing is like yoga for your lungs! This nifty technique involves inhaling, holding, exhaling, and holding again—just like tracing a square. It's a stress-buster extraordinaire, soothing your nerves, turning down the anxiety dial, and sharpening your focus like a laser!

- Sit up straight with your feet flat on the floor for a grounded position.
- Close your eyes and take a slow, deep breath in through your nose, counting to four. Feel the air filling your lungs.
- Hold your breath for another count of four, keeping your mouth and nose relaxed. Simply pause your breathing.
- Slowly exhale through your nose for a count of four.
- Pause for another count of four.
- Repeat this process four times. Ideally, continue for five minutes or until you feel calm.



Square breathing can be useful in many situations, such as: calming yourself down when faced with stress or feeling overwhelmed, before responding to a high-stress situation, or when trying to sleep. It helps in reducing work stress, resetting your creative juices, and clearing your head. This technique can be beneficial during a meeting at work, when setting your intentions for the day, or when making a big decision.

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM



Monika Kozaka honors **Isabella**.

Susan honors her grandchild, **Hayley**.

Melinda honors her daughter, **Charlotte**.



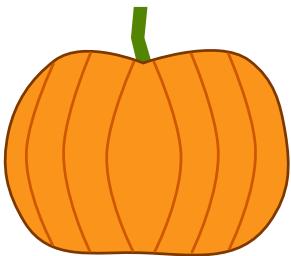
Pamela Scholund honors **Steven**.

Stacy Becker honors her son, **Ryan**.

Joni and Tom honor their daughter, **Kellie**.

Mae Serrano honors **John**.

Judy Dawley honors **Chris**.



Tammy Brooks honors **Tuano**.

Charise & George Augustine honor **Tiffany**.

Mialy Garcia honors her brother, **Aiden**.

Melissa Jayne honors her son, **Aiden**.

Michelle Roy honors her daughter, **Mikayla**.

Mike and Ellen Stevens honor their son, **Ryan**.

Francisco Villafane honors his son, **Jomar**.

Robin and Richard Server honor their daughter, **Brooke**.



Sherri Pinna honors her son, **Ryan**.

Angela Daubaras honors her daughter, **Melanie**.

Harry Moore honors **Buster**.

Beverly Mott honors **Benjamin**.

Chuck Henneke honors his daughter, **Kelly**.

Jo Marie Cook honors her sons, **Gregory** and **James**.

Jan Armstrong honors her daughter, **Carrie**.



Tammy Sheen honors her son, **Michael**.



ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM

Christine honors **Jakeb**.

Irene Ploskina honors her son, **Mikey**.

Dawn Stephens honors her son, **Spencer**.

Valerie LaBoy honors her son, **Daniel**.

Linda Goodwin honors her son, **Trey**.

Cynthia Mascola honors her son, **Michael**.

Dorothy Gray honors her son, **Chuck**.

Pamela McMinn honors her daughter, **Danielle**.

Bonnie Car honors her son, **Troy**.

Denise Rado Amendola honors her daughter, **Dana**.

Linda Wildes honors her son, **Max**.

Jenn and Eric Winship honor their son, **Jakeb**.

Arlene Spadone honors her granddaughter,
Olivia.

Briana Murphy honors her daughter, **Lexi**.

Karla Relyea honors her daughter, **Megan**.

Beth & Steve Wooten honor their daughter,
Kenna and unborn **grandchild**.

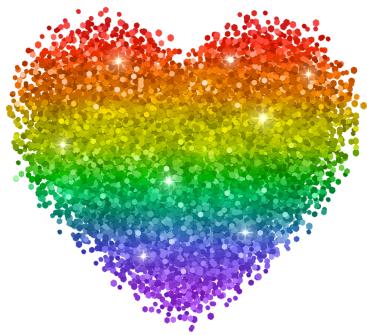
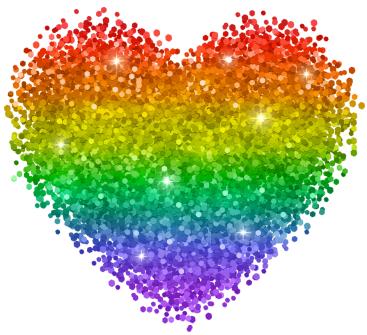
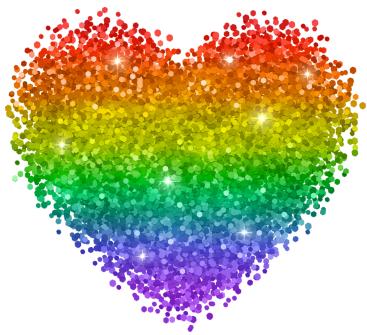
Gail and Ken honor their sons and grandson,
Tony, **Jason**, and **Jay**.

Heather Pope honors her son, **Eric**.

Pat Haupt honors her granddaughter, **Lauren**.

Kim and Pat honor **John** and **Jesse**.

Kim Raabe honors her son, **Matt**.



Someone said grief is like glitter. It clings to everything. Hides in corners. Slips into your socks. Appears on your fingertips when you're reaching for a glass of water, or brushing your hair before bed. It settles in places no one else can see. And sometimes, it sparkles. Sometimes, it doesn't.

And I think that's true—not because it makes grief prettier, but because it makes it stubborn. Grief does not knock politely and leave when you ask. It spills. It stains. It stays. People imagine grief as a clean wound: blood, bandage, better. But really, it's a messy room you can't fully clean. A scent that lingers even after all the windows are opened. A sound you keep hearing long after the music stops.

Some people lose things they love—books, cities, voices, future plans—and keep walking as if nothing happened. Others crumble at the touch of a sweater sleeve or the sound of a name. There's no proper timeline for learning how to live with what you miss. Some days you'll do it gracefully. Other days, you'll choke on it. That's still living.

And maybe that's the kindest thing about grief: it's evidence that something mattered. That someone left fingerprints on your heart so brightly, the light still catches on them. That you lived a moment so fully, its echo still finds its way back into your lungs.

So if it hurts, maybe that's okay. If it glitters in the dark and you cry when no one is looking, maybe that's okay too. You are not weak for remembering. You are not broken for carrying pieces of people with you. That's what makes you real. That's what makes you capable of love.

And love, in all its forms, is the reason we ever grieve at all.

30 Day Mental Health Challenge

1

Doodle for 5 minutes

2

Watch your favourite movie

3

Think of three things you are grateful for

4

Go for a walk

5

Complete an outstanding task

6

Do something nice for someone

7

Try something new

8

Think of a place that makes you smile

9

Listen to a new podcast

10

Wear something you love

11

Create a new music play list

12

Read something for fun

13

Have a relaxing bath or shower

14

Say hello to a passing stranger

15

Clean or declutter for 20 minutes

16

Share a difficult emotion with somebody

17

Set a goal for next week

18

Send a friend a text to say hi

19

Dance like nobody is watching

20

Do something outside

21

Draw your favourite memory

22

Do an online yoga session

23

Write down how you feel

24

Compliment someone

25

Complete the goal set on day 17

26

Fix something that's broken

27

Write a kind letter to yourself

28

Pamper yourself

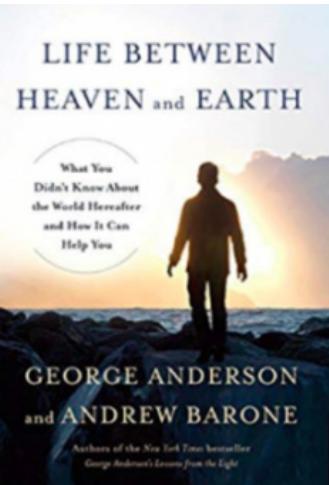
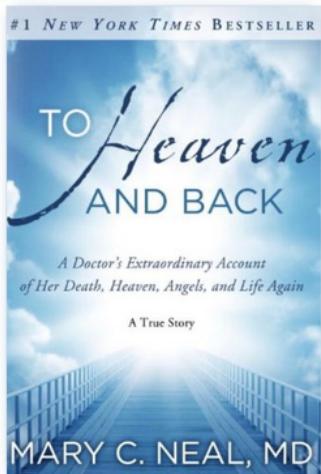
29

Ask for help with something

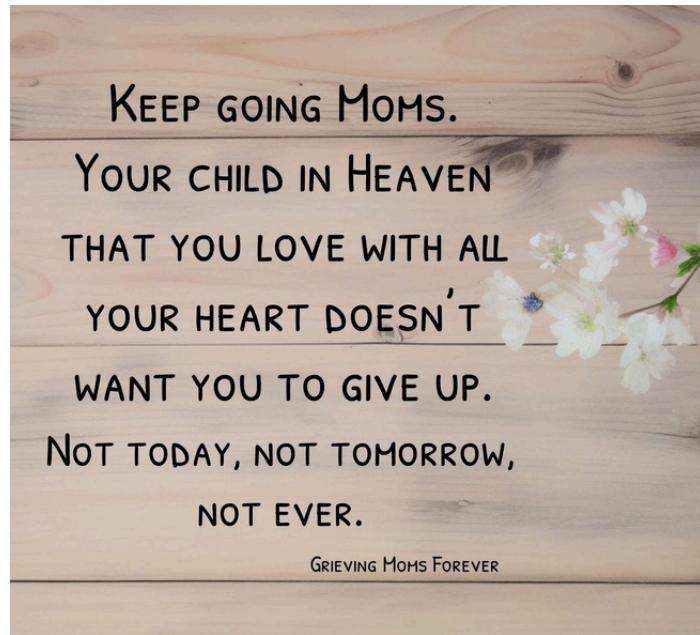
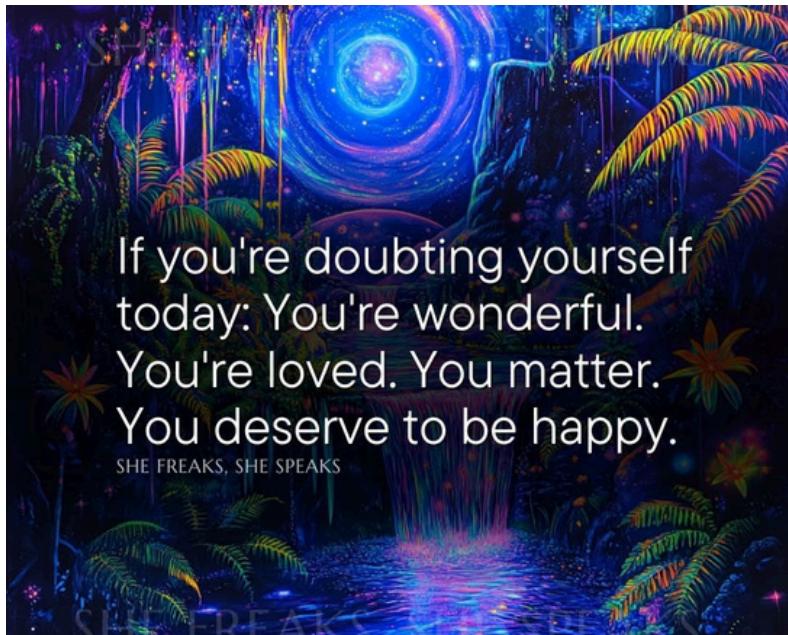
30

Name 5 things you are good at

Book Recommendations:



Movie Recommendation:



"You are fierce. You're a survivor. You're a fighter through and through. Little brave, breathe. There is a warrior within you."

When love gift donations are made to your local chapter in loving memory of your child, at the same time it is helping to fund the work of your local TCF chapter. Each chapter is run by Volunteers. If you wish to donate, checks can be made out to: North Port Compassionate Friends.