



The Compassionate Friends

The North Port Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child or Grandchild dies



Spring 2025 Edition

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A BOWLING EVENT Saturday 4/5

→ Treasure Lanes Bowling, 1059 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte, FL 33953 (10 minutes from the Northport Library)

→ 4pm-6pm - Cosmic Special (black lights, fog, and party music!)

→ \$12.30 per person (up to 6 players on a lane)

We will rent additional lanes if needed. We would love to see some of the dads come as we try to have a weekend event for group members who work as well. Feel free to bring your spouse or partner. Let's just have a casual fun time connecting with others.

RSVP to Beth (Email or phone) by 4/2/25.



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

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Third Tuesday of the month

Next Meeting:

April 15, 2025

6pm

LOCATION:

Westport Community Room
1177 Remington Trace Drive
Port Charlotte, FL 33953

LEADER:

Beth Wooten

bethwootenlcsw@gmail.com

[\(469\)-475-1650](tel:(469)475-1650)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Dawn Stephens

Morningofthesun@aol.com

UPCOMING EVENT

The 48th National Conference of The Compassionate Friends

July 11-13, 2025
Bellevue/Seattle, WA

For more information
visit:
compassionatefriends.org

Springtime

How do you feel when you see the purple and yellow of new crocuses? Or at the arrival of the first robin? The beginning of spring might make you feel better and feel new hope. And when we are grieving, feeling better and hopeful may also make us feel as if we are betraying the memory of our lost loved one. It is normal to experience new heightened grief or anxiety related to your grief in spring, just as it is in other seasons of the year. Although warmer, sunnier months can be nurturing and inspire new hopefulness, grief does not suddenly go away just because seasons change.

Spring generally brings a sudden flurry of change and things begin to move faster all around us. There is rebirth and renewal in nature as flowers and trees bloom and everything turns green again, and people quickly begin to flock to their favorite warm-weather activities. Try to take time to sit down and make some plans that can nurture you and help you cope with your losses and grief.

A helpful way to respond to anxiousness about spring and summer is to remind yourself about those things that YOU are in control of. Warmer months offer other opportunities for nurturing activities such as walking in nature, planting gardens, photography, family gatherings, stargazing, and many other things. When you are outside, take a moment to inhale and then to exhale. To be in control of the one moment you have control over. And give yourself permission to experience the warmth of spring on your face and in your heart.

From COPE Clinical Director Amy Olshever, PhD, LCSW



You can carry joy and grief at the same time

One of the hardest parts of grief is learning to balance grief and joy. Many grievers feel shame about moments of happiness, as if enjoying life betrays their loss. Some grievers also feel ashamed for “still grieving,” as if there’s a set time when they’re supposed to never be sad again.

Reframe it this way: Grief and joy aren’t opposites. They can coexist, just like the love you might feel for someone who died exists alongside the pain of losing them. Having moments of joy doesn’t cancel out your grief—it honors your capacity to feel every emotion on the spectrum of human emotions.

Affirmation: “I am capable of holding grief and joy side by side. They are both part of the rich life I am building after loss. I know that I will always remember my loss, just like I also know that I will laugh, smile, and feel happy again.”

Grief isn’t linear, and healing has no timeline

Society often pressures grievers to “move on” quickly, as if grief has a finish line. This can leave you feeling like you’re failing if you’re still struggling months—or even years—later.

Reframe it this way: Grief is a lifelong companion, not an obstacle to hurdle over. Healing doesn’t mean you’ll never feel the ache of loss again. It means learning to carry your loss forward in ways that feel meaningful to you.

Affirmation: “I will grieve for as long as I live. My grief will shift and change with time, but it will never disappear, and that’s okay. Grief is not a sign that I’m failing; it’s a sign that I care deeply about my losses and my loved ones.”

WHAT IS A COLOR WALK?

A Color Walk is a simple, immersive mindfulness practice where you choose a single color and follow it throughout your walk. Instead of walking mindlessly, you tune in—spotting your chosen color in the world around you, allowing it to guide your path.

This creative exercise enhances mindful walking, helps reduce stress, and encourages a deeper connection with your environment. Whether you're strolling through city streets or a quiet wooded trail, a Color Walk invites you to experience the present moment in a new and engaging way.

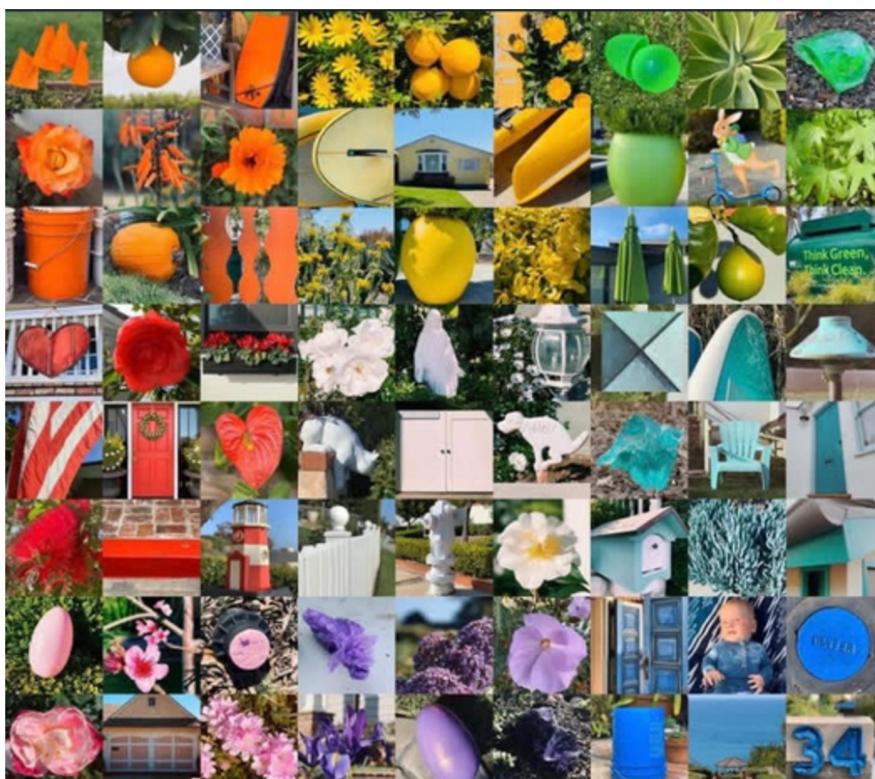


HOW TO TAKE A COLOR WALK

Choose a Color—Before stepping outside, select a color that resonates with you. It could be something bold and energizing like red or yellow, or something soothing like blue or green.

Start Walking & Noticing—As you walk, let your chosen color guide your focus. Notice it in nature, in storefronts, in people's clothing, on street signs—wherever it appears.

Let the Color Lead You—If you spot your color down a different street or along an unexpected path, follow it! This practice is about curiosity and presence rather than reaching a specific destination.



ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM



Christine honors **Jakeb**.

Monika Kozaka honors **Isabella**.

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

Pamela Scholund honors **Steven**.

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

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

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

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

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

Mae Serrano honors **John**.

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

Judy Dawley honors **Chris**.

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

Tammy Brooks honors **Tuano**.

Pamela McMinn honors her daughter,
Danielle.

Charise & George Augustine honor **Tiffany**.

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

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

Denise Rado Amendola honors her daughter,
Dana.

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

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

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

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

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

Arlene Spadone honors her granddaughter,
Olivia.

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

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

Robin and Richard Server honor their daughter,
Brooke.

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

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

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

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

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

Harry Moore honors **Buster**.

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

Beverly Mott honors **Benjamin**.

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

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

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

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

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



**My mom, she tells a lot of lies.
She never did before.
But from now until she dies,
She'll tell a whole lot more.
Ask my mom how she is,
And because she can't explain,
She will tell a little lie
Because she can't describe the pain.**

**Ask my mom how she is,
She'll say that she's alright.
If that's the truth, then tell me,
Why does she cry each night?**

**Ask my mom how she is,
She seems to cope so well.
She doesn't have a choice, you see.
Nor the strength enough to yell.**

**Ask my mom how she is,
"I'm fine, I'm well, I'm coping."
For God's sake mom, just tell the truth.
Just say your heart is broken.**

**She will love me all her life.
I sure loved her all of mine,
But if you ask her how she is
She'll lie and say she's fine.**

**I am here in Heaven,
I cannot hug her from here.
If she lies to you, don't listen.
Hug her and hold her near.**

**On the day we meet again,
We'll smile and I'll be bold.
I'll say, "You're lucky you got in here mom,
With all the lies you told!"**

-Author: Joanne Burr 

Woman and a Fork

A Message of Hope

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things 'in order,' she contacted her Pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes.

She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in.

Everything was in order and the Pastor was preparing to leave when the young woman suddenly remembered something very important to her.

There's one more thing,' she said excitedly.

'What's that?' came the Pastor's reply.

'This is very important,' the young woman continued. 'I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.'

The Pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say.

'That surprises you, doesn't it?' the young woman asked.

"Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by the request,' said the Pastor.

The young woman explained. 'My grandmother once told me this story, and from that time on I have always tried to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement. In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, 'Keep your fork.' It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming...like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance!'

So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder 'What's with the fork?' Then I want you to tell them: 'Keep your fork ..the best is yet to come.'

The Pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young woman good-bye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see her before her death. But he also knew that the young woman had a better grasp of heaven than he did. She had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice her age, with twice as much experience and knowledge. She KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the young woman's casket and they saw the cloak she was wearing and the fork placed in her right hand. Over and over, the Pastor heard the question, 'What's with the fork?' And over and over he smiled.

During his message, the Pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the young woman shortly before she passed. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to her. He told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either.

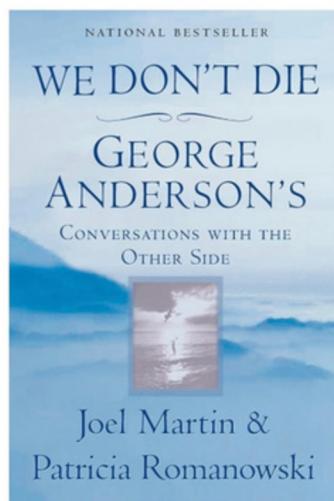
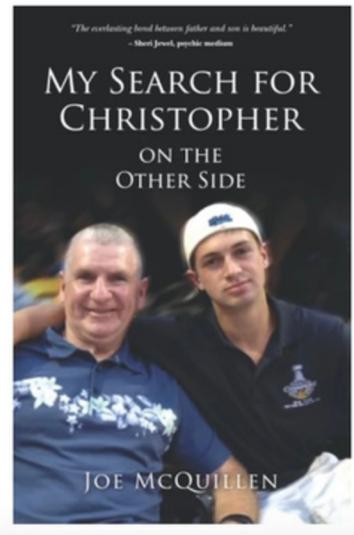
She was right. So the next time you reach down for your fork let it remind you, ever so gently, that the best is yet to come.



**THEY DID NOT
LEAVE YOUR LIFE.
I MOVED THEM**

-GOD

Book Recommendations:



Podcast Recommendation:



Find hope after loss

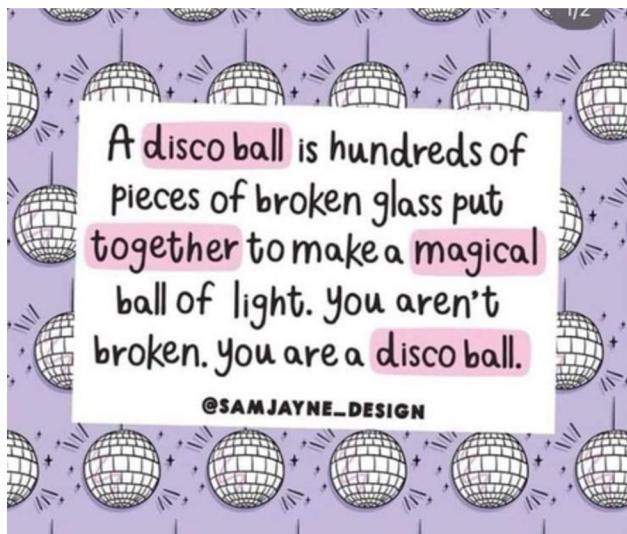


Even though you didn't make it to
the end of of my story, I will always
have the corner folded down
on your page...

Because it was one of my favorites.

AKHIRA / @ARTOFPoETS

*Keep
Pushing
Forward*



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.