



The Compassionate Friends
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Volume XXXI **April 2018** Number 43

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Yesterday was the anniversary of Anna's death. As I worked on the newsletter, I also reflected on her life. Short though it was, she is so much a part of who we are as a couple, as parents, as grandparents, as friends, as servants of God. These two poems I found seemed to summarize my thoughts and feelings.

DAFFODILS

In the Spring, I will bring daffodils to you with a prayer.
 After the cold, snowy winter is over and gone,
 I will sit on the grass
 and sing the songs that we have shared,
 knowing that your boundless spirit lives on.
 I've walked the path of sorrow. It's helped me to grow.
 Through the tears have come my strength and my healing.
 My heart, once wounded and broken,
 is mended and filled with deep love for everyone in all that I do.

And every warm, sunny Spring,
 I will bring yellow daffodils,
 and cherish the memories of you.

Sharon Corder, TCF/Inland Empire, CA

Olivia's Candle - To our beloved Olivia, whose life-light burned so briefly. You are forever a part of us as we remember and relive the joy with which we discovered you and the sadness with which we accepted your departure. The light and the love you lit in us burns on.

Pam Williams, TCF, Northwest Georgia



Sincerely,
 Jerry & Carol Webb

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A BEREAVED PARENT'S SPRING

Regardless of the calendar or the meteorologists, April marks the beginning of spring for many of us. The world outside begins to awaken from its winter slumber, and the sights and sounds and smells of spring abound, from the flowers peeking out of the ground to the birds chirping merrily outside our windows to the smell of the blooming trees as we venture out for our first walk of the season.

This is what spring is all about unless, of course, you are a “newly” bereaved parent, and then you might just be oblivious to it all. In fact, you may even resent the reappearance of spring and its symbolic rebirth.

The message to you from an “old timer” on this grief journey is to be easy on yourself...it won't always be this hard, and just feel whatever you feel. Don't let anyone tell you how you “should” feel this spring (or next).

Like all seasons, spring will have its share of emotional triggers for the newly bereaved – graduations, Mother's Day, planning for summer vacations, favorite flowers, and just waking up. But just as April showers bring May flowers...the tears of grief will ultimately sow the seeds of hope, and someday you, too, will see the beauty of spring again.

For those of us who have been on our grief journey for a while, not only do we recognize (and welcome) the beauty of spring again, but we also see our children in everything that is beautiful in spring. It's our way of carrying them with us through spring and through all of the seasons. So, as spring unfolds, here's wishing each of you peace and whatever joy you are able to find.

**Spring Will Return.
Terre Belt**

Cold winds blow across
Frozen ponds.
Snow lies deep upon
The fields
But the change has begun.

Daylight hours increase,
Slowly.
With each passing day,
Later sunsets are apparent,

Winter is ending.

For bereaved parents,
The change is painfully slow,
The progress not always apparent.
But the promise is the same.

Winter will end
Spring will return.

Betty Stevens, TCF/Baltimore, MD

Somehow It's Spring

It's spring in some places now. And in some places it will be winter for another couple of weeks (months?). Somewhere the tulips are beginning to push through the soft earth and somewhere the birds are returning to sing. Somewhere the air is warmer, the breezes more gentle, the land begins to awaken from a frozen sleep. The trees are beginning to bud and even the air smells fresh and clean.

Somewhere windows are open and the sound of the vacuum can be heard, marking the beginning of spring cleaning... a ritual given to us long before our forefathers set sail for a new world. Somewhere the last holiday decoration is being packed away (those holiday diehards!) and somewhere a lawn mower is being readied for a new season.

As spring approaches, we begin to shed our overcoats and stand in front of the mirror... examining the body for the extra lumps we've accumulated during the hibernation season. We lace up our jogging shoes and make our way to the sidewalks, high school tracks and to the gym, eager to strip away the added inches that came because it was dark and gloomy and food seemed to soothe and comfort during the dark days of winter.



Somewhere someone is planning a wedding, a graduation, a family reunion. Vacation brochures begin to appear and plans are discussed in anticipation of summer.

Spring is the reawakening season...the great wake up call for the earth. Somewhere, someone is answering that get up call...greeting

the new season with vim, vigor, and vitality. There are smiles and renewed energy and hope seems to simply float on the softened air. Somewhere...all of that is occurring, but

not within me. It's still snowing inside my being. It's still winter inside here and there aren't any tulips about to burst open in my spirit. I've still got my snow boots on and the sun hasn't quite made it to my world. It's still winter inside me...I wonder if spring will ever come.

Oh, there have been moments of spring in the past. Wonderful, warm fleeting moments; moments when I "forgot" about the pain, the emptiness, the despair, the grief. Moments when the world was right side up and the music made me dance. But they were only moments and I'm waiting for spring to arrive in me.

Hope... the major ingredient in spring, seems to elude my grasp. Just

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TCF's Facebook Page is a proven support area for bereaved family members to come and talk about their grief. Stop by and visit with some of our more than 120,000 Facebook members. **Please join our TCF/USA Facebook family.** Tell us about your child, sibling, grandchild, or other loved one and find support in the words and concern of others. **Check out the Discussion Boards!** Every day we also provide thought provoking questions, grief quotes, and links to grief stories, as well as TCF news such as updates on the National Conference, Worldwide Candle Lighting, and other TCF programs.



Closed Facebook Groups: The

Compassionate Friends offers several closed Facebook groups to connect with other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. The groups supply support, encouragement, and friendship. Recently added groups include Men in Grief; Loss to Long Term Illness; Loss of a Step Child; Loss of a Child with Special Needs.

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter

One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families who contact the national office: The Compassionate Friends, Inc., P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 (877)969-0010.

email:

NationalOffice@compassionatefriends.org

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Visit the [sibling resource](#) page at

www.compassionatefriends.org.

It is also available to read online without charge.



e-Newsletter Now

Available! An e-Newsletter is now available from the National Office! The monthly e-Newsletter contains notes and happenings of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.

About The Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Founded in England in 1969, the first U.S. chapter was organized in 1972. Since then, 635 chapters have been established. The current Quad City Chapter was formed in 1987.

TCF National Office

P.O. Box 3696

Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696

Toll Free (877)969-0010

TCF National Web site —

www.compassionatefriends.org

<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>

Mission Statement

The mission of The Compassionate Friends Quad City Area Chapter is 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.

Vision Statement

The vision statement of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Printed Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

TCF Online Support Community	<p>TCF's national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.</p>
TCF's Grief Related Webinars	<p>Held monthly, the webinars are on various grief topics with well-known experts in the field. To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx. Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.</p>
TCF National Magazine	<p><i>We Need Not Walk Alone</i> is available to read online without charge. Go to www.compassionatefriends.org and review the options at the top of the page. TCF e-Newsletter is also available from the National Office — to subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter link.</p>
Grief Materials	<p>Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than the Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief-related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you're looking for — or they'll be able to tell you where to find it. Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at 402.553.1200 or visit their website at www.centering.org. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.</p>
Amazon.com	<p>When making a purchase from Amazon.com, enter through the link on the home page of TCF national website and a portion of the purchase price is donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases made at Amazon.com.</p>
Previous Newsletter Editions	<p>Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to www.bethany-qc.org for copies of the last several years of The Quad City Chapter of TCF-QC Chapter Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.</p>
Alive Alone	<p>A newsletter for bereaved parents whose only or all children are deceased. A self-help network and publication to promote healing and communication can be reached at www.alivealone.org or alivealone@bright.net.</p>
Bereaved Parents' Magazine	<p>Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. https://bereavedparentsusa.org</p>
Our Newsletter	<p>Published one to three times per year, when there is content to make a balanced issue. It usually contains 30 pages of personal stories and updates, poetry, subsequent birth announcements, and any new topical articles and information. Currently it is being distributed electronically (PDF), but a printout is available to anyone without email access. To request a sample copy, please email Jean Kollantai, climb@climb-support.org. Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.</p>

Medicine for a Broken Heart

I found myself in a funk. Not really depressed, but not in good spirits either. I've been there before. This time the melancholy had no discernible source. No one cause that put me off my game. The week had its usual problems, but nothing remarkable; just the normal challenges of running a small business. After forty years I've learned to not let those issues bother me. Physically I was feeling okay. I managed to get in a racquetball game that week. I was eating and sleeping well. So why the blues?

In the early years after our son died, these periods of depression were fairly common. On more than one occasion I looked up out of the pit of sadness only to realize I was in a pothole on grief's highway. Over the years those potholes have diminished in number and size. Now it takes a fairly disturbing event to send me back into the valley of the shadow. That's why this disquietude, with no identifiable cause, surprised me.

The weekend arrived with me still down. We had dinner plans with our best friends. I didn't want to sit in a crowded, noisy restaurant (the one they picked had a 2-fer in the local paper so it was sure to be packed) and listen to them talk about their grandchildren. Don't misunderstand. They have been wonderful friends for over thirty years and stayed by us

through the nightmare when I'm sure we weren't much fun to be around; but I just couldn't force myself to be sociable. Not then. Not that night. And I still didn't know why.

Instead I asked my wife if just the two of us could go to a nearby Chinese restaurant that we frequent. It has big half-round booths we can get lost in under subdued light and sports a relaxed ambiance. Also they have a superb wine list. It was exactly what I needed: quiet time, free from the stresses of life with the one person in

the world I know I can always count on: lean on. By meal's end I was feeling better. Relaxed and contented. The wine, I'm sure, helped. Then came the fortune cookies.



I don't pretend to know the ways of providence, but I do believe there are reasons, sometimes, why things happen. I cracked the cookie and unfolded the paper: Love is the only medicine for a broken heart. I looked at my wife and smiled. Love is the only medicine for a broken heart. I knew it to be so.

Brad's death almost eight years ago still has amazing power over my state of mind. Thankfully the periods of sadness now come infrequently. The love of those close to me has

Continued next page

The Same

The ninety year old whose sixty-two year old son has died
Suffers the same.
The young couple whose child died in infancy or was yet to be born
Suffers the same.
The man and woman who lost their twenty-nine year old son
Suffers the same.
They all suffer the same!

Only those who have not lost children place a value system on it.
We “experts” - we know different.
We know that when you bring a child into your world
The indelible stamp of love makes it your child
Forever!
Our feelings do not diminish with their age nor ours.
One year or sixty-five – it’s the same love.
Ten years or twenty-one – it’s the same pain.
One child, or one of many, it’s the same loss.
It’s the same grief; it’s the same struggle.
Only “civilians” measure it in numbers.

So let us hug the ninety year old parent.
Let us caress the grieving young
couple
Let us comfort the man and
woman
They all walk the same path –
Together!

**TCF Babylon,
Long Island, NY**



Continued from page 6
helped make those periods short and rare. As you travel your own and
personal journey of grief, let in the love and support of others. Believe that
tomorrow will be a kinder day.

**Richard A. Berman
Baltimore BP/USA**

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

April 26, 2018, at 6:30 pm at

Bethany for Children & Families,

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265

The next regular monthly meeting is Thursday, May 23, 2018,

Please call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) for information and directions.

TCF website: <http://www.quadcitcitycf.org>.

**The
Compassionate
Friends of
Muscatine**

Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at 563.260.3626 for directions or information, or contact them at linmac67@machlink.com.

**Rick's House of
Hope**

Rick's House of Hope serves children ages 3-18, and family members from the Quad Cities and nearby counties. We serve those with grief, loss, or trauma issues. Death of a loved one and divorce are common; however, any sort of traumatic event or family change would fit our criteria, such as: bullying, teen dating victimization/harassment, crime victims, and other needs. At this time, Rick's has a Holiday Healing group for children experiencing loss on Tuesday nights 5:30-7:00 until the Christmas holiday. The continuous groups are Family Together for all members of the family on Wednesday nights 5:00-7:00 pm and a Teen Night on Thursdays 5:00-7:30 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806 and are free. Rick's House of Hope also does individual counseling/therapy. For more information, contact Lynne Miller, Program Manager, at millerl@verafrenchmhc.org or go to www.rhoh.org.

SHARE

A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Adler Room #1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at 309.373.2568, or chalyn@shareqc.com or www.shareqc.com.

**Loving
Listeners**

If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):

- ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com
- ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoearth3@mchsi.com
- ♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com

Doug, Rosemary, and Judy are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don't feel alone.

Love Gifts



As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from this newsletter, they often wish to make a **Love Gift** to help with the work of our chapter. This is a way to remember a beloved child, and to help other parents who mourn the loss of their child.

Thanks to:

Kathy DeCrane

Sarah and David Schafer, in memory of Samantha Cochuyt

Nancy Ronquillo, in memory of Maggie Steinhauser and Matt Ronquillo

Doug and Connie Brock, in memory of their son, John Brock, and grandson, Elijah Brock.

Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in memory of Beckett Nau, son of Brandon and Sarah Nau.

Donations are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to newly bereaved families. Some of the love gifts are used for materials to share with first time attendees at our meetings or to purchase books for our library. Our thanks to the many families who provide love gifts so that the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue.

If you would like to send a donation or love gift, please send it or to our chapter leader, Doug Scott, 6550 Madison Street, Davenport, Iowa, 52806. Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.

41st TCF National Conference July 27 - 29, 2018 - The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st TCF National Conference on July 27-29, 2018. "Gateway to Hope and Healing" is the theme of this event, which promises more of this year's great National Conference experience. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. Details will be posted on the national website as well as on the [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heart-warming experience.

Contact the Editors

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents and would like to share it.

If you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, send us your new address.

If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the

newsletter, send his/her/their name and address.

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

Please contact:

Jerry and Carol Webb

390 Arbor Ridge, Benton Harbor, Michigan, 49022

CarolynPwebb@gmail.com



A Sibling's Feelings

The pain of losing a sibling is so real, we sometimes hide it deep inside of ourselves. As we watch our parents hurting we see the pain in their eyes. We are also hurting not only for the loss of our brother or sister, but also for our own parents. We need to reach out to each other to let each other know we are hurting inside.

Our lives have all changed forever. I know they lost a son, but I lost the younger brother I loved, and as siblings, we share a special bond that we will never have anymore for he no longer lives...my brother, my friend. I will always miss you and I will never forget you for you will always live in my heart and I have wonderful memories no one can ever take away from me. In my heart you still stay, love you forever.

Marie Porreca - TCF/Rockland County, New York



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when I think there might be some hope, a memory comes creeping across my soul and it's winter again in my heart. It's this lack of hope that seems especially cruel during springtime. I thought this winter inside me would end and I was looking forward to a more peaceful time in my life. I thought we would settle down, plant a garden and live our life filled with memories and the opportunity to make new ones. HA! I thought grief would end at some point. The books all say it will...everyone else looks like their grief has subsided...how come spring missed us?!

A season without hope is the ultimate in despair and I've spent too many such seasons. Where does hope go and how do I get it back? Hope is that elusive something that keeps us moving, even in the dark. We are only powerless when we have no hope, no vision, no faith in our own abilities. We may be helpless at times.

We may question the arrival of spring but we are only truly powerless when we have no hope, no dreams...

Don't lose the hope! Search for it! Fight for it! Demand its return. Hope changes as we do and it can be so disguised that we may not recognize it, but it can be found — in the moments of our memories. We probably won't ever have totally happy lives again... We probably didn't have that kind of life anyway; we just thought we did.

Don't let death rob you of the moments of joy still to be remembered, and found. Don't let grief rob you of those spring places where love and joy live forever in the heart. Somewhere it is spring... Deal with the anger, the guilt, the depression as it comes and then let it go as you can...so there is room for joy to come again. Let hope come in... it's spring.

Darcie Sims

Reflections Board

Part of us forever mourns the loss of our child, but as time goes on the pain gradually begins to lessen. Someday in the future you may even ask yourself, "How did I make it through that difficult time in my life?" Remember there are people out there who care for you. Take life one day at a time and maybe someday you can be the one to offer assistance to someone who is newly bereaved.

*The longest walk
"HOME" that any
parent will ever take
is the one after their
child has "run" ahead
of them..."*

Anonymous

Earth has no
sorrow
that heaven can't
heal

David Crowder,
"Come As You Are"

Enigma? Grief is a
darkness that answers no
questions. But love will
give you light on the
path of leaving your
questions behind.

Sascha Wagner

COMPARISONS

It is useless to wonder what grief is larger or what grief is smaller. The death of children fills to ultimate endurance every human dimension for pain.

There is no need
to give rank to death.

We only have to recognize that grief
has filled a whole life to its ultimate
borders.

Sascha Wagner

You don't heal from
the loss of a loved
one because time
passes. You heal
because of what you
do with the time.

Carol Grandall



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Bethany
for Children & Families

**1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265**

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To those who are receiving our newsletter for the first time, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that your family and you have many friends. We who have received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help.