



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January 2016

Volume XXIV, Number 1

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Recently our neighbor, a young mom, celebrated a birthday. She carries a lot of responsibility and does not have much family support. Jerry very much wanted to do something special for her birthday so we put together a bag with some warm socks (she had commented on how she needed some) and homemade bread. Jerry made a special trip to the store for a doughnut and we delivered it complete with birthday candle and a birthday napkin. When I commented on the strength of his desire to encourage this friend, he commented, "It is something I would have done for my daughter." At the Candlelight Service, Becky and Jim Guens shared about ways they have honored their daughter's life including sharing the message of organ donation to many groups and lighting up their cul-de-sac with Christmas lights. Other bereaved parents shared stories of scholarships, special events, and causes they support in their child's name. We shared that while we have no surviving daughter, God has brought into our lives many young women. While for some it has been just a short time and others over many years, we have been given the opportunity to encourage and share our love just as we would have with Anna, had she lived. What a gift to be able to show care for other people and celebrate the life of our daughter at the same time. Many years ago we had the opportunity, for a year or so, to be a listening ear to a teenage girl whose father had deserted the family. I commented to Jerry that had it not been for her pain and our pain, our paths might have crossed only superficially. What a gift that in our reaching out to her, we could both find healing. In this new year we pray you will find new ways to share the love you still hold for your child.

*Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb*



Inside

Chalkboard Reflections	
About The Compassionate Friends	2
But Love...Love is Immortal	3
Love Gifts	
National TCF on Facebook	4
Printed Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings	5
The New Year: A Time of Hope	6
A New Year	
A New Year's Resolution	7
Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings	8
Leaving your Loved One in 2015: When Time Marches on	9
Thoughts About Progress	10
Contact the Editors	
The Secret of the Compassionate Friends	11
First...	
Thank You	

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

The death of a child is the most life-altering loss that a parent will experience. It defies the natural laws of the universe and calls into question the beliefs and values upon which we built our worlds. Through intent, embracing support from others and continuing bonds, we learn to adjust to a world without the physical presence of our children. In the process, we have learned to discover life after the death of our children. **Dave Roberts**

You ask, "Will the weeping ever cease?"
I tell you the truth, I don't know.
But yesterday I laughed.
Maybe tomorrow I will do it again.
I have hope.

Fay Hardin

Candles

It is not easy to remember dead children.

But, easy or not,
We know that we will not—
And do not want to—
Forget them.

Therefore we reach out together
again,

To love them and to celebrate
their memory.

Again, we light their special
candles

And we say their beloved names.
We remember our children, who
died.

They remain forever part of us,
And we are richer for having shared
their lives,
however briefly.

Sascha Wagner

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.

BUT LOVE...LOVE is IMMORTAL

As bereaved parents it can be happy for us or not, depending upon our own state of mind and our particular juncture on the road of healing.

Many of us will resent the lengthening of time between our child's life and our own present. Others may welcome the increasing distance in the hope that time itself will be a balm to pain.

Yet all of us perceive, beyond all the hype and expectations, that new years and seasons are merely calendar events. Whatever problems we have had in the past will follow us into the present. There is no inner demarcation with hurting behind and joy ahead.

Each of us has the same opportunities now as we had before. We can permit time to simply pass, or we can work to mold its passage into constructive growth.

In the death of our children, we have discovered with certainty that we lack the means to control the most cherished elements of our lives. But, we also know that within each of us is the potential to rise above the debilitating anguish we have experienced.

Time continues to move forward and most of us have been too damaged to even play the games of resolutions or dance the rites of spring. We are beyond the futility of such exercises. But, let us each confront this moment and time with an inward commitment to recovery, to living the hours, which comprise our existence with all the fullness and love of which we are capable.

Hurting will ultimately lessen. Pain will slowly become more bearable. Fears and guilt will gradually pass away.

But, love, that inner dance of the heart which leaps to our child's name or the memory of an especially close experience that bears not only the mantle of endless joy, will not pass away. All else, fame and fortune, distress and dismay, wealth and power, even ourselves, will at last be done.

But, love...love is immortal.

...may the immortality of love grow secure and healthy again within each of us.

by Don, MA (From the Alive Alone Newsletter)

DONATE

Love Gifts

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

Thank you to:

Jane Jackson, honoring Katie Rose, daughter of Jennie McKenna.

Bradley and Sheri Hilligoss, in memory of their son, Tyler Bradley.

Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in honor of their daughter, Maggie's, 17th birthday.

Love gifts 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 love gift, please send it to our treasurer, Michelle Curtis, 18163 241 Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa, 52722. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. **Your gifts are tax deductible.**

National TCF has a new Facebook page, **TCF - Loss to Suicide**. This page is open to parents, grandparents, and siblings who have lost loved ones to suicide. There is no good way to lose a loved one; different causes create specific pain that can be eased sharing with another experiencing a similar loss. Co-moderators, Cathy Seehuetter and Donna Adams, welcome you to this special closed page.

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.

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Loss to Suicide

TCF - Loss to Homicide

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

TCF - Loss to Cancer

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss

TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

TCF - Loss of a Grandchild

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>
Our Newsletter	<p>For parents who have experienced the death or deaths of multiple birth children during pregnancy, at birth, in infancy, or in childhood, contact Jean Kollantai at P.O. Box 91377, Anchorage, AK 99509.</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. http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm.</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>

The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we

have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.



The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories....sweet memories that take us

back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin, in memory of my son, Todd Mennen, TCF/Katy, TX

A New Year January 1, 2016

A new year. Another one without you. Another one without breathing in your scent, running my fingers through that soft tuft of hair, without watching you toddle down the hall.

A new year. Another year that goes on while my heart still beats and yours has long since stopped. The cruelest trick nature can play, to steal the one I love.

A new year. It won't be filled with your big blue eyes, your silly laugh or the smile that made me melt in to the ground whenever your eyes met mine.

A new year. Missing you. Aching for you. Longing for you.

A new year. Wanting to make you proud. Wanting to carry out a legacy. Wanting to show the world that you were here, you still are mine. You still matter.

A new year. Another chance to live, not because I always care much about life, but another year to live, because you

would want nothing more than for me to take all this love and spread it around.

A new year. One year more of making you proud. One year more of saying your name. One year more of living a life inspired by the boy who stole half of my heart and carried it with him as he left.

A new year. And even with the heartache, it's another year of living more richly because you were here. Another year in the "after", when my life has been defined by love and purpose, because that's what happens when you lose someone you love with your whole heart. You break and then you mend, and your soul becomes richer than ever before.

A new year. One year closer to you.
by Lexi Behrmdt



A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Now the holidays are over and once again a new year faces us – for some, the first one without that precious loved one – for others, another one of many.

The loss is still remembered, no matter how many others we have faced.

What will we do in the coming months? Each hour seems so long and the days seem to stretch ahead forever as if another year cannot possibly ever come to an end.

But, friends, it will and we will survive. The road is hard, and the pain so terrible to bear, but each year we realize that the pain has eased. We never will be totally without this pain of love and shattered dreams, but we will be able to live. This love that is stored in us for our missed child can be spread out to others to help us to ease their pain.

So, in this new year, let's make a new resolution – That our love for our dead child will be brought out of our hearts and given with our best effort to others to help ease their pain. In so doing, we will find our pain is eased also.

Thelma Richardson, TCF/Grand Junction, Colorado

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Monthly meeting: Thursday, January 28, 2016 at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois

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

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

Next month's meeting: February 25, 2016 at 6:30 pm

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	This is a community resource for children and adolescents dealing with grief. There is no fee for services. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. The group for 14 year olds and older meets Sunday from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806. For more information, call Emily Gordon, Program Director at 563.324.9580, or egordon@rhoh.org or go to www.rhoh.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)	A peer group for suicide grief support meets on the third Friday of every month, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Frances Banta Wagnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, 563.843.3655 or at there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)	Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meets on second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252, from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm. Contact: Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425 or laura@secondreformedchurch.net .
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	<p>If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Kay Miller 309.738.4915 ♥ Kirby White 563.271.5908 kombo100@msn.com ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoearthb3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com ♥ Gina Glassford 309.517.3664 citrgrs@gmail.com <p>Kay, Kirby, Doug, Rosemary, Judy, and Gina 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.</p>

Leaving Your Loved One in 2015: When Time Marches on

The start of a new year reminds us all that time is passing. Sometimes it seems to go so quickly and other times life can be painstakingly slow. Taking some time to consider how moving into the next year affects your grief could help your healing process. You might have many realizations about your loss hit you at various times over the next few days to weeks. This is a new year, a year that will not include your deceased loved one. You'll hear yourself say phrases like, "She died last year," or, "He died in 2015," and you'll be struck by how far away you feel from the days they lived and the day they died. In a sense, your loved one may feel more distant, unreachable. Consider this:

Allow yourself to acknowledge the start of the new year as part of your grief.

- Think about what the new year means for you and your loss. Let yourself have whatever thoughts come and feel whatever feelings stir.
- You may wrestle with mixed emotions about the end of 2015. Perhaps you feel relieved to be ending 2015 but at the same time feel disloyal, as though you're leaving your deceased loved one behind or being forced to let go of them too soon.
- The end of 2015 might feel like yet another loss and could exacerbate your grief symptoms for a short time. Take extra good care of yourself now and at all times while grieving.
- Maybe you're ready to leave 2015 in the dust. Perhaps you've been eager to start a new year, a fresh beginning with the hopes of feeling better with the turn of the calendar.

We have to remember one thing. There's nothing easy about going through grief and there is no magic way to healing. The only way, the only *healthy* way, to get to and through the New Year is to think about it. And *feel* about it. Today. Because tomorrow you will have to do it again, for tomorrow. And time will pass that way for a while, sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly, eventually easing your pain and anguish of losing your loved one. Thanks to time, you'll be able to learn how to still love them in the next year while they remain in your past.

www.Grieving and Growing.com



Thoughts About Progress

One thing that is frequently discussed at our meetings is the despair of thinking you are on the road to “recovery,” when all of a sudden you seem to be back at square one. But are you really?

Let’s keep in mind most of us have had no previous experience “recovering” from the loss of a child. Therefore, we have no point of reference – it’s all new to us. Actually the “roller coaster” of emotions is perfectly normal. In the very beginning most of us seem to vacillate between dead numbness and excruciating pain. Constant crying to not a tear left – just dried up and limp. We actually are living minute-to-minute. After a couple of months we might actually have a few hours that we have not cried or felt that deep overwhelming despair. Then, WHAM – back to where we started. We tend to panic and think something is wrong with us. Let’s be realistic! There is something wrong – terribly wrong: we have each lost a child.

Let’s be fair to ourselves. We started to play a role to the outside world. Like the old song says, “laughing on the outside – crying on the inside.” We want to be acceptable to society. “You are doing so well,” we hear. If only they knew! We may feel we have to fool others, but let us really be honest about our feelings. To deny our feelings, particularly to ourselves, is to block the road to recovery. Remember that recovery in this case does not mean, “getting over it,” it means to gain control of our lives again.

So, let’s not worry about what other people think, say, or expect.

Our friends (well-meaning as they are), sometimes members of our family, even someone who has lost a child, should not sit in judgment. Each person grieves differently, due to a person’s general make-up and the relationship with the dead child. Unless someone has totally withdrawn from everything and everybody over a lengthy period of time, the chances are all is in the realm of normalcy. Only after we have walked down the long road of grief and can look back, remembering those early days and weeks, can we see we really are not on square one again. We have just slipped backwards for a time. That is all. Allow yourself that, and then strive forward again. It takes time, a lot of time! We tend to expect too much from others, others expect too much from us, and therefore, we tend to expect too much from ourselves.

Mary Ehmann
TCF/Valley Forge, PA

Please contact the editors, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242:

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.



The secret of The Compassionate Friends is simple. There is no line between being a helper and being helped. In the early months of people's membership in TCF, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying, letting the grief flow, and "learning the ropes" of a bereaved parent. The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. It is not a big step, for listening to another person sort out his life helps us to sort out our life too. But it is an important step because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All the energy had been going inward. We had been feeling so empty inside that we kept withdrawing into ourselves. But at that point when we turn around is the point when we first listen to another, speak words of comfort and hope, share our pain instead of just feeling our pain.

Dennis Klass, Ph. D.,
TCF Advisor, St. Louis, Missouri

First and foremost please realize that there is no correct timing for doing something with our child's belongings. You will know when you are ready for a change. Some parents gain much comfort from seeing, touching, wearing their child's clothing, jewelry or using their belongings. Others find it too painful and need to put things away very quickly. You do what feels right for you **WHEN** you wish to do it. **DO NOT** let friends or family tell you what or when to do it. **PLEASE** do **NOT** dispose of items too quickly since later you will learn of some good ideas and wish you had not disposed of them.

Kay Bevington

Thank you to the many people who worked together to make this year's **Candlelight Memorial Service** a very meaningful event. A special thanks to speakers Jim and Becky Guens who reminded us to remember the many ways our children brought us joy and laughter. They also to share the choices we have made as bereaved parents to honor our children's lives by choosing to make a difference in the world in their memory.





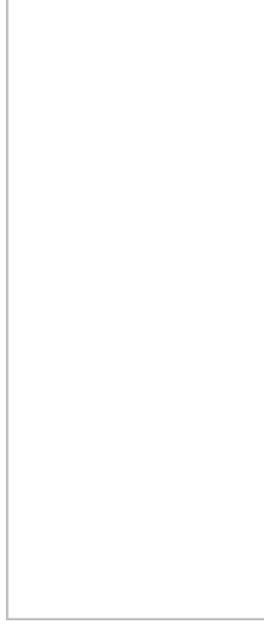
The Compassionate Friends
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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.

You are not alone in your grief.