



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Volume XXXI

Summer 2018

Number 6

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Last Sunday, while channel surfing on the television in the family room, Laurie and I happened on the most recent rendition of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. It had started 45 minutes earlier, so we were jumping into the middle of a story that both us of were not familiar with (surprisingly, for two English majors in college, neither of us had read the book). Knowing Laurie's abhorrence of coming late into a movie (this I discovered on our first and almost last date), I suggested we preview the production for fifteen minutes and move to catching up on the local news.

With a compromise reached, we quickly caught on that the oldest daughter, Meg, was entering into a marriage with Mr. Brooke (a quick Internet reference informed us that we were well into this plot), and the other daughters were thick into primping their dresses, hair, and other adornments for the big day. Thinking it was time to surf away from PBS, I looked to Laurie for agreement. She was dabbing the tears that were streaming down her face.

It has been 13 years since our daughter, Maggie, died suddenly. Six years old and always healthy until that day that she was not, she has been ever-present in our lives ever since. "Maggie?" I asked Laurie. "Of course," came the response. We, Maggie's parents, have 13 years of "Who would she be today" conversations. She would be a half year shy of 20 today, and like her friends and classmates from Kindergarten, she'd be in college, trying on boyfriends, mulling over different majors that would most likely extending her years in school. She would have been part of the bridal party when her oldest brother married a short while ago, and would be copiously screening the girlfriends of her other two brothers.

Father's Day and Mother's Day are observances from which Laurie and I tend to shy away. Akin to other parents who grieve a child, life is full enough of thoughts of what ought to have happened, but did not. We have missed a great deal of the life that Maggie ought to have had, but the six years that we had with her have left us forever richer and forever changed. Those memories are precious gifts to us. I count myself most fortunate to be Maggie's Dad.

Sincerely,
Bill and Laurie Steinhauser

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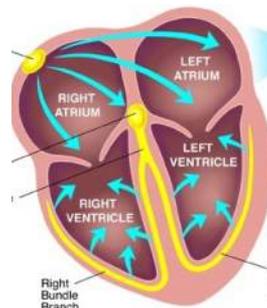


A Grieving Dad's Father's Day Thoughts

It has been five Father's Days since my wife and I lost our beautiful daughter, Andrea (Andi) to the war in Iraq. We didn't make a big deal of Father's Day when Andi was alive, but now this holiday is very special to me – a time when I reflect upon my obligations and blessings as a husband and a father.

For almost a year after Andi died, when my family needed me the most, I was emotionally paralyzed. I was so tangled in the “web of grief” that I blamed myself for Andi's death. Why hadn't I done everything in my power to keep her from going to Iraq? I could not cope with Andi's death until I began realizing how her brave commitment to peace inspired her mother, me, and people around the world. We created a foundation in Andi's name that provides scholarships to young women who want to use their talent and skills like Andi did – to make this a better world.

I like to think that I have an emotional heart. Like my physical heart, it has four chambers. Each chamber represents one of my four children, with the whole heart embodying me and my wife and the unity of our family. Andi's spirit will live on in the Andi chamber of my heart.



Losing a child is terrible. The pain is always there. Some days are better than others. But I think I've learned a few lessons that may be helpful to others in their grief.

In order to live with your grief, you must learn to forgive yourself. You must release yourself from the remorse you feel for not having said, “I love you” more, for not giving your loved one more hugs.

Each person grieves differently - you must respect that, in yourself and others. Do not be afraid to cry. Crying helps to “rinse” the sadness from your soul.

Saturate your mind with positive thoughts. Try to remember that your loved one would want you to live a happy and productive life.

I get solace from reading the accounts of other people who have suffered losses. It helps me to know that I am not alone in my grief. And that also helps me to remember that it is possible to lead a productive life that is full of love even when you are sad.

Andre Parhamovich, Painesville, Ohio

A Father Writes

A father does not find his job an easy one. The responsibilities he faces are enormous. Everything from finance to being a good role model tests a man's ability to be the best father he can. It is a job charged with emotional, physical and mental challenge. And, at the time it is only one of the many roles he fills. His roles include husband and lover, son, friend, boss, coworker to name a few. The relationships he has are numerous, complex and always changing. One event in particular can really put all these relationships and roles to the test – the death of his child.

The bereaved father is a unique individual. Unfortunately, his uniqueness and attendant problems are not often understood by others or even by himself. His child's death puts extraordinary demands on him. All the roles he fills change and his life is truly not ever the same again. That is not to say it cannot ever be as good, but just the circumstances are going to be different.

When a child dies, it seems that the majority of sympathy is directed towards the mother. This is usually because she is much more open in her grieving, thus it is easy to focus on her emotional needs. But what of the grieving father? His other roles may prevent him from working out his grief. As husband and provider, he is the one who sees to the practical matters around the death: funeral arrangements, notification of people, arrangement for sibling care, etc. It may be days, weeks or months before things are settled to the point that he thinks deeply about what happened. In most cases, he is back to work and into his usual routine so quickly that he can find himself comforted by this. The impact of the child's death is lessened

to a degree. Away from the house, it is easier to "forget" the child and what has happened.

In our society, we are taught in subtle and not so subtle ways that men don't cry and that, in general, they are not at all open about their emotions. Thus, many men are denied a perfectly good emotional release mechanism – crying! Even in the privacy of their own home, they feel they have to "be the strong one." Our experience has taught us that men who use crying as a tool in their grief work have fewer long-term adjustment problems. Since men often suppress their feelings, good and bad, how they are coping with their child's death never comes to the surface.

Bob Steiner - Western Australia,
Sept. 1998

If this is your first vacation since your child died, you may find you really don't want to go at all, but feel pressured by previous commitments or other children's needs. Try to leave yourself an escape route. Go – but with the understanding that if it's too much, you can come home. Just having that agreed to ahead of time and knowing that choice is available to you may make it an easier time for you.

Mary Cleckley TCF/Atlanta, GA



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

<p>TCF Online Support Community</p>	<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>
<p>TCF's Grief Related Webinars</p>	<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>
<p>TCF National Magazine</p>	<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>
<p>Grief Materials</p>	<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>
<p>Amazon.com</p>	<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>
<p>Previous Newsletter Editions</p>	<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>
<p>Alive Alone</p>	<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>
<p>Bereaved Parents' Magazine</p>	<p>Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. https://bereavedparentsusa.org</p>
<p>Our Newsletter</p>	<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>

Traveling with Memories

Summer is beginning, and many families are making vacation plans – either to travel somewhere by car or plane, or to enjoy a “staycation” and take in a local activity. Our family’s summer plans include travel in Missouri as well as Texas. For us, vacation after loss includes time to make memories with both our living children and our angel Samuel.

OUR SON SAMUEL WAS BORN STILL IN APRIL 2007.

Before that time, our vacations were usually excursions for rest and relaxation, a new adventure or experience, or a working trip with some sightseeing and good food squeezed in. After Samuel’s delivery, everything in our world, including our future travels, changed dramatically. Derek and I grieved intensely for weeks after coming home from the hospital without Samuel. We eventually began to realize that we needed to “get away” just for a little while to gain some shelter from the storm of feelings that were controlling our lives.

Our oldest son, Wyatt, was 2 and loved trains, so we traveled to Colorado over Memorial Day weekend to explore and ride trains there. We brought our new camera, meant to be filled with photos of a new baby, and instead filled it with photos of us riding a train through Freemont, Colorado, in the snow (we weren’t expecting snow in May!). This trip was our chance to hide in a world that wasn’t raw with

feelings for Samuel for a few days and hunker down with just ourselves.

When we returned home, I made a photo book of the Colorado train ride for Wyatt to enjoy. When I look at that book now, it’s filled with memories for me – I look swollen in my postpartum state, Derek looks tired and worn, and Wyatt’s chubby cheeks are lit with excitement from the ride. I can still feel Samuel in those pictures.

Since then we have taken many trips as a family and each time we try to do something or find something that reminds us of Samuel.

We have found a seashell on a South Carolina beach, a handmade bowl from a market in Georgia, an Asian ornament in San Francisco, and a Zuni mother-of-pearl butterfly from Santa Fe. Samuel is our butterfly, and we often look for butterflies and butterfly objects in our travels. We feel like Samuel is with us when



we see a butterfly, and Derek feels closest to Samuel when he is outdoors under a blue sky. We have many butterflies on our shelves, our walls, and even in Samuel’s garden in our backyard to remember him.

We have been blessed with two more living children since we lost Samuel, and all three kids enjoy looking for special treasures on our trips to put on Samuel’s shelf when we get back home.

Continued on the next page

Helping Others Help You – Ten Rules for Self-Healing

1. Tell friends to call you often. Explain that after the first couple of months you will need their calls.
2. Tell your friends to make a specific date with you; none of this “we must get together for lunch.” Remind them that you’re bound to have “down” times, and their patience would be appreciated.
3. Tell them to please feel free to talk about the person that has died — and don’t avoid that person’s name.
4. It’s important for friends to understand that you may appear to be “doing so well” but on the inside you still hurt. Grief is painful, it’s tricky and it’s exhausting.
5. Ask your friends to care, but not to pity you.
6. Make plain that friends and relatives can still treat you as a person who is still in command and can think for yourself.
7. Tell your friends that it’s all right to express their caring. It’s OK for them to cry; crying together is better than avoiding the pain.
8. Let your friends know too, that it’s all right to say nothing. A squeeze or a hug are often more important than words.
9. Let people know that they can invite you to socialize, but that you might decline.
10. Ask your friends to go for walks with you. You and your friends can “walk off” feelings. Walks promote conversation and help fight depression.

Ruth Jean Loewinsohn

Continued from the prior page

They recognize that these items are part of our family and part of our memories, and they value these objects and their meaning as much as I do. Our daughter Shiloh feels a special connection to butterflies also.

On our recent visit to the Laumeier Art Fair on Mother’s Day, she picked out a small drawing of a butterfly for her room. I think that she feels the memory of Samuel in this drawing. Our youngest, Ryder, is filled with charm and mischief, and his treasures usually reflect his spirit of play – a ball, a well-loved toy, even a shiny coin –

remind me of his angel brother.

We are driving to Branson today for a long Father’s Day weekend vacation – we will do a little boating and fishing on Table Rock Lake, enjoy some amusement park fun at Silver Dollar City, and snuggle up around a campfire. Most importantly we will be looking for a treasure to remind us of our family. We will celebrate our living children, mourn our angel baby, look for butterflies, and make memories for now and always.

Meredith Byers

Share Newsletter – nationalshare.org

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Thursday, June 28, 2018, at 6:30 pm at

Bethany for Children & Families,

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265

The next regular monthly meetings are

Thursday, July 26, and August 23, 2018.

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

TCF website: <http://www.quadcitctf.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.

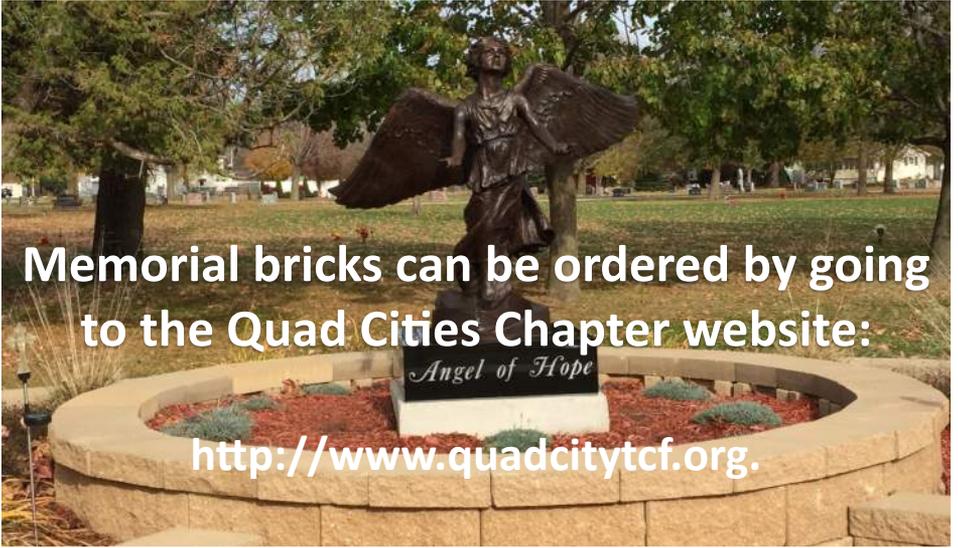
Loving Listeners

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 shoearthb3@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.

The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden



Memorial bricks can be ordered by going to the Quad Cities Chapter website:

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

41st TCF National Conference July 27 - 29, 2018

St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st The Compassionate Friends 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 are posted on the national website (www.thecompassionatefriends.org) as well as on the [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#). Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming 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



Grieving on Father's Day

Fathers are often referred to as the hidden grievers. When a child dies, thoughts generally go to the mothers—the agony they most certainly are suffering, their loneliness, emptiness, now that someone who was once a part of them is gone.

Women tend to grieve outwardly, talking to their friends, crying, seeking out supportive groups and friends to be with and with whom to share their burden of sorrow.

Men, on the other hand, have a much more inward grieving style. Men are usually more factual than emotional. They accept more readily that nothing they say or do will reverse the situation; their child is irrecoverably gone from this earth.

They may weep at times, but that is not their primary mode of mourning. A man may throw himself into his job with fervor, perhaps to help alleviate the feeling that as the family protector, he has failed to keep each member safe. He may begin or continue a project, or start a new activity, in

memory of his loved one, to whom he dedicates his efforts.

Men are more concrete in their thinking, but that does not mean they grieve less. What it often does mean is that they get less emotional support; people see them return to work, keep busy at home, and assume, they're over it. Little do others realize that men agonize through their grief and mourning fully, as much as women, and appreciate just as much the caring word, the hug, a recalled memory, a shared moment of silence.

Perhaps the best gift you could ever give a grieving father on Father's Day is the recognition of his loss, and affirming him as a father in mourning. A book especially for men in grief; a card recognizing that he is missing one of those who made him a father, yet he is still a father; a gift in memory of his child; or simply a hug, an arm around the shoulder, or a compassionate word will assure him that although he does not grieve outwardly much, those who truly care about him have not forgotten.

Carol A Ranney [https://
honoringourangels.blogspot.com](https://honoringourangels.blogspot.com)

VACATIONS - If you are a newly bereaved parent, you are probably not looking forward to your vacation this year. In fact, you may be dreading it and wishing everyone else would forget about it this year. However, with a little extra thought and consideration, your vacation can prove to be a time of healing and of relaxation. Talk with others members of the family and find out what they would really like this year. If you usually vacation with members of your extended family or with friends, be sure they understand that you will not be the same this year. If you feel you will have to have a good time for their sake, don't go. The effort it will cost you will be very exhausting.

Use the time to get to know your spouse

again and or spend some quality time with your other children, if you have surviving children. Don't try to pack so much into your vacation that you will not have time to think. That tactic usually does not work and leaves you tired and more depressed than before your vacation. Be good to yourself and your family. If you find that you are enjoying yourself, don't feel guilty. You deserve it and it does not in any way diminish the love you have for your child.

Above all leave some time for rest and remember that, although your vacations will not be the same as they once were, there will be a day when you will again look forward to them rather than dread them.

Barbara April, TCF, Stone Mountain, Georgia

Reflections

Grief is a passion to endure. People can be stricken with it, victims of it, stuck in it. Or they can meet it, get through it, and become the quiet victors through the active, honest, and courageous process of grieving.

Bereaved Parents of the USA,
Baltimore, Maryland, August 2008

When someone dies, you don't get over your grief by forgetting, you get through your grief by remembering.

Author unknown

They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies.

William Penn

People keep telling me that life goes on, but, to me, that's the saddest part

Tears are not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. Our tears testify to our life. And loving calls for great courage, for in loving, we always risk getting hurt.

We cry – women and men – because we've lost someone or something precious. While every loss is an invitation to new life, growth is always scary. But the tears that spring from our love can help us find healing and renewal.

And with healing comes new courage, enabling us to say, "I am determined to honor myself and those I love by going on and living. Seattle-King County TCF Newsletter

I would tell anybody in grief to be kind and gentle to themselves and to NOT COMPARE their journey to the time and distance traveled by others grieving the same loss. There is hope; it may come as the slightest pin hole of light in the darkest of places, but hope is there, and it will find you.

Kris Munsch – Blake's Dad



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.