



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March 2016

Volume XXIX, Number 3

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Jerry and I spend a lot of time traveling in the car. Even a trip to the grocery store or church, or my dad's house requires a half hour in the car each way. When the children were younger, I read to them when we were driving. Now I read books to Jerry while we travel. Recently I have been reading Jerry the book, *41*, a biography of George H.W. Bush written by his son George W. Bush. Last week on our way to church I came to the part of the narrative where George and Barbara Bush's 3-year-old daughter is diagnosed with leukemia and dies less than a year later. Without warning my throat choked up and it became hard to read. Tears flooded my eyes. I had to stop reading, take a deep breath, regain my composure. It will be 32 years this March since our daughter died. Even though so much time has passed, reading aloud the account of another parent's grief can flood me, momentarily, with those feelings of loss and sorrow.

While researching this newsletter I read the following statement by Angela Miller. "There will always be a hole in your heart, the size and shape of your child. Your child is absolutely irreplaceable. Nothing will fill the void your child left." Anna was a precious treasure and will always be part of our family. In the book, George W. Bush writes, "My father never stopped thinking about his daughter. For as long as I can remember, he has kept a three by five photo of her on the desk in his office."

We have an "Anna" wall in our bedroom. These are our children, loved and remembered.

*Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb*

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Chalkboard reflections

It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain.

In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens, but it's never gone.

But grief is a walk alone. Others can be there, and listen. But you will walk alone down your own path, at your own pace, with your sheared-off pain, your raw wounds, your denial, anger, and bitter loss. You'll come to your own peace, hopefully, but it will be on your own, in your own time.

Cathy Lamb

*THE PASSAGE OF TIME ALONE
DOES NOT CAUSE OUR GRIEF TO
END, BUT ITS SOFTENING TOUCH
HELPS US TO SURVIVE*
WAYNE LODER

CAN YOU REMEMBER?

WITH WINTER TUMBLING SNOW
-THE ROSES SILENT
AND THE WATER ICE.

WITH TREES SO BARREN
THAT YOUR MIND REFUSES
TO PICTURE LEAVES
AND GREEN AND EVEN BLOSSOMS...

CAN YOU REMEMBER,
CAN YOU FEEL AGAIN,
THAT SPRING DID COME
FROM WINTER, EVERY YEAR?
SASCHA WAGNER
THE SORROW AND THE LIGHT

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.

GRANDPARENTS' REMEMBRANCE

We are the grieving grandparents,
the shepherds of our children and
grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two-fold
and at times we feel powerless to help.
We seek to comfort our children
in the depths of their grief
and yet we need the time and space
to face our own broken hearts.
We have been robbed of the special tender
touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild
and we have lost a symbol of our immortality.
As we walk by our child's side,
we both give and draw strength.
We reach into their hearts to comfort them,
and when they reach out to us in their
distress, we begin the journey to heal
together.
We continue to be their guardians.
We allow traditions to change
to accommodate their loss.
We support the new ones
which symbolize the small steps on their
journey. It is in their healing that our hearts
find comfort.

Susan Mackey, TCF/Rutland, VT

People will speak of
“closure,” of “moving on,” of
“getting over it,” of grief coming to
an end. Smile kindly, and know any-
one who says these things hasn't
lived this thing called grief.

To lose a child is to lose the very
heart and soul of *you*. It is over-
whelmingly disorienting. It takes a
long, long time to find yourself
again. It takes a long time to grow
new life around the chasm of such
grave loss. It takes a long time to
grow beauty from ashes.

There will always be a hole in your
heart, the size and shape of your
child. Your child is absolutely irre-
placeable. Nothing will fill the void
your child left. But your heart will
grow bigger— beautifully bigger—
around the empty space your child
left behind.

Angela Miller

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.



What she said

next offered
some hope.
“This was a
long, dark tun-
nel that I would
have to walk alone, she said, one step
at a time, tear after tear, blindly – but
with the certainty that there would
be light at the end. I had no choice
but to keep walking day by day until
finally I saw the first glimpse of light.”

**Author and bereaved parent
Isabel Allende in an interview
with *Good Housekeeping***



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:

Jeff and Gina Hayes, in memory of their son, Grant.

Damon and Diana Norton, in memory of their sons, Colin and Colton.

Dean and Kathryn Znaniecki In memory of Colin and Colton.

Laurie and Bill Steinhauer, in memory of Anna Webb.

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 by 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 use of the word "closure" is often heard in public circles or in the media especially after a tragedy and implies finality. The word comes with the sense that there will be a time, day, or event like a funeral that marks when a grieving person will be "healed" or "over it," as though it were a disease and you could magically take a pill to be cured. There is an expectation that when the eulogies are said and the casseroles are gone, the grief somehow magically goes away. The truth is that those of us who are in TCF realize that the death of a child or sibling changes our lives forever, and we will never truly "be over it."

Yes, we will not have the intensity of the pain and sorrow we had at the beginning of our grief. We will go on with life and find a new normal for us, but life will never be as it was before the death, and we will never be fully "healed." Sometimes those around us have attempted to comfort us by pointing to deadlines, replacements, or "at leasts." We have heard it said, "At least you have other kids," or "You can have another baby," or "Hasn't it been 6 months?" Many see "comfort giving" as a short-term support effort, and soon we will be "over it" as we are kept busy returning to the tasks of daily living and focusing on our blessings. These comments hurt rather than provide the comfort they are meant to provide. Grief follows no plan, no stages, timetable, formula, or schedule. There are no road maps; there are no absolutes.

We learn in TCF that everyone grieves differently. Grief is like being lost. The familiar things we relied on to live each day are gone. We must find new anchors or stabilizers along the way and learn a new way of relating to the world and people around us. We are forced to live without our child or sibling. The reality of our loss often far outweighs what we have remaining. Grief

Closure: Is it a Reality? is all consuming, distorts reality, and we

begin to mark time in "before or after our loved one died." No one can hurry the process of grief; no one can do it for us. Not even our spouses, parents, or other children can help us in those early days. The truth is that when our grief is new, we feel exhausted physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We barely have enough energy to breathe.

We feel as though we have no control over our lives anymore, nor do we care. We realize on some level we are helpless. We might even feel hopeless or purposeless. Some of us feel isolated, lonely, and misunderstood. Some feel like everything is



trivial compared to the loss we have experienced. Some feel as if the world is spinning on around us,

and nobody really cares that our child, sibling, or grandchild died. All of these feelings are normal and part of the grieving process. And yes, we also need to realize it is a process — a very long, gradual, and difficult process. Time does not heal all wounds, but time softens the intensity of the grief. What helps is finding those who will listen with their hearts and give us hope and understanding. Those who will spend hours, days, and months with us as we tell our story over and over so we can somehow believe it ourselves. What helps is to surround ourselves with those patient people and meaningful activities that comfort and support.

Gradually, the cold darkness of grief begins to give way to the warmth of the

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The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden

5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, 61265



In the Quad Cities, in the Moline Memorial Cemetery, the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden has taken form. After four years of planning and fundraising the Memorial Garden is **close to being completed**. The wing-shaped planters rise from the earth flanking the two sides of the central circle. The last phase of construction was finished this past December, and the **final push** is underway to obtain the Angel. The final cost to purchase and install the Angel is \$16,800, and **only \$2,000 remains to be raised** before reaching that goal.

We are making a final appeal to bring this very special angel to the Quad Cities. You can help create a place of solace for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings throughout the Quad City Area.

In the area before the angel lie the inscribed bricks that spell out the names of local children who have died before their time, remembered by parents, siblings, grandparents, and relatives who daily live with the absence of a loved child. These stones are available to parents, siblings, and families who would like to remember a deceased child, adult-child, sibling, niece, nephew, or grandchild. **The order form** is found on the TCF website. Please go to <http://www.quadcitytcf.org> to download the order form.

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Monthly meeting: Thursday, March 24, 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: April 28, 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 Waggner 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 the 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	If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given): <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 shoearth3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com ♥ Gina Glassford 309.517.3664 citrgrs@gmail.com 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.

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memories, acceptance, purpose, and reinvestment in life. We learn to speak of our loved one without crying, and to begin to accept that whatever time we had with him or her, we would have taken even if just but a moment. We learn that grief is the price we pay for loving our child or sibling so much, and we wouldn't want it any other way. Our relationships with family, friends, and yes, even God can be strengthened or challenged as we look for new ways to connect with them. We may lose old friends who don't really understand. We learn that problems in life are not overwhelming. We are handling the worst thing that can happen to us; what else can happen? We learn to more deeply cherish those we love. We help others in grief without batting an eye. Sometimes we pick up "gifts" along the way by becoming more caring, compassionate toward others, and appreciative for what is important in life. New strengths can develop as we find our new selves along the way. Life will be different as we learn to cope, but still have meaning.

For those of you who are new in your loss, we hope that you will continue to share your sorrow with us and learn from those further ahead on the path of grief. Someday it won't hurt as much as it does now, and you won't always feel "this elephant on your chest." We encourage you to ask the family and friends around you for what you need and tell them when their expectations for you are too high. We hope you will explain to them that your grief is not on a timetable and will probably not ever reach what society calls "closure." Explain to them that you will always miss your child or sibling, but you will learn to live with a broken heart. We hope you will inform them that the mention of your child's name is music to your ears and it's okay to talk about him or her. Your TCF friends will be with you and hold your hand every step of the way.

Carole J. Dyck, R.N.
TCF/Verdugo Hills, CA
In memory of my son, Chris

I Know You By Heart (I Chase Butterflies)

Words and Music by Alan Pedersen –TCF
Executive Director

This road gets lonely
Since you've been gone
There's one thing to console me
I'm sure our love lives on
It's deeper than flesh and bone
It's stronger than time
It keeps you close to me
If I open up my mind

So I chase butterflies
I reach for falling stars
I look for any sign
From where you are
I call your name out to the wind
So I can feel you here again
Death can't keep us apart
Cause I know you by heart
You're my heart

People think I'm crazy
Cause I talk to you this way
They don't know how much I hear
In the words I feel you say
You're the inspiration
That keeps me strong
Though you're just beyond my touch
You are never really gone

The most painful death in all the world is the death of a child. When a child dies, when *one* child dies... *not* the 11 per 1,000 we talk about statistically ... But the one that a mother held briefly in her arms... He leaves an empty space in a parent's heart that will never heal.

Thomas H. Kean
48th Governor of New Jersey

VULNERABLE

I have found in the years that have passed that I am most vulnerable at times of remembrance. The word “anniversary” no longer holds a promise of celebration. Instead, holidays and birthdays, family gatherings and otherwise joyous occasions contain an undertow of sorrow. If I get caught up in it, I quickly get pulled under and wind up gasping for breath. *It is ironic that the presence of the absence can be emotionally devastating.*

You’ll excuse me if the bounce is gone from my step, or the depth of my laughter has changed. Issues that were once monumental now seem insignificant. Please excuse me if I don’t commiserate that your car needs repair or the faucet leaks. My focus on life has forever changed.



You’ll excuse me if my spirit seems lost during holidays of any kind. They are now days “to bear” rather than days to share and enjoy.

You’ll pardon me if I bring you down or make you feel discomfort, and I’ll pardon you for not understanding that my life will never be the same, that although I’ll survive, there will always be sorrow.

**Joan Fischer,
TCF/Nassau County Chapter, NY**

Around the Corner to Spring

The clouds are heavy and gray, the rain is wet and cold, and the hours of the day disappear too quickly into the darkness of night. Winters in the Pacific Northwest can be long and lonely; the promise of spring is a faraway thought.

But just as sure as winter engulfs us now, spring will come in its time. Daffodils will bravely break the cold ground, colorful tulip cups will catch spring showers, and slowly but surely, trees will bud, birds will sing and the sun will shine.

We have all encountered unspeakable pain in the loss of our child, and the seasons of recovery may also seem overwhelmingly dark and cold. Through this tremendous trauma, each of us finds a way to survive – a strength many could not imagine, yet here we are.

Each day, each season, each year that we survive beyond that unforgettable day, our children beam with pride and send their love from the heavens. It is their prayer for us; much like our prayers that they would “grow strong and be happy.” I believe it is this enduring love that helps us discover life again.

Spring is often known as the “season of hope.” Yes, there will still be spring showers (just as there will always be a tear for our loved ones), but they are often punctuated by breathtaking rainbows stretching across the heavens and the promise of blue skies once again. The air seems lighter and fresher, filled with floral aromas and the scent of “life!”

As we close out these last weeks of winter and look ahead to brighter days, my wish to all families is that you celebrate your strength, honor your tears, and share a word of hope and support to others who are newly bereaved. May we all find spring in our hearts!

Diane Barta, TCF/Portland, Oregon

At Last, The Spring

How is it in the winter of my grief
that I can notice how the seasons change with
their accustomed regularity?
Just now I cannot bear the taste of
Spring, yet She won't sleep forever.
This month she's busy pushing trees
to bud, And bidding flowers to raise
their dormant seeds to life.
All life is reaching for the light.
And all my own potentiality
In spite of heavy winter's cloak,
races to embrace the good, strong
harbingers of joy and peace and
transformation.

Shirley Cognard Ottman
BP/USA of North Texas
bereavedparentsUSA.org

Please Ask - Someone asked me about you today. It's been so long since anyone has done that; it felt so good to talk about you – to share my memories of you and to simply say your name out loud. She asked me if I minded talking about what happened to you – or would it be too painful to speak of it. I told her, "I think of it every day and speaking about it helps me to release the tormented thoughts whirling around in my head." She said she never realized the pain would last this long – she apologized for not asking sooner. I told her, "Thanks for asking." I don't know if it was curiosity or concern that made her ask. But I told her, "Please, do it again sometime soon."

Barbara Taylor
Parents of Murdered Children – Cincinnati, OH

Meditation

*Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year.*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Anniversaries! They continue to plague us. Each holiday, the remembrance of what we "used to do" – the spring picnics, the Easter trip... And then, of course, the private anniversaries – birthdays, wedding anniversaries, the anniversary of the day of death.

Sometimes we forget. And then wonder, by midafternoon, why we are feeling so low – until we look at the calendar and remember. The conscious mind may forget, but the unconscious has a longer memory.

Over time it will get easier. But it's well to be mindful of anniversaries and realize that on some level we will remember and probably be sad.

So acknowledge – This is the day. Perhaps tell an understanding friend. And then – be a little kind to yourself. Perhaps plan some diverting activity. No need to mourn all day. Your loved one wouldn't want that. You won't forget. Next year will come around...

Martha Whitmore Hickman
from *Healing After Loss*



Scottsdale, Arizona, will be the site of the 39th TCF National Conference on July 8-10, 2016. "Hope Rises on the Wings of Love," is the theme of this year's event. The 2016 Conference will be held at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. We'll keep you updated with details as they become available. Plan to come and be part of this heartwarming experience.



The Compassionate Friends

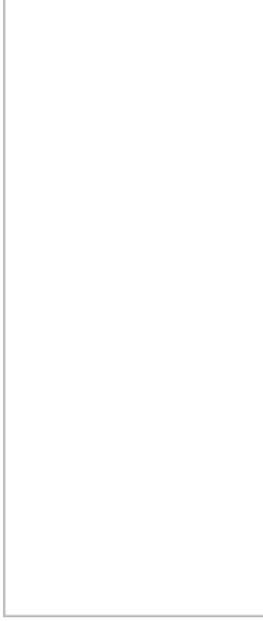
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265

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March

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.