



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November 2019

Volume XXXII Number 9

Dear Compassionate Friends,

The first weekend of October we accomplished a task we have wanted to complete for a long time – moving our daughter’s remains from a baby cemetery in Moline to a family plot in Central Iowa. Eight family members – parents, brothers, sister-in-law, aunt, and nephews gathered on a sunny, breezy hillside in the country cemetery to remember Anna’s life.

Our service was simple and the memories shared were Jerry’s and mine since only the two of us and her older brother, aged three when she died, had known her life. While driving to the cemetery, our younger son, who only knew his sister through family photos, made the comment that when people asked, he told them he had two siblings, a brother and a sister. We were deeply touched by this because I think that we had perhaps assumed that for him she was not a real family member since he had never known her. And yet we realize, her life and death has impacted all of us to some extent. The thread of her life and loss runs throughout our family. We are different people with different priorities because we lived through the life-altering experience of child loss.

At the end of our service we shared the following quote, from a past TCF newsletter. “We cannot control the movement of time, nor can we control our own destiny or the destinies of those we love. But we can take comfort in knowing that those who have lived in our hearts are never really gone. For as long as we keep them with us, in our hearts and our thoughts, they will be with us always. For love, which is timeless, never ceases to exist.” SE MacNaughton.

Sincerely,

Jerry and Carol Webb

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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:

**Scott and Mary Beth Madden, in memory of their son, Scott 'SJ' Madden.
Laurie and Bill Steinhauser, in memory of their nephew, Patrick Hagerty V
and niece, Beth Hagerty.**

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 Treasurer, Doug Scott, 6550 Madison Street, Davenport, Iowa, 52806. Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.**

November 23, 2019 is International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Each year, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention supports hundreds of large and small Survivor Day events around the world, in which suicide loss survivors come together to find connection, understanding and hope through their shared experience. While each event is unique and offers various programming, all feature an AFSP-produced documentary that offers a message of growth, resilience and connection. There will be an event in Galesburg, Illinois on November 24, 2019. For more information: contact:

Chastity Smith - chastity.smith0@gmail.com - 309-335-6245
or Tina Benedict - tinabrooke@comcast.net - 309-335-6245.

The Secret of The Compassionate Friends' success is simple: There is no line between being a helper and being helped. In the early months in TCF, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying and letting the grief flow, and "learning the ropes" of being 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 lives, 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 the words of comfort and hope, share our pain instead of just feeling our pain. At that time the real healing has started.

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



10 Tips for Living with the Holidays this Year

Merry Christmas



1. Remind yourself that you will survive. You will.
2. Think about what will bring you the most peace this holiday season. Keeping all traditions intact? Tweaking some traditions a bit and adding new ones? Throwing out all the old traditions and starting new ones? Flying to the Caribbean and completely skipping the holidays this year? It's okay to do that.
3. Don't expect anyone to mention your child by name. Believe it or not, that's your job. People will look to you to determine whether or not it's safe to talk about the person that died. A few subtle ways to do that: Serve/bring your child's favorite dish to the holiday get-together – talk about it! Bring a favorite picture – pass it around. Work it into the dining table centerpiece. Bring a favorite memento – a book, a

- poem, a toy, a video, an article of clothing-share it after dinner. Have your child's favorite music playing in the background – tell the story!
4. Plan a special evening for close family and friends when you REMEMBER. Ask everyone to bring a favorite photo and write down a special memory. Set time aside to sit in a circle and share the photos and memories.
5. Remember that it's okay – it's even healthy – to cry.
6. It's okay to stay in bed...you will get out, when you are ready and able.
7. It's also okay to smile or even laugh, a bit. You're not being disloyal.
8. Buy yourself a gift. Wrap it. Write a note – to you – from your beloved child.
9. Buy someone less fortunate than you a gift.
10. Light a candle.

Used in TCF newsletters granted by the author, Tom Zuba, twice bereaved parent, author, speaker, and work- shop presenter.
www.tomzuba.com

Fall Autumn has arrived. While many people welcome this season with the cooler weather, colorful landscape, and family traditions, there are many of us who look to the upcoming months with dread. For the newly bereaved, we wonder how we will survive the upcoming holiday months without our child, and we can't understand how the rest of the world can continue to experience joy in the holidays when we feel so devastated from our loss. We also wonder how those who have lost a child or sibling, maybe not as recently, can smile and laugh and even look forward to the holidays.

At our meetings, you may see some smiling faces and even hear some laughter. These are the people who have walked in your shoes and have been where you are, wondering how they would ever smile again, how could other

people in the group be happy, and how could they survive the next birthday, anniversary, Thanksgiving, or Christmas. Yet somehow, little by little, they find hope, friendship, and even happiness again. There is no magic wand to make that happen; it takes time and support from people who care. Compassionate Friends is here for that reason, to give and receive support and encouragement, because others were there for them when they walked that dark and lonely road and because they still walk it every day, with each day the steps getting a little lighter with renewed hope. Please do not be offended by smiles and laughter, but be encouraged by them, that one day you will feel alive again and will take pleasure in honoring your child with joyful memories.

TCF/Marietta, Georgia newsletter

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 at climb@climb-support.org. Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.</p>

Holidays

The cool crisp air of autumn brings the excitement and anticipation of Thanksgiving, the holidays, family gatherings, special food, warm, joyous memories-and, for those of us experiencing illness, grief, or separation from those we love, it can also be a time of pain, sadness, or dread.

How can we comfort and heal the hopelessness and emptiness we feel as the rest of the world is dancing with happiness? Instead of pretending to be happy, **allow** yourself permission to be exactly where you are – sad, withdrawn, depressed, angry – or, if a moment of quiet, relief, warmth, love, or happiness washes over you, allow yourself that moment. You may judge yourself for being sad or a "downer" and in the same breath, deny yourself any moments of peace and happiness, by feeling happiness or for feeling good.

Grief will come in waves — waves of memories of what you once shared together that you no longer will have. Holiday time can bring up incredible frustration, helplessness, and anger at a world that appears to be totally oblivious to your pain. As the holidays approach, focus on what you need to take care of yourself. It might be to create a new way of celebrating important events that will be a healing balm to your grief rather than a re-opening of the wounds. Solicit other people's support in your active process of surviving the season. Share with family and friends your plan to take care of your hurting. If there is something someone can do to nurture you, let them know. You will be giving them the gift of caring.

Our senses are acute at this time. Every sight, sound (i.e., music), aroma, taste (i.e., goodies), and touch will be magnified. Or the opposite may occur and we may be anesthetized and not be able to feel anything.

Throughout our journey into and out of the winter months, it is vital that we listen carefully each day, hour, and minute, to what we are experiencing, what we need, and what we can do to get what we need.

Be gentle with yourself. Treat yourself as you would the most delicate, tiny child who is hurting, who yearns only to be held, cuddled, and protected. Care for yourself as the precious human being that you are.

Janet Childs
TCF/San Jose/Palo Alto, CA

Time Will Ease the Hurt

The sadness of the present days is locked and set in time, and moving to the future is a slow and painful climb.

But all the feelings that are now so vivid and so real, can't hold their fresh intensity as time begins to heal.

No wound so deep will ever go away, yet every hurt becomes a little less from day to day.

Nothing can erase the painful imprints on your mind; but there are softer memories that time, will let you find.

Though your heart won't let the sadness simply slide away, the echoes will diminish even though the memories stay.

Bruce Wilmer
TCF/Cumberland,
New Jersey newsletter

**WHAT YOU
LEAVE BEHIND IS
NOT WHAT IS
ENGRAVED IN
STONE
MONUMENTS,
BUT WHAT IS
WOVEN INTO
THE LIVES OF
OTHERS.**

PERICLES

The Dreaded Holidays

The holidays are coming, and there are some things we can do to make it easier to bear: If you are still in that robotic stage of grief, you may not even remember to flip the page of the calendar. People talk about the upcoming holidays and you feel "so what, my child is dead." Don't they understand? Can't they realize you don't feel thankful for anything, yet alone look forward to a Thanksgiving dinner?

If it is the first Thanksgiving without your child, give yourself permission to do nothing or as much as you feel comfortable with. As a bereaved parent, we often feel we "ought" to do the traditional thing. That is fine if you have enough energy, but right now don't spend the little bit you have by doing anything that isn't really necessary. For a bereaved family, the first set of holidays to be faced without their child is especially confusing. Nothing you do will feel normal. You haven't experienced ways to face holidays without your child. Right now, it is a trial and error matter as we experiment with new ways to observe holidays without our child here. Try to do what you feel you can do. If it doesn't work, don't feel afraid to try something

different. Each time you make the effort, each time you try to do something, you learn from it. This whole grief thing is new, we haven't mastered it yet. Give yourself a break, don't put unrealistic expectations on yourself or others. If it has been awhile, and you feel the need to resume the festivities again, by all means, do so. The dreams of a lifetime died when your child died. If you have managed to overcome some of the pain and suffering, the terrible doubts, or the "if only's," rejoice in the fact you can see hope and a brighter future again. Celebrate and return to those things you once treasured. Whatever you do this holiday season, remember, start early, allow yourself plenty of extra time, and keep the stress down as much as possible. Accomplishing small steps gives you the courage to tackle bigger ones. Don't put too much emphasis on doing what others want. As long as you take care of yourself and try to get through things as best as you can, you will have done enough.

Whenever it all seems like too much, remember, The Compassionate Friends will be here and available to help however we can.

Lynn Vines
TCF South Bay/L.A., California

The Death of a Child

The death of a child is so out of season, like a snowstorm on the Fourth of July. Newness of life, bursting with potential, is cut off, severing bud from branch. Tender shoots are ripped from roots by winds so strong. Coldness wrenches life from earth and warmth of flesh from human arms. Clouds of grief rob hearts of mirth.

It seems so wrong that one so young dies while life as just begun.

There is no joy of harvest, fruit mature.

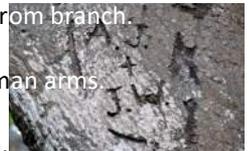
Life is made of fragile stuff – no day secure.

What might have been can never be, but love's sweet moments are etched on memory.

Like initials deeply carved in bark of tree, they can never be erased,

but will bring remembrance of a laugh, a tea, a scene or sweet embrace

to brighten the future's uncertain skies.



Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

The next regular monthly meeting is

Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 6:30 pm

at Bethany for Children & Families,

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265

Please call 309.736.6601 for information and directions.

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

Next month's meeting is held on **December 6, 2019 at 7:00 pm**

Moline Memorial Park Cemetery, 5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine	Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittch-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 shoearb4@gmail.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.

ANNUAL CANDLE LIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Chapter's Annual Candle Light Memorial Service is for every bereaved parent who would like to have his or her child(ren) remembered. You may light a candle in memory of your child. (You can bring a favorite candle or one will be provided. You can also bring a photo of your child to show.) All family members are invited.

If you cannot attend and would like a candle lit in your child's memory, please complete and return this form to Lisa Rains, 2341 7 ½ Street, East Moline, Illinois 61244, or email Lisa at AngelOfHope@gmail.com.

Child's Name: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Friday, December 6, 2019
at 7:00 p.m.
Angel of Hope Memorial Garden

The service will be held *inside*
the Mausoleum at
Moline Memorial Park Cemetery
5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265



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, please send us your new address. Because we send the newsletter bulk rate, the post office will not forward it.

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 or email
CarolynPWebb@gmail.com.



At the Holidays, We Hope...

For those of you for whom this is your first holiday with the empty chair at the Thanksgiving table, we know that it is a particularly difficult day for you, and all of us who have been through that first major holiday understand your sadness and will keep you close in our hearts during this holiday season.

For those of you who have been through the first one and are in what I feel are

still the early years of this grief journey, we know how exhausting it is to try to put on a mask in order to make others feel comfortable. Here is hoping that you will be able to feel however you may feel today, and that your family and friends will be understanding and compassionate and allow you to have those emotions, whatever they may be.

For those of us further down the road of our grief journey, we know that no matter the years that have passed since our child, grandchild, sibling or other precious one has been gone, that though the years may soften our grief, we still ache for their presence and miss them with all our being.

And, above all, I truly hope that family and friends will speak their names and thereby giving you the gift of allowing you to remember - with them - the one you miss so much. Though gone from this earth, they are loved and present in our life every day and will forever be.

Cathy Seehuetter TCF/St. Paul, MN

Thoughts from a Parent Who Lost an Older Child

Perhaps I had a child longer than you had yours, but thirty-eight years does not seem long. Perhaps there are more memories to hold in my heart, but I know yours are just as dear to you as mine are to me – even if your memories are only

one or two days. Your dreams for your child are gone. So are mine. Never did I imagine that I would have to deal with my child's death instead of him having to deal with mine. In thirty-eight years, there was time to give me a legacy of three grandchildren. This is a very special blessing and one that I do

not take for granted. My mission is to sustain the relationship with my three grandchildren who now live three thousand miles away from me.

My child died from a terminal illness that is not one of the “acceptable” diseases. My child died of alcohol and drug addiction. The tools for remission of this disease are placed in the hands of the person who has the disease. Even with the help of four treatment centers, the recovery was not to be. One day at a time, my recovery is taking place. The pain, after two and one-half years, has gone to a place where it can be tolerated. My story and my age may be different from yours, but the bottom line is the same: my child has gone to a place where I cannot go and I miss him so much. The pain of grief is still there, but I am living one day at a time – enriched because my son came through my body into my life.

Helen Godwin
TCF/Orange Park Jacksonville, FL



Notables

Mourning is one of the most profound human experiences that it is possible to have . . . the deep capacity to weep for the loss of a loved one and to continue to treasure the memory of that loss is one of our noblest human traits.

Shneidman (1980)

The depth of your sorrow diminishes slowly and, at times, imperceptibly. Your recovery is not an act of disloyalty to the one who has died. Nor is it achieved by forgetting the past. Try to strike a delicate balance between a yesterday that should be remembered and a tomorrow that must be created.

TCF/Atlanta, GA

GRIEF IS NOT A DISORDER, A DISEASE OR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. IT IS AN EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NECESSITY, THE PRICE YOU PAY FOR LOVE. THE ONLY CURE FOR GRIEF IS TO GRIEVE.

EARL GROLLMAN

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It goes on.

Robert Frost
(who outlived sons, Elliott and Carol, daughters Marjorie and Elinor, and sister Jeanie.)

Listen to Your Heart

When your heart says "cry" but your mind says "don't," listen to your heart. It could be pride, not your mind, that is saying, "don't cry," for tears are hard for one's pride to accept. Crying because your child died does not mean that you are not a strong person. Tears do not mean you are having problems with emotional instability. You are crying because you hurt. Next time your heart says "cry," listen to it. In the long run you'll feel better.

Rose Moen,
Carmel/TCF, Indianapolis, IN



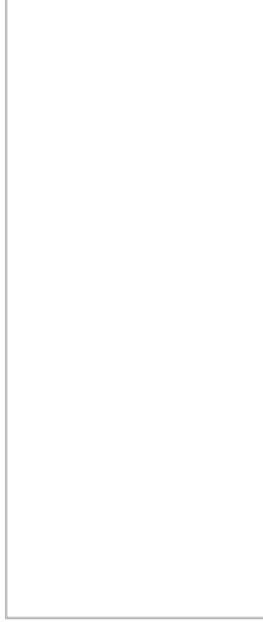
The Compassionate Friends
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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.