



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September 2016

Volume XXIX, Number 7

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Jerry and I are in the process of downsizing, as we look toward the possibility of selling our home of 37 years and moving to be closer to our older son and his family. A recent task has been to root around in the storage area, where we have allowed much to accumulate over the years and see what can go and what should stay. Today one task was to address the carton labeled "Anna cards." I had forgotten how many people had expressed their sympathy when she died 32 years ago. I sorted through the cards and read the names and the notes, with tears in my eyes. Even after all these years, there are still times the feelings surrounding our daughter's death are tender. So many people reached out to us, wishing to comfort us in our grief, judging themselves inadequate to find words to speak to our sorrow. As I read the signatures on the cards I recognized names of family and friends, but many names were unfamiliar, the connection we had to them eluding me. Some were friends of friends, or parents of friends. There was even a note from a lady whose grandson-in-law had been part of the ambulance crew that transported our daughter to the hospital. While many of the cards were signed only with a name, there were also many who had taken time to write us a note, share a poem or Scripture or something meaningful to them related to grief. One person hit it the best when she said, "There must be a very empty place around your heart." How true – there was and still is a hole within that belongs to Anna alone. Another friend, also a bereaved parent, wrote, "I remember the support and love our friends, family and church, and how meaningful that was for us." Even today, looking back at the many people who took time to reach out to us at that time, is meaningful to me. I also appreciated the notes from people who expressed their appreciation that they had held Anna or seen her or knew her personally in some way. Anna's life and death are a long ago chapter in our lives and yet the lessons we learned in those hard days continue to have an impact on us today. All of the cards and letters and memorials are now in a sturdier container and when the time comes, will be moving with us.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

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Chalkboard reflections

DEEP GRIEF SOMETIMES IS ALMOST LIKE A SPECIFIC LOCATION, A COORDINATE ON A MAP OF TIME. WHEN YOU ARE STANDING IN THAT FOREST OF SORROW, YOU CANNOT IMAGINE THAT YOU COULD EVER FIND YOUR WAY TO A BETTER PLACE. BUT IF SOMEONE CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THEY THEMSELVES HAVE STOOD IN THAT SAME PLACE, AND SURVIVED, SOMETIMES THIS WILL BRING HOPE." - ELIZABETH GILBERT

The answer to why doesn't help us heal. But knowing that God's glory can be displayed, even in the brokenness of our lives, gives us hope despite our circumstances.

Laura Story

I BELIEVE THE HARDEST PART OF HEALING AFTER YOU'VE LOST SOMEONE YOU LOVE, IS TO RECOVER THE "YOU" THAT WENT AWAY WITH THEM.
(SEEN ON FACEBOOK)

To die one's self is a thing that must be easy, and light of consequence; but to lose a part of one's self, well, we know how deep that pang goes, we who have suffered that disaster, received that wound which cannot heal. It is one of the mysteries of our nature that a man, all unprepared, can receive a thunder-stroke like that and live. It will take mind and memory months, possibly years, to gather together details and thus learn and know the whole extent of the loss.

Mark Twain,
bereaved father of Suzy Clemens.

GRIEVING ALLOWS US TO HEAL, TO REMEMBER WITH LOVE RATHER THAN PAIN. IT IS A SORTING PROCESS. ONE BY ONE YOU LET GO OF THE THINGS THAT ARE GONE AND YOU MOURN FOR THEM. ONE BY ONE YOU TAKE HOLD OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE BECOME A PART OF WHO YOU ARE AND BUILD AGAIN.

RACHEL NAOMI REMEN



The Price

It is not really a question
of whether I could have wanted
never to have you with me,
if had I known
how deeply your dying
would break my life today.

There is only one certain truth:
Even if I had known
that there would come to me
the cruel grief I suffer today.
I would endure it all again
for the wonder of
having had you in my life.

Sascha Wagner

Words

When grief is new
you need not find a reason
however good and brave
to temper your despair.

When grief is new
the heart accepts no answer
however wise and kind
to ease your mourning.

When grief is new
your life can only know
disintegration,
overwhelming pain...

My friend, try to believe
what other grievers learned:
you will not always hurt
as you hurt now,
time will restore
the soundness of your mind.

(All other words are shadows on the
wind when grief is new.)

Sascha Wagner

In terms of

her personal legacy, I have pondered what Abi taught us long and hard. What did we learn from having her in our lives for such an agonizingly short time? Addressing such weighty philosophical questions is regarded as a very normal part of grieving in today's bereavement literature. The fact that death (particularly sudden death) frequently induces a crisis of meaning is well understood. How do we go on living in a world where such things can happen? How do we incorporate such tragic events into our personal life stories?

My own way, like any other grieving mother, is unique. If I can channel my professional skills and personal experience to help others cope with grief, then that goes some way to comforting me; to dragging something useful from the terrible loss we have all felt since the deaths of Abi, Ella and Sally. Staying miserable forever was just not an option for me. I have two beautiful teenage boys to live and care for, and a voice in my head urging me not to "lose what you have to what you have lost." These things propelled me to assume an active role on this terrible journey of grief.

Ultimately, I chose life, not death and hope to help others do the same.

**Lucy Hone (in memory of her daughter Abi;
her friend Sally and her daughter, Ella Rumble**

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.

Thanks to:

Mary Rose De Coster, in memory of Casey Armstrong.

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.**

DONATE

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 Seehuettter 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	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.
TCF's Grief Related Webinars	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.
TCF National Magazine	<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.
Grief Materials	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.
Our Newsletter	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.
Amazon.com	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.
Previous Newsletter Editions	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.
Alive Alone	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 .
Bereaved Parents' Magazine	Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. http://www.bearvedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm .
Our Newsletter	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.

Grieving the Loss of a Child

The parent-child bond is one of the most meaningful relationships a person will experience. Parents who have lost a child can often feel that a part of them has died. The despair and pain that follow a child's death is thought by many to exceed all other experiences. Parents are simply not supposed to outlive their children and no parent is prepared for a child's death.

The length of a child's life does not determine the size of the loss. Parents are intimately involved in the daily lives of young children, and their child's death changes every aspect of family life, often leaving an enormous emptiness. Parents may be less involved in the everyday lives of older children and adolescents, but death at this age occurs just when children are beginning to reach their potential and become independent of emotional and practical support.

Parents who lose an only child also lose their identity as parents, and perhaps the possibility of grandchildren.

When any child dies, parents grieve the loss of possibilities and all of the hopes and dreams they had for their child. They grieve the potential that will never be realized and the experiences they will never share. When a child dies, a part of the future dies along with them.

Common grief reactions:

Grief reactions following the death of a child are similar to those following other losses but are often more intense and last longer. Parents commonly experience the



following grief reactions:

- ♥ Intense shock, confusion, disbelief, and denial, even if the child's death was expected.
- ♥ Overwhelming sadness and despair, such that facing daily tasks or even getting out of bed can seem impossible.
- ♥ Intense anger and feelings of bitterness and unfairness at a life left unfulfilled.
- ♥ Fear or dread of being alone and overprotecting their surviving children.
- ♥ Feelings of resentment toward parents with healthy children.
- ♥ Feeling that life has no meaning and wishing to be released from the pain or to join the deceased child.
- ♥ Questioning or loss of faith or spiritual beliefs; assumptions about the world and how things should be do not fit with the reality of a child's death.
- ♥ Dreaming about the child or feeling the child's presence nearby.
- ♥ Feeling intense loneliness and isolation, even when with other people; parents often feel that the magnitude of their loss separates them from others and that no one can truly understand how they feel.

Some people expect that grief should be resolved over a specific time, such as a year, but this is not true. The initial severe reactions are not experienced continuously with such intensity; rather periods of intense grief come and go over a period of 18 months or more. Over time, waves of grief gradually become less intense and less frequent but feelings of sadness and loss will likely always remain.

Healing Hearts of WNY

If Only They Knew

If only they knew that when I speak of him, I am not being morbid. I am not denying his death. I am proclaiming his life. I am learning to live with his absence. For twenty-six years he was a part of my life, born, nurtured, molded and loved – this cannot be put aside to please those who are uncomfortable with my grief.

If only they knew that when I sit quietly, apparently content with my own company, I am not self indulgently unhappy, dwelling on things which cannot be changed; I am with him. I am seeing his face, hearing his voice, remembering his laughter, recalling his excitement and joy in life. Please allow me this time with him, as I do not begrudge you your time with your children.

If only they knew that when I sometimes weep quietly, I do not cry in self-pity for what I have lost. I weep for what he has lost, for the life he loved, for the music which filled his very being, and for all he still longed to hear, for the poetry which moved him to tears, for the beauty about him that daily fed his soul, for the exhilaration and excitement of flying the skies, of searching for his God in the vast space of the universe. For all that he loved and lost, I cry.

If only they knew the feeling of deep grief, the emptiness, the dull pain, the endlessness of death. If only they understood the insanity of the platitudes so freely spoken – that “time heals,” that “you’ll get over it,” that “it was for the best,” that “God takes only the best” – and realize that these are more an insult than a comfort, that the warm and compassionate touch of another means so much more.

If only they knew that we will not find true peace and tranquility until we are prepared to try to stand in the shoes of others. We will not be understood until we learn to understand compassionately and we will not be heard until we learn to listen with hearts we well as minds. **Jan McNess TCF Victoria, Australia**



Please contact the editors, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242, 309.654.2727,

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.



Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Monthly meeting: Thursday, September 22, 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 months' meeting: October 27, 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 Waggoner 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): ♥ Kay Miller 309.738.4915 ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoearthb3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotamil.com Kay, 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.

FALL

It is so hard to believe that summer is over! Even though summer is technically still here until September, the cool evenings we have been having, school starting, and football games being played are all signs that fall is here. And I love it!

To me, fall is the most invigorating time of the year. The crispness of the air, the beautiful coloration of the trees, the smell of leaf and wood smoke, the sky full of birds traveling south “talking” with one another as they go, are all part of this wonderful world we live in. I hope all of you will be able to feel and see the wonders of fall.

Sometimes we are so “down” and preoccupied with our child’s death, and we are working so hard to just get through each day, that we are unable to appreciate what is going on in the world around us. Try to take a few minutes each day and look around. If you can focus on a

beautiful tree or leaf, smell the chrysanthemums blooming in the garden or bite into a fresh apple just picked and enjoy doing this for just a few minutes, it will make your day seem brighter. And, if you are up to it, go to a high school football game or a band competition. The enthusiasm of the young people participating in these events is contagious.

Yes, it sometimes hurts. We want our children to be there also, enjoying these activities. But it also gives us renewed faith that life does go on, and there is happiness and excitement in the world. I hope you all can find some beauty and peace in the fall months ahead.

Peggy Hartzell TCF Ambler, PA



Helping siblings who are grieving

Parents are the focus of attention when a child dies and the grief of siblings is sometimes overlooked. The death of a sibling is a tremendous loss for a child; they lose a family member, a confidant, and a life-long friend. Parents are often preoccupied with the needs of a sick child and then become overwhelmed with their own grief when the child dies. The surviving siblings may misinterpret the parents’ grief as a message that they are not as valued as much as the child who died. In addition, parents can help siblings during this time of grief by:

Making grief a shared family experience and including children in discussions about memorial plans.

Spending as much time as possible with the surviving children such as

talking about the deceased child, just playing together, or doing something enjoyable.

Making sure siblings understand that they are not responsible for the child’s death and help them let go of regrets and guilt.

Never compare siblings to the deceased child and make sure children know that you don’t expect them to “fill in” for the deceased child.

Set reasonable limits on their behavior, but try not to be either overprotective or overly permissive. It is normal to feel protective of surviving children. Ask a close family member or friend to spend extra time with siblings if your own grief prevents you from giving them the attention they need.

Healing Hearts of WNY

Grief's Array of Emotions

I think the most frustrating thing about grief is that it is more than just sadness or the persistent feeling of emptiness I feel. Grief spans a wide array of feelings and emotions including, but not limited to sorrow, anger, jealousy, and helplessness. Lately, I have been struggling with coming to grips with my life as it continues along a path I would never have imagined. If Carl were still alive, I imagine he would be married and I would be an aunt to his children. He would have been there for my wedding and would be anxiously awaiting, along with my parents, the arrival of his future nieces and nephews. He would have been a great uncle. He was always great with kids and reveled in the part of himself which never grew up; the same trait which inexplicably drew kids to him.

Losing a brother is not just losing a companion, a best friend, a confidant, someone to pave the way for a little sister as she follows eagerly behind. When Carl died I not only lost those things, but I lost the future we would have had. I wish I would have had a chance to see how great he would have been with the children I hope to someday have. I wish I would have had the chance to see his sparkle, his amazing smile passed on to his children. But my reality is that these things will never come to pass. As each year turns into the next I struggle to reconcile the life I had imagined with the life I live today. It's hard to keep moving forward when I no longer have a big brother to do things first so I know, more or less, what to expect.

Maybe dealing with Carl's death and the loss of the future I had imagined would be easier if grief were merely a matter of dealing with the ensuing sadness. However, as my life continues to move forward, I come across new struggles. I find myself getting jealous of my husband of three months, and his relationship with his brother and angry at him for having one when mine is gone. Is it rational? No, but grief isn't always rational. I can't fault him for having a close relationship with his brother, nor can I fault him for Carl's death. I have no real reason to be angry with him when he is on the phone with his brother. I can't be angry with him

because it's not me. No matter how much I wish, it will never be me again. I have no real reason to be jealous of his niece and nephew and the relationship he has with them. It is not his fault that I will never hold my brother's children.

It isn't fair for me to take my anger out on him or brood silently while he continues to nurture relationships with his family. I know, too well, the importance of family. One of the things I love most about him is that he is very close to his family and places great importance on maintaining strong familial ties. But, my grief inevitably creeps in and weaves its way through our relationship. Not only do I have to deal with my grief, but I have to be careful in how I channel it, if I want to have a successful marriage. Yet, even as I try to channel my grief, more anger creeps in because I have to concentrate harder on my actions because I am grieving my brother's death—and that doesn't feel very fair either.

I try to tell my husband and try to help him understand when I am feeling angry or jealous because he has something I long to have, but I am afraid. I fear that there will come a day when I tell him the reason I am acting irrationally is because I am struggling with my grief and he sees my explanation merely as an excuse or something I should learn to control. I fear he will tire of being patient with me, or expect that one day I won't cry "over nothing" or that one day I won't feel sad on the Fourth of July because it was one of Carl's favorite holidays.

Is my fear irrational, or am I assuming he will react to me the way others in the past have reacted? I guess I am bound to find out sooner or later. Just as I learn to live with my grief I will have to learn how to manage my grief while maintaining a marriage. I sure wish grief was just about feeling sad. No, I really wish I didn't have to deal with it all.

*Carrie Kears
Carrie's brother, Carl Pueschel,
died January 19, 1996*



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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.

We Need Not Walk Alone

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 Web site:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Visit the **sibling resource** page at www.compassionatefriends.org
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 will contain notes and happenings of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit the TCF National Web site home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.



The Compassionate Friends

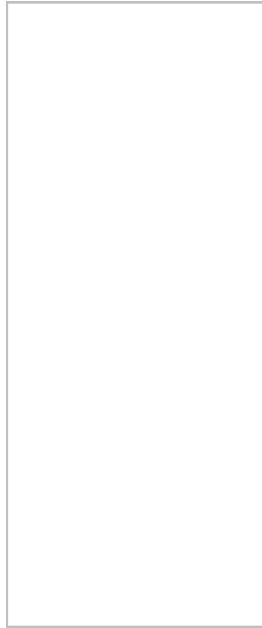
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Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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.