



# The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

## December 2014

Volume XXVII, Number 10

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I was looking for useful articles for this month's newsletter when I read this quote and thought, How appropriate. "Each new life no matter how brief, forever changes the world."

**Our daughter,** Anna Katherine Webb, was born in late November. In just a few days we will mark her 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. She was not a healthy baby and was in and out of the hospital for most of her four months of life. Yet she captured our hearts from the moment we knew she was expected, and she continues to be an important part of our family history. She lived only a short time, but changed our world in ways we could not have imagined. Over the years the lessons we have learned through our grief have given us a forum to encourage other bereaved parents. Our experiences in walking through deep valleys of pain and disappointment have been a means to urge other married couples to persevere when life is tough and dreams are shattered. We trust that we honor Anna's memory, because although we grieve, we are not without hope or joy. When we light a candle for her on December 9, we will remember not only the four months we shared with her on earth, but the many ways her life has counted for something as she made a difference in our world.



Sincerely, Jerry and Carol Webb



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*Merry Christmas. God's blessings in the New Year.*

# CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

## Our Christmas Candles

Let us ignite our candles,  
and let the flames proclaim  
to everyone the living fire  
of love which lights our way.

And let these candles henceforth  
be symbolic of enduring love  
which death cannot destroy.

by Shirley C. Ottman, Teri's mom, Bereaved Parents of North Texas

No matter how bright the sun or clear the air...  
No matter where I am or who I am with...  
Everything is tinged with the absence of you.

From The Compassionate Friends Facebook page

Some of the most comforting words in the universe are "me too."  
That moment when you find out that your struggle is also someone else's  
struggle,

That you're not alone and that others have been down the same road.

Rita Ghatourey

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



# Lights of Love

Can you see our candles burning in the night?  
Lights of love we send you, rays of the purest white.  
Children we remember though missing from our sight  
In honor and remembrance, we light candles in the night.  
All across the big blue marble spinning out in space,  
Can you see the candles burning from this human place?  
Oh, angels gone before us, who taught us perfect love,  
This night the world lights candles that you may see them from above.  
Tonight the globe is lit by love of those who know great sorrow.  
But as we remember our yesterdays, let's light one candle for tomorrow.  
We will not forget, and every year in deep December,  
On Earth we will light candles as we remember.



Jacqueline Brown

## Quad City Chapter Announcements

The annual Candlelight Memorial Service in memory of our deceased children will be held on **Tuesday, December 9, 2014**, at Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island, Illinois, at 7:00 p.m.

The **January 23, 2015**, meeting of the Chapter is at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois.

**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.
- If you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.



# 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:**

**Randy and Barb Frerichs, in memory of their son, Jacob Michael.**

**Ken and Sandy Keller, in memory of their son, Adrian.**

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

**Richard and Carol Watters, in memory of their son, Rob.**

**In memory of Anna Katherine, daughter of Jerry and Carol Webb.**

**In memory of Beth Hagerty, daughter of Pat and Kim Hagerty.**

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 treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*.

**Your gifts are tax deductible.**

## **What's it all about?**

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, 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.compassionatefriends.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.

## **Chapter website:**

<http://www.quadcitctf.org>

## Printed Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

<b>TCF Online Support Community</b>	<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 <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.</p>
<b>Understanding Suicide</b>	<p>ASAP (Awareness, Support, Action, Prevention): A confidential group that meets biweekly to serve individuals who have contemplated or attempted suicide and those coping with the suicide of a loved one. Christian Care, 2209 3rd Avenue, Rock Island – first and third Wednesdays, 4:00-5:30 pm.</p>
<b>TCF's Grief Related Webinars</b>	<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 <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx">http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx</a>. Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible</p>
<b>TCF National Magazine</b>	<p><i>We Need Not Walk Alone</i> is available to read online without charge. Go to <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> and review the options at the top of the page. <b>TCF e-newsletter</b> 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>
<b>Grief Materials</b>	<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 <a href="http://www.centering.org">www.centering.org</a>. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.</p>
<b>Our Newsletter</b>	<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>
<b>Amazon.com</b>	<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>
<b>Previous Newsletter Editions</b>	<p><b>Looking</b> for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to <a href="http://www.bethany-qc.org">www.bethany-qc.org</a> for copies of the last several years of The Quad City Chapter of TCF-QC Chapter Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.</p>
<b>Alive Alone</b>	<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 <a href="http://www.alivealone.org">www.alivealone.org</a> or <a href="mailto:alivealone@bright.net">alivealone@bright.net</a>.</p>
<b>Bereaved Parents' Magazine</b>	<p>Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. <a href="http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm">http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm</a>.</p>

## FACING THE HOLIDAYS WITHOUT YOUR CHILD

Death is such a mystery, and when it happens to someone near and dear to us, death becomes all-too-real. This is especially true when we experience the totally unacceptable, unexplainable death of a child. We wander around in a thick fog for a long time unable to focus on anything. Joy has been shocked out of us, and we feel numb to the world. Most of life loses all meaning in the first months following the death of a child. There is no joy. Unbearable pain has taken residence in our hearts, and nothing seems to be able to list the heaviness of it all.

This type of heart pain and brokenness is especially traumatizing during the holidays. We panic, not knowing how we are going to get through the next hour, much less the entire holiday season. It all feels like too much. And, in all practicality, it is too much for us to face, so we must set personal guidelines for trying to get through the holiday season following the death of our child.

It is wise never to try to follow the same holiday rituals and traditions expecting a happy outcome. Life has been turned upside down and inside out and is spinning out of control on most days. In the blink of an eye, your child's life on this earth was gone. You must now take the time to simply breathe deeply, try to relieve your body of all forms of emotional and physical stress, and take each day as it comes. Trying to do too much too soon is a sure-fire way to increase your level of anxiety and pain.

Make no apologies and feel no guilt for your rollercoaster of emotions following the death of your child. Your life has gone through major changes, and your heart has endured some of the deepest pain known to all of mankind. By letting others know that your holidays will be different this year because your life is now totally different, you have set the stage for some support. There's no sense at all in playing the pretend game. Your pain will eventually make its appearance to everyone around you. It's better to line up support from the early moments of your loss to make certain that you are surrounded by caring people who are trying to understand.

Find some way to include your child in the holidays. It will help your grieving to know that you have kept your child's memory alive. Some parents have found it helps to place a special ornament on the Christmas tree each year engraved with their child's name. Others choose to buy a gift and donate it to a child in need of some special holiday joy. Many parents light a candle and keep it burn-



ing through the holiday season as a way of honoring their child. Do something that will make you feel connected to your child. There is no right or wrong thing to do. Whatever works for you is the best choice.

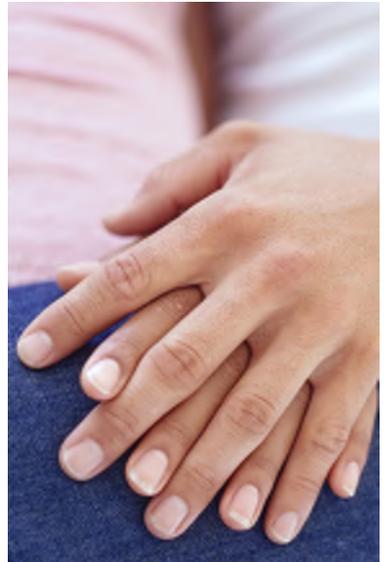
Most of all, remind yourself daily that you will get through this holiday season without your child, and your pain will not always be this raw. The holiday season is a time of love, and there will be a day when special moments will warm your heart, and your grief will soften. By doing something to include your child in the family holiday, you are allowing yourself to cry tears of joy as well as sorrow.

Grief is a journey that takes time and lots of trial and errors along the way as you find what gives you the most comfort during your deepest hours of pain. Be extra kind to yourself, and, in time, you will be able to face the holiday season with moments of peace as you find new ways of holding your child close even in death.

**Clara Hinton, author of *Silent Grief***

**Don't tell me that I will survive,  
How I will surely grow.  
Don't tell me this is just a test,  
That I am truly blessed  
That I am chosen for this task,  
Apart from all the rest.  
Don't come at me with answers  
That can only come from me.  
Don't tell me how my grief will pass  
That I will soon be free.  
Don't stand in pious judgment  
Of the bonds I must untie,  
Don't tell me how to suffer,  
And don't tell me not to cry.  
My life is filled with selfishness,  
My pain is all I see. But I need you;  
I need your love  
Unconditionally.  
Accept me in my ups and downs  
I need someone to share.  
Just hold my hand and let me cry,  
And say, "My friend, I care."**

**Joanetta Hendel**



# Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

## The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

### Upcoming Meetings:

December 9, 2014 at 7:00 pm

### Candle Lighting Service

at Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois

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

TCF website: <http://www.quadcitytcf.org>. The next regular meeting is January 22, 2015, 6:30 pm, at Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois.

<b>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</b>	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 <a href="mailto:linmac67@machlink.com">linmac67@machlink.com</a> .
<b>Rick's House of Hope</b>	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 <a href="mailto:egordon@rhoh.org">egordon@rhoh.org</a> or go to <a href="http://www.rhoh.org">www.rhoh.org</a> .
<b>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)</b>	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 <a href="mailto:there.is.hope@hotmail.com">there.is.hope@hotmail.com</a> — <a href="http://www.mjlfoundation.org">http://www.mjlfoundation.org</a> .
<b>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)</b>	Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meets on second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252, from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Contact: Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425 or <a href="mailto:laura@secondreformedchurch.net">laura@secondreformedchurch.net</a> .
<b>SHARE</b>	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 <a href="mailto:chalyn@shareqc.com">chalyn@shareqc.com</a> or <a href="http://www.shareqc.com">www.shareqc.com</a> .
<b>Loving Listeners</b>	If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given): Kay Miller 309-738-4915 Kirby White 563.271.5908 <a href="mailto:kombo100@msn.com">kombo100@msn.com</a> Doug Scott 563-370-1041 <a href="mailto:doug.scott@mchsi.com">doug.scott@mchsi.com</a> Rosemary Shoemaker 309-945-6738 <a href="mailto:shoartb3@mchsi.com">shoartb3@mchsi.com</a> Judy Delvechio 563-349-8895 <a href="mailto:delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com">delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com</a> Michelle Curtis 309-644-0486 Kay, Kirby, Doug, Rosemary, Judy, and Michelle 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.

If possible, we would cut out November, December, and January 1st out of our calendars—just close our eyes and wish it away. But since we can't, we have to do the next best thing — we need to give ourselves a gift this holiday season. And in doing this, we give our family and friends a gift as well. That gift is taking care of us through this trying holiday season, to do what feels right to us. We can try to spare ourselves any unnecessary stress. That could mean doing away with the old family traditions and making some new ones. It could mean having Christmas dinner at a restaurant. That gift to us might be to go away for the holidays; for others that may be just staying home and doing nothing. Maybe a relative or family friend could help with any preparations or gift buying that we feel we might want to do this year. Possibly they could involve any surviving siblings in their holiday happenings so that they too feel like they are participating in something for the holidays. So often our family and friends feel helpless and desperately want to find some way to assist us and this is one way that they can. TCF Chapter in Tuscaloosa, Alabama said "No matter how many people or how many presents, the pulsating void that seems too large for your heart to hold keeps on drawing your attention back to the child who is missing. As others laugh and play, your thoughts fly away—to Christmases past or a snowy cemetery. Give me a special gift this year...let me weep."

**Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul, MN**

**Christmas** cards — to send or not to send, what to write, how to cope with sending a card and to include or not include our child's name in some way. That is a dilemma facing bereaved parents every year. The first couple of years after James died we did not send any cards. Then when I wanted to send cards, it seemed impossible to sign just mine and my husband's name and leave James out. How to compromise and do something in between? Every year we've added some verse or quote or phrase that includes James in the card; usually on the other side of the card is something special for that year. This year I found cards that had three ornaments on the front - three is symbolic to me representing mom, dad, and James. Beside the first red and silver ornament, "Remembering the past," next to the second green and silver ornament, "Celebrating the present," and next to the third blue and silver ornament, "Believing in the future." These quotes seem so especially appropriate to how far we've come, this is our 12th Christmas without James. Then I wanted to come up with a poem about ornaments. This is what I wrote opposite the card's inside greeting, "Wishing you a delightful Christmas filled with joyful memories and bright hopes." This again is so perfect, what I savor the most about Christmas are memories.



Hoping everyone has a Christmas with treasured memories of years past, special new memories and treasured gifts of love, hope, joy and peace.

**Meg Avery, TCF/Atlanta  
James' Mom - 7/15/83 - 9/22/97**

*Instead* of looking forward to the holiday season this year, you may instead be feeling a myriad of emotions and stresses as you wonder how you will make it through. Asking yourself the following questions can help you to identify and face the specific feelings and concerns you have about the coming holidays.

- ♥ How am I going to make it through the holiday season?
- ♥ If this is the first Christmas I will be spending without my loved one, how do I feel right now? If it is the second or more, how am I planning to spend the holidays this year?
- ♥ What are my plans for Christmas Eve and Day?
- ♥ If I could do anything I want, what would I do on the above days?
- ♥ Do I find myself trying to please my family (if applicable) and continuing with Christmas decorating and activities as in previous years?
- ♥ Do I find myself dreading the places where people are happy and enjoying the season, such as stores, office parties and church services? Do I feel guilty if I don't want to participate in these activities? How do I feel about attending church during the holidays?
- ♥ What am I doing for myself at this time? Am I getting enough rest? Am I able to sleep at night? Am I eating enough to be able to work? Am I exercising in any way, such as walking? Do I feel selfish because I want to be alone sometimes? Do I feel guilty if I don't want to do what my friends or family want me to do?
- ♥ Am I wondering how long this hurting will last? Do I have a trusted friend who will listen to me and not give advice, but just love me?

If you are a survivor of loss, remember you are not alone in your grief.

**Judy Hawk**



**The friendship** and understanding of other bereaved parents is one of the most helpful gifts we can give ourselves. Other bereaved parents will let us reminisce of happier Christmases past; will allow us to speak our child's name without hesitation; and will let us cry and not be uncomfortable with our tears. It is so consoling to be able to share your feelings with someone who understands that, for us, grief does have a place in our holiday.

**Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/ St. Paul, MN**

# CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Tuesday, December 9, 2014  
at 7:00 P.M.  
Bethel Assembly of God Church  
3535 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island, IL

The Chapter's Candlelight 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 place with the candle.) All family members are invited. A time of fellowship will follow the service.



If you cannot attend and would like a candle lighted in your child's memory, please complete and return this form or call Doug & Barb Scott (**563.370.1041**) so we have enough candles are on hand.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

You are welcome to bring a favorite finger-food, help with set up at 6:00 pm, or clean up afterwards.

Please send to: **Doug & Barb Scott**  
c/o Bethany for Children & Families,  
1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265

If you would like to make a love gift to TCF in memory of your child, you may do so at the service or by sending your contribution to our treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.



## *The Compassionate Friends*

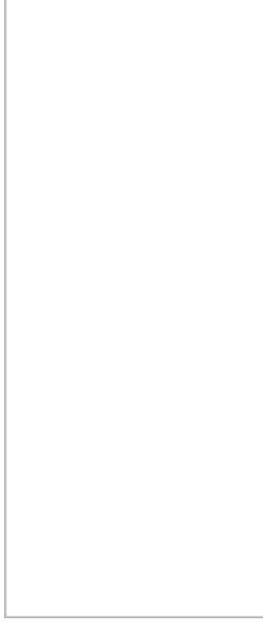
*Quad City Area Chapter*  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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.***