



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

June, July, & August 2014

Volume XXVII, Number 6

Dear Compassionate Friends,

When our daughter died, one of our neighbors showed up at our house with a chubby, blue spruce tree for us to plant in her memory. Another group of friends later presented us with a beautiful Indian magic crab apple tree. Now 30 years later, the blue spruce towers over our house and each spring Anna's crab tree decorates our yard with masses of deep pink blossoms. The kind act of our friends gave us a long-term tangible reminder of their love and concern and care for us and our child.

Recently I ran across an article about Project 52. The mission of a group of men, supporting their friend, a bereaved father, by making a difference in the lives of other bereaved families by planting a tree in their child's memory. Bereaved parents find many ways to acknowledge the life of their child. Members of the Quad City Compassionate Friends are doing that as they pursue the creation of the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden at Moline Memorial Park. Others support important causes such as seat belt awareness, bike helmets, or speak to young people about the dangers of driving while drinking. Maggie's Fund, created by Bill and Laurie Steinhauer in memory of their daughter, helps families with emergency needs for clothing, food, shelter, furniture, and medical assistance. Kelly Farley, author of *Grieving Dads: To the Brink and Back*, writes, "I know Katie and Noah would want me to make a positive impact on other's lives, which this project has allowed me to do. The idea of helping others helps me." Our children's lives can continue to make a difference in this world as we as parents both grieve and grow.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

Next newsletter is in September.

Inside

Chalkboard Reflections	2
Grieving Dads: To the Brink and Back	3
Love Gifts	
What's it all about?	4
Some Typical Male Coping Styles to Deal with Grief	
Printed Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings	5
Understanding the Situation of Grieving Fathers	6
Angel of Hope Memorial Garden	
Angel of Hope Memorial Garden	7
Support Groups for Grieving Parents and Siblings	8
Some Things I've Learned in the Last Nine Years	9
TCF National Conference	10
The Secret of TCF's Success is Simple	
What is Project 52?	11

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

Desolation

I read many words.
I hear many sounds.

Why can I not comprehend?
anything I hear,
anything I read?

When you died,
did you take away with you
my senses and my mind?
I understand nothing.

Sascha Wagner

To get through the hardest
journey we need take only one
step at a time, but we must keep
on stepping.

Chinese Proverb

Stars

The stars are like my memory of you.
They seem so small and frail up in the blue,
yet they may each be greater than the sun.

And now, as faint as they appear to be,
the dimmest star, the smallest memory
is full of shining beauty every one.

Sascha Wagner

WHEN WE FINALLY REALIZE THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS GOING
TO BE SMILING AND DANCING IN OUR HEARTS, THEN, OUR
PAIN SHALL TURN TO JOY.

Bob Walters TCF /South Lake Tahoe, California

The best thing any father can do
for himself and for others around
him is to reach out for help and to
know it is not a sign of "weakness";
it's a sign of courage, courage to
face these feelings head on. There
is no time frame for healing after
such a loss. Some days your emo-
tions will win, but gradually over time
it will dawn on you that you are win-
ning this battle and a new you is
starting to emerge. Maybe the new
you will be someone you don't recog-
nize, but in time you will realize this
is the new you and you will learn to
live with this person.

Kelly Farley

Editor's Note: While I was researching this newsletter I ran across references to the book *Grieving Dads: To the Brink and Back*. I have not read the book, which is available on Amazon.com. However of the 26 people who reviewed it on that site, all gave it 5 stars. Most of the reviews were written by bereaved fathers or family members of bereaved fathers. The author also has a blog, grievingdads.com (C. Webb)

Grieving Dads: To the Brink and Back is a collection of candid stories from grieving dads who were interviewed over a two year period. The book offers insight from fellow members of, in the haunting words of one dad, "this terrible, terrible club," which consists of men who have experienced the death of a child.

This book is a collection of survival stories by men who have survived the worst possible loss and lived to tell the tale. They are real stories that pull no punches and are told with brutal honesty. Men who have shared their deepest and darkest moments. Moments that included thoughts of suicide, self-medication, and homelessness. Some of these men have found their way back from the brink, while others are still standing there, stuck in their pain. The core message of *Grieving Dads* is "you're not alone." It is a message that desperately needs to be delivered to grieving dads who often grieve in silence due to society's expectations.

Grieving Dads: To the Brink and Back is a book that no grieving dad or anyone who cares for him should be without. As any grieving parent will tell you, there are no words to describe the hell one experiences after the death of a child. Many men have no clue how to deal with or understand the myriad emotional, mental, and physical responses experienced after the death of a child. Stories appearing in the book have been carefully selected to represent a crosssection of fathers, as well as a diverse portrayal of loss. This approach helps reflect the full spectrum of grief, from the early days of shock and trauma to the long view after living with loss for many years. Any bereaved father will find brotherhood in these pages, and will feel that someone understands them. While there is plenty of raw emotion in this book—the stories are not exercises in self-pity nor are they studies in grief. They are survival stories instead. Some are testimonies to hope. Some are gut-wrenching accounts of overwhelming despair. But all of them are real-life stories from real-life grieving dads, and they show that even if one reaches his physical and emotional bottom, it is possible (although not easy) to live through that pain and find one's way to the other side of grief. Most dads in this book found themselves in a state of physical, mental, and emotional collapse after the death of their child. As if the losses alone weren't enough to drive these men to the brink, most try to deal with their grief according to the conventional wisdom so many men are brought up with, which perversely, increases their suffering all the more. We all know the party line about how men are "supposed" to deal with loss or even disappointment: toughen up, get back to work, take it like a man, support your wife, don't talk about your emotions, don't lose control, and if you must cry—by all means do so in private.



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: Carl Rauch

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.



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

What's it all about?

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

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.

Some Typical Male Coping Styles to Deal With Grief

Grieving fathers often don't show or work through their pain openly. Carol Staudacher, author of *Men and Grief*, lists four alternative ways men cope with grief:

1. **Remaining silent** - keeping the pain private helps to protect against vulnerability in the form of tears, strong feelings, and sharing emotions.
2. **Grieving secretly** - grieving when no one can see to spare others from seeing, feeling or experiencing that grief. Anything else often seems against "cultural expectations."
3. **Taking physical and legal action** - trying to get control over a situation that is out of control. This approach is often supported and rewarded by others as it's seen as being "assertive and courageous" in times of grief.
4. **Becoming immersed in activity** - occupying all time so there is none left to think of the loss or feel the pain of the grief. <http://www.positive-parenting-skills.net>

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>
Understanding Suicide	<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>
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>

Understanding the Situation of Grieving Fathers

Grieving fathers respond to the sad event very differently - and sometimes in a way that puzzles mothers, since many men don't show their grief.

To all grieving mothers: this is very common, not necessarily a need to worry and can have many, often several causes.

Fathers often see themselves as providers, emotionally stronger, and take on the role of holding the "family ship" above water when everything else is falling apart.

Men are used to dealing with their emotions in a different way.

Many grieving fathers need to return to work soon after the sad event and function there. A father's grieving sadly often doesn't find acceptance at work.

A father's relationship to his child is often very different than a mother-child relationship. Especially, if the child died before birth, fathers have fewer and less tangible memories.

Phase One of the construction of the Quad Cities' *Angel of Hope Memorial Garden* gets underway soon!

The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden, to be located at the Moline Memorial Cemetery, 5001 34th Avenue, Moline, is a place where families can gather to remember and pay tribute to those children who have passed on.

The Memorial Garden will eventually consist of a circular (20' diameter) garden designed with more than 1,600 decorative bricks, benches, and a variety of native grasses, scrubs, and decorative flowers.

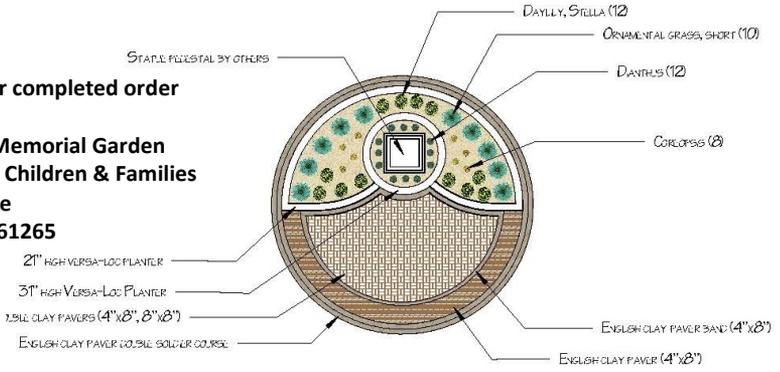
The memorial has areas with designated paving stones that are suitable for inscription. These stones will be available to parents, siblings, and families who would like to remember a deceased child, adult-child, sibling, niece, nephew, or grandchild. The form on the facing page can be used to order for a brick.

Simply complete the form and send it with your remittance.

There is one bench still available for purchase as are the 4"x 8" and the 8"x 8" inscription bearing bricks that will adorn the circular floor of the monument. Please use the order form on the next page for purchasing and inscribing bricks. To purchase the remaining bench, please call 309.736.6601.



Please mail your completed order form to:
Angel of Hope Memorial Garden
c/o Bethany for Children & Families
1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265



Angel of Hope Order Form

Name			
Address			
City, State, Zip			
Email address			
Telephone			
4" x 8" brick	\$100	Inscription limits: 15 characters per line (including spaces & punctuation), 1 to 3 lines	
8" x 8" brick	\$200	Inscription limits: 15 characters per line (including spaces & punctuation), 1 to 6 lines	

Inscription on 4" x 8" brick (print):

Inscription on 8" x 8" brick (print):

Please call (309)736-6601 with questions or for more information.

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Summer Meetings:

Thursday, June 26; Thursday, July 23; and

Thursday, August 28; at 6:30 pm

Bethany for Children & Families 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265

Located two blocks east of the I-74 exit at 7th Avenue — turn right at 18th Street.

Please call Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, for information and further directions.

<p>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Helping Heavy Hearts—Grief Support Group</p>	<p>We are a support group for people who have suffered a tragic loss of life whether a child, sibling, or other. We are great at listening and offer tender shoulders when you contact us. We are flexible to meet any time of day or night. Death needs no appointment and neither do you. We are not professional counselors, but we do have a degree in life experiences. Please contact Kirby White at 563.271.5908 or kombo100@msn.com.</p>
<p>Rick's House of Hope</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)</p>	<p>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 Waggnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, 563.843.3655 or at there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org.</p>
<p>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)</p>	<p>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 laura@secondreformedchurch.net.</p>
<p>SHARE</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Loving Listeners</p>	<p>If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):</p> <p>Michelle Curtis 309.644.0486 Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 or Kay Miller 309.738.4915 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com Kirby White 563.271.5908 or kombo100@msn.com</p>

Some things I've learned in the last nine years

Grief doesn't leave us; it only abates, even if only for a short period of time. That doesn't mean we don't feel "better" as the years go on, it means that grief is still a real and understandable factor. The heart simply cannot go on grieving as we have done in the early stages of the loss of our loved one without giving out. We have an innate sense of survival - even if we don't wish it.



Grief is somewhat like the tide. One of my favorite things to do is to sit on the rocks in Maine and watch the tide come in and go out. I never realized until recently that as the tide comes in, I feel euphoric and anticipate the full tide. Then as the tide starts to recede, I start to feel uneasy and then when the tide is low, I feel empty. Now I can relate this to my grief. At times, I look forward to certain events and have a euphoric feeling – then as the event passes, emptiness! My daughter is no longer on this earth.

I've learned that laughter has its place. It's a great escape – but then I must come back to reality. Proverbs 14:13 says it well – "Laughter can conceal a heavy heart; when the laughter ends, the grief remains."

I've learned that there are people who just can't understand what we are going through – it's no particular fault of theirs. They just don't know how to relate to us. On the other hand, there are people who are understanding, compassionate and will shed a tear with us and give us a hug.

I've learned to put limits on myself. Grieving is hard work - it wears you down after a while. I now know it's OK to say "no" and to mean it and stick by that decision. It really doesn't matter what other people think.

Nine years ago, I didn't even know there was such an organization as "The Compassionate Friends." If I had known, I couldn't have related. Now I do, and I commiserate with each of you and also thank all of you who have become my friends. I know we all wish we didn't have a reason to be here. I go through that feeling twice a month when I'm getting ready to come here – but I thank God that we are now all together and that we have this safe place to come to.

Bonnie Corbett
TCF/Rochester, NY
In memory of her daughter,
Kelly Lynne Forrest

National Conference

Chicago will be the site of the 37th TCF National Conference on July 11-13, 2014. "Miles of Compassion through the Winds of Hope" is the theme of this year's event which will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, just minutes from the airport.

Early registration for the conference is \$90 for adults, \$40 for children (9-17), and \$40 for full-time college students. After June 6 registration will be higher.

The Hyatt Regency O'Hare is now accepting reservations for the National Conference. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 888.421.1442.

Please mention The Compassionate Friends when reserving your room. Please visit Rosemont's website, www.rosemont.com, for information on local area dining and activities.

Volunteers are needed for this very special conference. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Mary Seibert, Chicago National Conference Chairperson, k_m_seibert@yahoo.com or Ashley Larsen, National Conference Volunteer Committee Chairperson, aflarsen86@yahoo.com.

Sponsorships are available. For additional information, please contact the National Office.



The Secret of TCF's Success is Simple: As seasoned grievors reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward, and both are helped to heal.

To Our New Members: Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But, you have nothing to lose, and much to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you find the right person or just the right words spoken that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Members Further Down The Grief Road: We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting, we have new parents. Think back . . . what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF.

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.



WHAT IS PROJECT 52?

Project 52 was founded by three men on a mission trip to Honduras in August 2006. The men, Dustin Blythe, Bill Clark, and Pastor John Dawson, were total strangers but were seated next to each other on the plane. The trio quickly forged a friendship that week.

As they learned more about each other and served the poor of Honduras, their experience ignited them to dream about how they could help others. On August 19, 2006, as they sat together on the flight home, Dustin, Bill and John bounced ideas off each other and agreed they would form a charity to serve others when they got back. They just didn't know what that charity looked like yet.

Unbeknownst to them, upon arrival back in Omaha one of them would receive devastating news that would change all of their lives forever. During the flight home and hundreds of miles away, Dustin's son, Treye Blythe, had been murdered. Treye was 18 at the time and had been at a house party. He was tragically stabbed to death when he tried to pull a friend out of a fight. Treye lost his life trying to help a friend he barely knew. Despite this devastating loss, Dustin, Bill, and Pastor John continued to work on their dream of helping others. The name "Project 52" came about one night when Bill was looking at a picture of Treye wearing his football jersey. His number was 52.

The idea of who the charity could serve came shortly after Treye's death: Dustin's friends planted a red maple tree in the Blythe backyard, and friends of Treye's mom, Lisa, also planted a tree in memory of Treye. These gifts inspired the idea to serve grieving families by honoring the departed and blessing those left behind.

The group soon learned that 52 was the perfect number, as they wanted to help others 52 weeks a year— not just once a year on a mission trip or at Christmas. And of course Psalm 52 is perfect in light of the Trees to Remember Program — "But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever."

"Losing a child is the worst experience a parent can face. As a living memorial to a dear family member lost, we donate and plant trees to the families who have lost a loved one. While our focus is on families who have lost children, we also donate and plant trees for children who have lost parents. While we understand that a tree won't fill the void of your loss, we do hope as you watch it grow and change with the seasons, that it brings peaceful thoughts of your loved one.

If you know of a family who has lost a child and wish to nominate/donate a tree please go to their website: Trees to Remember Program (TRP) - <http://www.p52website.com>.



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265

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Rock Island, Illinois

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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.