The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November 2015

Volume XXVIII, Number 9

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I was going through some files and found this article I wrote for the newsletter in 1994. I think it still applies to the grief process even 21 years after the fact, so I wanted to share it with you.

Bereaved siblings bear some special burdens. Their role in the family changes. Often they face real or imagined guilt for things said or done or not said or done. Things at home are changed significantly because of their missing sibling, their parents' grief and their own grief and fears. Parents often become overprotective. Friends don't really understand. Younger children have trouble understanding what dead really means. A few months' after our daughter's death our son requested we make a trip to the funeral home so he could see Anna again. We had to explain many time to try to help him understand an event we didn't understand ourselves.

At a time when your resources to give are at their lowest, your surviving children probably need you the most. At a time when you have no answers, they have many questions. At a time when you want to resign from life, they need you to participate in life with them. Together with love, understanding and patience on both sides your family will survive.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

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A Solitary Journey

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that other people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again. ~ **Helen Steiner Rice**

The melody of the child who played upon the piano of my life will never be played quite that way again, but I must not close the keyboard and allow the instrument to gather dust.

I must seek out other artists of the spirit, new friends who will help me find the music of life again, creating new tunes and harmonies to enhance the melody which will always sing in my heart.

Carl Cavin, TCF/Lavonia, Michigan

Grief Can Be a Roller Coaster

Instead of a series of stages, we might also think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, the lows may be deeper and longer. The difficult periods should become less intense and shorter as time goes by, but it takes time to work through a loss. Even years after a loss, especially at special events such as a family wedding or the birth of a child, we may still experience a strong sense of grief.

Hospice Foundation of America

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

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.
http://www.quadcitytcf.org

Thoughts for Thanksgiving

When you lose someone you love and are grieving, Thanksgiving Day feels burdensome and painful. When a brain tumor took away our precious Katie's life, I dreaded that holiday. For seven years we served no rutabagas because they were Katie's favorite vegetable. The thought of their seasonal aroma wafting through our home without her in it was too much to bear.

I don't share this part of me today to make you sad. I share it because you are my extended family and I am yours – we are all fellow travelers. During our lifetimes we will lose people or they will lose us because that's just the way the cycle of life goes.

When we suffer loss we question if we will ever overcome the pain of its paralyzing grief. We think we won't survive and we doubt we can ever feel happy again. Even poor Charlie Brown had doubts, "I think I'm losing control of the whole world," he once sighed. Giving thanks seems counterintuitive, too, when we only feel like crying. But we can give thanks and we can go on. Here are a few suggestions on how to go about it.

- Make the conscious decision to live. That means you get out of bed every day and put your feet down on the floor. "Thank you for my feet" even if they don't feel like walking.
- Allow yourself private time and space to quietly listen to songs that were important to your loved one and cry some more; sigh some more; but then, switch to a different kind of music to distract yourself.
- Do something active such as taking a walk and meditating on your specific pain. Have a little talk with the beloved person you lost and allow your tears to flow; they are healing you.
- Write your longings for your beloved in a private journal; expressing your feelings is crucial for your journey through grief and sorrow.
- Go to someone else's home this year or to a movie instead if you don't feel like cooking – normal has been redefined for you. If you have children or grandchildren, hug them. Children don't always understand death but they understand life and it will rub off, I promise.
- Turn toward your mate or friends for consolation, not against them.
- Remember, the stages of grief and loss – denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance are particularly intensified during holidays and that includes Thanksgiving, so consciously reflect more on your many present blessings and less so on your sorrow and losses. Our Katie told me more than once that someone else always has it worse and she was right.
- Pray for the strength and courage to accept your now life then pray some more. Meditate, do yoga, walk. Ask others to help you – friends, sensitive family members, a bereavement counselor or spiritual advisor. Yes, I know it's hard, I am not speaking in the abstract here; I am with you every step of the way.
- Consider all the other people in your life who love and depend on you. They need and want you there physically, emotionally and spiritually this Thanksgiving even if you are sad. Why? Because they love you and they want to give you an extra hug. We all need those extra hugs when we are hurting.

My friends, the Creator has planted an abundance of love and mercy in your heart for your loss. And while yes, we must surrender to the physical absence of our beloved, we also trust with all our soul that they are at peace now and we will be given the grace to find peace, too, and the courage to make this Thanksgiving Day and every day matter.

Mary Jane Hurley Brant

DONATE

Love Gifts

As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from the newsletter, they often wish to make a **Love Gift to help with the work of our chapter**. This is a meaningful way to remember a beloved child.

Thank you to:

Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in memory of their niece, Beth 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.**

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 sharing with another experiencing a similar loss. Co-moderators, Cathy Seehuetter and Donna Adams, welcome you to this special closed page.

TCF's Facebook Page is a proven support area for bereaved family members to come and talk about their grief. Stop by and visit with some of our more than 120,000 Facebook members.

Please join our TCF/USA Facebook family. Tell us about your child, sibling, grandchild, or other loved one and find support in the words and concern of others. Check out the Discussion Boards! Every day we also provide thought provoking questions, grief quotes, and links to grief stories, as well as TCF news, such as updates on the National Conference, Worldwide Candle Lighting, and other TCF programs.

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	*We Need Not Walk Alone* 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.

The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden

5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, 61265

What has been absent in the ministry and mission of The Compassionate Friends here in the Quad Cities is a place of solace that has only the affiliation of a shared and common loss where grieving parents from our two state area can come to remember who they have lost. This is the vision of and need for the **Angel of Hope Memorial Garden.** It is a place that grieving Iowa and Illinois parents can sit in communion with other grieving parents who alone can say, "*I know how you feel, I also have lost a child."*

In the Quad Cities, in the Moline Memorial Cemetery, the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden has taken form. The wing-shaped planters rise from the earth flanking the two sides of the central circle. **There in time to come, the Quad Cities' Angel of Hope will one day stand**.

In the area before the angel lie the inscribed bricks that spell out the names of local children who have died before their time, remembered by parents, siblings, grandparents, and relatives who daily live with the absence of a loved child. These stones are available to parents, siblings, and families who would like to remember a deceased child, adult-child, sibling, niece, nephew, or grandchild. **The order form is found on page 7** or go to the TCF website, http://www.quadcitytcf.org and download the order form.

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.
Mail your complete form to: Angel of Hope Memorial Garden, c/o Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265.

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Upcoming Meetings:

Thursday, November 19, 2015, 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.

Candle Lighting Service is on December 3, 2015, at 6:30 pm

The next regular meeting is January 21, 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 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.
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)	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-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 ♥ Kirby White 563.271.5908 kombo100@msn.com ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoeartb3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvechio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotamil.com ♥ Gina Glassford 309.517.3664 citrgs@gmail.com Kay, Kirby, Doug, Rosemary, Judy, and Gina are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don't feel alone.

Challenge and Change

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we also grieve for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun loving but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the old us too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when a child dies. We wonder, our families wonder – when will he come out of it? Will we make it through the long sleep? What hues will we show when we emerge? If you've never watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of the cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy - but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the new us. When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from the cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge. Then we can say proudly: "I have survived against overwhelming odds." Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give me hope that I can be happy. I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again.

Sherry Mutchler, TCF/Appleton, Wisconsin

Just Flow with the Season and Take Care of Yourself

We're well into November and it's almost time to take the "January pill." After Tricia died, I decided I'd invent a pill you could take the week before Thanksgiving and, when you came to, it would be January. I'm still working on the invention. In the meantime, I know many of you are already dreading the approaching holidays.

The true spirit and meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas are not necessarily exemplified by some of our "traditions." You are re-evaluating many aspects of your life so let this also apply to the coming holidays. You will not always feel as you do now. You will find joy in holiday activities, but maybe not in all things you once thought so very important.

Flow with the season and with your sadness, knowing strength will come as you work with what you can do without overtaxing yourself. Resolve to be as generous with your energy as you can and as selfish as you have to be to protect the emerging person you will become as a result of your loss.

This person can be truly beautiful and loving because of what you have learned through grief. You will miss your child; no magic potion can wipe the pain away. Enjoy what you can - you deserve some pleasure. And may some measure of peace overtake you before this year ends.

Elizabeth B. Estes, TCF/ Augusta, Georgia

It's Okay

It's okay,
To cry,
To not cry,
To feel guilty,
To not feel guilty,
To be angry,
To stop being angry,
To seek answers,
To stop seeking answers,
To feel responsible,
To feel sorry for yourself,
To be mad at your child,
To feel misunderstood,
To reach out for help,
To let out your pain,
To care what others think,
To not care what others think,
To let go of your child's death,
To embrace your child's life,
To lose your expectations,
To grieve anyway you want,
To give yourself a break,
To believe in signs,
To stop hating,
To forgive,
To smile without guilt,
To find joy,
To heal,
To begin to live again,
To laugh,
To love yourself,
It's okay; it's all okay.

From *We Need Not Walk Alone*

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.

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
The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)
TCF – Loss of a Grandchild

Candlelight Memorial Service

Thursday, December 3, 2015
at 6:30 p.m.
Bethel Assembly of God Church
3535 38th Avenue,
Rock Island, Illinois

The Chapter's Candlelight Memorial Service is for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings who would like to have his or her child(ren) remembered on this night. You may bring your own candle or use one we have. Please bring a picture of your child to the service as well. All family members are invited. A time of fellowship will follow the service.

If you cannot attend and would like a candle lit in your child's memory, please complete and return this form to Doug Scott, c/o Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, 61265.

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 5:30 p.m. or help with the clean up after the service.

If you have any questions or want more information, please call Doug Scott at 563.370.1041.

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

Bethany
for Children & Families

1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265

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Return Service Requested

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.