

# *The Compassionate Friends*

*Quad City Area Chapter*

*Supporting Family After a Child Dies*

November - December 2024

Volume XXXVII, Number 9

Dear Compassionate Friends,

**The English** word “comfort” comes from a Latin word meaning “**make strong together.**”

This is what the Compassionate Friends is all about. Reaching out to comfort others who have experienced similar grief to our own because we have all lost a beloved child or children. The credo of the Compassionate Friends contains the following statement:

*We are all seeking and struggling to build a  
future together as  
We reach out to each other in love,  
And share the pain as well as the joy,  
Share the anger as well as the peace,  
Share the faith as well as the doubts,  
And help each other to grieve as well as to grow.  
We need not walk alone.*

Together we grow strong. We learn to live, laugh, love again. We find purpose and meaning in life and in time you are able to reach out your hand to ease the burden of others who are new in their grief. We are the Compassionate Friends.

Those of us who have worked through our grief and found there is future are the ones who must meet others in the valley of darkness and bring them to the light.”

*Rev. Simon Stephens, founder TCF*

Sincerely,  
Carol and Jerry Webb



Self-care isn't just drinking water and going to sleep early. Self-care is taking a break when things become overwhelming, saying no to things you do not want to do, allowing yourself to cry, asking for help from those around you, doing things that make you happy.

The Daily Reminders

So I am glad, not that my loved one has gone,  
But that the earth she laughed and lived on was my earth too.  
That I had known and loved her,  
And that my love I'd shown.  
Tears over her departure?  
Nay, a smile that I had walked with her a little while.

From Barbara Bush, in memory of their daughter, Robin



As bereaved parents, we often wonder if anyone remembers our child. Life goes on around us, and after a time it seems that we are the only ones who still miss his presence and feel his absence. It begins to seem that our child lived and died without anyone noticing. But no one lives, however briefly, who doesn't affect the lives of many people. Don't be afraid to ask others to share a memory they have of your child. You might find some real treasures in unexpected places

Linda Moffatt  
TCF, St. Louis, MO

How I struggled that first Thanksgiving after Wade died to see how in the world I could possibly be thankful. The idea came to me to separate the two - what I could never be thankful for from those things for which I was still thankful in spite of the tragedy that had come. I wrote my two lists on paper, and it helped!

Janet Reindle, TCF NW  
Chapter, Houston, TX

### 3 C's to Cope with the Holidays

Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, Ramadan, Kwanza, and New Year's Day are annual holidays that can be a very difficult time for people who have experienced the death of a loved one. Memories of good times and togetherness at the holiday season serve to remind us of our loss. Watching others who are feeling thankful and are celebrating when we feel overwhelmed, lonely, or sad can be very painful. Holidays force us to realize how much our lives have been changed by the loss of our loved one. Particularly in the first year, many bereaved are left with having to develop new holiday rituals and traditions.

The first step in coping with grief at the holidays is to acknowledge that the first holiday season is difficult and then to prepare for it in advance by making specific plans and obtaining the support that you need. Remember too, that sometimes anticipation of a holiday can be more difficult than the day itself.

**Choose.** During the holidays it is easy to drift into activities that increase our pain. But we do have choices. We can decide what activities we wish to participate in, who we want to be with and what we want to do.

**Communicate.** It is important that we discuss our choices with others, especially those who are affected by them. They have needs as well. Their ways of dealing with grief may be different.

**Compromise.** There is no right or wrong way to grieve. When we communicate, we may find that our feelings and needs and the very ways that we cope, will differ. We need to find space for compromise.

**-Hospice of Orange and Sullivan  
Counties, New York**

### Thankful Heart

Did you know that it is possible to be thankful even though your son or daughter has died? There are many blessings in everyday things that we all take for granted and just assume should be ours. We can become thankful for these things and make it become part of our life; our new life we are given in our children's death. In this a healing can take place. I'm not saying it's easy. Sometimes, in fact, it is very hard. But, maybe it is time to take a look at things differently and be thankful for them. A thank you may not always come from the heart but rather from the head. It may not always be spontaneous, but sometimes require a deliberate effort. Sometimes I can end up changing my whole attitude by forcing myself to think up something, however small, to be thankful for. I can start out feeling down and depressed and bring myself up into a much more pleasant frame of mind. Just as people grieve differently, there are not set rules. What to be thankful for can vary from person to person. I generally start with little things and work my way up. A new life has formed within me as a result of my daughter's dying, and I vow to make it a positive change - one of growth in respect to her life and as a tribute to her. I'm thankful for her, for what she's meant to me and for what her dying has meant to me. Yes, I miss her and think of her every day and sometimes wonder what it would be like to have her here. I imagine all the joy that I'm missing because she's not here. I feel the pain of her absence. It would be better and I'd rather have her here, of course. Sometimes I think it's unfair and miss her more and more each day. There is a hurt that will never go away completely until I see her again. But, at the same time, I can be thankful for things I do have. If I can only think of just one little thing each day and think about that, as the days go by, my list will grow and so will I.

**Bart Netzke — TCF New Ulm, MN**

**TCF's Facebook Page** is a proven support area for bereaved family members to come and talk about their grief. Stop by and visit with some of our more than 120,000 Facebook members. **Please join our TCF/USA Facebook family.** Tell us about your child, sibling, grandchild, or other loved one and find support in the words and concern of others. **Check out the Discussion Boards!** Every day we also provide thought provoking questions, grief quotes, and links to grief stories, as well as TCF news such as updates on the National Conference, Worldwide Candle Lighting, and other TCF programs.

**Closed Facebook Groups:** The Compassionate Friends offers several closed Facebook groups to connect with other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. The groups supply support, encouragement, and friendship. Recently added groups include Men in Grief; Loss to Long Term Illness; Loss of a Step Child; Loss of a Child with Special Needs.

## The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter

A complimentary issue of the National Newsletter is sent to bereaved families who contact the office at The Compassionate Friends, Inc., 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI 48393, (877)969-0010.

**email:**

NationalOffice@compassionatefriends.org

**Website:** [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Visit the **sibling resource** page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). It is also available to read online without charge.



**e-Newsletter Now**

**Available!** An e-Newsletter is now available from the National Office! The monthly e-Newsletter contains notes and happenings of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.

## About The Compassionate Friends

**The Compassionate Friends** is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Founded in England in 1969, the first U.S. chapter was organized in 1972. Since then, 635 chapters have been established. The current Quad City Chapter was formed in 1987 (<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>).

**TCF National Office**

48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808

Wixom, MI 48393

Toll Free (877)969-0010

TCF National Website:

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**Mission Statement**

The mission of The Compassionate Friends Quad City Area Chapter is that 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.

**For the Newly Bereaved** - In the early minutes, days, weeks, months and even years of grief, we find ourselves in all consuming grief and pain beyond description.

We find it difficult to carry on our everyday lives or to think of little except our children's death.

Even our once wonderfully happy memories, shared with our children while they lived, now bring us pain for a time.

Bereaved parents do not "get over" the death of their children nor "snap out of it" as the outside world seems to think we can and should. The death of our children is not an illness or a disease from which we recover. It is a life altering change with which we must learn to live.

With the death of our children we are forced to do the "impossible," build a new life and discover a "new normal", for ourselves and our families in a world that no longer includes our beloved children. It is important for newly bereaved parents to know that they will experience a wide and often frightening variety of intense feelings after the death of their child.

It is also important for newly bereaved parents to understand and know that all of the feelings you experience are very natural and normal under the circumstances. Equally important for you to know and believe is that, as much as you cannot possibly believe it, you will not always feel this powerful and all consuming grief.

But right now you must follow the instincts of your soul and allow your bodies and hearts to grieve. The grief resulting from your child's death cannot be skirted over, around or under. You must go through it in order to come out on the other side.

**Shirley Blakely Curle, CF, Central AR**



I put up  
all the  
kids'

stockings, including Justin's. And on Christmas Eve, after everyone is asleep, I sit in the living room with only the tree lights on and write Justin a letter. After I am done writing him I put it in his stocking. This has become our time together. This year there will be five letters in his stocking. Maybe, in years to come on that Christmas Eve night I will open them and Justin and I could share them all. But for now I am still writing.

**From the website Helpful  
Holiday Ideas - [http://  
www.angelabode.com/  
holidayideas.html](http://www.angelabode.com/holidayideas.html)**



**The Annual Candle Lighting Memorial  
Service**

**Friday, December 6, 2024  
at 7:00 p.m.**

**Angel of Hope  
Memorial Garden**



**The service will be held at the Mausoleum  
(south of the Angel of Hope Memorial)  
in the Moline Memorial Park Cemetery  
5001 34th Avenue  
Moline, Illinois**

The doors open at 6:00 p.m., and the ceremony will  
begin at 7:00 p.m.

## Little Things Mean A Lot

The words, "little things mean a lot," took on an entirely different meaning when my husband and I received a candle from one of his friends shortly after the death of our two sons. This thoughtful gift began the meaningful ritual of lighting a candle each evening during the dinner hour, and symbolized that nothing will ever extinguish the light of Erik and David that we carry with love in the depths of our hearts. I am quite sure that this friend never imagined that his gift would provide such lasting comfort. Such a seemingly little thing – but it has meant so much.

One of the lessons grief has taught me is how important it is to remember those who have lost a loved one by death – whether it is a spouse, child, sibling, parent or significant other – at any time, but especially during the holiday season. I reasoned that if I had been comforted by receiving a candle gift, perhaps others might be comforted as well.

And so another tradition was born, more or less, by happenstance. As I became aware of those who have experienced the death of a loved one during the year, I noted the loss. Then, as the holiday season approached, I wrote to each of them, acknowledged their changed lives, shared a reflection about their loved one if I had known them personally, and included a candle as a symbol of everlasting love.

Notes of gratitude told how this simple gesture had warmed hurting hearts. Surprise was a common response. Some commented at how touched they were that someone outside of their family and/or who did not know them personally had acknowledged their changed lives. Others wrote that receiving the note and candle "out of the blue" months after their loved one had died, had comforted them – especially if they were beginning to feel alone in their grief. Several told how they lighted the candle as they wrote their Christmas cards or how they planned to burn the candle during their

Christmas dinner. A couple shared that they were going to adopt the idea (just as I had adopted it) and send candles to others who were grieving the death of a loved one.

The most visible candle lighting remembrance is likely The Compassionate Friends' Worldwide Candle Lighting Event. Taking advantage of the technology available through the Internet and acknowledging the multiple emotions and cultural pressures associated with the holiday season, the second Sunday in December was chosen for this commemoration. Just like the handoff of a baton in a relay race, the lighting of the candles begins at the International Dateline at 7:00 p.m., the candles stay lit for one hour and are extinguished just as the bereaved parents in the next time zone light their candles. The ceremony ends when all the bereaved parents in all of the time zones have lit their candles. Visualizing an untold number of candles circling and illuminating the globe in a 24 hour wave of love lights contributes to a powerful feeling among bereaved families and the assurance that they are not alone in their grief.

An important benefit of this kind of remembrances is that friends and family members are given an opportunity to talk about the deceased with the bereaved family. Those who intended to share their memoirs at "the right time," but never did because "the time had never seemed right," are given a second chance to act on their intentions of weeks, months, or years past and share their reflections, stories, and memories about the one who died.

There are other meaningful ways to break the silence, to give the bereaved an opportunity to give a voice to his or her grief experience – maybe it is by sending a candle, a note of reflection, a flower, a phone call, or some other meaningful symbol. Seemingly a little thing, but it can mean a lot whether the gift is given or received, not only during the holiday season, but anytime.

**Nita Aasen, St. Peter, Minnesota -  
*Bereavement Magazine***

# Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

## **The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Meeting**

**November 21, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.**

**Bethany for Children & Families**

**1701 River Drive, in Moline, Illinois**

**(Please park in the east lot and go to the second floor.)**

**The next chapter meeting is on**

**December 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. at the**

**Moline Memorial Cemetery**

**5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois**

**January 23, 2025, is the first chapter meeting of the new year.**

### **The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine**

Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the Snyder and Hallenbaugh Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa, Chapter. The contact person is Tom Summit, 563.506.0103.

### **Rick's House of Hope**

Rick's House of Hope serves children, ages three to 18, and family members from the Quad Cities and nearby counties. We serve those with grief, loss, or trauma issues. Death of a loved one and divorce are common; however, any sort of traumatic event or family change would fit our criteria, such as: bullying, teen dating victimization/harassment, crime victims, and other needs. The continuous groups are Family Together for all members of the family on Wednesday nights 5:00-7:00 p.m. and a Teen Night on Thursdays 5:00-7:30 p.m. All meetings are held at 852 Middle Road (Vera French), in Bettendorf, Iowa, and are free. Rick's House of Hope also does individual counseling/therapy. For more information, contact Lynne Miller, Program Manager, at millerl@verafrenchmhc.org or go to [www.rhoh.org](http://www.rhoh.org).

### **SHARE**

A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. 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](mailto:chalyn@shareqc.com) or [www.shareqc.com](http://www.shareqc.com).

### **Phone Support**

If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):

♥ Doug Scott, 563.370.1041, [dns0826@gmail.com](mailto:dns0826@gmail.com)

♥ Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, [shoearth4@gmail.com](mailto:shoearth4@gmail.com)

♥ Judy Delvecchio, 563.349.8895, [delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com](mailto:delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com)

Doug, Rosemary, and Judy are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don't feel alone.

## 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>TCF's Grief Related Resources</b>	<p>There are resources on elements of grief with well-known experts in the field. To view the resources, go to <a href="https://www.opentohope.com/tv/">https://www.opentohope.com/tv/</a>.</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>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>Looking 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="https://bereavedparentsusa.org">https://bereavedparentsusa.org</a>.</p>
<b>Our Newsletter</b>	<p>Published one to three times per year, when there is content to make a balanced issue. It usually contains 30 pages of personal stories and updates, poetry, subsequent birth announcements, and any new topical articles and information. Currently it is being distributed electronically (PDF), but a printout is available to anyone without email access. To request a sample copy, please email Jean Kollantai at <a href="mailto:climb@climb-support.org">climb@climb-support.org</a>. Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.</p>

## Holidays

November, December, and January – some of the toughest months to get through when you’re newly bereaved (and sometimes when you’re not so newly bereaved). Changing seasons. A sense of foreboding about the dreaded march toward the cold winds of winter. And around every corner, the signs and sounds and smells of the family holidays to come. For some, the signs may be comforting, but in the beginning of a grief journey, for most, they seem to make an already challenging life even more challenging.

During the 12 holiday seasons that I have lived without my daughter, I have been fortunate to have been a part of our support group, where other bereaved parents have shared their holiday lessons with me: It’s going to be tough. (For a few, it will not.) Sometimes acknowledging that right up front seems to help. Make some plans – they seem to help many get through the special days. But, feel free to abandon the plans if you can’t go through with them when the time comes. You CAN and WILL make it through. As we all know, when our worlds stopped, everyone else’s kept right on moving. And so it is with holidays and seasons. While they may seem to last forever, they won’t. For many of us, the anticipation of the special days is sometimes far worse than the days themselves. Allow yourself to feel whatever you feel. Friends in our group repeat this message often because as bereaved parents we feel certain that we must

be losing it when we experience such a wide range of emotions during the holidays. But many have said that we need to acknowledge, not deny or judge, our feelings – whatever they are – and let them flow.

Take care of yourself and do only what you can do. Don’t let others set your schedule or detail your day’s activities.

As hard as it is for a parent to do, you may need to put yourself first this time around. Your world has changed, and you are allowed to establish new ground rules.

Bring your deceased children with you into the holiday season. From lighting special candles on special holidays in memory of your children, to giving special gifts that you think your child may have given to siblings or grandparents – or gifts that are in memory of or have a connection to your child. Including and remembering our children in the holidays can be quite comforting before and after the holidays.

Good luck to each of you as enter this holiday season! Our support group welcomes you to our meetings in November, December, and January – we understand how you feel and want to hear how you’re doing.

**From the Blue Grass TCF Newsletter**



# Particularly at <sup>this</sup> <sub>time</sub>

of year when families are celebrating the holidays, the sudden small reminders and the large ones too, come to plague us. We thought we were doing so well, and then there we are, crying as though our loss was



yesterday.

We need to take heart. If our loss was recent, the sadness is understandably overwhelming. If it was a while ago and we thought we were over the worst, then perhaps this time it will not take so long for the quiet joy to reassert itself, the spiritual presence to return in its quiet and infinitely precious way.

Our life runs in seasons, as does our grief. Some seasons are long, some short. But if we are resolute in our efforts to be present to the moment, even as we know this moment will give way to another, we can be assured at these times of renewed pain that things will get better.

**Martha Whitmore  
Hickman, *Healing After Loss***

## Love Gifts

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

**Thank you to Steven and Diane Birdsley, in memory of their son, Scott.**

**Donations** are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to our bereaved families, for the materials shared at our meetings, and/or to purchase books for our library. Thank you to the many families who provide love gifts so the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue. **If you would like to send a donation or love gift, please send it or to our Chapter Treasurer, Laurie Boyce-Steinhauser, 2946 Summertree Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722.** Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. **Your gifts are tax deductible.**

### Contact the Editors

**If** you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents and would like to share it...

**If** you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, please send us your new address. Because we send the newsletter bulk rate, the post office will not forward it...

**If** you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, send his/her/their name and address.

**If** you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if you prefer to receive this newsletter via email...

**Please contact: Jerry and Carol Webb**  
390 Arbor Ridge  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022



## *The Compassionate Friends*

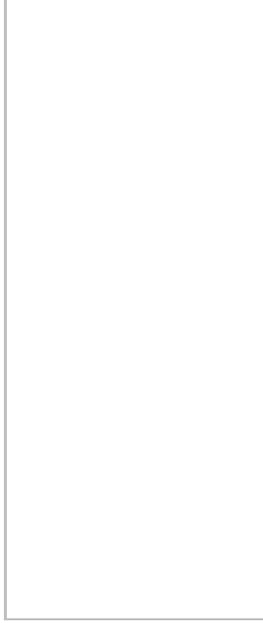
*Quad City Area Chapter*  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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.***