



The Compassionate Friends
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January-February 2025

Volume XXXVIII, Number 1

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Grief is a normal response to losses in life. Just as a cast enables our broken bones to mend, so does the process of mourning give emotional wounds the time and environment they need in order to heal.

The idea of mourning is extremely old. In the ancient Greek language, the root meaning of the word is “to care.” To grieve and be burdened with sorrow is only part of the mourning process. Mourning is the way in which we adjust our lives from what “was” to “what is.”



Glen W. Davidson, a national healthcare leader and author of *Living With Dying*, says, “Mourning is a process that takes you on the journey from where you were before loss to where you will be as you struggle to adapt to the change in your life.” Quite simply, mourning is the restructuring of life.

For 38 years, many grieving parents, organized in 1988 as the QC Chapter of the Compassionate Friends, have shared their grief journey, lighting the way for those who followed. Monthly meetings and this newsletter are both ways we have worked together to grieve, grow, and provide hope and healing for other bereaved families.

Beginning with the November-December 2024 newsletter, we are publishing every other month. Meetings will continue on a monthly basis with the dates for both months noted in each newsletter. Thanks to Bethany for Children & Families which provides assistance with newsletter publication and the site for The Compassionate Friends’ monthly meetings. ***We are not alone in our grief.***

Sincerely,
Carol and Jerry Webb

Our children were
still are
and always will be
part of who we are
what we are
and what we do
today
tomorrow
and forever.

Ken Pinch, TCF, Canada

Quietly

I missed you quietly
today. So quietly that no
one noticed.

I missed you as I climbed
out of bed and as I

brushed my teeth; when I waited at the lights on the drive into
work and as I heard the rain outside my window.

I missed you as I ordered lunch and as I kicked off my shoes when
I got home; as I switched off the lights and climbed into bed for
the night.

I missed you without tears or noise or fanfare.

But oh how I felt it.

I felt it in the morning, at lunchtime, in the evening, and at night.

I felt it as I woke, as I waited, as I worked.

I felt it at home, on the road, in the light, in the dark, in the rain.

I felt it in every one of those moments, each one sitting heavier
and heavier as the weight of me missing you kept growing and
growing.

Yes, I missed you so quietly today.

But I felt it so loudly.

There are few places where
many words are more unfit,
than in the presence of grief.
A warm pressure of the
hand, a word or two of
strong sympathy, and a quiet
heart's prayer to God for
help will give the truest
comfort.

J.R. Miller



Even in laughter,
the heart may
ache, and rejoicing
may end in grief.

Proverbs 14:13 NIV

Becky Hemsley, 2024

A Priceless Gift

The final gift bestowed by any loved one who is torn from your grasp is a clear and unforgettable awareness of what is permanent...and what is temporary. My second book, which is called *Packing for the Big Trip*, was written because conversations I had with people about the first book made it so crystal clear that the reason we are all so completely blind-sided by death is that we live in a “death-denying society,” a society where the death rate is 100 percent, but where no one wants to mention it.

I wrote in *Packing for the Big Trip*, “Every person who dies gives a priceless gift to those who stay behind. That gift is awareness of death and its manifold implications for our lives.” Death awareness is about living. It brings the maturity

we need to live our lives with wisdom and joy...to stop cringing at the thought of eventual death...and start living with the daily enthusiasm of those who are packing for big trip.”

Maybe you are still so close to your child’s death that you are not ready to see that there could ever be anything good to come from it. That’s fine. Maybe you are still wishing you could wring that kid’s neck for leaving you here with all this pain. That’s fine too. But maybe you are beginning to realize that you have new eyes for the upside down values of our culture, that your “death awareness” has given you greater “life wisdom,” that your child's death has given you a gift of life.

Charlie Walton,
author of
When There are No Words

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

Visit the **sibling resource** page at 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

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.

Grief affects a person mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Grief infiltrates a person's thoughts and consumes their energy. Many people describe it as a "fog" that settles in for some time after a person's death.



The Compassionate Friends
Facebook page

The Importance of You

This is the choice we grievers always have. Our precious things have gotten out of our hands and our lives have been broken and weeping is utterly, utterly appropriate; but there comes a time that we either live the rest of our lives in sadness and anger and resentment, or we find by the courage that God gives, and the companionship of compassionate friends, that we do have the strength to stoop over, pick up the pieces, and see what we can make of what is left.

**The Reverend John
Claypool**

Always

Another year passes and we remember:
He would have been two,
She would have been three.
We shed our tears,
And place flowers on their graves,
Even if only in our hearts.

Another year passes and we remember
What seems that the rest of the world
has forgot,
And most would think us mad still to
suffer,
But we know who's foolish and who is
not.

Another year passes and we remember:
She would have been nine,
He would have been ten.
And year after year we'll always
remember
What was and what might have been.

Judith Perry

Hope Defined

After my daughter, Rachael, died in 1992, my husband and I received a letter from the local TCF chapter. Rachael died in March; we went to our first meeting in July. We sat outside in the car, debating whether or not we were even going to go in. We wondered how on earth it could be any help to us in a roomful of people who were all so sad. But we did go in. We sat silent and shell-shocked – as I am sure so many of you did at your first meeting. But as the meeting progressed, we heard other parents tell about their child and about how they were managing on their grief journey. We saw (and felt) the encouragement members gave to one another. We saw and felt the understanding focus that was put on each parent as they spoke of their beloved child.

I don't remember a lot of details about that first meeting, but I do remember thinking as I saw and listened to those who were two, five, and ten years down the road on their grief path that somehow this monstrous event that had overtaken our lives must somehow be survivable, and that these caring people would help me find my way back to life. That night they lent us some hope, and that was a gift beyond measure.

Susan Chan

Survival after your child dies often forces you into stances that are foreign to your nature. It's a time, for instance, when, though you've been encouraged most of your life to fight the inclination to be self-centered, suddenly learning to allow yourself to be selfish becomes a large part of your ability to survive this trauma.

Old habits are hard to break, however, and you often find yourself more concerned with the needs of others on the periphery of your life than with your own. In the meetings and on the phone, it is obvious many parents are trying to make their grief symptoms march to the tune of others' drums. The old caretaker in them wants to continue to take care.

Those of us who are further down the road of grief encourage the more newly bereaved to know how necessary it is for you to put your needs first now. For a while, allow yourself to be selfish, and to be vocal, if necessary, about your right to take care of you and do the things that comfort you before you consider others.

It is your child, your grief, your needs, your survival you're dealing with here. Take care of you, and if that seems selfish and self-centered in the eyes of others – so be it! There'll be plenty of time, after your grief has softened and you've learned how to live more comfortably with this loss, for you to resume some of your old patterns. Hopefully, unselfishness will again be one of them. For right now, though, take time for you, for you're one of the most important people you know.

Mary Cleckley

What Do I Tell My Children?

An incident that happened years ago reminded me once again that coping with my brother's death is a learning process that will continue the rest of my life. I was shopping for a coat when I heard a little boy question his mother, "Why do I have to stay so close?" She answered him with the all-too-familiar answer, "Because." As I drove home, I began to think about the question the little boy asked. Why—only a three-letter word—but such a huge question.

I remember when I was in school that we students needed to understand everything. We were supposed to know how things worked. We were taught to question everything. I nearly drove my Latin teacher crazy with my need to understand the conjugation of verbs. "Why that way?" I kept asking. "It makes no sense!" The teacher never answered why; he just insisted I learn those irregular verbs. He taught me a lot more in class than just Latin. He taught me about life. He taught me that sometimes there is no why, there just is.

That was a difficult lesson to learn. I wonder how I am going to teach it to my children. I know I'll

have to. Someday my children are going to ask where my brother, their Uncle Freddy, is and why he is not with us. What do I say when my children ask me where my brother is? How do I explain something to my children, which I still cannot explain to myself?

How are we, Freddy's family, supposed to explain murder to our children? How do we explain that there are some horrible people in this world? How do we make them understand that there are people that commit horrible acts and not make them afraid of life? How do we let them know their uncle was a good and wonderful man and still is in our hearts and memories? How do we let our children know how much their uncle would have loved them?

How do we do this? Is there a way? Why should I even have to worry about this? Why? Sometimes there is no why, there just is.



Karen Peterson
TCF, Franklin Lakes, NJ



The Angel of Hope Monument, located at the Moline Memorial Cemetery, 5001 34th Avenue in Moline, Illinois, offers grieving parents a way to honor the child who has died. The brick apron in front the Angel of Hope statue is paved with bricks honoring those offspring who have passed. If you would like to purchase a brick, the order form is on the next page with instructions.

Angel of Hope Memorial Brick Order Form

Name			
Address			
City, State, Zip			
Email Address			
Telephone			

4" x 8" Brick	\$100	Inscription Limits: 13 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation)' 1 to 3 lines.
8" x 8" Brick	\$200	Inscription Limits: 13 Characters per line (including spaces and punctuation, 1 to 6 lines.

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

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

Call (309) 781-9074 with questions or for more information.
 Make checks payable to: Angel of Hope Memorial Garden
 Mail your completed order form to:
 Angel of Hope Memorial Garden c/o Christie Hoffman 11618 6th Street, Milan, Illinois 61264

Wintersun



There are those days in winter when your world is frozen into a vision of eternal ice, when earth and air are strangers to each other, when sound and color seem forever gone. There are those days in winter when you feel like dying, when life itself surrenders you to anguish, to total mourning and to endless grief. And

then it happens—from a bitter sky, a timid sun strides to his silent battle against the gray and hostile universe. It changes ice to roses, sky to song. And then it happens that your heart recalls some distant joy, gladness from the past. A slender light, then larger, braver, until your mind returns to hope and peace. Let memories be beauty in your life, like song and roses in the winter sun.

Sascha

New Beginnings

The holidays are behind us. We look to the beginning of a New Year in which we have the opportunity to grow and move through our grief journey unhampered by presents, gatherings, extra demands, and traditions. What will your first steps into the New Year bring to you and how will you achieve it? Will you be helping others? Will you be reaching deep into your soul through therapy to come to a place of peace? Will you be educating yourself about your grief journey by reading the writings of other bereaved parents and professionals? Will you be falling into the embrace of nature by being out of doors and exercising? The choice is ours to make and whatever choice you do make is the right decision for you. Our journey is that – “ours.”

So as you embark on a New Year with emptiness in your heart, look for what gives you comfort and seek ways to find solace in the support of others. Together we can make it and move beyond “making it” into a safe place where we can feel healing energy through remembering the good times and the blessings.

Take care of yourselves.

**Sue Anderson Kirkland
Eastside TCF, WA**

CARRYING OLD MEMORIES INTO A NEW YEAR

Christmas has ended, and the living room still has that unwrapped look. With the festivities now part of future memories, I anticipate the next hurdle: the start of a new year. The TV commercials romanticize champagne toasts illuminated by glowing candles. People make resolutions, hopeful that this brand-new unblemished year will be the one that fuels their successes.

For the parent who has lost a child to death, a new year can be daunting. The first New Year's Day after my son Daniel's death was scary. I wanted to hold onto 1997. Although it was the year he'd lost his battle with cancer and died, it was also the year he'd lived. 1998 would mark the first calendar year without him.

For some reason, the image of an old-fashioned wooden bucket came to me. With this item, I heard the word **carry**. That's it, my newly-bereaved mind said.

The key with a new year is to carry the old into it.

So here we are, on the brink of another year, a new decade, with fresh hopes and dreams. A clean slate. There are many things about 2009 I wish to forgive and forget, but I don't want to ever forget my son.



Each year marks a year further from when I last held him, heard his voice, and saw his smile. I yearn to hug him, tell him how much he's grown, and ask him what he'd like for dinner. My heart feels that distinct hollowness and sorrow that belongs to a mother without her child.

But the bucket I have isn't hollow. It is brimming with memories and fondness, warmed with love and laughter; I hold it tightly.

Just as I carried Daniel's four-year-old memories into 1998, now — thirteen years later — I will continue to carry them. And I will do more than just hold them, I'll let them trickle out, forming their own glow, as I share this special boy with my world. "Wasn't it funny when Daniel called adults redults? Do you remember how he gave stickers away in the hospital, and once when bored made a collage out of baby lotion and glitter?"

Daniel lived, he loved, and I believe he continues to live in Heaven.

So, get yourself a sturdy bucket and carry. Boldly carry the memories into the new year. Along the way, give yourself permission to forgive. Let the memories you recall be the brightest ones. Listen. There is nothing to fear. Listen. Your child's voice can be heard in your heart.

Alice Wisler

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Meeting

January 23, 2025, 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 meetings are on

February 27, 2025, and March 27, 2025

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.
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 or www.shareqc.com.
Phone Support	If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Doug Scott, 563.370.1041, dns0826@gmail.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, shoeartb4@gmail.com ♥ Judy Delvecchio, 563.349.8895, 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

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>
TCF's Grief Related Resources	<p>There are resources on elements of grief with well-known experts in the field. To view the resources, go to https://www.opentohope.com/tv/.</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>
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. https://bereavedparentsusa.org.</p>
Our Newsletter	<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 climb@climb-support.org. Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.</p>

One Woman's Opinion

When a child dies, the surviving parents and siblings of that child are often bewildered by the surge of many emotions such as denial, sadness, anger, guilt, and hopelessness, to name a few. They are also confounded by unexpected confusion, by difficulty in making decisions, and even sometimes by physical and/or mental collapse. Bereavement literature addresses all these hazards so that if one can concentrate on reading material for a few minutes at a time, one becomes aware that all these feelings are normal during the grieving process. One begins to grasp the idea that grief will not be entirely expended in a few weeks or months and sometimes even years, that others have endured before rebuilding their lives to comfortable, enjoyable levels. And while many people are surprised that their grief is so persistent, they also find a kind of comfort in knowing that what they are experiencing is normal, particularly for bereaved parents and siblings.

It's surprising to me that much bereavement literature omits mention of the huge energy drain which comes with grief. If you are newly bereaved and have not yet realized that nearly all your energy is required just to deal with these

many emotions that you are now confronting, then let me assure you that this is the case.

Don't expect yourself to complete projects within the same time frames as you once were able. And if you work outside the home, don't expect to be able to dazzle clients with your usual repartee. It simply takes too much energy just to dress in the morning, to make the simple decision to eat, to stifle tears in public, to keep your anger from inappropriately erupting, etc. There's very little energy left over for anything else. Everything will take longer than you think including grief recovery. You will, however, gradually rediscover yourself and rebuild a new life. Your new life will be a rich and full one in which the memories of your child will no longer produce pain. In fact, those memories will continue to enrich your life. And that's the truth!

Meantime, conserve your energy when and where you can, and allow yourself time to grieve. Remember that those persons who deny (or stifle or stuff) their grief simply delay the process. The quickest way to recovery is straight through the grief, not around it!

Shirley Ottman, TCF, North Texas

The Image of Grief

I am a tree, standing alone in the early winter. I feel cold, empty, gray, and ugly. The winds of grief have ripped away a branch and have left me unbalanced – with a great gaping hole. The sap of my innermost being rushes to the hole to provide a balm for the pain of the open wound. The icy cold rain of my weeping falls through the shaking of my boughs. I continue to sway in the harsh gales of reality, and the keening of the winds are the voice of my heartache. But...

Under the ground there is life. Each root of love, friendship, care, family, and faith is feeding into the trunk, and I know for a certainty that surely spring will come again! The bark of time will cover the rending wound. The scar will always be there, but the drain on my heart will be over. The leaves will burst forth and gently surround the wound with breezes of living memories and promises of life to come. My boughs will be heavy with wonder of living. Nestled near the scarred trunk, secure in the knowledge that God is my refuge and strength, the sweet bird of happiness will sing again.

Anite King
TCF, Hagerstown, MD

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.

Thanks to:

- ♥ **Jerry and Carolyn Webb, in memory of their daughter, Anna.**
- ♥ **Laurie and Bill Steinhauser, in memory of their daughter, Maggie.**

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, or email CarolynPWebb@gmail.com.



The Compassionate Friends

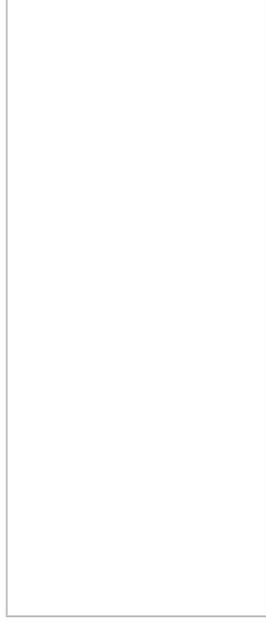
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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.