



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

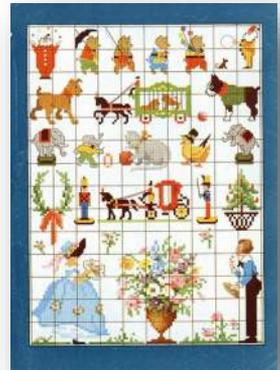
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Dear Compassionate Friends,

“What do I do with my child’s things?” is a dilemma facing most bereaved parents. Each family deals with their children’s belongings in a different way, and each family needs to work together to determine what works best for them.

Several weeks after Anna died, my mother helped me put away her things since our children shared a room. Later, Jerry told me he felt deeply disappointed to have not been part of that process even though keeping the children’s belongings organized was typically my role. For several years I carefully kept all of Anna’s pretty clothes, toys, blankets, etc., but gradually I gave certain things away to special people and loaned much of her wardrobe to my brother for his daughter. Later I enjoyed sharing some of her things with our granddaughter. I still have a few things – a very special blanket, the dress she wore when she was dedicated, her pink hospital T-shirt, her musical pink and white kitten – tangible links to my precious child. Husbands and wives need to talk to each other and work together on these decisions. Include your child’s siblings. They are grieving too. How you choose to handle belongings may have a big impact on them as well. In time you may want to even talk to extended family. My mother asked if she could have the birth sampler I had cross stitched for Anna. It hung on Mom’s bedroom wall until she died. Now it hangs on ours.



Sincerely,
Carol and Jerry Webb

No hurt heals by itself.
So although we do not
choose the ways we are
hurt, we can choose the
ways we will heal.

Lois Wyse

The passage of time alone
does not cause our grief to
end, but its softening touch
helps us to survive.

Wayne Loder

words

instead of saying, "i know what
it feels like," let's say, "i cannot
imagine your heartbreak."

instead of saying, "you're
strong, you'll get through this,
let's say, "you'll hurt, and I'll be
here."

instead of saying, "you look like
you're doing well," let's say,
"how are you holding up today?"

instead of saying, "healing
takes time," let's say, "healing
has no timeline."

instead of saying, "everything
happens for a reason, let's say,
"this must feel so terribly
senseless right now."

and when there are no words
to say at all, you don't need to
try and find some. love speaks
in silences too.

Ullie Kaye Poetry

"Spirit of a Hippie,"

Gary Sturgis, *Surviving Grief*

I never believed I would see another
season change with gladness. I never
believed I would see the world again
without the haze of tears. I never
expected to laugh again. I never felt
my smile would return and feel
natural on my face. I never hoped
for another day when I would not
want to die. I never envisioned a
world that could again be bright and
full of promise. I believed that all
that had passed from me the day
that he died and went away, never
to return. But I was wrong, and I
know that in the fullness of your
grieving, you too will come to
understand that life goes on. That it
can still have meaning, that even joy
can touch your life once more.

Don Hackett, TCF Hingham, MA

The Smell of Spring

The smell of spring is in the air
again, and whether we want to or
not, we find ourselves "hoping" – for
what, we may not always know. The
promise of new life in nature spawns
the hope of new and continuing life
for us too, and somehow we feel a bit
of optimism that we may not have
felt for a long time.

We may try to "reason away" this
surge of hope, but it is there
anyway. Let it happen! Let yourself
feel hope! It is a
natural and God-given
response, a promise of
healing and recovery.

TCF, Monte Vista, CO



When Someone Takes His Own Life

by Norman Vincent Peale

They took toll of his

In many ways this seems the most tragic

form of death. Certainly it can entail more shock and grief for those who are left behind than any other. And often the stigma of suicide is what rests most heavily on those left behind....

And my heart goes out to those who are left behind, because I know that they suffer terribly. Children in particular are left under a cloud of differentness all the more terrifying because it can never be fully explained or lifted. The immediate family of the victim is left wide open to tidal waves of guilt:

"What did I fail to do that I should have done?" "What did I do that was wrong?" To such grieving persons I can only say, "Lift up your heads and your hearts. Surely you did your best. And surely the loved one who is gone did his best, for as long as he could. Remember, now, that his battles and torments are over. Do not judge him, and do not presume to fathom the mind of God where this, one of His children, is concerned."

A few years ago, when a young man died by his own hand, a service for him was conducted by his pastor, the Rev. Weston Stevens. What he said that day expresses far more eloquently than I can, the message that I'm trying to convey. Here are some of his words:

"Our friend died on his own battlefield. He was killed in action fighting a civil war. He fought against adversaries that were as real to him as his casket is real to us. They were powerful adversaries.

energies and endurance. They exhausted the last vestiges of his courage and his strength. At last these adversaries overwhelmed him. And it appeared that he had lost the war. But did he? I see a host of victories that he has won!

"For one thing, he has won our admiration, because even if he lost the war, we give him credit for his bravery on the battlefield. And we give him credit for the courage and pride and hope that he used as his weapons as long as he could. We shall remember not his death, but his daily victories gained through his kindnesses and thoughtfulness, through his love for family and friends, for animals and books and music, for all things beautiful, lovely and honorable. We shall remember not his last day of defeat, but we shall remember the many days that he was victorious over overwhelming odds. We shall remember not the years we thought he had left, but the intensity with which he lived the years that he had. Only God know what this child of His suffered in the silent skirmishes that took place in his soul. But our consolation is that God does know, and understands."

**From TCF/Marin County and
San Francisco Chapters Newsletter,
Summer 2001**

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.

Is It Almost Over?

It's March and winter has still got us in its grip. Just like grief, it seems relentless. Will spring ever come; will I ever feel better? We ask ourselves that question but we never seem to get an answer.

Like winter, grief is long and wears on us. How can we battle the storms that seem to come out of nowhere and cover us with a blanket of despair?

Seasons do change and so do we. Winter is hard work, like our grief, but we do finally see an end in sight. Do we really want to see spring? Will it truly be better? For each and every one of us our spring will come at different times. Not one of us can tell each other when that will be. But I can promise you this, if you battle each new storm as it comes at you, each storm will be less, and you will be stronger to ready for the next one. You will start looking forward to the gentle breezes and the fragrant air. No matter where you are in your winter, please know that we are there to help you survive your storms, and in helping you, we help ourselves battle our own.

Margaret and Vicki

Bittersweet Memories

One of the most precious things to a parent who has lost a child is the memories. Without them, it would be as if their child never was. With them, it is so bittersweet that it can make a parent laugh and cry, rejoice and anguish, touch the sweetness to the lips and taste the salt from the tears.

Memories keep the heart from crushing under the weight of sorrow. They give a parent the chance to be with their child again. They can walk through their memories like they were a movie. When the memories are so vivid, you can almost feel them, touch them, hug them, and kiss them. It is so bittersweet when the reality comes and you realize it is just a memory, a thought, and you are reminded of what you have lost.

If you asked a parent if they would

give up the memories so they did not have to feel the pain of knowing their child is gone, they would tell you no. As painful as it may be, not having the memories or feeling their presence is just as unbearable as losing them.

There is no happy place to go to, but there is a place to be with your child. You know before you step into that realm that it will be painful, but you know that it will be joyful too.

So as we let the memories take us to a time that our child was safe with us, just rest a while until it is time to go, and the next time try not to think of what is gone but what is still in your heart and will always be.

**Vickie Van Antwerp,
TCF Brevard, NC
*We Need Not Walk Alone***

“Pick more daisies”

was the most popular expression in our family. I picked it up from a magazine article about a 94-year-old lady in Kentucky who, when asked what she would do differently if she had her life to live over, responded "I would take more chances; I would eat more ice cream and less beans; I would have more real troubles but fewer imaginary ones; I would climb more mountains; I would swim more rivers, and I would pick more daisies."

Our son, Mark, seized the daisy expression as the theme both for his life and his entrance exam essay at UCLA. It helped him live his brief 18 years; his essay helped him get an academic scholarship.

Daisies became our family flower. They marked our attitude about living. And they marked our son's memorial service. After it was over, his

friends and fraternity brothers each threw a daisy



into the ocean. Daisies still mark his grave every week. It has taken me almost two years to return to really thinking about daisies and what that quote by a 94-year-old lady really means. During that time, I made a pretty big mess of

things. I did the best I could, but I was often going through the motions outside, but empty inside. To me, what this quote means is we really do have to pull ourselves together again and go on.

Dr. Charles Heuser, a former pastor at our church, notes "**going through the steps of grief is like walking through the valley and shadow of death. Keep walking, but don't camp there.**"

Our children would not want us to “camp there,” but to go pick more daisies—to somehow live an even more meaningful life in their name. As I go on, I am truly a different person. I don't suffer fools or superficiality very well any more. As one of my best friends said, “...I get tired of beige people.” Yet, I will drop everything to help another bereaved parent. I certainly have more “real troubles and fewer imaginary ones.” But it's OK—I like myself better that way.

And I am returning to embrace life each day again. But this time I am following my heart instead of my expected career. I am taking more chances, climbing more unfamiliar mountains, and picking daisies in huge handfuls.

Mark would want it so.

**In memory of my son, Mark
Rich Edler, TCF South Bay, CA**

Jessie's Keychain

Questions without answers. That's one of the things you learn to deal with when your child dies.

Our daughter Jessica was 14 years old in August 1999 when she went back-to-school shopping with two of her friends. It was beautiful summer day...a car crash was the furthest thing from our minds. However, the 16-year-old driver wasn't paying full attention to the traffic in an intersection and pulled in front of a tractor-trailer. The passenger side of the car where Jessie was seated took the brunt of the hit. Jessie died the next day. And that's when the questions began to bombard us.

Most of the questions dealt with why the crash had occurred and why Jessie had died. But after a few months, we began to ask ourselves what we were going to do to try to make sense of this horrible thing that had happened. Was there any way to stop this type of tragedy from happening again ... at least once? Was there any way to stop another family from experiencing this hell?

In our vulnerable state, we worried about the safety of Jessie's brother and her cousins and all her friends. Christmas and Jessie's birthday were approaching and we wanted to be able to give these kids a reminder-both of Jessie and of the frailty of life.

We came up with the idea of a keychain, hoping that if the kids noticed each time they started the car, they couldn't help but be reminded of those

issues. We designed the keychain and made and distributed 250 to family and friends. We brought a sample to the Highway Safety Task Force in which we had become active; they were intrigued with the idea and helped us pay for the production of thousands more. Now the Motor Vehicle Administration in Frederick, Maryland, offers a key chain to newly licensed drivers after telling them Jessie's story.

In the past 22 months, over 4,000 Jessica Murphy keychains have been distributed. We still don't have any answers, but we have begun to accept that there won't be any. However, one thing we have gained is hope. Hope that at least one child will see Jessie's keychain and will remember to drive more safely. Hope that at least one child will see Jessie's keychain and will remember her and how fragile life really is.

We probably will never know if Jessie's keychain helped save a life... but that doesn't matter. What matters is that the production and distribution of the keychain gave us a positive focus and helped us work through some of our grief. What matters is that maybe someone, somewhere, won't die because the keychain reminded them to slow down, buckle up, and drive defensively. What matters is that we have learned that some questions simply don't have answers.



**Sue and Don Murphy
TCF Frederick, MD**

Will You Get Bitter or Better?

“Instead of complaining that the rose bush is full of thorns, be happy the thorn bush has roses.” Proverb

I am a member of a mercifully small subset of society. I am the mother of a dead child. Twenty years ago, my daughter Grace—my first child, my only girl—was born prematurely and died 32 minutes later. As I write this, I am astonished that it has been twenty years since I met my daughter for the only time.

Time stopped for me when Grace took her last little breath. And I was certain that my life could never start again. I was wrong. Here’s what made all the difference in my healing:

Over time, I learned to bless the thorns in my life. I began to see that the thorn and rose define one another. Since one cannot exist without the other, we can only enjoy the rose when we embrace the thorn.

As a society, though, we make healing from loss very difficult. We unintentionally tell each other lies about suffering and the healing process. One of those lies is that “Time heals all wounds.” If time healed all wounds, why do so many people suffer their entire lives from things that happened decades ago? As one of the bereavement experts I studied explained, it’s not “time” that heals all wounds. It’s hard work. And hard work takes time. Here is some of the hard work of healing:

Choose to heal

When great tragedy comes to your life, you have just one decision to make that will determine the whole of your remaining life: *Will you be bitter or better?* Your future happiness depends on the choice you make. On the surface of it, this seems like a “no brainer” decision. I mean, why would you choose bitterness over joy? Well, here’s one reason: When a child dies, your entire future dies—at least the future you envisioned for yourself. When that child is an infant, you believe your sorrow is the only tangible evidence of her brief life.

The choice to get better means making the choice to move past your sorrow.

As strange as it sounds, the loss of your sorrow can feel like an additional death. Worse, it feels like the *final* death because it feels like you are choosing to deny your child’s entire existence. (As it turns out, I was wrong about that. Lots of other tangible evidence came from Grace’s life—this piece, for example.) But those roses bloom at some future point, while your suffering is immediate. Let no one say that healers lack courage.

Choosing to heal means letting go of the immediate reward of your suffering for the possible promise of future insight.

It is a risk that all who heal take, and it is not an easy choice to make while you are in the hell of acute loss. I urge you to make it nonetheless.

The thorns make community possible

Joy can be an individual experience. When you are joyful, I am happy for you. But I don't necessarily feel enlightened by your happiness. When you let me see your sorrow, however, then I feel an affinity with you. *It is our shared suffering—our thorns—that make empathy possible.* It is our thorns that make us protective of one another. In this way, thorns are the pathway to community and peace.

Suffering brings wisdom—if you choose to heal

It used to bother me that people complimented me for my “wisdom” or “courage” after Grace died. Somehow, it felt like the Spiritual Booby Prize. To this day, I would trade that wisdom for the return of my daughter. But I don't have that choice.

If I refuse to celebrate and share that hard-won wisdom, I essentially cut the rose from the thorn bush.

In my case, Grace would have been the rose I would have preferred. But that rose is not available to me. The rose of wisdom is. I share that wisdom because it is a gift of grace. My Grace. The rose of my wisdom is made possible because of the thorn of my sorrow. Grace's legacy is manifested when I share the wisdom she left me.

Your sorrow makes you free

Once the “worst thing” that can ever happen to you in life actually happens—once you decide to get better instead of bitter—then you get to live the entire rest of your life without feeling paralyzed by fear.

After all what is left to fear? But what if the worst thing hasn't happened to you yet? Can you still live a life less controlled by fear? Absolutely!

Here's how: Remember that suffering makes community possible. That means that you can “borrow” my suffering and use it as a balm to heal your fears.

In my case, the suffering and death of a child would be the “worst thing” that could happen in life. What is your “worst thing?” Whatever that thing is, I can assure you that some human being in the history of the planet has survived that thing. And triumphed!

All you have to do to be break free from fear is determine that, if your “worst thing” ever happened, you would make a study of how others have triumphed over that thing.

Once you make that decision, you have a “worst case scenario” action plan in place. You are now free to live life without feeling weighed down by fear. If you decide. To get better. Instead of bitter. The tools of choice, celebration, community, and study are ways that I have learned to become a better mother to my daughter, Grace. Twenty years later, I see these to be the tangible manifestation of her 32-minute life. The thorn of my loss illuminates the resplendent rose of Grace's legacy—the message that “all healing is possible,” for myself and others.

Jennifer Boykin

Suggestions for Coping with the “Special Days”

Since love does not end with death, birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and other special days may result in a renewed sense of personal grief. Such occasions emphasize the absence of the person who has died and may reawaken painful emotions leaving you feeling drained. Here are some suggestions to help you cope.

♥ Have a cake with candles. Have everyone in the family make a wish and blow out the candles together. Share the wishes if you want.



♥ Buy a present in memory of your loved one. Make it something that lives on such as a tree or flowers you can watch bloom and grow year after year.



♥ Combine what you would have spent for presents and donate it to a cause special to your loved one.



♥ Buy or make a birthday card for the one who has died. Inside, tell your loved one something that you never got a chance to say. Write about what you're feeling, what you're doing – anything you want to share.



♥ Visit the cemetery and take flowers, notes, or a balloon bouquet.

♥ Make the day a celebration of the life of your loved one. Talk about the good things you remember, the funny things, the jokes played, the special moments and memories.



Sasha J. Mudlaff, M.A.
Hamilton's Academy of Grief and Loss

Moving on

It's what everyone
Wants me to do.
They all think that I should,
But no one tells me how.

Moving on

Is it some kind of trip?
Does it require a destination?
I hardly ever have any energy
To be where I am.
Where would I feel more?

Moving on

Away from who I am now!
Away from all I have known?
Away from my pain?
Away from your death?
But where could I go
That all of this
Would not go with me?
Nowhere I think
Now if only they'd leave me
alone.
When I am ready
I will feel my own way
To move on
While taking you along.

-Deb Kosmer

After the reality hits that we cannot control what happened, we can then decide what we are going to do with this new life we have been handed. We aren't the people that we used to be, nor will we ever be the same. We are changed in ways we would have never imagined. We have learned where our priorities should be. We sweat the small stuff less, put less importance on materialistic things, and value each other's uniqueness. We prize our family and close friends. We are more compassionate and less impatient. We know how precious and, too often, how fleeting life is. As one of the members of our group said, "I had to decide whether I was going to be bitter or better, and I chose better." What better way to honor our children than to be a better friend, a better family member, a better citizen; to reach out our hand or give a shoulder to cry on to a newly bereaved parent, in a way that only we as bereaved parents can do. I truly believe that these things make our children very proud of us.

Every child changes the lives of his or her parents. Children show us new ways to love, new things to find joy in, and new ways to look at the world. A part of each child's legacy is that the changes he or she brings to a family continue after the child's death. The memories of joyful moments you spent with your child and the love you shared will live on and always be a part of you.

-From "When a Parent is Grieving the Death of a Child," cancer.net

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Meeting

March 27, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Bethany for Children & Families

1701 River Drive, Moline, Illinois

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

The next chapter meetings are on

Thursday, April 24, and May 22, 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):

- ♥ 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>

Grief is not a moment

It is not something that fades simply because time moves forward. It lingers, reshapes, and becomes a quiet companion to those who have lost someone they love. The world may expect grief to have an expiration date, to be something that eventually disappears, but the truth is loss does not just take a person—it takes pieces of the life that once existed, rewriting the very foundation of who you are.

When someone is gone, the world does not stop. Time continues, people carry on, seasons change. But for those left behind, everything shifts. The places once filled with their laughter now echo with absence. The moments once shared now feel incomplete. It is not just their absence that is mourned—it is the loss of what was, the loss of what could have been.

Some may ask, “Are you still grieving?” as if the passage of time should lessen the weight of love that once existed. But grief is not something to be outrun, nor is it something to be measured by a calendar. It is woven into the fabric of the soul, a reflection of the depth of love that was once given and received.

Yet, even in the depths of grief, there is resilience. There is a quiet strength in carrying memories, in learning how to live in a world that feels different. Grief does not mean being stuck—it means honoring what was lost while still moving forward. It is proof that love does not vanish. It transforms.

So let grief be. Let it exist without shame. It is not a weakness; it is love continuing beyond loss. Some may not understand, but those who do know that grief is not a sign of refusing to move on—it is a testament to a love that will never fade.



Posted on Facebook

Should be sweet remembrances of those things which so delighted us when he was alive afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure when we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory and make that memory a glad rather than a sorrowful one. Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like a miser who never enjoys what he has, but only bewails what he loses.

-Plutarch, 46-125 AD

(written upon the death of his son who died by suicide)

48th Annual National Conference of The Compassionate Friends Bellevue/Seattle, Washington July 11-13, 2025

TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

You can find more information at compassionatefriends.org.

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:

Irv and Audrey Geisz, in memory of their son, Rhett Geisz.

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 the 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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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.