



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November-December 2025

Volume XXXVIII, Number 6

Dear Compassionate Friends,

On a raw and bitterly cold Thursday evening in January 2025, we awaited the arrival of grieving parents for the monthly meeting of The Compassionate Friends. Due to how terrible the weather was, we doubted if anyone would brave the cold. As 6:30 p.m. arrived, so did eight distraught parents who, we were soon to learn, had suffered the loss of a child as recently as Thanksgiving. The meeting went long, full of tearful testaments of lives cut short by chance, recently discovered ailments, or terribly tragic accidents.

On the blustery and chilly Thursday this last week, several of those parents from the January meeting and others who in the intervening months now unfortunately qualified for membership gathered for a meeting of the chapter, finding the new location at the Moline Police Department. A few of the veterans of the last nine months greeted each other in the parking lot and walked in together. Others upon entering, put their arms around each other or simply patted an available shoulder of new and old members alike. They called the meeting space a “safe place” where they could say what they felt without people giving advice or looking at them as though they are weird. They were relaxed and at ease with each other; they trusted those who had assembled because they were *of the same cloth*. There was clear evidence that many of them were learning the new harsh reality of losing a child. This is a grief which one learns to live with for the rest of his or her years. It will always be there, a constant companion, somedays manageable, others overwhelming. They were going on with living, appropriately dressed, and caring for themselves while supporting others in this lonely-going forward with life.

As the Reverend Simon Stephen, the founder of The Compassionate Friends, wrote, “It is the gift of hope which reigns supreme in the attributes of the Compassionate Friends. Hope that all is not lost. Hope that life can still be worth living and meaningful. Hope that the pain of loss will become less acute and above all else, the hope that we do not walk alone, that we are understood. The gift of hope is the greatest gift that we can give to those who mourn.”

There were still plenty of tears at the chapter meeting, but now there was an occasional smile and even laughter. The conversation and the support continued in the parking lot after the meeting.

Sincerely,
Laurie and Bill Steinhauser

Frost

On a cold winter's day, frost etches a beautiful artistry on everything it touches, every blade of grass it glitters and sparkles, and for moments before the sun comes out and the master piece evaporates before our eyes, we stand memorized cherishing the wondrous sight.

Like frost, our children were only here for a brief moment but, while they were here whether it was moments in the womb, days, months, or many years, they etched their beautiful artistry of love on our hearts and lives and all of those they touched.

Unlike frost, what they etched is forever; it is something that we can cherish and hold onto always.

We stand here tonight lighting a candle to remember children we will never forget. Their light, their spirits, their artistry lives on, and like the flame of the candle, gives warmth on a cold winter's night.

The light in the darkness the love our children gave us remains, it keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief blow. It lights our way through the darkness and loneliness that we feel, and it gives us hope!

Julie Short - Southeastern TCF Candle Lighting Ceremony

Here's the truth about grief: loss gets integrated, not overcome. However long it takes, your heart and your mind will carve out a new life amid this weirdly devastated landscape. Little by little, pain and love will find ways to coexist.

Megan Devine

At this season of lights,
We remember the light
you brought into our lives:
The light of your wit and
intelligence,
The light of your love.
May the time not be distant when
the memory of these lights
will illumine our hearts and minds
And eradicate the darkness
therein.

Stephanie
Hesse,
TCF/Rockland
County, NY



Courage is NOT having the strength to go on;
It is going on when you don't have the strength.

Theodore Roosevelt

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., P.O. Box 46, Wheaton, IL 60187 (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

P.O. Box 46

Wheaton, IL 60187

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.

Prepare for a Grief Anniversary

The nature of a calendar is that it is cyclical. For instance, this post is first running on October 15, and next year there will be an October 15, and the year after that. This is true for every day except leap days, but even those come around eventually too.

We celebrate happy anniversaries, but life isn't all happiness. We remember some days with more pain than others.

I was reminded of this a few years ago when looking at Mary Katherine Ham's Instagram account. This journalist and commentator is known for many things, but in addition to her professional work, she's shared a lot about losing her first husband. He died in a bicycle accident in September 2015, leaving her with one little girl and another on the way.

In an Instagram reel, she said that "The thing about losing someone on a particular day, or a traumatic event on a particular day if you have one in your life, as you're bound to at some point, is that the calendar is going to come back around," she noted. "When that happens, be prepared for it."

She went on to say, "You know the date is coming, you know you're dreading it, at least early on in your grief, and you should set up a situation for yourself." Mary Katherine planned a nice lunch with several friends on her grief anniversary as a way to make sure she had something on the day to look forward to, instead of just dreading the day.

I think this is an incredibly wise idea. The calendar does come back around again. Every year, we note the

anniversary of all the days that shaped us. And yes, over time, some of the grief changes form. Mary Katherine Ham remarried a few years ago and so the shape of the grief is different than it was in the first year. But still, whatever shape it takes, it will always be there. You are highly unlikely to forget the date. Not everyone in your life will remember it as you will, and you can't always count on other people to observe it and take care of you. You need to take care of yourself.

So if you've got a grief anniversary in your life, think about what truly makes you happy. What could you plan into your life for that day so that you will feel loved? What will make you feel like there are still good things in this world? Reach out to your friends. Your closest ones will welcome the opportunity to help on that grief anniversary. They may want to help, they just probably don't know what to do. Think about things that make you smile. What would you genuinely enjoy? Get one or two of these things on the calendar.

What this can do is temper some of the dread the day might otherwise conjure up. There will be something on that day to look forward to. You won't be alone if you don't want to be. Life can be tough, especially if you are grieving. But figuring out how to spend your grief anniversary in a way that will make you feel taken care of is one of the best gifts you can give yourself. Then you can continue to show up for the other people in your life.

Laura Vandercam
vanderhacks@substack.com

Christmas Morning or Mourning

That inevitable awakening lies ahead for each of us, that moment when we open our eyes and face the climax of weeks of colored lights, carols, frenzied shopping, social gatherings, accumulating gifts...even if we have not taken an active part in all of these preparations. Now the prelude is over and the day itself is upon us. However we have participated, with apprehension or dread, with courage or resolve, this is the moment when we confront the ultimate reality of dealing with the holiday without our child.

Will it be morning or simply mourning? Whether this is our first Christmas since our child's death, or one of many, this is far more than a cute play on words. For the answer lies within each of us and not without. The quality of our Christmas is but another in that series of countless decisions we each confront when our child dies.

The holiday is more than just another day, but like each other it does afford moments for grief and occasions for joy. It is simply more intense, more culturally bound in rituals that establish the significance for certain parts of our lives.

Without doubt, we will each remember our child's anticipation and excitement from holidays past, and we will hear the unnatural silence of absence above numberless other sounds. Allow yourself to cry and let the hurt course through you as you dress. It is your own grief...it belongs only to yourself...and it must not be denied. Wash, brush your teeth, feel the hollowness without being consumed by it, for there are others in your life. Even if you are alone, you are an "other," a personality apart from your deceased child and a great deal more than a life summed up in a denial of living.

Therefore, grant yourself moments to grieve, but leave room to sandwich instants of joy between.

A single smile, one quiet laugh, a gentle moment of fondness for the delight of another, even if only from memory...these are all it takes to turn mourning into morning. You can and should not smother or suppress grief, but you must also remain open to the light that still can enter your life.

In my own memories of my son at Christmas I will find both reasons to cry and irresistible urges to laugh. His life was sunshine in mine. In the holiday his memory should not become a shroud to hide away my love for him. On the 25th, as on every other day, I will remember him and long for him, knowing he has forever marked Christmas for me with his own happiness and it is only his permanent physical withdrawal that chills these moments with a seemingly endless sorrow.

If we decide, if we are willing to work on it, we can mix remembrance with mourning and turn it to morning, thus enriching our lives by continuing to feel the laughter and joy our children gave to each of us. It is our deceased child's Christmas gift to us this year and in all the years to come. Take it with the same grace and gratitude with which we accepted all the others from holidays past...from other Christmas mornings.

Don Hackett, Kingston, MA

Don and Kathy's son, Olin, died at the age of 17 as a result of an accidental hanging at a boys' camp.

Tips to Cope With Grief at the Holidays

Grief in and of itself is bad enough, but it can be magnified when the holidays roll around. The holiday season is filled with reminders of the one you lost, since you're surrounded by others who have their loved ones with them and are celebrating a season of joy and togetherness.

The holiday season starts in early November and ends after New Year's Day, and that two-month period can be devastating for those who are in the process of grieving. This time of year brings a lot of hustle and bustle, shopping, and socializing with family and friends. Everyone else seems to be happy and festive as they run around preparing for parties, hitting up malls, and buying presents for loved ones. Even in the midst of so much chaos, you may feel utterly alone. This is exacerbated by the fact that often during this time, many normal activities are shut down or postponed, leaving you alone with memories of your lost loved one.

The pain you're feeling is very much at odds with the celebratory spirit that's all around you, leaving you nothing but quiet moments where you're faced with the raw power of loss.

There are ways to get through the holiday and cope with your grief during this time. First off, it's important to acknowledge that the holidays will be tough for you and to give yourself some extra self-care as you navigate through this month. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Decide which traditions you would like to keep and which ones you would like to change.
- Create a new tradition in memory of the person you lost.
- Think about where you want to

celebrate the holiday. If it's too painful to do the same you've always done, consider changing the location. For others, it can be comforting to keep things as they were. It's totally up to you and there is no wrong answer.

- Plan ahead and speak with family and friends to ensure everyone agrees about the traditions that will or will not be honored this year. Remember, everyone grieves differently. When several people lose one person they loved, everyone is grieving but they do it in a different way. If you lost a parent, for example, be considerate of how your siblings decide to celebrate.
- Place a memory stocking or box at the holiday party or meal where everyone can write down what they loved about the person. Read them together.
- Include your loved one's favorite dish at Christmas dinner.
- Be honest with friends who try to get you to go out and "get over it." Let them know you're not ready. They will understand. Take baby steps and pace yourself. One day you may feel like being sociable and the other you may feel like curling up on the couch. It's OK.
- Donate money to charity in your loved one's name or buy a gift and donate it to a charity they cherished.
- See a counselor to talk about your feelings. Join a support group to connect with others going through the same thing.
- Donate your loved one's clothing to a homeless shelter. This may spur you to go through their closets if you have been having a hard time facing this task.
- Craft a memorial wreath, ornament, tree, or decoration in their name.

Continued on Page 10



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 8" x 8" brick (print):

Call (309)781.9074 with questions or for more information.
 Make checks payable to "Angel of Hope Memorial Garden."
 Please mail your completed order form to:
 Angel of Hope Memorial Garden
 c/o Christie Hoffman, 11618 6th Street, Milan, Illinois 61264

When We Remember

When the snow falls, and silence drifts in white across the earth, we remember their joy, the glad cries that broke the hush of fresh winter.

When the family gathers, caught in wonderment around the Thanksgiving table or the holiday tree, we remember their excitement, the anticipation that was impossible to contain.

When the sun sets, and Christmas lights sparkle and shine to challenge the night, we remember their tired but glowing faces, alight in a thrill of happiness that made our day.

When we remember, we feel afresh that brightness, that energy, and we smile . . . and we cry.

For what was, for what can never be.

In our remembering, we are the vessels of yesterday, the bearers of the light, the victims of the dark.

And in our remembering, we are parents, hurting, healing, gathering our strength and our passion to live once more, to destroy an endless night with the sun and starlit joys of the past, forging our memories into the promise of a new and different dawn, a reinvestment in life itself, even without our child.

For we have loved, love still, and have been loved in turn.

Our memories tell us, our intellect compels us, ultimately, to answer our child's love with our own unending love, showing through the quality and commitment of our own lives that both loves have enriched us beyond measure.

May the holidays, for all their sorrow and all their pain, help each of us to build anew our lives, using our joys from the past to create a new day, where sorrow, though never gone, no longer governs our every waking hour.

**Don Hackett, TCF, South Shore Chapter,
Hingham, MA**

Tips, Continued from page 7

Leave yourself an “out” at holiday events. Drive yourself to any parties you’re invited to so you can leave when you sense too much holiday overload.

- Talk to your kids about the loss. They may be feeling conflicting emotions about the loss of their loved one, as they struggle with the joy of the season offset by the sadness they see in you and others around them.

- Nix the holiday cards this year. You’re going through a lot. No one says you have to go through the motions of sending out cards if it’s just too much. You can always pick it up again next year.

- Minimize gift-giving, or skip it altogether. With so much on your mind, going to the mall or spending hours shopping online may seem like an unnecessary stress. Talk with family members about what you all want to do about gift exchanges this year. Perhaps you could do a Secret Santa where you only have to buy one gift for another person.

In the end, remember this: it’s okay to be happy. This doesn’t take away from how much you loved your child, your spouse, parent, or other lost loved one.

Pathways Hospice

ANNUAL CANDLE LIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE



**Saturday,
December 6, 2025
at 7:00 pm.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Angel of Hope
Memorial Garden
The service will be held at
the Memorial Garden in the
Moline Memorial
Park Cemetery
5001 34th Avenue,
Moline, Illinois**

The annual Candle Light Memorial Service is for bereaved parents who would like to have their child(ren) remembered. The service will be held at the Angel of Hope Memorial in the Moline Memorial Park Cemetery on Saturday, December 6. There will be music and reflection, and a procession of light to the angel.

We will gather in the chapel (just south of the memorial garden) for a short service. Following the service, we will proceed to the Angel of Hope placing a candle and a white flower at the foot of the monument.

If you cannot attend and would like a candle lit in your child's memory, please complete and return the form below to Lisa Rains at 2341 7 ½ Street, East Moline, Illinois 61244.

Child's Name: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Meetings
are held on the **fourth Thursday** of each month,
at the **Moline Police Department Headquarters,**
1640 6th Avenue, in Moline, Illinois.

The November Chapter meeting will be held on
Wednesday, November 19th
(due to Thanksgiving and a scheduling conflict).

<p>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</p>	<p>Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the Snyder and Hallenbaugh Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Tom Summit can be contacted at 563.506.0103.</p>
<p>Rick's House of Hope</p>	<p>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 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. and a Teen Night on Thursdays from 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.</p>
<p>SHARE</p>	<p>A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third 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.</p>
<p>Phone Support</p>	<p>If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email: ♥ Doug Scott, 563.370.1041, dns0826@gmail.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, shoearth4@gmail.com ♥ Judy Delvechio, 563.349.8895, delvechiojudy@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.</p>

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 the Quad City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends for previous versions of the Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format. www.quadcitytcf.org</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>

An Attitude of Gratitude

As Thanksgiving approaches, I find myself thinking of people, events, feelings and things I am grateful for. However, the first Thanksgiving after my son died I cannot say I possessed an attitude of gratitude. My 16-year-old son, Cameron, died in an automobile accident on June 4, 1999. That first Thanksgiving after he died, all I could think of were the things he didn't get to experience, the places he never got to go, items I never got to buy for him, subjects we never got to discuss, arguments I wished we hadn't had, finding out how his life would have unfolded, what he would have become, who he would have married, how many children he would have had, where he would have lived, etc., etc., etc. If you are newly bereaved, I know you can relate to those thoughts. My head was so full of the thoughts of what death cheated Cameron out of. I felt singled out and alone. Life wasn't fair, and I felt cheated. I was hurt, angry, and in pain. But, along the way, I was blessed to find fellow travelers on the journey through grief. I found out that it was normal to have these thoughts. I feared that I would forget some of Cameron's ways and mannerisms that made him so unique. I have gained strength, insight, and hope from other bereaved parents. I encourage

you to go to support groups for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents and just talk. Tell your story as many times as you need to. Listen as others share their experience, strength, and hope. I promise you that if you do the grief work, and, yes, it's probably the hardest work you'll ever do, you will reach a point in time when you too can have an attitude of gratitude. This Thanksgiving finds me with an attitude of gratitude. I am grateful that I had a son named Cameron. I'm grateful for my two surviving children, Aaron and Joselyn, my husband, Gene, and my son-in-law, Doug. I'm grateful for all the special people I have met on this unwanted journey through grief. I'm grateful for friends and family who supported me. I'm grateful that we can talk about Cameron and share special memories we have of him. I'll always miss him and wonder how his life would have unfolded. I'm grateful that I'm at this place in my journey through grief. I can, once again, participate and be a part of life. I have learned to love Cameron in death as much as I loved him in life. Today, I can talk about Cameron, share memories of him, and smile.

Martha Honn
Bluegrass TCF Newsletter

**Leave your life open to the memories
And to the promises of this season**

The songs of the season, the lights everywhere, the words of caring and peace – they are again all around us.

They touch our hearts more intensely now than at other times of the year. And often this season brings with it an emotional chain reaction, one feeling triggering the next, until we are almost overwhelmed by a sea of awareness.

It is fitting that in this sea of awareness the memories of dead children, sisters, and brothers, assume a bittersweet priority. As our feelings of loss and pain mingle with the celebration, our memories are at once the burden and the blessing of this season, a cause for loving tears and a cause for aching smiles.

Yes, when memories of winters past come to mind, many of us can find a light behind the tears. Images and sounds that are stored inside emerge in our mind with surprising clarity and evergreen tenderness...

It is not easy to remember our dead children. But, easy or not, we know that we will not – and do not want to – forget them... They remain forever part of us, and we are richer for having shared their lives, however briefly.

Sascha Wagner

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.

Donations are used for mailings to recently 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 electronic version of the newsletter, please send us your email address. If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, send his/her/their name and email address...

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if your email address has changed...

Please contact: **Jerry and Carol Webb**, 390 Arbor Ridge, Benton Harbor, MI 49022, or email CarolynPWebb@gmail.com or webbjerryd@gmail.com.



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



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.