



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

July-August 2008, Volume XXI, Number 7

The Quad City Chapter

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Our daughter's death in 1984 left our family stunned and reeling. Stunned, because even though she had not been well most of her short life, we had trouble grasping the fact that she had died. Reeling from the exhaustion and stress of hospital stays, doctor visits, tough decisions, financial concerns, the pain of loss. Out of the blue came the offer from some friends (also bereaved parents) to use their vacation cottage in a small town in Missouri for a week. The offer enabled our family to have a low cost opportunity to go somewhere quiet, by ourselves, to rest and regroup. This was an amazing gift. We packed up our then three-year old and headed south. The stay in the cottage stands out in my mind as one of our most special times away as a family in spite of the pain we were in.

In this quarter's issue of *We Need Not Walk Alone* – The Compassionate Friend's National Magazine there is an article about Faith's Lodge located in Danbury WI. According to their website, Faith's Lodge welcomes grieving

parents and families who have lost a child. The Lodge's tranquil setting provides an opportunity to seek comfort, peace, and healing in the beauty of the Northwoods, while surrounded by others who understand what you are experiencing. You can find out more about Faith's Lodge at their website, www.faithslodge.org. Perhaps Faith's lodge is the perfect healing place of rest for your family.

Stay Requirements: Parents and families who are invited to stay at Faith's Lodge have to meet the following requirements:

- Have lost a child, aged 20+ weeks gestation through 19 years, within the last three years.
- Have received a referral from a healthcare provider, mental healthcare practitioner, clergy member, or approved support organization (such as the Ronald McDonald House).
- Have completed and submitted a Guest Application to Faith's Lodge.

Faith's Lodge is at 818 West 46th Street, Suite 202, Minneapolis, MN 55419 (612) 825-2073.

Info@faithslodge.org

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Quad City Chapter



1830 6th Avenue,
Moline, Illinois 61265

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«City», «State» «ZipCode»

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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.

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Chapter Meetings

August 28, 2008 — 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Bethel Assembly of God Church

3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL

From John Deere Road, turn right at 38th St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38th Ave. The church will be on your right. We meet in the downstairs fellowship hall. (Or you can turn into the church driveway off of 38th St.; the church is on the west side of the road.) Call Sharon and Dave Ulseth (792-0529) for directions or information. **The meeting for September is on the 25th of the month.**

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| The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine | Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at (563) 263-2737 for directions or information. |
| Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group | Meets the second Tuesday each month at 7:00 pm in the office of Family Resources located in Building 9 of the Annie Wittenmeyer Complex off Eastern Avenue in Davenport. For more information, contact Dave Happ at (563)785-6133. |
| Mom's Group meets in Aledo | A group of moms who have had children die meet once a month in Aledo to support and encourage one another as they go through the grief process. You are invited to join them at the Happy Joe's in Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309) 582-7789. |
| Rick's House of Hope | Located at 4867 Forest Grove Drive in Bettendorf, this community resource is for children and adolescents dealing with grief. "Children and adolescents experiencing grief and trauma often need a safe place to express their feelings. They need companions for the journey of grief who are outside their family and not themselves grieving." The volunteer mentors at Rick's House of Hope provide this for young people and their families during painful and confusing times of grief. There is no fee for services. For more information, call 563.324.9580 or 563.421.7970. Find Rick's House of Hope on the web at www.genesishealth.com — Keywords: "children and grief." |
| Quad City SHARE | A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday of each month at Grace Lutheran Church, 1140 East High Street, Davenport, Iowa. For more information, call (309)792-7808. |
| Survivors of a Suicide Loss Support Group | For those who have lost someone to suicide, this group, facilitated by a peer survivor and a professional, meets the third Monday of the month in Moline, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. For details, contact Joel M. Moore (309)737-1363 or moore-jm@sbcglobal.net |

SOME THINGS I LOST AND ONE I DIDN'T

When my son died, I lost many things. I lost the pleasure of his company, the joy of watching him grow up, and the hope of enjoying his companionship in the future. I lost heart for a while, but I didn't lose my son. He died.

I don't like to hear or read sentences such as, "She lost her child," when what is meant is that the child has died. Someone who loses things is careless and no parent is so careless as to lose a child.

To be told that we "lost" our children makes us sound as if we were in some way responsible, just as we are responsible when we lose our glasses, our purses or even our tempers. I suspect that when we hear that we "lost our children" and when we say, "I lost my child" we might feel a little guilty as if we did something or failed to do something, to cause the loss.

We don't need to feel guilty. I know that I have lost a lot, but always I say that my son died, because that is, in fact what happened.

Claire Hopley Amherst, MA

"When we realize that ... there is nothing that we can do to reverse the situation, we have the choice of spending the rest of our life lamenting what we have lost, or spending the rest of our life giving thanks for what we have been given..."

Dr. John Claypool



What's it all about?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others be supportive.

Founded in England in 1969, the first U.S. chapter was organized in 1972. Since then, 635 chapters have been established. The current Quad City Chapter was formed in 1987.

TCF National Office

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696
Toll Free - (877)-969-0010
TCF National Web site - www.compassionatefriends.org

The Quad City Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

meets bi-monthly on the fourth Thursday of the month in Rock Island, Illinois. See the newsletter for schedule.

Quad City Chapter Newsletter Editors

Jerry and Carol Webb
Box 71, Cordova, IL 61242

e-newsletter is now available from the National Office! The monthly e-newsletter will contain notes and happening of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit the TCF National Web site home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.

Love Gifts

There are no dues or fees to belong to TCF. As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from the newsletter, they often wish to make a Love Gift to help with the work of our chapter. This is a meaningful way to remember a beloved child.

Thanks to:

Steve and Mary Gibbs, in memory of their daughter, Lindsay, 10/12/1979-8/14/1999

Love gifts are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to newly bereaved families. Some of the love gifts are used for materials to share with first time attendees at our meetings or to purchase books for our library. Our thanks to the many families who provide love gifts so that the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue. If you would like to send a love gift, please send it to our treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.

Lost Potential

Last year, I attended a workshop presented by a specialist in grief named Dr. Cable. Dr. Cable said many important things about the grief process, but as a bereaved parent, one thing stuck in my mind.

He said that if you asked a bereaved person to describe his deceased mother, he will say, "Oh, she was so sweet. She always wore flowered dresses and loved to bake cookies." But if you asked a bereaved parent to describe her deceased child, she will say, "Oh he would be five this year and just starting kindergarten," or "She would be twenty-two this year and graduating from college."

You see, we bereaved parents grieve the lost potential of our children. Our children don't stop growing in our minds. We grieve again and anew each year as our child would have been a different age.

Chris Anderson, TCF/Walla Walla, WA

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents, please share them with us, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242.

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, we would be happy to add them to our mailing list.

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter, we would appreciate you letting us know. Thanks. Jerry and Carol Webb (Editors), Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242, (309)654-2727.

Thank you to **Bethany for Children & Families** and **Maggie's Fund** for printing and mailing this month's newsletter. If you are able to assist in the final preparation for mailing of the newsletter in any given month, please contact Jerry and Carol Webb at (309)654-2727.

Forever

Babies are a precious gift to be held, hugged, kissed and loved ... forever.

My precious gift died.

For a few short moments I held her and hugged her and after a soft kiss on the forehead

She was taken from me ... forever.

But no one can take the love that I have for her.

It goes on ... forever.

Years have passed, friends have forgotten.

But I'll always remember her ... forever.

Geralyn Beussink, TCF/Saratoga NY

TCF Bulletin Board

Contact www.preciousparents.org which publishes a newsletter titled HEARTLINE for parents whose infants have died.

The August Meeting of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is on August 28th at 7:00 PM at the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island.

GRIEF MATERIALS

Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than the Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief-related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you're looking for – or they'll be able to tell you where to find it. Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at (402) 553-1200 or visit their Web site at www.centering.org. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.

Our Newsletter

For parents who have experienced the death or deaths of multiple birth children during pregnancy, at birth, in infancy, or in childhood, contact Jean Kollantai at P.O. Box 91377, Anchorage, AK 99509.

Amazon. Com

When making a purchase from Amazon.com, enter through the link on the home page of The Compassionate Friends national Web site, and a portion of the purchase price will be donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases, not just books, made from the Amazon.com site.

We Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter
One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families that contact the national office.
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
(877)969-0010
Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
Web site: www.compassionatefriends.org
Visit the sibling resource page at www.compassionatefriends.org

Iowa SIDS Foundation's
Vine and Dine
Wine Pairings Dinner
and Silent Auction
November 7, 2008
6:00 PM
Davenport Country Club

How Does a Grieving Kid Deal with School?

Going back to school is always tough, but when there has been a death in your family it's really hard. You wonder how your friends will treat you. You don't think you can concentrate or listen very well because your mind feels all confused. You worry how the rest of your family will be without you around. You feel so different, and school is sure to be just the same!

Sometimes kids and teachers don't know what to say, so they say something dumb or don't say anything at all. Some days it can seem almost impossible to keep from crying in front of people. Everyone thinks you should be "over it" right away.

Dana (age 12): "Fortunately the kids treated me very considerately. But the teacher wasn't as nice. She thought I was using my father's death to make her go easy on me. But as all of us know, that's not how it is. We can't help it if we get upset. But some people don't understand."

School can be very hard for a kid who is grieving the death of a loved one. Some things that might help a little are: Talk with your teacher about what you want the class to know about the death and who should tell them. Make a plan with your teacher so you can leave the room if you start feeling very upset. Try to find a safe, quiet place to go: the library, the nurse's office, etc. If people ask you questions that you don't want to answer, say something like, "I'd rather not talk about that right now." Try to find at least one person who you feel comfortable talking to when you want to talk. Or start to write your thoughts in a journal....

If you are bothered by what other kids say, try to talk to them and get them to understand that you need their support. If that doesn't work, talk with your teacher or a parent. If you think that your teacher doesn't understand, do your best to talk with her, and bring in an understanding adult to help if necessary.

To keep up with your homework, maybe you could study with a friend or get an older student to help you, or ask your teacher for some extra time. As long as you are really trying, that's all anyone should ask of you.

As you go through the school year there will be some good days and some tough ones. Don't be upset with yourself if you don't do as well as usual on grades, or you have trouble getting along with your same old friends. Be patient with yourself, because you want everyone to do the same for you.

Grief is a big long process that changes people, and change can be tough. But change can bring good things too. Perhaps you will find yourself appreciating the little things more, or being kinder to people, or wanting to make the most of your time, or developing an ability to express yourself creatively. These are things you don't normally learn in school, but these are things you learn from living.

By Dana Ward, Erin Helmer & Barb Coe. Taken from the 8/88 newsletter of Fernside, a center for grieving children and their families located in Cincinnati, OH

Ways of maintaining a connection with our loved one who has died:

- Chet got an extraordinary gift from his daughter, Patti: her heart. Thanks to Patti's heart, Chet is still going strong after 11 years. He honors his daughter's name by advocating organ donation.
- Dan, whose son died by suicide five years ago, is a golfer. He and his son played together often. Dan now carries his son's hat and favorite club cover with him whenever he plays the game.
- Ronda's daughter loved sunflowers. It has been two years since her daughter died of a brain tumor. This year, Ronda planted sunflower seeds in little pots and gave them to her daughter's friends for graduation. Ronda also has a garden filled with sunflowers.
- Henry and Patricia's son and Lauren and Kerri's bother was a firefighter who died in the September 11th World Trade Center attacks. The family has created a picture book that they distribute to honor his memory.
- Heidi, Rebecca, and Heather, whose brother died in an automobile accident, each wear a gold heart on a chain with an engraving of their brother's name.
- Joyce, whose daughter died by suicide ten years ago, wears her daughter's army boots every year on her birthday.
- Cheryl and Ben, whose son was a National Guard Volunteer and died in a roadside bomb explosion in Iraq, have established a scholarship in their son's name.
- Sandy, whose son was killed when he grabbed a high-voltage line, keeps his watch, which stopped at the time of his death, in her purse.
- Darrell, whose daughter was shot

and killed when two teens opened fire at Columbine High School, travels the world preaching and promoting a message of love and tolerance.

- Chad, whose big brother died in a mountain climbing accident, wears his brother's football letterman jacket on Superbowl Sunday.
- The Reed family releases environmentally friendly balloons every year on their deceased baby daughter's birthday.
- Lisa and her sister loved to listen to music. When her sister died of cancer, Lisa made a tape of their favorite songs. She and her best friend listen often and have a good cry as well as a laugh.
- Karl and Sue, with the help of their hospice nurse, Eileen, created an online memorial through The Library of Life for their son, who died of thyroid cancer.
- Mitch saved his twin sister's purse after she died in an automobile accident. He gave it to his sister's daughter on her sixteenth birthday.

As you can see, there are as many creative ideas as there are people. Many of these ideas take some effort, but something as simple as thinking about your loved one provides a connection. They will always be in your hearts. The reality is that we don't forget, move on and have closure, but rather we honor, remember and incorporate our deceased children and siblings into our lives in a new way. In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive in your mind and heart is an important part of your healing journey.

An excerpt from "Continuing Bonds" by Gloria C. Horsley from *We Need Not Walk Alone* – Summer 2006

What man! Ne're pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not
Whispers the o'er fraught heart, and bids it break.

From *Macbeth* – William Shakespeare

I Won't "Should" on Myself

SHOULD -- I will not SHOULD on myself today! I won't let others SHOULD on me today either! Immediately after my daughter, Julie, died, I was bombarded on all sides with lots of SHOULD!

"You SHOULD keep a stiff upper lip and be strong for the rest of the family."

"You SHOULD not dwell on it."

"You SHOULD just accept it as God's will. He knows best. You SHOULD not cry about it."

"Julie left a 22 month-old daughter. You SHOULD live for Autumn."

"You have three other children. You SHOULD live for them."

"You SHOULD not keep her paintings and photographs out in plain sight as a constant reminder."

"Above all, you SHOULD keep busy. If you kept as busy as I do, you wouldn't have any trouble sleeping. You SHOULD work in the yard, work in the garden, work in the house, but keep busy!"

"You SHOULD go back to work."

"It was fate. It was supposed to happen. You SHOULD just accept her death and try to forget about it."

"There are many deaths everyday. You SHOULD think about all the people killed in wars, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, airplane crashes and all kinds of natural disasters and accidents."

"You SHOULD think about Rose Kennedy, who has lost three sons, and Anne Lindberg, whose baby son was kidnapped and murdered. They survived."

"You SHOULD not say such things, you SHOULD not even think them."

Jean Corley Lacy from Healing Hearts website
www.healingheart.net

Sometimes, a Man Needs a Good Cry

I wanted to call my friend last night, but I didn't know what to say.

We go way back. Further back than the first time I got dumped by a girl, but that was when I discovered we had an understanding that transcended words. It was my last year in high school, popular, and as close to being omnipotent as any mortal for miles around. Then the unthinkable happened – I got dumped for some jock at a competing high school. After I did all the things I thought were expected of me, like act as if I didn't care and then drink myself sick, I told my friend about the shock and pain of that novel experience. Although he laughed in my face, telling him made the event seem less traumatic.

We called this particular friend “Bull,” a hint to his physique and temperament. However, I knew better than most that he was a very sensitive person, although this sensitivity could not be seen with the naked eye.

Although we didn't stay in touch with each other on a regular basis, he always seemed to be there when it counted. He made the trip for my wedding, and a few years later, he turned up for my college graduation. A year later, when my eight-year-old daughter died, and while I was functioning in a hazy numbness while making arrangements, greeting people and keeping a stiff upper lip, I happened to look up from the mist and there was my friend.

We just looked at each other and shook our heads. Neither words nor embrace passed between us – I sensed I would have violated some unwritten code he lived by. But it seemed normal for him to be there and I knew his slow smile was an expression of his wordless condolences. If he could comprehend the pain, that sad shake of his head seemed to say, he would gladly absorb some of it. But he didn't and couldn't. Anyway, we both knew his being there was enough.

The Bull was like a distant star one sees only on those special nights when there's a reason to look skyward. He's always there; it's just a question of finding him. There were times when he would find me. Like the time he impulsively showed up at our home at 4 am with his wife and another couple and insisted on taking us to a West Indian Festival in Montreal. We allowed ourselves to be swept along on a very memorable weekend.

Three years ago, his five-year-old died suddenly. When he called that night, it was in the same unemotional detached way that was a part of this “code of manhood.” Having been there, I knew his pain. I was aware of the hurricane of emotions that were raging behind the calm voice asking me to look up meningitis in a medical dictionary.

The following morning, I went to Brooklyn to be there for him. We exchanged what was becoming our ritualistic headshake. We didn't hug each other as our wives did, nor did we cry on each other as others in the apartment were doing. We didn't talk to each other about the mystery of death and about the unfairness of losing a child so young, or about dashed hopes and bitterness. Instead, we talked in matter of fact terms about emergency rooms and the medical profession. The conversation was void of any emotion and in keeping with the “manly” code.

But I wanted to tell him it was okay to cry. I wanted him to know he had to give himself permission to grieve. I thought he should know unless he abandoned his show of strength and let himself be a distraught father, if even for a moment, that the pain and bitterness will grow and crystallize like a block of marble, blocking out any new emotions or sensations and crushing the juices of any residual feelings he might still retain.

Instead, I let him be “strong” and remained at his elbow just in case he needed to go limp on someone for a while. But “The Bull” stayed strong. I found out later I was his role model. I learned that he admired the way I “handled” myself during my ordeal and for him to make any other showing was unthinkable.

I should have called my friend a long time ago and told him about 18 months of denial, of misdirected anger, or almost constant thoughts of self-destruction. I should have told my friend about the individuality of grief, that bereaved parents can't synchronize their feelings and that resentment can be a by-product of the silence borne of internalized grief. I should have told my friend a lot of things. Instead, I opted to honor the “code.” I heard that my friend and his wife had separated, that he isn't the same person anymore.

I wanted to call my friend last night, but I didn't know what to say.

Modele Clark