



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



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Moline, Illinois 61265

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To those who are receiving our newsletter for the first time, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that your family and you have many friends. We who have received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help.

You are not alone in your grief.



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Volume XXIX December 2016 Number 10

Dear Compassionate Friends,

391. As we attached the 391 labels to the individual newsletters, it was surprising how many of the names we recognized, how many we remembered from walking in the cemeteries north of Kimberly in Davenport, or in the Moline Memorial Park Cemetery. So many children who have died, so many families forever changed, so much grief, so many broken hearts. To the community at large, it is an invisible population. But seeing pages of labels that were to be applied to the newsletter brought home how many parents and siblings in our communities carry this terrible loss with them day after day for the remainder of their lives.

392. In mid-October, Laurie called me at work crying and trying to speak in between her sobs. The last time she had called so distraught was when she called telling me that our daughter, Maggie, had had a seizure and could not be awakened. This call bore similar news. Our nephew, Patrick, had died suddenly from an intracranial hemorrhage. He was but 31, leaving a wife, an 18 month old son, and another baby on the way. His loss was the second loss of a child for Laurie's sister and brother-in-law. They were added to the mailing list.

December in the northern United States is a cold and dark month, but it also a month of traditional, hope-filled celebrations for many faiths and differing ethnic and racial communities. Several of those celebrations speak of light coming in the midst of darkness, hope dispelling despair, lost people being found. Alike to these traditions, the membership of The Compassionate Friends gather together in December when the darkness of winter dominates our lives, when we long for the return of lighter and happier days. The annual candle lighting service for TCF was meant to help us grieving souls honor the children we have lost, to remember happier days, and to look to a time when we might be reunited with our beautiful children. And so we light the candles and we recall the sad and happy times, for we are not alone in our grief.

Sincerely,
 Laurie and Bill Steinhauer

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Chalkboard reflections

LIGHTING A CANDLE AND SAYING A CHILD'S NAME KEEPS THEIR MEMORY BURNING BRIGHT.

JIM LOWERY

Moving on doesn't mean you forget about things. It just means you have to accept what happened and continue living.

DEATH ENDS A LIFE,
NOT A RELATIONSHIP.

MITCH ALBOM

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again—even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

Denise Falzon - TCF/Lake Area, Michigan

LOSS IS NEVER EASY, BUT LOVE WILL ALWAYS REMAIN. TOMORROW IS NOT GUARANTEED; GOD'S LOVE IS.

SAMI COHE

Grief always laments what might have been, the future we were robbed of, the tomorrow that we won't get to see.

Grief is like the ocean, it comes on waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim.

CANDLE LIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday, December 15, 2016
at 7:00 P.M.
Bethel Assembly of God Church
3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL

The Chapter's Candle Light Memorial Service is for every bereaved parent who would like to have his or her child(ren) remembered. You may light a candle in memory of your child. (You can bring a favorite candle or one will be provided. You can also bring a photo of your child to place with the candle.) All family members are invited. A time of fellowship will follow the service.

If you cannot attend and would like a candle lighted in your child's memory, please complete and return this form to Michelle Curtis (address below).

Child's Name: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Please send to: Michelle Curtis 18163 241 Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722
You are welcome to bring a favorite finger-food, help with set up at 6:30 pm, or clean up afterwards.

If you would like to make a love gift to TCF in memory of your child, you may do so at the service, using the included envelope with this newsletter, or send your contribution to Michelle Curtis (address above). Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.



Donate
We rely on you

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 winter 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

How can you help me this holiday season?

Remember: The greatest gift is sharing memories.

Let me know when you are hurting or missing them too. The worst is thinking I am alone in my grief.

Help me to honor them in some meaningful way.

Allow me to cry, laugh or leave when I need to.

Allow traditions to change to accommodate the missing space.

Allow me to say no to invitations.

Allow me to change my mind often.

Remember that much of what I do is a reflection of my grief, not my feelings about the holiday or my friends and family. Though I am hurting, I still love and care.

Tanya Lord - www.thegifttoolbox.com

Please contact the editors, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242, 309.654.2727,

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, send us your new address.

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.



The Quad City Angel of Hope has Arrived!

The final component of the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden has been placed upon its pedestal in the Moline Memorial Park Cemetery. In addition, the most recent order of memorial bricks were laid alongside of all of those previously placed. These additions nearly bring the entire memorial garden to completion. (A few bricks that have been ordered are not yet placed, and future brick orders will be included as other parents, grandparents, siblings, and grieving friends add the names of their loved children to those already there.) On December 6th, at 7:00 pm there will be a candle lighting service at the Moline Memorial Park Cemetery. Contact Rosemary Shoemaker for details: 309.945.6738 or shoartb3@mchsi.com

Love Gifts

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.

Thank you to:

Ken and Sandra Keller, in loving memory of our son, Adrian Keller.

Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in loving memory of Beth Hagerty.

Donations and 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 donation or love gift, please send it using the enclosed envelope or to our treasurer, Michelle Curtis, 18163 241 Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.

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.

TCF National Office

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

www.compassionatefriends.org
<http://www.quadcitcitycf.org>

Mission Statement

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

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something that allows the world to hear our child's name, and for that one moment the candle means so much more than anyone else could ever understand.

For a fleeting second, that is our universe and every memory we have comes flooding back to us as we see the flame through tears, distorting it into something magical. It's the only gift we can give our children. This is as close as we can get to our child now. A tiny, flickering flame that can warm the heart and it's nice to think that perhaps they can see it also. It's a beacon, our light in the window, our shining star in the darkness. It's an opening of our hearts and a way to share our grief. We gather to honor the memories of our children and to share this bond of lighting a candle for the children all over the world. We miss them so much.

Jim Lowery ~ TCF, Sugar Land/SW Houston Chapter

We Need Not Walk Alone The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter

One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families who contact the national office. The Compassionate Friends, Inc., P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 (877)969-0010
email: Naionaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
Web site: www.compassionatefriends.org
Visit the [sibling resource](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) page at www.compassionatefriends.org
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 will contain notes and happenings 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.

National TCF has a new

Facebook page, **TCF - Loss to Suicide**. This page is open to parents, grandparents, and siblings who have lost loved ones to suicide. There is no good way to lose a loved one; different causes create specific pain that can be eased by sharing with another experiencing a similar loss. Co-moderators, Cathy Seehuetter and Donna Adams, welcome you to this special closed page.

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.

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Loss to Suicide

TCF - Loss to Homicide

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

TCF - Loss to Cancer

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss

TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

TCF - Loss of a Grandchild



Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter
Annual Candle Lighting Service, Thursday, December 15, 2016 at 7:00 pm at
Bethel Church, 3535 38th Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois
 Please call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) for information and directions.
TCF website: <http://www.quadcitytcf.org>.
Next month's meeting: January 25, 2017, at 6:30 pm at
Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois

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 563.260.3626 for directions or information, or contact them at linmac67@machlink.com .
Rick's House of Hope	This is a community resource for children and adolescents dealing with grief. There is no fee for services. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. The group for 14 year olds and older meets Sunday from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806. For more information, call Emily Gordon, Program Director, at 563.324.9580, or egordon@rhoh.org or go to www.rhoh.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)	A peer group for suicide grief support meets on the third Friday of every month, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Frances Banta Wagnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, 563.843.3655 or at there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)	Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meets on the second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252, from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm. Contact Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425, or laura@secondreformedchurch.net .
SHARE	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday at 6:30 pm 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 .
Loving Listeners	If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Kay Miller 309.738.4915 ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoeartb3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvechio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com <p>Kay, 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	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.
TCF's Grief Related Webinars	Held monthly, the webinars are on various grief topics with well-known experts in the field. To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx . Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.
TCF National Magazine	<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.
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 website 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, Alaska 99509.
Amazon.com	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.
Previous Newsletter Editions	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.
Alive Alone	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 .
Bereaved Parents' Magazine	Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm .
Our Newsletter	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, climb@climb-support.org . Include

The Gift of the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting

May 11, 1995, 45 years after I had taken my first breath of life, would now sadly and incomprehensibly mark my precious daughter's last. On a blisteringly hot day, six of our family vacationed in Orlando on a freeway many hundreds of miles from our home in Minnesota. An alcohol-impaired driver fell asleep at the wheel crashing into the side of the car where Nina was seated, thereby ending the promising life of my vibrantly beautiful 15-year-old daughter, killing her instantly. A week that began in joyful family togetherness ended in unspeakable tragedy.

Brokenhearted, we returned home to begin the daunting task of learning to live without Nina. We catatonically walked through the mind-numbing chore of making arrangements for our daughter's funeral, our house filled with people aiding us however they could. But soon after the service, the silence in our home was deafening. My son wondered aloud where everyone had gone. Though hard to conceive that the sun still rose and set every day; that people continued to work, breathe, laugh and love, I undoubtedly knew the answer to his question; they had returned to the normalcy of their untainted existence while our lives felt irreparably shattered.

While others had gone back to the "real world," even in the midst of my cavernous grief, I knew I had to preserve Nina's memory; I needed to find others who also desired their loved ones not be forgotten, realizing that it had to be another bereaved parent. I also needed reassurance there was hope that the raw pain of my loss would not continue forever, and that I was not alone on this most difficult of journeys. Thankfully, the funeral director in our city led me to The Compassionate Friends (TCF), a self- help group for bereaved parents,

siblings and grandparents. There I found the support and understanding that I so desperately craved, along with many distinctive, creative ways from seasoned griever to ensure that Nina would be forever remembered.

This became particularly important as I neared the first Christmas without Nina.

They showed me I could bring her into the holiday season she loved so much by attending our chapter's annual holiday candle lighting. A few short years later, I became involved in chapter leadership. During that time, the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting (WCL) came into existence and culminated into what is believed to be

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the world's largest candle lighting.

Held the second Sunday of December at 7:00 p.m. in each time zone around the world, candles are lit for one hour. As the candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next, creating a virtual 24-hour wave of light around the globe.

The past few years I have been the emcee for our chapter's program in conjunction with the WCL. From my vantage point, I clearly see each tear-stained face. Though the room is dimly lit in the beginning, as each flame is lit for a child gone too soon, the room gradually becomes bathed in a warm and peaceful glow. The candles are held proudly aloft in a show of fortitude and solidarity, with the belief that our children look down and see our lights of love and hope lifted heavenward, signifying that though gone is the life, never is their light.

The TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting is the gift I give myself (and Nina) each holiday season, and many family members and friends gift me with their presence at the chapter event or light a candle at 7:00 p.m. in remembrance of Nina. For all of us whose precious children have died, it is a beautiful and special way to ensure forevermore "...that their light may always shine."

With gentle thoughts over the holiday season, and always...

Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul Chapter

Candles in the Night

A heart broken by the death of a child can never be healed. As parents we try every way that can be thought of to cope with the loss, but the void will always be there. At first that emptiness seems to take your breath away, and most times we wish it would.

This becomes different with the passage of time. It never goes away, but at some point we learn to live with it, and in fact this horrible feeling becomes a lifeline of sorts. One of our biggest fears is to forget our children. Forget how they looked or how their voices sounded. The smiles and tears that blur together to make a child. This emptiness in effect becomes a constant yearning to remember our children.

Our hearts force us to find ways to fill that void to maintain our role as parents. Some are as simple as visiting the cemetery and some are as complex as changing our entire lives, dedicated to the memory of our child. In between are the many rituals we create or borrow from others to honor the memories and to keep our child's name alive.

Lighting a candle and saying a child's name keeps their memory burning bright. It means we are struggling to cope with this unwanted role of bereaved parent in the only positive manner we can. We will most certainly shed tears every time, and we will still miss our child, but we are doing

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