



The Compassionate Friends

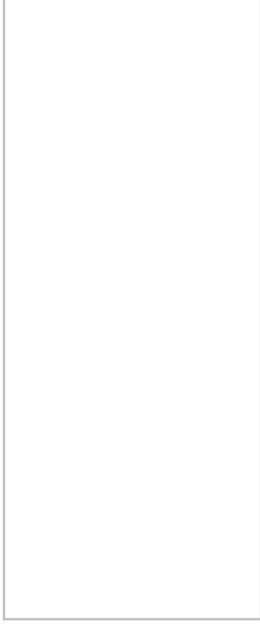
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



1830 6th Avenue
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.



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

May 2016

Volume XXIX, Number 5

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Recently

our pastor gave a dramatic sermon that involved another member of the congregation playing a role. I was unsure who the costumed “actor” was. After the service I asked a friend who the man was who helped with the sermon. He thought a little, having trouble coming up with a name. Then he “You know, the man whose child died.” Immediately I knew who the actor was. As I pondered that, I remembered how after our child had died, I felt conspicuous as though I had a sign on my forehead that read - bereaved parent. Only the week before we had been chatting in a small group about when we had joined our church. One of the older members said they remembered us because our child had died about that time.

And so as bereaved parents we are sometimes distinguished by the fact that our child has died. Perhaps that is fitting because in that moment of loss our lives changed dramatically, just as they changed dramatically the day each of our children was born. There is a litany we often read at Compassionate Friend’s Candlelight Services that repeats the phrase - “We are who we are today because we have a child who has died.” I think that Ken Finch, TCF, Canada, sums it up well. “Our children were, still are, and always will be part of who we are, what we are, and what we do. Today, tomorrow, and forever.”

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

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Chalkboard reflections

IT'S THE NEVERNESS THAT'S SO PAINFUL. ALL THE REST OF OUR LIVES WE MUST LIVE WITHOUT HIM...A MONTH, A YEAR, FIVE YEARS-WITH THAT I COULD LIVE. BUT NOT THIS FOREVER.

NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORFF -
LAMENT FOR A SON

YOU LIVED. YOU BREATHED.
AND OUR LOVE IS FOREVER. I
WILL ALWAYS BE YOUR
MOTHER AND YOU WILL
ALWAYS BE MY PRECIOUS
CHILD.

ABEDFORMYHEART.COM

The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure, but rather we honor, we 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.

Harriet Schiff, The Bereaved Parent

When trying to remember when something took place, our mind decides by remembering whether it was before or after our child died. It is a pivotal date that forever created a division in the timeline of our hearts and mind. When looking at photographs taken prior to our son's death, I see a look of true happiness untouched by the tragedy that was pending. In photos taken since, there is a smile on the outside but a touch of pain and loss can be seen in our eyes. The reality that tragedy can strike and we have no control is hiding behind the smile.

Karen Cantrell – TCF/Frankfort, KY

I WISH OTHERS KNEW THAT AFTER THE DEATH OF MY SON I STILL GENUINELY FEEL HAPPY, JOYFUL, HOPEFUL. I STILL LAUGH OFTEN. I STILL REJOICE WHEN OTHERS HAVE A BABY THEY GET TO KEEP IN THEIR ARMS. I STILL CARE DEEPLY. I STILL AIM TO LOVE THOSE AROUND ME WELL. AND YET I STILL GRIEVE PROFOUNDLY. I STILL ACHE WHEN I THINK ABOUT EACH MISSED MILESTONE WITH MY SON. I STILL WIPE AWAY TEARS OFTEN FROM MY FACE. I STILL WISH MORE THAN WORDS CAN CONVEY THAT THIS WAS NOT MY STORY. I STILL HAVE EACH OF THESE FEELINGS ALL MIXED WITHIN MY HEART. THIS IS THE NEW ME."

COURTNEY C. FROM ABEDFORMYHEART.COM

This crappy club called child loss is a club I never wanted to join, and one I can never leave, yet is filled with some of the best people I've ever known. And yet we all wish we could jump ship— that we could have met another way -- any other way but this. Alas, these shining souls are the most beautiful, compassionate, grounded, loving, movers, shakers and healers I have ever had the honor of knowing. They are life-changers, game-changers, relentless survivors and thrivers. Warrior moms and dads who redefine the word brave.

Every day loss parents move mountains in honor of their children gone too soon. They start movements, change laws, spearhead crusades of tireless activism. Why? In the hope that even just one parent could be spared from joining the club. If you've ever wondered who some of the greatest world changers are, hang out with a few bereaved parents and watch how they live, see what they do in a day, a week, a lifetime. Watch how they alchemize their grief into a force to be reckoned with, watch how they turn tragedy into transformation, loss into legacy.

Angela Miller

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.quadcitytcf.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.



Scottsdale, Arizona, will be the site of the 39th TCF National Conference on July 8-10, 2016. "Hope Rises on the Wings of Love," is the theme of this year's event. The 2016 Conference will be held at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. We'll keep you updated with details as they become available. Plan to come and be part of this heartwarming experience.

The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden

5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, 61265



In the Quad Cities, in the Moline Memorial Cemetery, the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden has taken form. After four years of planning and fundraising the Memorial Garden is **close to being completed**. The wing-shaped planters rise from the earth flanking the two sides of the central circle. The last phase of construction was finished this past December, and the **final push** is underway to obtain the Angel. The final cost to purchase and install the Angel is \$16,800, and only \$2,000 remains to be raised before reaching that goal.

You can help create a place of solace for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings throughout the Quad City Area. **Help us raise that last \$2,000 to complete this project and place the Angel of Hope upon the center platform!**

In the area before the angel lie the inscribed bricks that spell out the names of other children who have died before their time, remembered by parents, siblings, grandparents, and relatives who daily live with the absence of a loved child. These stones are available to parents, siblings, and families who would like to remember a deceased child, adult-child, sibling, niece, nephew, or grandchild. **The order form** is found on the TCF website. Please go to <http://www.quadcitytcf.org> to download the order form.

Helping Yourself Grieve

As much as it hurts, it is natural and normal to grieve. Some parents find the following suggestions helpful while grieving:

- ♥ Talk about your child often and use his or her name.
- ♥ Ask family and friends for help with housework, errands, and taking care of other children. This will give you important time to think, remember, and grieve.
- ♥ Take time deciding what to do with your child's belongs; don't rush to pack up your child's room or to give away toys and clothes.
- ♥ Prepare ahead of time how to respond to difficult questions like "How many children do you have?" or comments like "At least you have other children." Remember that people aren't trying to hurt you; they just don't know what to say.
- ♥ Prepare for how you want to spend significant days, such as your child's birthday or the anniversary of your child's death. You may want to spend the day looking at photos and sharing memories or start a family tradition such as planting flowers.
- ♥ Because of the intensity and isolation of parental grief, parents may especially benefit from a support group where they can share their experiences with other parents who understand their grief and can offer hope.

Parents report that they never really "get over" the death of a child, but rather learn to live with the loss. The death of a child may compel parents to rethink their priorities and reexamine the meaning of life. It may seem impossible to newly grieving parents, but parents do go on to find happiness and to reinvest in life again. An important step for many parents is to create a legacy for their child. Parents may choose to honor their child by volunteering at a local hospital or a cancer support organization. Or, parents may work to support interests their child once had, start a memorial fund, or plant trees in their child's memory. It is important to remember that it is never disloyal to the deceased child to re-engage in life and to find pleasure in new experiences.

Healing Hearts of WNY

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.



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.

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 treasurer, Michelle Curtis, 18163 241 Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa, 52722. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. **Your gifts are tax deductible.**

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

Daisies in Huge Handfuls

"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.

Rich Edler
TCF/South Bay, CA

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Monthly meeting: Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 6:30 pm at

Bethany for Children & Families

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois

Please call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) for information and directions.

TCF website: <http://www.quadcitytcf.org>.

Next month's meeting: June 22, 2016 at 6:30 pm

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 Waggner 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 shoearth3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvechio 563.349.8895 delvechiojudy@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, AK 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 your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.

Thoughts about Mother's Day

As I think about Mother's Day this year, I become very nostalgic. Every spring during my elementary school days, I looked forward to the day the order form for our plants for Mother's Day came from our local florist. I always ordered pansies for my mom, the ones with purple and yellow or yellow and brown. I could hardly wait for the delivery day to come, so that I could present them to my mother. She always received them with much surprise and appreciation, as if it were a gift she had never received before or even expected.

As a child, Mother's Day was an important occasion to my family. My dad always insisted we wear the traditional carnations: white if one's mother was deceased, red if still living. He would make a special trip to the florist to purchase them. We would attend church, and then drive to a nearby city for lunch.

I remember clearly my first Mother's Day being "the mom." Our Anna was only about three weeks old, so I had a very limited idea of what it really meant to be "the mom." But I do remember being treated like a queen and enjoying every minute of it.

Over the next several years as we raised our two daughters, my husband continued to affirm the women of our family. On Mother's Day he always bought roses for each of his girls. Anna would get a yellow one. Debbie would get a peach-colored one. The red roses were for me. When the girls were young I would receive and treasure their hand-made cards. As they grew into young

adults, their choices in purchased cards were just as significant. Every year as Mother's Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories... That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. Our daughter, Anna, died. How could those special days of love and togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away or stay in bed with the sheets over my head. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by "intact" families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all



Thoughts, continued

those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

The feelings that I have shared are not uncommon in the early years of grief with those who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. If you or someone you care about has experienced the death of a child, I offer some suggestions from those who have been there to help you do to make it through this time.

Realize this day is full of potential for a multitude of feelings to sneak up on you and catch you by surprise. Especially during those early years, do whatever works for you. This may be a time of being in "survival mode." Trying to please everyone else can cause undue stress. If you have surviving children who want to honor you, communicate your feelings to them. Let them know that while you are grieving the death of their brother or sister, you still love them. Try to keep things simple and uncomplicated. Visit the cemetery. You may choose to pretend the day just does not exist and do something completely unrelated to Mother's Day. Clean the house, take a nap, get out of town. One of my Compassionate Friends spends Mother's Day at Home Depot. No one bothers her there or mentions Mother's Day. Have a good cry. If you have trouble crying, just stop by a card shop

and read a card or two. Maybe even buy the card that you believe your child would give you. Go to the recycle bin and break glass into the proper receptacle. Know that the days before the holiday may be worse than the actual day.

As with all holidays, be reassured that what you do this year does not have to be what you do next year.

As my Compassionate Friends and I have found, with proper grief work over time, the intensity of our feelings has softened. This will happen for you, as well. In the meantime, be gentle with yourself. And remember, "You need not walk alone."

Paula Funk

**TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI
In loving memory of my daughter,
Anna**



I lost my daughter four days ago to stillbirth. I am unsure of how I will ever be the same person again. I can't imagine being the hopeful optimistic person I was. I feel lost. I have other beautiful children for which I am blessed. They cannot replace the one I've lost and wish people would stop saying, "At least you have four beautiful children." I know they are trying to help and say anything to bring me comfort, but I just want to scream, "No one can replace her in my heart!!" As if my pain should be less because I have other children, as if it doesn't matter as much."

**Rebecca M.
from abedformyheart.com**