



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

May-June 2025

Volume XXXVIII, Number 3

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Yesterday, driving home after facilitating an Easter week event at our church, I was thinking about the person who commented on our “daughter.” The “daughter” this new acquaintance was referencing is our friend, Amanda. In many ways we serve as substitute parents, so in a way she is our “daughter,” even though not by blood.

I began to think about our daughter who died many years ago. She died in late March, just a week or two before Easter. That first Easter was stark. The weather was cold, wet, and dreary and mirrored my feelings as we shared Easter festivities with friends who graciously invited us to join them. As I thought about Anna, I wondered what she would be like. Would she still have abundant dark hair or be graying like her brothers? Would she have a family, a career? Would we be friends? Suddenly tears welled in my eyes as I reflected on what could have been and felt the old ache of grief for the child who was with us such a short time.

By the time I drove into the garage, I was done with tears and set about emptying the car and making a cup of tea. Later, sitting in the kitchen looking out into the yard, I realized the once bright day had perceptibly darkened. I did not think rain was predicted. The darkness grew and all at once a deluge of raindrops pelted the deck. Ten minutes later the storm and the clouds had passed revealing the sun which again filled the day with light.

I think this is what old grief looks like. That ache of the loss of our child is there buried under the surface. There are times those sad and painful feelings blindsides us for a moment triggered by an event, a memory, the chance comment of a stranger. And then the moment passes, our spirits lift, and we carry on, remembering with warmth the child whose life and death helped us become the people we are today.



Sincerely,
Carol and Jerry Webb

Hope

Hope is not an easy word for grievors — but we, more than others, need to understand what hope can mean for us. Hope means embracing with tenderness and pride our own life and the gifts left to us by those we have lost.

TCF/Johannesburg Newsletter

The death of a child is so painful, both emotionally and spiritually, that I truly wondered if my heart and spirit would ever heal. I soon learned that I could help myself best by helping others.

Barbara Bush

We are the rememberers, the people left behind to keep the one who's gone from us alive in heart and mind.

The people left to cherish and preserve their legacy, yes, we are the rememberers and we will always be.

Grief Watch

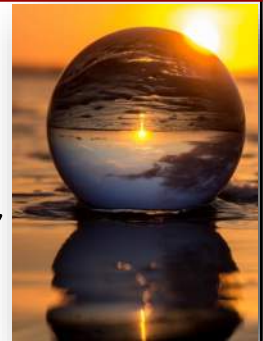
There is no vacation from your absence. Every morning I awake I am a bereaved parent. Every noon, I feel the hole in my heart. Every evening my arms are empty.

My life is busy now, but not quite full. My heart is mended, but not quite healed. For the rest of my life, every moment will be lived without you. There is no vacation from your absence.

Kathy Boyette
TCF, Gulf Coast, MS

If this is your first vacation since your child died, you may find you really don't want to go at all, but feel pressured by previous commitments or

other children's needs. Try to leave yourself an escape route. Go — but with the understanding that if it's too much, you can come home. Just having that agreed to ahead of time and knowing that choice is available to you may make it an easier time for you.



Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

**Here are My Top Four Tips
on How to Handle Mother's Day
After Losing a Child**

1. Grief is a dynamic process. What worked last year might not work this year and what works this year will change next. Leave yourself open to new ways of approaching where you are.
2. If you have a tough year, don't get attached to thinking, "That's how it going to be for the rest of my life!" Accept it as simply being a tough year and look to find ways to improve it.
3. There is no right or wrong way to do this. You are the only one who can determine what you need. You are as individual as the relationship you had with your loved one. Honor your uniqueness.
4. Know that it's not just "the day" that makes it hard. Often, it's the days leading up to and following it that weigh on us. The anticipation and the let-down can be very exhausting. Set aside ten minutes to check in with your self. How's your energy, your mood, your body, your emotional state? Don't be afraid to feel like you're moving forward – We don't HAVE to stay stuck, we can choose happiness...if for no other reason than you, of all people, deserve it!

Paula Stephens

If Only One More Time

To hear your voice loud and clear;
to see your image as if you're here;
to feel your warmth like you are near,
if only, one more time.
To hear you call, "Mom, I'm home,"
to keep me company when I'm alone;
to watch you run and grab the phone,
if only, one more time.
To watch you sit quietly and read;
to buy you things you say you need;
to see you do a thoughtful deed,
if only, one more time.
To find a note written by you;
to walk upstairs and trip over your shoe;
to comfort you when you're feeling blue,
if only, one more time.
To feel your arms in a soft embrace;
to see that smile upon your face;
to understand when you needed space,
if only, one more time.

Vicki Richey
TCF, Orange County Chapter, CA

TCF's Facebook Page is a proven support area for bereaved family members to come and talk about their grief. Stop by and visit with some of our more than 120,000 Facebook members. **Please join our TCF/USA Facebook family.** Tell us about your child, sibling, grandchild, or other loved one and find support in the words and concern of others. **Check out the Discussion Boards!** Every day we also provide thought provoking questions, grief quotes, and links to grief stories, as well as TCF news such as updates on the National Conference, Worldwide Candle Lighting, and other TCF programs.

Closed Facebook Groups: The Compassionate Friends offers several closed Facebook groups to connect with other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. The groups supply support, encouragement, and friendship. Recently added groups include Men in Grief; Loss to Long Term Illness; Loss of a Step Child; Loss of a Child with Special Needs.

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter

A complimentary issue of the National Newsletter is sent to bereaved families who contact the office at The Compassionate Friends, Inc., 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI 48393, (877)969-0010.

email:

NationalOffice@compassionatefriends.org

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Visit the **sibling resource** page at www.compassionatefriends.org. It is also available to read online without charge.

e-Newsletter Now

Available! An e-Newsletter is now available from the National Office! The monthly e-Newsletter contains notes and happenings of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.



About The Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Founded in England in 1969, the first U.S. chapter was organized in 1972. Since then, 635 chapters have been established. The current Quad City Chapter was formed in 1987 (<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>).

TCF National Office

48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808

Wixom, MI 48393

Toll Free (877)969-0010

TCF National Website:

www.compassionatefriends.org

Mission Statement

The mission of The Compassionate Friends Quad City Area Chapter is that when a child dies at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Vision Statement

The vision statement of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Starting Over Again

As parents, how many times have we told our children to **“Try, try again? You can do it. Just start over.”** We would say this, be it a coloring book not kept within the lines, with learning to tie shoes, working with school assignments, or later with the other difficulties that life brings.

Little did we think that this well-meaning advice, which we gave out of love and concern for our children’s well-being, would be the words that we now must follow. **“Hang on.” “Don’t give up.” “Try again, and start over.”** All this now applies to us.

Had the situation been reversed, we would not have wanted our children to live out the rest of their lives in pain and unable to go on. We would have wanted them to continue not in constant sorrow but with hope for renewal and better days ahead.

As we have said to them, they would be throwing it right back to us...**“It is a very hard road that you must travel, but you can do it. What you wanted for me, I want for you. Do what you have to. Find your way out of the dark tunnel, and when you fall, pick yourself up and start over again. You can do it.”**

If we could hear them right now, they would be saying: **“LIVE**, for life is but a moment. **LOVE**, for that is what really matters, and **GO ON** for we shall be together again someday.”

Mary Ann Lambden
TCF, Gloucester County, NJ

Understanding the Situation of Grieving Fathers

Grieving fathers respond to the sad event very differently— and sometimes in a way that puzzles mothers, since many don't show their grief.

To all grieving mothers: this is very common, not necessarily a need to worry and can have many, often several causes.

- ♥ Fathers often see themselves as providers, emotionally stronger, and take on the role of holding the “family ship” above water when everything else is falling apart.
- ♥ Men are used to dealing with their emotions in a different way.
- ♥ Many grieving fathers need to return to work soon after the sad event and function there. A father’s grieving, sadly, often doesn't find acceptance at work.
- ♥ A father’s relationship to his child is often very different than a mother-child relationship. Especially if the child died before birth, fathers have fewer and less tangible memories.

My April Child

When our daughters were growing up, the arrival of spring time was a favorite time of the year, filled with anticipation of the coming of special days of family fun. The freshness of the air, the brilliant colors of springtime trees and flowers, and the song of the birds, returned from their winter retreat, resounded the message of hope and that life was good. We had survived another cold, snowy Michigan winter and were soon to be rewarded with blue sky, sunshine and temperatures well above freezing!

Birthdays in our family were a time of celebration together. Each year Larry, Anna, Debbie and I, and perhaps a friend or two, would celebrate Anna's April birthday by dining at her favorite Mexican restaurant. There would be lots of silliness and laughter. During her teenage years, Anna would always forewarn us not to have the staff come to our table to sing their crazy birthday song. Of course, since we always insisted that our role as parents was to embarrass our children, her threats and warnings could not stop our tomfoolery. I believe she secretly enjoyed the attention.

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. My April child 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 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 we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away on her birthday. For several years we did just that. With hearts filled with the numbness of fresh grief, our restructured family of three would hop in the car and head out of town. We would spend the day busying ourselves with whatever it took to survive. We would laugh half-heartedly, share memories, or cry together as we struggled to discover our new identity as a family without Anna's physical presence.

As always, only a few short weeks following Anna's birthday Mother's Day would arrive right on schedule. 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

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To the Dads Grieving on Father's Day: We see you!

A day like today is bittersweet. It is a day of celebration and honor, a day set aside to say thank you, to you.

But the one (or ones) who should be thanking you, giving you cards, presenting you with yet another tie, are not here. It is a day filled with what should be, but what is not. Of what could have been, but instead is so different.

What can we say on this day, where words fall short and no Hallmark card can express the depth of what this day holds? Nothing can be said that can fix this pain or mend the hole in your heart that is the exact shape of your child. There is nothing that can be done to fill that void.

But, what those of us who grieve our children who died want to tell you is this:

We see you. We know you. We are here for you. We love you.

We see you.

The one with the brave face. The one who carries on about his days in the same way that he did before. The one who can compartmentalize and stay in the routine because that is what is comfortable. We also see you turn away and sometimes step aside. We see you take a deep breath and put your arm around your partner or go to lift the spirits of your other children because the way you see it, you need to be there

for them; they are your priority. We see you putting others before yourself. We see you doing the best that you can, day after day. We see your passion. We see your hurt. We see your love.

We know you.

We know that behind that stoic smile and the way you go about your day, there is a heart that yearns for the child that you cannot wrap your arms around. We know you feel like you must be the strong one, the one who thinks that you cannot break down because if you break down, who will be there for everyone else? We know you are the fixer, but now there is nothing about this that can be fixed.

We know you hurt; we also know our culture does not give you permission to know that it is OK to grieve and to show your feelings and speak how you truly feel. We know that when someone asks, "How are you?" you lie, because you know that the other person would likely be uncomfortable with your truth. We know you, and we know your heart is breaking but that your heart is also bursting with the joy of being your child's father. We know you, and we know this grief journey is anything but comfortable or easy.

We are here for you.

This is a lonely journey. Most people are unable to sit with pain, sadness,

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Being the Mother of a Child Who Died — On Mother's Day

I am the mother of a child who died. And that makes Mother's Day very hard.

Recently I was talking to a mother whose child had just died. "What about Mother's Day?" she asked, through tears. It was hard to know what to say, because it's a terrible day for those of us who have lost a child. Other days of the year you can maybe make it a few hours without thinking about your loss; other days of the year you can pretend that you are an ordinary person and that life is normal. But not on Mother's Day.

On Mother's

Day it's in your face that your child is gone forever. On Mother's Day you can't pretend you are ordinary or that life is normal. All the hoopla, all the Hallmark hype, the handmade cards and flowers and family gatherings, make it almost excruciating.

Our town has a Mother's Day road race for which I am eternally grateful—especially because, in a

demonstration of grace's existence, the start and finish are next to the cemetery where my son is buried. On my way I can visit his grave and say what I need to say and look yet again at the name we chose for him carved into stone. At the end of the race, they give all the mothers a flower; on my way home, I go back to the grave and lay my flower there. And then I move forward with the day.

See, that's the real challenge after losing a child: moving forward. It's almost impossible to envision in that moment of loss; how can life continue after something so horrible? But life

does continue, whether we like it or not. There are chores to do and bills to pay; morning comes, again and again. So pick yourself up and you live, but you are never the same. At first, we are different because of our raw sadness. But over time, the sadness moves from our skin into our bones. It becomes less visible, but no less who we are. It changes into a wisdom, one we'd give up in a



heart-beat to have our child back. We who have lost children understand that so many things just aren't important. All that is important is those we love. All that is important is each other. Nothing else.

It can feel very lonely, being the parent of a child who died, especially on Mother's Day or Father's Day. We feel so different from those around us, all those happy people with children the same age our child was, or would have been. But over the years, I've come to understand that I'm not alone at all. There is a wonderful Buddhist story about a woman whose son gets sick and dies. She goes to the Buddha to ask him to bring her son back to life; I will, he says, if you bring me some mustard seed from the home of a family that has not known loss. She goes from house to house but can find no family that has not lost someone dear to them. She buries her son and goes to the Buddha and says: I understand now. That is what I understand now. It doesn't make me miss my son any less, or Mother's Day any easier. But it helps me make sense of it; loss is part of life. There are no guarantees, ever. Our children, and all those we love, are gifts to us for



however long we have them.

I understand now too that we are together in this, all of us in joy and in loss. It's the connections we make with each other that matter—it's the connections we make that give life value and help us face each morning.

As G.K. Chesterton wrote, "We are all in the same boat in a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty."

Years ago, I chose words to say each time I go to my son's grave. It makes it easier to have a ritual. And over the years, the words have come to mean more to me. They aren't just about grief anymore. They are about who I am, what I have learned, and what I can give. "I will always love you," I say. "And I will always be your mother."

Claire McCarthy, M.D.
BP of USA Coeur d'Alene

*Remember the life!
Remember the whole
life, not the final
page of it.*

*Rabbi Maurice Davis
TCF, Baltimore MD*

To the Dads...continued from page 7

anger and uncertainty. But there are many who can and many who will. We want you to grieve in a way that is meaningful and helpful and in a way that allows for expression of all of your feelings, because they are real. It is OK to not be OK. You are living the unimaginable and yet it is your reality. You do not have to walk this road alone. We want to walk the journey with you. We want to remember with you. We want to listen, cry, sit with you, and celebrate you because you are an incredible father.

We love you.

No one grieves the same. No one can fully understand how you feel because no one is you. You are often the overlooked one. After a child dies, most people focus on the mom while you are left to find your own way. But you are equally as important. Your feelings matter. Your relationship with your child matters and continues to matter. We may not be perfect in the way that we care for you but hear this: We love you.

No matter how long your child lived, we know that it never could have been long enough. Father's Day is a bittersweet day. But, you, you are a father, nothing in life or in death can take that from you. You are theirs and they are yours and that is something to celebrate today and every day.

Happy Father's Day.

DeAndrea Dare
Founder and Executive Director,
A Memory Grows

Some Typical Male Coping Styles to Deal With Grief

Grieving fathers often don't show or work through their pain openly. Carol Staudacher, author of *Men and Grief* lists four alternative ways men cope with grief:

- 1. Remaining silent:** Keeping the pain private helps to protect against vulnerability in form of tears, strong feelings and sharing emotions.
- 2. Grieving secretly:** Grieving when no one can see to spare others from seeing, feeling or experiencing that grief. Anything else often seems against "cultural expectations."
- 3. Taking physical and legal action:** Trying to get control over a situation that is out of control. This approach is often supported and rewarded by others since it's seen as being "assertive and courageous" in times of grief.
- 4. Becoming immersed in activity:** Occupying all time so there is none left to think of the loss or feel the pain of the grief.

<http://www.positive-parenting-skills.net>

My April Child, continued from page 6

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 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 it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

It seems impossible it has been nine birthdays and nine Mothers’ Days since

me off guard, but it is softer now. The tears still come, but less frequently. Warm memories bring joyful moments to the emptiness. I smile quietly to myself, reassured Anna lives on in our hearts and lives, as well as in the hearts and lives of those around us. Once again, each April we celebrate the day of her birth, for her life has been a gift of unimaginable joy. Our traditional Mother’s Day rituals have changed to new ones. There is more laughter now, fewer painful tears. I rejoice I can celebrate I am Debbie’s Mom, and now Scott’s mother-in-law, as well! Life is good.

The winter has been long and cold, as has been the winter of our grief.

Springtime has arrived. The sunshine



and blue sky, the purple crocus and yellow daffodils pushing through the warming earth bring hope of renewal and reassurance that life continues. Although there is an irreparable hole in my soul and an emptiness in my heart that will never leave, I am forever grateful Anna lived with us for 23 years. I am eternally thankful I am and I

always will be Anna’s Mom. May the warmth and brilliance of springtime fill your hearts with times of peace and hope and love.

Paula Funk

TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, Michigan

Anna died. In my heart it was only yesterday. I can still see her smile and hear her laugh. I can feel the warmth of a quick hug as she heads out the door. With each passing year comes a new reality of what it means to be a bereaved parent, of what it means to find a new normal for our lives. The pain continues to occasionally catch

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Meeting
May 22, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.
Bethany for Children & Families
1701 River Drive, Moline, Illinois
(Please park in the east lot and go to the second floor.)
The next chapter meetings are on
Thursday, June 26, 2025 and July 24, 2025

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine

Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the Snyder and Hallenbaugh Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa, Chapter. The contact person is Tom Summit, 563.506.0103.

Rick's House of Hope

Rick's House of Hope serves children, ages three to 18, and family members from the Quad Cities and nearby counties. We serve those with grief, loss, or trauma issues. Death of a loved one and divorce are common; however, any sort of traumatic event or family change would fit our criteria, such as: bullying, teen dating victimization/harassment, crime victims, and other needs. The continuous groups are Family Together for all members of the family on Wednesday nights 5:00-7:00 p.m. and a Teen Night on Thursdays 5:00-7:30 p.m. All meetings are held at 852 Middle Road (Vera French), in Bettendorf, Iowa, and are free. Rick's House of Hope also does individual counseling/therapy. For more information, contact Lynne Miller, Program Manager, at millerl@verafrenchmhc.org or go to www.rhoh.org.

SHARE

A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Adler Room, #1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at 309.373.2568, or chalyn@shareqc.com or www.shareqc.com.

Phone Support

If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):
 ♥ Doug Scott, 563.370.1041, dns0826@gmail.com
 ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, shoearth4@gmail.com
 ♥ Judy Delvecchio, 563.349.8895, delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com
 Doug, Rosemary, and Judy are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don't feel alone.

Printed Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

TCF Online Support Community	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 Resources	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/ .
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.
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. https://bereavedparentsusa.org .
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 at climb@climb-support.org . Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.

Sometimes

Sometimes in the middle of the night as I read, wash dishes, fold clothes, or sit quietly and pontificate about this or that, I hear your voice. The sound is so clear: “Mom,” you say. Sometimes I answer back in an automatic response. I wait for a brief moment and then your voice is gone. I am startled and I freeze in place, not moving, not breathing, not blinking, just listening.

Sometimes I think I see you in a store or on the street, walking that unique walk that was yours alone. I look twice and realize it is not you. But it was a brief moment of joy to see that special walk.

Sometimes I think I have lost my mind. But most of the time I am thankful for these little reminders. Perhaps it is my mind giving me a sense of you. Perhaps the keeping of you in my heart brings this peace to me.

Sometimes when I come home from work, I find something on the counter that wasn't there that morning. A sock, a small socket wrench, a matchbox car. I ask my husband if he came home during the day. He didn't, of course. I wonder about these things, but then I also get comfort from them.

Sometimes I wish I could talk to you just one more time. I would simply listen to your voice, your excitement, your disappointment, your happiness,

your enthusiasm, your concern... whatever you might be feeling. That would be enough. I don't need great revelations, just a conversation, just your voice.

Sometimes I could just scream at the inequity of your death. You, my only child, the one who gave purpose and meaning to my life, are gone forever from this plane. But then, I get a grip on my sanity and stop thinking negatively.

Sometimes I meet a newly bereaved mother, and I see myself. I know her heart, I understand her torment, and I feel the pain that has wrapped her in its horrible, crushing grip. I listen to this mother whose world has been gnarled into a grotesque shell of life, and I ask about her child.

Sometimes I accept my reality, sometimes I don't. But I always keep you in my heart, taking you into the future as far as I, myself, will go. And that has to be enough. I cannot change the past. I can only live today and plan for tomorrow.

Sometimes, though, I am glad that my mind allows me these little forays into a parallel reality. These give me peace. In this world, peace is as ethereal as a fine mist near a waterfall.

Sometimes, reality is just too harsh.

Annette Mennen Baldwin,
TCF/Katy, TX

In memory of my son, Todd Mennen



48th Annual National Conference of The Compassionate Friends

Bellevue/Seattle, Washington
July 11-13, 2025

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

You can find more information at *compassionatefriends.org*.

Love Gifts

As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from this newsletter, they often wish to make a **Love Gift** to help with the work of our chapter. This is a way to remember a beloved child and to help other parents who mourn the loss of their child.

Donations are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to our bereaved families, for the materials shared at our meetings, and/or to purchase books for our library. Thank you to the many families who provide love gifts so the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue. **If you would like to send a donation or love gift, please send it or to the Chapter Treasurer, Laurie Boyce-Steinhauser, 2946 Summertree Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722. Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.**

Contact the Editors

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents and would like to share it...

If you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, please send us your new address. Because we send the newsletter bulk rate, the post office will not forward it...

If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, send his/her/their name and address...

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if you prefer to receive this newsletter via email...

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



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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

You are not alone in your grief.