



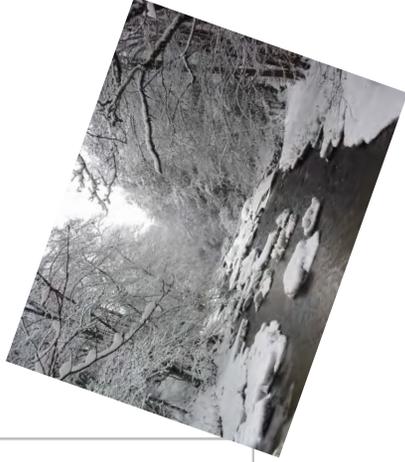
**The Compassionate Friends**  
Quad City Area Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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.



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Volume XXX January 2017 Number 1

Dear Compassionate Friends,

**This fall,** I injured my shoulder and have been working to rehab it without much apparent progress. This week, as I reflected on the various nuances of how my shoulder feels, I was struck by the similarity to the emotional pain of grief, especially in the second and third years.

Sometimes I function pretty well. I know the injury is there, but it does not bother me too much. Sometimes I am troubled by a constant ache that distracts me from my chores or wakes me in the night making it impossible to go back to sleep. And sometimes pain shoots through me unexpectedly, in such a rush that it almost takes me to my knees, and I need a moment or two to recover.

Dealing with the ongoing pain saps my energy. The physical therapist tells me that shoulders take a long time to heal, and I need to be patient.

After the first or second pain-filled years after your child dies you may think the grieving should be done and you should be handling life much better. In many ways you will be. However, you have sustained a devastating injury, and it is going to take time, lots of time, before you no longer feel a constant nagging ache of loss or are blindsided by a sharp assault of pain. Continuing to talk with others about your child will help. Most bereaved parents cannot deal with their grief without some outside support whether it is a spiritual counselor, therapist, listening friends or a support group.

The new year might be the right time to attend a Compassionate Friends meeting. At a TCF meeting you will meet others who are dealing with the pain of the loss of their child - bereaved parents who are in all different stages of grief and who have a variety of ways of coping. The important thing is that they care, and their goal is for no grieving parent to walk alone.

Sincerely,  
Carol and Jerry Webb

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## Chalkboard reflections

Now I Know

I never knew, when you lost your child,  
What you were going through.  
I wasn't there, I stayed away,  
I just deserted you.  
I didn't know the words to say,  
I didn't know the things to do.  
I think your pain so frightened me,  
I didn't know how to comfort you.

And then one day my child died.  
You were the first one there.  
You quietly stayed by my side,  
Listened, and held me as I cried.  
You didn't leave, you didn't go.  
The lesson learned is  
NOW I KNOW!

Alice Kerr  
TCF/Lower Bucks, Pennsylvania

GRIEF IS LIKE A LONG, WINDING VALLEY  
WHERE ANY BEND MAY REVEAL A  
TOTALLY NEW LANDSCAPE.

C.S. LEWIS

Sorrow makes us all children again - destroys  
all differences of intellect. The wisest know  
nothing.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE IN YOUR  
JOURNEY TOWARD HEALING, BOLSTER  
THE HOPE THAT ARISES WITHIN YOU.  
YOUR HEALING IS PROBABLY THE BEST  
MEMORIAL YOU MAY ERECT TO YOUR  
DEAD CHILD!

ROBERT GLOOR

GRIEF IS NEITHER AN ILLNESS NOR A PATHOLOGICAL CONDITION, BUT  
RATHER A HIGHLY PERSONAL AND NORMAL RESPONSE TO LIFE-CHANGING  
EVENTS, A NATURAL PROCESS THAT CAN LEAD TO HEALING AND PERSONAL  
GROWTH. THE TRANSITION THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME IS THE  
COURAGEOUS JOURNEY.

SANDI CAPLAN AND GORDON LANG,  
IN GRIEF'S COURAGEOUS JOURNEY: A WORKBOOK

WHETHER WE CRY ON THE  
INSIDE OR CRY ON THE  
OUTSIDE IS PREDETERMINED  
BY SOCIETY, OUR GENETICS  
AND A HOST OF OTHER  
FACTORS. BUT WE DO CRY  
THESE BEAUTIFUL TEARS FOR  
OUR DECEASED CHILDREN.  
THESE TEARS SOMEHOW  
REMAIN US OF THE  
CONNECTION TO OUR  
CHILDREN, THEIR DEPARTURE  
AND OUR DEEP, DEEP LOSS.

АННЕТТЕ АЛЕКШЕН БАЛДВИН

You loved; therefore, you  
grieve. You may succeed in  
postponing your grief for a  
time, but it will resurface  
some day in some way. You  
are encouraged to deal with  
it now so that it won't be  
waiting ten or fifteen years  
down the road for you.

Mary Cleckley

## Dwelling on Our Loss

To an outsider, the idea of meeting with a group of people for the purpose of discussing death, our personal experiences with the death of our children, the "grief process," etc., may seem grim if not altogether morbid. All of us who are involved in The Compassionate Friends have run into someone who has asked, "Why do you do this?" or "Why don't you just try to let it go?"

The idea of "dwelling on the loss" is always stated with negative connotations, yet dwelling on the death of a child is not something we can avoid. Indeed, "dwelling" is part of the healing process. It's how we come to grips with the questions, "Why, what if...?" that uncontrollably pop up in our minds, and it is how we learn to accept the unacceptable.

Certainly, there is a wealth of information in books dealing with death and dying. Our faith, our pastors, priests, and rabbis have much to contribute to our healing. Psychologists, psychiatrists and therapy may be necessary.

The Compassionate Friends encourages grieving parents to utilize any or all of the above tools, but we also realize the value of learning to verbalize, openly, publicly, the grief and the loss we feel . . . not in the privacy of our doctor or minister's office, where we are very sheltered, but openly among people who know full well how hard it is to say, "My child is dead." We do not put any pressure on people attending our meeting to say anything, but the beautiful part of this group is that it enables you to see people who are "down the long road" a way further and to realize that you will be there in time.

Are we dwelling on our loss? Absolutely. But we are learning to dwell on it constructively, to dwell on it without guilt and without the isolation we have all felt. We learn how to reach out (in time) to others with a compassion that brings healing to others as well as to ourselves.

Philip Barker—TCF/California

## An Image of Grief

I am a tree, standing alone in the  
early winter.

I feel cold,  
empty, gray,  
and ugly.  
The winds of  
grief have  
ripped away  
a branch and  
have left me

unbalanced – with a great gaping  
hole. The sap of my innermost being  
rushes to the hole to provide a balm  
for the pain of the open wound. The  
icy cold rain of my weeping falls  
through the shaking of my boughs. I  
continue to sway in the harsh gales of  
reality, and the keening of the winds  
are the voice of my heartache. But...



Under the ground there is life. Each  
root of love, friendship, care, family,  
and faith is feeding into the trunk, and  
I know for a certainty that surely  
spring will come again! The bark of  
time will cover the rending wound.  
The scar will always be there, but the  
drain on my heart will be over. The  
leaves will burst forth and gently  
surround the sound with breezes of  
living memories and promises of life  
to come. My boughs will be heavy  
with the wonder of living. Nestled near  
the scarred trunk, secure in the  
knowledge that God is my refuge and  
strength, the sweet bird of happiness  
will sing again.

Anite King  
TCF/Hagerstown, Maryland

## Five Myths about Grief

### 1. Time heals all wounds.

*False:* Time by itself is only the passing of days. Time – *plus* permission to grieve, *plus* the willingness to face and process feelings, to reminisce, to express your pain – these together over time will heal your wounds.

### 2. If you just move on with life, your grief will eventually go away.

*False:* Repressing your feelings is like not doing your homework. You think you're getting away with something but in fact, you're only hurting yourself. You'll pay when it comes time for the test. Likewise, not facing your grief is cheating yourself. You'll pay for it with a range of potential problems: health issues, depression, anxiety, bitterness, etc. True healing comes when feelings are accepted, expressed, and processed.

### 3. If you grieve properly, you will achieve closure.

*False:* Even if you allow yourself to experience your feelings head on, there is no such thing as "closure." The human heart never closes because love itself can never die. Just because a person has died

does not mean that the relationship is over. Therefore, you will continue to feel pangs of loss over the years; it comes hand in hand with the love you feel in your heart. Closure is not the goal of healing.

### 4. You will never feel joy again after a major loss.

*False:* Love and joy are abundant and will fill your life again one day if you let them. Though you may feel despair during the darkest days of grief, you won't feel that way forever. The very same love that makes your loss feel so hard now will one day be the source of an inner wellspring of joy in your life.

### 5. At some point, you just need to "get over it."

*False:* You will not get over grief the way you get over the flu. You will learn to live with loss and integrate it into your life. At some point you will have to decide whether or not to let grief expand you to a life of compassion or shrivel you to a life of bitterness. But initially, all you need to do is allow grief into your life.

Ashley Davis Bush, LISCW

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.



You introduce yourself to me, the solitary stranger in the cafeteria. You're just being friendly. In the course of conversation, you ask, "How many children do you have?" And you are slightly disconcerted when I hesitate. Don't I know how many children I have?

The answer, when it comes, is a shock. "I have three children, two living and one deceased." And now, what do you say? This is your unspoken question; I hear it in your uncomfortable shifting in your seat and the disappearance of your smile.

My 8-year-old son, Andrew, was hit by an SUV and killed in May of 1988. And the not-so-subtle message from our society to those of us who are grieving is, "Just get over it. It doesn't do any good to dwell on the past. I wish you could live in the present."

But we are changed forever by those we love in life and equally by their passing. And so, it has not, in fact, been a long time since Andrew died. The experience of that day 28 years ago lives timelessly in my heart. From then on, I was left to try to make sense of what defied reason, to accept what was unacceptable. Part of me knew that Andrew was gone, and yet another part reeled in disbelief — and still does. I often feel that I stand with one foot in each of two worlds, this living reality and the unknown beyond, mourning for two: Andrew and myself.

To avoid total emotional isolation, I sought companionship from trusted friends and group support from others who suffered losses. I learned that shared tears are far less salty than solitary ones and that open expression lessens the pain of grief. In telling our stories, we learned that we have more in common than we have differences. And, perhaps, most of all, we learned that we are not alone. I listened to others' stories, and I learned to care again — to

## Letters to My Son, Andrew

allow someone new a place in my still fearful heart.

And I learned what truly endures in this uncertain existence: "It is a glimpse of play out an open window, a knowing smile at bedtime, a sleepy head resting on a shoulder, a sigh of contentment, a cheerful wave hello. It is a moment of warmth, a secret shared breathlessly, a casual glance that says nothing in particular, but says all. It is a quick impression, a flash of pride, a stolen hug, a silent tear. It is a thousand, thousand such moments, each of them a heartbeat, all of them a lifetime. It is what we were to each other. It is what we are to each other. It is all that happened. It is all that didn't."

I wrote those words to my son in one of many letters meant to keep our relationship alive and to help find myself again. Those letters have now been published as a book, called *Dear Andrew*.

Over the years, I have evolved so that my grief is no longer as raw as it once was. Rather, it has settled like a fluid in every cell in my body, and seeks balance with my every thought and movement.

"I'm all right now," I wrote to Andrew. Perhaps this is what it means to heal.

Still, your cafeteria question is not simple. Grief is not simple. And grievers are not living in the past, but in an eternal paradox where their loved one is both present and absent. It is a bittersweet state.

What can you say to me? This one phrase is safe and effective "Oh, I am so, so sorry." That's all, no more.

And, gratefully, I will say, "Thank you."

*Robert Goor (dearandrew@robertgoor.com) has been writing for over 20 years and has been a father for over 40. Dear Andrew is his first literary publication. He is an active member of the Bethesda Writer's Center and of The Compassionate Friends.*

## 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:

**Glen and Sylvia Just**, in memory of **Shawn L. Just**.

**Linda Pearson**, in memory of **Jimmy R. Parson** and **Aaron Morford**.

**Bob and Jo Reade**, in memory of their daughter, **Robin Reade**.

**Pam and Jeff Shoultz**, in memory of their son, **Jacob Shoultz** (1994).

**Brad and Sheri Hilligoss**, in memory of their son, **Tyler Bradley Hilligoss**.

**Suzanne and Harry Schafer**, in memory of their daughter, **Sherry Lee Schafer**, and grandsons, **Gerald Pool** and **Joshua Schafer**.

**Kirby and Kim White**, in memory of their daughter, **Elizabeth White**.

**Mark and Deb Knobloch**, in memory of **Samuel Knobloch**.

**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.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.

### A DEATH HAS OCCURRED

A death has occurred, and everything is changed by this event. We are painfully aware that life can never be the same, that yesterday is over, that relationships once rich have ended.

But there is another way to look upon this truth.

If life went on the same without the presence of the one who died, we could only conclude that the life we here remember made no contribution, filled no space, meant nothing.

The fact that this person left behind a place that cannot be filled is a high tribute to this individual. Life can be the same after a trinket has been lost, but never the same after the loss of a treasure.

Paul Iron  
The  
Compassionate  
Friends  
Savannah, Georgia



### 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: [Nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:Nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)  
Web site: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
Visit the [sibling resource](#) page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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

**Monthly Meeting, Thursday, January 26, 2017 at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline**

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

**Next month's meeting: February 23, 2017, at 6:30 pm**

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

**Inclement Weather:** the winter season is upon us now with unpredictable weather. If the weather is severe the night of our meetings, please use good judgment before venturing out. Listen to local TV and radio stations or check cancelations online. If most school activities and other events are cancelled, we will not meet. You can check the website or call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) to double check if the meeting has been cancelled.

<b>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</b>	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 <a href="mailto:linmac67@machlink.com">linmac67@machlink.com</a> .
<b>Rick's House of Hope</b>	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 <a href="mailto:egordon@rhoh.org">egordon@rhoh.org</a> or go to <a href="http://www.rhoh.org">www.rhoh.org</a> .
<b>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)</b>	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 Waggnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, 563.843.3655 or at <a href="mailto:there.is.hope@hotmail.com">there.is.hope@hotmail.com</a> — <a href="http://www.mjlfoundation.org">http://www.mjlfoundation.org</a> .
<b>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)</b>	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 <a href="mailto:laura@secondreformedchurch.net">laura@secondreformedchurch.net</a> .
<b>SHARE</b>	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, still-birth, 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 <a href="mailto:chalyn@shareqc.com">chalyn@shareqc.com</a> or <a href="http://www.shareqc.com">www.shareqc.com</a> .
<b>Loving Listeners</b>	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"> <li>♥ Kay Miller 309.738.4915</li> <li>♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 <a href="mailto:doug.scott@mchsi.com">doug.scott@mchsi.com</a></li> <li>♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 <a href="mailto:shoearb3@mchsi.com">shoearb3@mchsi.com</a></li> <li>♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 <a href="mailto:delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com">delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com</a></li> </ul> <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

<b>TCF Online Support Community</b>	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 <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.
<b>TCF's Grief Related Webinars</b>	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 <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx">http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx</a> . Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.
<b>TCF National Magazine</b>	<i>We Need Not Walk Alone</i> is available to read online without charge. Go to <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> and review the options at the top of the page. <b>TCF e-newsletter</b> 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.
<b>Grief Materials</b>	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 <a href="http://www.centering.org">www.centering.org</a> . When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.
<b>Our Newsletter</b>	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.
<b>Amazon.com</b>	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.
<b>Previous Newsletter Editions</b>	<b>Looking</b> for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to <a href="http://www.bethany-qc.org">www.bethany-qc.org</a> for copies of the last several years of The Quad City Chapter of TCF-QC Chapter Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.
<b>Alive Alone</b>	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 <a href="http://www.alivealone.org">www.alivealone.org</a> or <a href="mailto:alivealone@bright.net">alivealone@bright.net</a> .
<b>Bereaved Parents' Magazine</b>	Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. <a href="http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatiNews.htm">http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatiNews.htm</a> .
<b>Our Newsletter</b>	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, <a href="mailto:climb@climb-support.org">climb@climb-support.org</a> . Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.

We begin a new year, one that many of us enter with reluctance. After all, it means another year away from our child and another year to be lived without the physical presence of the one we have lost. Apprehensive about any new challenges that we may be called upon to face in our broken condition, we call out, "Wait, I'm not ready yet!"

The death of our child changed the course of our life; nothing will be the same again. But it also has shaped us into who we are today. And it will continue to do so as we learn to incorporate this loss into who we are to become.

Have you found that you have already begun to live differently? Compassion toward others is more profound. Trivial things are no longer important. Appreciation for life, and those in our lives, is paramount. We're living the same life—differently.

Tragedies, disappointments, and heartaches combine with beauty, love, and joy to fashion our life. These are all a part of life, and our challenge is to incorporate them into our world. The difference that our child's life has had upon the world continues through us.

So, rather than being fearful of the challenges that lie ahead, perhaps a better question to consider at this time might be: What

## Reflections on a New Year

opportunities will present themselves

in the coming year to honor this loss that is already a part of our life? Our child has become more integrally entwined into our being than ever before. We bring him or her to every situation that we encounter. How can we make that situation better because of this bond?

The start of a new calendar year is a good time to remember that we are in the midst of life. It is not perfect. Nor is it one that we might have chosen. But, our struggles do not put life "on hold." Rather they are a part of life itself! Our life is ours to make the most of, with many gifts that we can share with others. There is no better time than the present to gather up the pieces and recognize the uniqueness that we each call "me"—uniqueness made more wonderful because of our child's presence in the life we choose to live.

*Paula Staisiunas Schultz  
In memory of Melissa and Jeff.  
Author biography, 2002: Paula and her husband Bob live in Chicago, Illinois, where Paula serves as co-editor of the South Suburban Chapter newsletter. Their son, Jeff Schultz, is currently a student at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Their daughter, Melissa Schultz Cleaves, and her husband, Jeff Cleaves, had been married seven weeks when they died in a car accident on Thanksgiving weekend 1999.*

## Frost

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

Like frost, our children were only here for a brief moment. But, while they were here, whether it was moments in the womb, days, months, or many years, they etched their beautiful artistry of love on our hearts and lives and all of those they touched. Unlike frost, what they etched is forever, it is something that we can cherish and hold onto always.

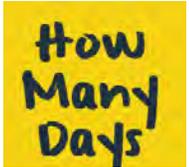
We stand here tonight lighting a candle to remember children we will never forget. Their light, their spirits, their artistry lives on, and like the flame of the candle, gives warmth on a cold winter's night and light in the darkness. The love our children gave us still remains. It keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief blow. It lights our way through the darkness and loneliness that we feel, and it gives us hope!

Julie Short, 2007  
Southeastern/TCF  
Candle Lighting Ceremony  
In Memory of Kyra

## Time Rolls On

Whether we see time going by or not, whether we are aware if it is winter or spring, May or June, day or night...time keeps rolling on.

I remember back in those early days of grief, when time seemed to stand still. I remember looking at the clock, realizing that it was 3:00 a.m. and being surprised that it was nighttime. I remember not knowing or caring whether it was a Sunday or a Tuesday...



But I did know when it was a Wednesday. I knew it was a Wednesday each week because Wednesday was the day our daughter died.

Everything from that moment on was measured by a different standard of time. At first we marked the hours, then the days, then the weeks. All time was measured by how long it had been since she had passed on from our world.

Days became weeks, weeks became months, and now...months have been years. For us, the marking of time has evolved.

Our family history will forever be divided into "before..." and "after..." but we have gradually become aware of time again. We keep a calendar, we make appointments, and we schedule ourselves into events and commitments.

Once again, time is rolling on.

Jane Ono  
TCF/Coquitlam, British Columbia