



**The Compassionate Friends**

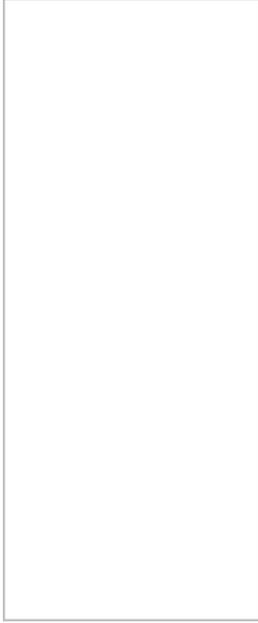
Quad City Area Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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.*



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

April 2015

Volume XXVIII, Number 4

Dear Compassionate Friends,

**O**ur granddaughter was baptized a couple of weeks ago. I wanted to give her a special gift but wanted to choose something that would not be duplicated by others who would attend this special event. Then I remembered the cross hanging for many years on our bedroom wall. It was a gift to our daughter, Anna, from our teenage babysitter. The cross is silver metal and superimposed on it is the figure of a little girl kneeling in prayer. We included it in the casket spray of miniature pink roses that covered Anna's tiny casket. It has been displayed behind our bedroom door alongside birth samplers, a special card and a poem – our Anna wall. I knew it was a perfect gift for our Hannah who shares her aunt's name within her own. We wrote a note to go with it and presented it to her after lunch following the worship service. Our daughter-in-law looked at me in surprise and said, "Carol, are you sure?" I was. It seemed the right time to let go of this treasure. I am glad to think that now it is associated with a joyful event rather than a sorrowful one. It is also a small way to connect our past (with its treasured memories) to our present and future as our family continues on. There is no "right" or expected time to pass on or get rid of the bits and pieces of our lives that remind us of our child who has died. When I die, I suspect my children will come upon some of those things and wonder why we kept them. And that is okay.

Sincerely, Jerry and Carol Webb

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## The Old Yellow Truck

Several weeks ago I sold my old, rusty yellow pickup truck. I placed an ad in the Baltimore Sunday paper which read:

For Sale = 1978 Toyota pickup truck,  
110K miles – as is \$450. Call.

Someone called, paid me \$400, and drove away—all in the same day. I should have been happy to get rid of it, but instead, I ended up feeling depressed. If I could have advertised the truck in our TCF Newsletter, the ad would have read:

For Sale (regretfully) 1978 Toyota pickup truck used by college student when he was home for weekends or semester breaks. Provided safe transportation through a snowstorm on his last New Year's Eve. Four-speaker stereo radio with rock music stations preselected. Ashtray clean except for old bank receipts. Truck used by father for hauling things while thinking about son. Priceless. Don't call.

It has been 18 months since my son died, and yet it is still difficult to part with certain things—even things that did not belong to him. This is a problem with which we are all faced. What to keep? What to let go? The practical side of us says these things are no longer needed, so we should get rid of them. The heart says my son owned these things or used them; they bring back memories, so we should keep them.

There is not a right or wrong answer as to what we keep or what we let go. I reassure myself by noting that these memories of my son didn't leave with that old yellow truck. They still remain locked in my heart forever.

Gary Piepenbring, TCF/Penn-Maryland Line Chapter, MD

## Memories

When you need to reach deep inside and take out one of your precious memories: Wipe away the cobwebs, lay it out in front of you and let the sunshine and the sounds engulf you. Revel in the experience of it, re-live each precious moment, be overwhelmed by them and taste the wonderful sweet tears that are their gift. When your needs have been almost satisfied, pause for one more second, then gently fold it back up, give it a big hug and a tender kiss, and return the treasure to where you found it. Then to make the experience complete, find someone special and share the feelings with them, for surely something as wonderful as this is meant to be shared. Don't be afraid of using them, that's what memories are for. You will never lose them, for as certain as the sun will rise tomorrow, love once attained is never lost.

Steve Channing, TCF, Atlanta Area Chapters

## When Grief is New . . . I Need:

I need to talk about my loss.

I may often need to tell you what happened or to ask you why it happened.

Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself face the reality of the death of my loved one.

I need to know that you care about me.

I need to feel your touch, your hugs.

I need you just to be with me.

And I need to know you believe in me and in my ability to get through my grief in my own way, and in my own time.

Please don't judge me now or think that I'm behaving strangely.

Remember I am grieving. I may even be in shock.

I may feel afraid.

I may feel deep rage.

I may even feel guilty.

But above all, I hurt.

I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I've felt before.

Don't worry if you think I'm getting better and then suddenly I seem to slip backward.

Grief makes me behave this way at times.

And please don't tell me you know how I feel.

Or that it's time to get on with my life,

I'm probably saying this to myself.

What I need now is time to grieve and recover.

Most of all, thank you for being my friend.

Thank you for your patience.

Thank you for caring.

Thank you for helping, for understanding.

Thank you for praying for me.

And remember, in the days or years ahead,

After your loss when you need me,

As I have needed you – I will understand and then I will come and be with you.

Barbara Hills Les Strang from *After Loss,*  
*A Recovery Companion for Those Who Are Grieving*

Regional Conference  
October 2-4, 2015  
"Hope and Healing for Our Broken  
Hearts"  
Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester, MN

Speakers will be Mitch Carmody, speaker, author and bereaved dad and sibling; Alan Pedersen, Executive Director of TCF and bereaved dad; Dr. Heidi Horsley, TCF National Board Member and Executive Director of "Open to Hope" and bereaved sibling; and Glen Lord; vice president of the TCF Board of Directors and The Grief Toolbox, and bereaved dad. A Special Friday Night program with Carla Blowey of "Dreaming Kevin" and Mitch Carmody of "Letters to My Son" will focus on signs from our children and dream work.

More information is available on the National Chapter's website. We will also have information available at our local Chapter as well. More updates will follow as the event gets closer.

## Bridge

Friends and family think that our relationships are bridges built out of concrete that can't be broken. What they don't realize is that when our child died that bridge transformed into match sticks and the hurtful words and thoughtless actions lit the fire to our fragile bridge.

Doug Scott,  
TCF/  
Quad  
Cities



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

**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.

**If** you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

**Our Newsletter** is 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](mailto:climb@climb-support.org), include your full name and your location and your reason for interest.

## CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

When a rainbow appears, it does not mean that the storm never happened or that we are not still dealing with its aftermath.

It means that something beautiful and full of light has appeared in the midst of the darkness and clouds.

Storm clouds may still hover, but the rainbow provides a counter-balance of color, energy and hope.

Franchesca Cox

With winter tumbling snow  
- the roses silent  
and the water ice . . .

SOME PEOPLE THINK  
THAT GRIEF IS OVER IN A  
MONTH OR A YEAR. THEY  
DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT  
IT IS A PROCESS THAT IS  
EXPERIENCED ONE DAY AT  
A TIME.

With trees so barren  
That your mind refuses  
To picture leaves  
And green and even blossoms . . .

Can you remember,  
Can you feel again,  
That Spring did come  
From winter, every year?

Sascha

"Finding a balance between holding on and letting go is one of life's greatest challenges for parents who have lost a child".

From the TCF/Fayetteville Newsletter

## 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 treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. **Your gifts are tax deductible.**



## The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

### What's it all about?

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, 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)

### 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.

### Chapter website:

<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>

**After the First Year** - After the first year the pain changes from a crushing weight to a wick-edly cutting edge. Time speeds up from a grinding plodding to a more normal routine. And sometimes you forget, for a moment, that your whole life was destroyed just last year. After the first year you start to remember the good times. You can tell a funny story about your child and save the crying for later. But sometimes it seems like you're the only one left who mourns. "What's the matter with you anyway? It's been a whole year." After the first year your child seems a little closer and yet still so far away. Miracle of miracles, you haven't forgotten how he walks, his voice, the shape of his head, or the solid warmth of his fingers

curving around yours. Those memories ambush you at many unlikely moments and tear you apart. After the first year, your heart begins to thaw. You remember that you once loved your surviving children and you love them once again. You remember that life used to hold joy; and you rediscover some small enjoyment in living. You learn to piece your life back together in a different pattern. After the first year you pick up your burdens and go on. Amazingly you have survived a blow more painful than anything you ever imagined. Even though you wish you had died too, it slowly dawns on you that you must still live because after the first year, comes the second year.

Liz Ford TCF Madison, WI

**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 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.

## The Compassionate

**Friends** is pleased to announce that Dallas, Texas, will be the site of the 38th TCF National Conference on July 10-12, 2015. "Hope Shines Bright ... Deep in the Heart" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great National Conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. Details can be found on the national website as well as on the **TCF/USA Facebook Page** as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.



## Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

#### Upcoming Meetings:

Thursday, April 23, 2015, 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>.

The next meeting is May 28, 2015, 6:30 pm.

<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 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, 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 Chalyen 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>♥ Kirby White 563.271.5908 <a href="mailto:kombio100@msn.com">kombio100@msn.com</a></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:shoearth3@mchsi.com">shoearth3@mchsi.com</a></li> <li>♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 <a href="mailto:delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com">delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com</a></li> </ul> <p>Kay, Kirby, Doug, Rosemary, and Judy, and 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>Understanding Suicide</b>	ASAP (Awareness, Support, Action, Prevention): A confidential group that meets biweekly to serve individuals who have contemplated or attempted suicide and those coping with the suicide of a loved one. Christian Care, 2209 3rd Avenue, Rock Island – first and third Wednesdays, 4:00-5:30 pm.
<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, AK 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>	Looking 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_NatlNews.htm">http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm</a> .

## Dancing in the Rain

The word dance seems to be etched in to my mind. Recently, a friend shared a quote she had come across: “Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass. It’s about learning to dance in the rain.”

Wow – what awesome words! The image of a storm is a good analogy in understanding our grief. Storms can come from nowhere, like a tornado, seemingly destroying everything in their path and leaving our lives a complete and utter shambles. The darkness and dreariness stay while lightning continues to flash, stabbing our hearts with pain. Thunder clamors constantly, reminding us that our children are gone. We can walk in fog for what seems like years as the sleet and frigid cold freeze us in our tracks. The wind howls, imitating our screams and wailing. The rain seems to be endless.

Others, who haven’t lost their children, who are living in sunshine, cry out to us, “Come in out of the rain.” They don’t understand that often we’re just not able to move. The storm has become our world, for however long we need or choose to live there. My own experience of grief tells me that our lives will always be stormier than they were before the hurricanes came and took what was most precious to us. But, we do have a choice. We can stay hunkered down under the false protection of denial. We can lock ourselves up in a protective shell and never come out. Or, we can learn to dance in the rain. However, each bereaved parent must decide what feels best to them.

I find myself thinking, “It’s hard to crawl, walk or breathe without her and she wants me to dance?! She must have forgotten all those times I tried and she said, ‘Mom, you can’t dance!’ then I realized that she’s not referring to my ability when I hear, ‘Dance, Mom dance! Dance in the rain. Dance because you can’t change what has already been done. You have the choice to sit it out or dance. Listen for the music, keep your eyes wide open, go forward, follow the music and dance. Follow me. I am not behind you. I am in front of you. I’m free and I am dancing’.”

She taught me to hear the music and her song continues on. Without it, I couldn’t dance. I believe if we allow our children to lead us to dance in the rain that they will eventually dance us out of the severe storms of pain and into the sunshine of peace.

“And when the skies are gray because I went away, put on your dancing shoes, grab your umbrella, and dance.”

**Excerpt from article by Julie Short, TCF/SE Illinois, In Loving Memory of Kyra. Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, Summer 2008.**



## The Sounds of Silence

The sounds of silence are everywhere—it is the silent pain of the loss of our son Andy, it is the silence of our home because one of our children is gone, and it is the silence of the sudden quiet that comes over people when we mention Andy.

We have become both better and worse in the six years since Andy died of cancer at the age of 22. We are better because we are able to get on with our lives and even enjoy ourselves occasionally. We have gotten worse because, as the years go by, we feel his loss more deeply. We feel his loss every time we participate in a celebration marking some milestone of our friends and relatives or their children. We feel the loss because any celebrations of our own will always be incomplete— one person will always be absent and not there to celebrate with us or to enjoy his own milestones. The pain of his absence is always present at these events.

When Andy died, the pain of his loss was a sharp acute screaming pain that tore a hole inside of us. Now, the pain is a silent quiet steady pain. The hole is still inside us, covered by a scar, but it is still there. It doesn’t scream out loud any more but instead just remains as a quiet steady and never-ending ache and sadness—a silent pain.

The silence of our home is a different kind of quiet. By now, if Andy had lived, he probably would have been out on his own. We would have been “empty nesters” anyway. But, when a home becomes empty because of the death of a child, it is a different kind of empty nest. Our daughter Lesley is married and out on

her own, the way it should be. But, Andy is gone for a different reason.

So, the silence of our empty nest is not the silence of knowing we raised two children and now they are both out leading their own lives. Instead it is the silence of a home that is empty because one child is gone forever—of having to deal with the reality that phone calls only come from one child, not two; that only one child stops by for a visit, not two; that one child is forever gone from the nest. There is a silence in our home that often seems to pervade every space. It is a sad silence, not the temporary quiet of a happy home.

And then, there is the silence of relatives and friends when we talk about Andy—not about his death but about the things he did while alive. It is as if Andy has become a forbidden topic because he died, as if his death wiped out the 22 years he did live. It occurs when a relative whispers that our son died when someone asked how old he was—like his life and what happened to him was a big secret. It occurs when people suddenly get a funny look on their faces and don’t know what to say next when you mention something about Andy. It occurs when you get the feeling that people want to avoid you because you remind them of a horror that could happen to anyone. It is a silence that reminds you that your emotions and feelings are different from that of others and that you will always have to live with the sounds of silence resulting from your son’s death.

**Mel Winer, In Memory of my son, Andy Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, Copyright 1997**