



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



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 Moline, Illinois 61265

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

You are not alone in your grief.



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April 2016

Volume XXIX, Number 4

Dear Compassionate Friends,

This week we ran into some friends who we knew had been out of town. We asked how their trip was, and they shared that they had been away to attend their grandson's funeral. As we expressed our sympathy, they shared that the young man had not been making good choices in a long time, and his life had ended tragically as a result of those choices. We felt sad because it seemed as though they did not feel permission to grieve because of the circumstances of this child's death.

As I was working on this newsletter, I came across the article, "The Child Who Wasn't Perfect." All of our children were a deeply connected part of our life at some level even if the choices they were making had drawn them away from our family circles and into behavior that made us sad, fearful, or despairing. Your grief as a parent or grandparent is real, valid, and acceptable even if your child's choices in life, perhaps choices that led to his or her death are ones that hurt too much to share.

John Donne wrote in 1624, "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee." Our children and grandchildren are always part of us; part of our legacy, regardless of where their decisions have taken them. The following is from the credo of The Compassionate Friends "Whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died." Your child does not have to have been "perfect" for you to attend a TCF meeting. All are welcome and together we will work together to find hope and healing.



Sincerely,
 Jerry and Carol Webb

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Chalkboard reflections

A Father's Pain

Should the sweet remembrances of those things, which so delighted us when he was alive, only afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure when we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory and make that memory a glad rather than a sorrowful one. Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like the miser who never enjoys what he has, but only bewails what he loses.

Plutarch – a Greek Writer, 46-125 A.D. - on the death of his son by suicide

IT IS A WONDERFUL FEELING TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE STILL REMEMBERS.

GRANGER WESTBERG, GOOD GRIEF

Developmental milestones in the lives of other children can trigger emotions of grief even years after a child's death. Significant days such as graduations, weddings, or the first day of a new school year are common grief triggers. Parents frequently find themselves thinking about how old their child would be or what he or she would look like or be doing if he or she were still alive.

Healing Hearts of WNY

Every child changes the lives of his or her parents. Children show us new ways to love, new things to find joy in, and new ways to look at the world. A part of each child's legacy is that the changes he or she brings to a family continue after the child's death. The memories of joyful moments you spent with your child and the love you shared will live on and always be part of you.

Healing Hearts of WNY

EARLY GRIEF

I FEEL A LIGHTLESS VOID INSIDE.
IT HAS NO NAME.
I KNOW THAT OTHERS SAY I AM IN GRIEF.
BUT FOR ME,
IT IS WITHOUT A NAME,
A MORTAL DISTRESS BEYOND WORDS.

SASCHA WAGNER

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

TCF National Office

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

www.compassionatefriends.org

<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>

Mission Statement

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

Vision Statement

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

DAFFODILS

In the Spring, I will bring daffodils to you with a prayer.

After the cold, snowy winter is over and gone,

I will sit on the grass

and sing the songs that we have shared,
knowing that your boundless spirit lives on.

I've walked the path of sorrow. It's helped me to grow.

Through the tears have come my strength and my healing.

My heart, once wounded and broken,

is mended and filled with deep love for everyone in all that I do.

And every warm, sunny Spring,

I will bring yellow daffodils,

and cherish the memories of you.

Sharon Corder, TCF/Inland Empire, CA



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

The Child Who Wasn't Perfect

I cannot say, as I have heard other parents say, "My child has always been a joy and a pleasure; never gave me a minute's trouble." I cannot say that.

I had a son who was always trouble. He was born cross and irritable, a real trial from the word "go." He seemed to be in protest at having been born, from his very first breath and outcry, through the rest of his life. His 37 years of life were one outcry of protest, misery and unhappiness.

He expressed his tormented spirit through music, poetry and a beautiful American Indian spirituality. But in spite of the pain that was in his heart, he had a wide smile and a hearty, big laugh that belied the torment that raged inside him. He had a strange, mysterious wild charm, to which all who met him fell victim.

He seemed to be born in the wrong time, the wrong culture, with a crippled spirit, and a body that carried a fatal flaw: addiction. He put himself and his family through the agony of the damned. Step by step he destroyed himself, as we watched with grieving hearts. He rejected every effort to save him.

Then came that fateful week. Some mystery reached out for him. His body, his spirit defied every weapon at science's disposal to diagnose and save him – one by one his vital functions failed - and he was GONE.

The word "forever" suddenly had a new and terrible meaning.

So he was hard to love. BUT WE LOVED HIM EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

We had him because we wanted him and we loved him every minute of his life. Our grief has been no less because he was not a perfect child. It has just been an extension of the grief we lived with all those years, as we watched him destroy himself; an extension of the agony that we were helpless against - the "MONSTER" called addiction that destroyed him.

Yesterday was his birthday. I longed for the sight and sound of him and that wild, melancholy charm that vanished a year and a half ago. My heart stays full of tears, they are always just beneath the surface. I struggle daily to keep them out of sight of my fellow man, who does not want to share my pain.

So I come home and sit on my porch in the dark, listen to the rain or the night sounds and stare into space. And I cry - and I cry - and I cry for my CHILD WHO WASN'T PERFECT.

Jane Miller, Lee's Mom
TCF/Atlanta, Georgia

Love never dies

There will never come a day, hour, minute or second I stop loving or thinking about my son. Just as parents of living children unconditionally love their children always and forever, so do bereaved parents. I want to say and hear his name just the same as non-bereaved parents do. I want to speak about my deceased child as normally and naturally as you speak of your living ones.

I love my child just as much as you love yours--the only difference is mine lives in heaven and talking about him is unfortunately quite taboo in our culture. I hope to change that. Our culture isn't so great about hearing about children gone too soon, but that doesn't stop me from saying my son's name and sharing his love and light everywhere I go. Just because it might make you uncomfortable doesn't make him matter any less. My son's life was cut irreversibly short, but his love lives on forever. And ever.

Angela Miller

It is not easy to remember our dead children. But, easy or not, we know that we will not - and do not want to - forget them... they remain forever part of us and we are richer for having shared their lives, however briefly.

Sascha Wagner

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.



In our society we are generally not prepared for death but we are especially unprepared for the death of a child. We do not have the words for it. Thus, people — including many well-meaning people — say the most inappropriate things trying desperately to be supportive and encouraging, but generally making you feel sadder and more miserable. You have to remember, it is not their fault. Like most people, in fact, like you before this tragedy, we are trained to hide such horrors in a closet and then to lock the closet and put a couch in front of it. The tragedy is not to be discussed or acknowledged. Except, the tragedy eats at you, sometimes bringing you to the verge of screaming, leading you to seek someone with whom you can share the experience and emotions.

Bill Fletcher, Jr., Bereaved Parents of USA

DONATE

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:

Janice J. Hamdorf, in memory of her son, Kelly

Gerald and Midge Moseley, in memory of their son, Remy

Tammy Saskowski

Love gifts are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to newly bereaved families. Some of the love gifts are used for materials to share with first time attendees at our meetings or to purchase books for our library. Our thanks to the many families who provide love gifts so that the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue.

If you would like to send a love gift, please send it to our treasurer, Michelle Curtis, 18163 241 Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa, 52722. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. **Your gifts are tax deductible.**

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

TCF's Facebook Page is a proven support area for bereaved family members to come and talk about their grief. Stop by and visit with some of our more than 120,000 Facebook members.

Please join our TCF/USA Facebook family. Tell us about your child, sibling, grandchild, or other loved one and find support in the words and concern of others. Check out the Discussion Boards! Every day we also provide thought provoking questions, grief quotes, and links to grief stories, as well as TCF news, such as updates on the National Conference, Worldwide Candle Lighting, and other TCF programs.

Closed Facebook Groups

The Compassionate Friends offers several closed Facebook groups to connect with other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. The groups supply support, encouragement, and friendship.

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Loss to Suicide

TCF - Loss to Homicide

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

TCF - Loss to Cancer

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss

TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

TCF - Loss of a Grandchild



With empathy,

we not only "feel sorry" for what another person is going through; *we identify with his or her suffering and loss*. Our own experience of a similar crucible allows us to enter into that grieving person's situation. Our own scars sensitize us in ways the unwounded can never fully grasp.

I may not be able to *say or do anything* that will reduce the suffering they feel. But in the midst of unimaginable pain they will sense a "kindred spirit" in me as someone who "gets" their loss.

Often in such situations, nothing needs to be said. With empathy, mere presence provides comfort that transcends words.

It is a paradox of faith that our experiences of suffering, anguish and loss can become precious gifts which God uses to manifest His care through us to others. And the deep satisfaction such experiences can provide to the one who gives empathy is difficult to convey.

In part, this is because you and I long to find meaning in our

suffering. Offering such profound comfort to others in their time of deepest need helps to "redeem" and heal our own previous loss.

Scripture explains that in His brief years on earth, Jesus experienced every form of temptation and loss that you and I will ever encounter. As a result, He not only "feels sympathy" for us; Jesus *empathizes with us*.

There is a saying that "*In God's economy, nothing is wasted.*" As we entrust our lives to Him, He uses everything we bring -- the good, the bad, and the painful in our lives -- for His good purposes. Over time, He weaves unexpected yet beautiful blessings for us and others out of our life's frayed and broken threads, including our darkest moments and greatest defeats.

Our capacity for empathy does not come from our brilliant achievements or capacities to control. Instead, empathy grows from the ashes in our life, redeemed into a precious gift we give away in care for others, yielding an unlikely harvest of blessings for all involved.

Kent Dahlberg

Empathy is one of the great gifts we give to others in their time of deepest need. That capacity is born out of our own pilgrimage through grief:

We comfort others with the comfort we have received from God. (Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:4)

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Monthly meeting: Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois

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

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

Next month's meeting: May 26, 2016 at 6:30 pm

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine	Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at 563.260.3626 for directions or information, or contact them at linmac67@machlink.com.
Rick's House of Hope	This is a community resource for children and adolescents dealing with grief. There is no fee for services. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. The group for 14 year olds and older meets Sunday from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806. For more information, call Emily Gordon, Program Director, at 563.324.9580, or egordon@rhoh.org or go to www.rhoh.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)	A peer group for suicide grief support meets on the third Friday of every month, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Frances Banta Waggner Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, 563.843.3655 or at there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)	Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meets on the second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252, from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm. Contact Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425, or laura@secondreformedchurch.net .
SHARE	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Adler Room #1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at 309.373.2568, or chalyn@shareqc.com or www.shareqc.com .
Loving Listeners	If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Kay Miller 309.738.4915 ♥ Kirby White 563.271.5908 kombo100@msn.com ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoearth3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com ♥ Gina Glassford 309.517.3664 citrgrs@gmail.com Kay, Kirby, Doug, Rosemary, Judy, and Gina 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 Webinars	Held monthly, the webinars are on various grief topics with well-known experts in the field. To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx . Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.
TCF National Magazine	<i>We Need Not Walk Alone</i> is available to read online without charge. Go to www.compassionatefriends.org and review the options at the top of the page. TCF e-newsletter is also available from the National Office -- to subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-newsletter link.
Grief Materials	Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than the Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief-related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you're looking for—or they'll be able to tell you where to find it. Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at 402.553.1200 or visit their website at www.centering.org . When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.
Our Newsletter	For parents who have experienced the death or deaths of multiple birth children during pregnancy, at birth, in infancy, or in childhood, contact Jean Kollantai at P.O. Box 91377, Anchorage, AK 99509.
Amazon.com	When making a purchase from Amazon.com enter through the link on the home page of TCF national website and a portion of the purchase price is donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases made at Amazon.com.
Previous Newsletter Editions	Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to www.bethany-qc.org for copies of the last several years of The Quad City Chapter of TCF-QC Chapter Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.
Alive Alone	A newsletter for bereaved parents whose only or all children are deceased. A self-help network and publication to promote healing and communication can be reached at www.alivealone.org or alivealone@bright.net .
Bereaved Parents' Magazine	Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm .
Our Newsletter	Published one to three times per year, when there is content to make a balanced issue. It usually contains 30 pages of personal stories and updates, poetry, subsequent birth announcements, and any new topical articles and information. Currently it is being distributed electronically (PDF), but a printout is available to anyone without email access. To request a sample copy, please email Jean Kollantai, climb@climb-support.org . Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.

Mentioning Your Child's Name

A woman whose college-aged son was killed in an accident told me that six months later no one would say his name in her presence. It was driving her crazy because he was constantly on her mind – but she felt that no one would even acknowledge that he ever existed.

Then one day she was walking through a mall, feeling completely alone in the midst of hundreds of people, and she suddenly saw one of her son's friends from high school. They made eye contact and, instead of walking away, he came straight toward her. His first words were, "You know, I think about Jason all the time and miss him so much!" They sat down on a bench and for the next hour exchanged stories, tears, laughter, and memories. It was the most healing hour she had spent in six months. She said she really felt this young man was an angel – sent by God right when she needed it most.



We need to talk about our loved ones who have died, yet so many people around us are afraid to. They think that mentioning the person's name will make us cry (they're probably right about that) and they're afraid that hearing the name will hurt us (they're 100 percent wrong about that). We need to hear our loved one's name. We need to tell – and hear – stories about him or her. We need to laugh and cry – sometimes at the same

time. We need to say how much we miss the one we love and hear how much others do too.

Since so many people are afraid to mention the name of your loved one, you may need to take the initiative and tell people it's okay to talk about him or her. On more than one occasion I've come right out and told people, "It's okay to talk about Joan." I know it's difficult and involves some risk, but I

encourage you to say something similar to people you trust. You'll almost certainly find a few more people who will let you talk and let you cry and who will share a little bit of your pain – and your joy – in your loved one.

A young mother who lost a baby told me that she grew tired of her friends avoiding the subject. So she put together

a list of helpful things her friends could say or do to help her during her grief. She made copies of the list and carried them in her purse. When people around her seemed apprehensive, she'd pull out a copy and hand it to them. Do you know what the number one item on her list was? "It's okay to talk about my baby. I may cry, but that's okay. I miss her and I want to talk about her."

**Kenneth C. Haugk,
Finding Hope and Healing**

The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden

5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, 61265



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

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

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