On one of our adventures this summer, we visited the First Ladies National Historic Site in Canton OH. The museum is located in the childhood home of Ida Saxton McKinley, wife of President William McKinley. The McKinleys had two children, a baby, Ida, who died at the age of four months and a daughter Katie who died at the age of four, two years later. There is a poignant picture of Ida McKinley, taken in the White House 25 years later. In the background of her formal portrait is a framed picture of Katie. Her precious child, loved, and not forgotten. Recently we were chatting with one of our son’s friends who was visiting with his family. At one point during the conversation he began to talk about his twin sister who had died in a playground accident, almost 50 years ago. A beloved sister, loved, and not forgotten. While it happens infrequently, we appreciate when others remember that we are not only parents of two sons, but also a daughter. Our beloved child, loved, and not forgotten. Our children’s names and their stories continue to impact our lives and are woven into the substance of who we are.

“The real treasure comes when others introduce our children's names and stories into an everyday conversation. Knowing our sons and daughters are remembered and live on in the hearts and lives of others is a measure of the meaningful legacy that our sons and daughters have left to us and to the world.”

—Nita Aasen

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb
Please take note:
The monthly meetings of the Quad Cities TCF Chapter are now in person every fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m.
See page 8 for details!

Each of your children changes your life. They show you 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 your family continue after death. The memories of joyful moments you spent with your child and the love you shared will live on and always be a part of you.

GRIEF: “It is an individual process that takes a lot of time, has no schedule, and can differ based on your beliefs, culture, and individual personality.”

Allan Buchannan

I have grown up with the knowledge of people who believe real men don’t cry. Maybe they haven’t lost a son. Maybe they haven’t had a chance to be an example to the daughters who share their grief. As General Schwarzkopf said in an interview with Barbara Walters when asked if he was afraid to cry, “I’m afraid of any person who won’t cry.”

Carrie Kears

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

The hurt never goes away. We never forget. We never get over it. We don’t want to. We hurt so much because we loved so much. But the focus on death and the event fades and the warmth of good memories replaces it.

Richard Edler
When my daughter Madison died, I didn’t think I would ever be able to survive the intense, excruciating pain that came hand-in-hand with her death. It wrecked me down to my core, and it took me months before I thought I would even breathe normally again. The pain felt like a black cloak hanging on me, one I couldn’t take off no matter how hard I tried. And I’ll be honest, for a while I quit trying. Instead, I sat back and decided the black cloak was there to stay, and I just had to wear it.

As I began to look at what I was left with, I searched for just one thing I could feel grateful for. I had another daughter, so it seems like that would have been an easy answer. But when you are hurting so intensely, the obvious isn’t so obvious and what might be possible feels impossible. Happiness seemed impossible. But there she was, a bouncing, energetic, joyful three-year-old. My Makenzie. I knew she deserved more. She deserved a joyful mother. I didn’t realize it at first, but recognizing this was the first small step toward climbing out of my hellacious pain – the first hint that I would eventually remove the black cloak.

At first my smiles were forced, my expressions of happiness were fake – all disguises of my horrific pain. Then one day, they weren’t. They were how I authentically felt. I didn’t notice it immediately when it happened; I just looked back one day and saw that in all the pain, happiness had found its way through.

I chose to model for Makenzie a parent who was happy and joy-filled, rather than one who was continually gripped in sadness, hiding in the sheets of her bed. I chose to get up, to laugh with her, to take and pick her up from school. It wasn’t easy, but I was determined. I saw a counselor and I took medicine. I did everything I could to try to be what she deserved.

Dawn Barton
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://quadcitytcf.org).

TCF National Office
48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808
Wixom, MI 48393
Toll Free (877)969-0010

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.

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://quadcitytcf.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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Printed Resources for Grieving Parents &amp; Siblings</th>
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<td><strong>TCF Online Support Community</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TCF’s Grief Related Resources</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bereaved Parents’ Magazine</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Our Newsletter</strong></td>
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My Daughter Died and This is What I Want People to Understand

It’s been two years since my child died, and I still feel like the world walks on eggshells around me regarding the sensitive topic of her brief life...and I hate it.

It’s like her death has left this giant elephant in the room, and everyone but me goes to great lengths trying to avoid it. Like if she’s mentioned, it will somehow remind me of her death, and I will crumble into a million, teeny-tiny pieces.

But let’s get one thing straight: I never forget. I am so agonizingly aware that she is gone throughout every second of every day. Unfortunately, this is what I’ve had to adjust to in my life. The pain never diminishes, but somehow I’m molding my life around it. Seeking a new normal, if you will. But I can’t do that if the world pretends she never existed.

So please, say her name freely. It might surprise you, but I won’t crumble into a million, teeny-tiny pieces. I’ve already done that. Now I’m piecing myself back together again with what’s left. And yes, I might shed some tears along the way, but I will not fall apart, because I’ve already regained myself through the hardest brunt of it all.

Understand, I don’t loathe the tears when they fall. Sometimes, I need to feel it again. I need to acknowledge and grieve her non-existence in my life. It is more than healthy for me.

My child died, and I want you to speak about her. More importantly, I want you to allow me to speak about her. Please don’t dodge my conversations about her, because the last thing I need is to be shut down. I don’t say this from a "wiser than thou" standpoint, but unless you’ve lost a child, you can’t understand how deeply the pain stays with you.

Before our daughter died, I remember seeing bereaved parents going on and on about the children they lost on social media. And I’m embarrassed to say, I felt a little uncomfortable with the newly-found, hurting voices they publicly shared within their grief. Somehow, I foolishly thought they needed to stop dwelling via social media...because it made me feel uncomfortable. How ignorant was I?

So, I have been in your shoes. I get that it’s uncomfortable, scary, and messy. I understand that you don’t know what to say or how to say it. I’m fully aware that you cannot fathom what it’s like to bury a child, and you fear you’ll make circumstances worse for me if you bring up my daughter’s memory. (Remember, I used to have all of my children alive and well.)

But wouldn’t it be easier just to tell me that?

Because if I’m being honest, I don’t even know what to say about it sometimes. Actually, my go-to phrase for this cruelty usually goes like this — It. Just. Sucks. How incredibly profound, huh?

You could never remind me that she is gone, because her death is a part of her story. To forget her death would be to forget her...and I could never. So there is no “reminding me,” and there is no making me “more sad.”

What makes me sad is feeling like I’m cut off from all conversation about her, because the rest of the world feels uncomfortable, as I once did too. But now that my child died, I live in the slums of uncomfortable.

I will never see my little girl again, and
the only opportunity I get to talk about her is when someone is willing to listen. So if you want to help, just hear me out. I thought I would have a lifetime to say her name, yell her name, and possibly cheer her name from a front-row auditorium stand, but I don’t. No amount of perfect, cookie-cutter words will ever bring her back, and that’s perhaps the loneliest part of all. Point being, it doesn’t take some long, drawn out slew of words to make a difference. Taunting me deeply is the realization that I don’t have time for people who cannot respect my way to grieve. Because while my loss doesn’t make up the entirety of who I am, it is undeniably a huge part of me. And I cannot neglect my need to grieve and be a successful human being. I cannot ignore her death or pretend it did not happen, because it did. My child died, and just as I recount stories about my living children, I still feel inclined to do so with my child who is not alive. I still love her. Death can never change that. One of my biggest fears is living in a world without recognition of her. So if you care for me even just the tiniest bit, please don’t let that happen.

Caila Smith
scarymommy.com

Continued from page 11 others their emotions are normal, their responses to the emotions are normal, and that they will be able to live and love again.

It is critical to stress that whether you are a male or female dealing with a loss of a loved one, if you are unwilling to express grief in any form at all, you will likely face serious consequences during your future journey. Not to express our grief is to potentially set ourselves up for a lifetime of illness, bitterness, anger, and lack of connection to life. When we look at gender differences in grief what is important to remember is that neither way is right or wrong, just different. Both genders can learn from the other. If we learn to understand and accept one another’s differences, we can learn to support one another without trying to change them. Grief is a very personal and individual experience with everyone navigating through this journey in his or her own way. The hope is that those walking this journey can experience comforting support along the way.

Tom Becker, MSW, APSW

Sibling Loss — One whose sister or brother has died has a special view of this loss. There is the loss itself, hard enough to bear, and often no one inquires how a bereaved sibling is doing with the grief. And as I’ve heard one sibling put it, “I lost my brother, and my parents are so changed that I feel as if I lost them too.” Much is changed within our surviving family.

Charley Kopp, TCF, Contra Costa, CA
# The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Meeting

**Upcoming meeting on Thursday, September 23, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.**

Our meeting is held in-person at 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, on the second floor. Masks and social distancing are required. The next meeting is on October 28, 2021.

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<th><strong>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</strong></th>
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<td>Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittch-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>.</td>
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<th><strong>Rick’s House of Hope</strong></th>
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<td>Rick’s House of Hope serves children, ages 3-18, 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. At this time, Rick’s has a Holiday Healing group for children experiencing loss on Tuesday nights 5:30-7:00 until the Christmas holiday. The continuous groups are Family Together for all members of the family on Wednesday nights 5:00-7:00 pm and a Teen Night on Thursdays 5:00-7:30 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806 and are free. Rick’s House of Hope also does individual counseling/therapy. For more information, contact Lynne Miller, Program Manager, at <a href="mailto:millerl@verafrenchmhc.org">millerl@verafrenchmhc.org</a> or go to <a href="http://www.rhoh.org">www.rhoh.org</a>.</td>
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<th><strong>SHARE</strong></th>
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<td>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 pm via ZOOM MEETING during the pandemic and in “normal time” 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>.</td>
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<th><strong>Loving Listeners</strong></th>
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<td>If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given): 💖 Doug Scott 563.370.1041, <a href="mailto:dns0826@gmail.com">dns0826@gmail.com</a> 💖 Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738, <a href="mailto:shoartb4@gmail.com">shoartb4@gmail.com</a> 💖 Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895, <a href="mailto:delvecchiojudy@hotamil.com">delvecchiojudy@hotamil.com</a> 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.</td>
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Recently, The Compassionate Friends offered a virtual event, *Rising Together in Grief and Hope*, featuring David Kessler, Shari O’Loughlin, and David Wood. All three of our inspirational speakers suffered tragic losses of children and siblings and were able to transform their experiences into helping others. In addition to their presentations, there is a Question and Answer Panel at the end of the video where our speakers answer questions from attendees. This event was recorded so that all would have the opportunity to view it.

You can access this event through the TCF Facebook page or the TCF Website.

**Take This Thread** - Take this thread of hope and let it be a new beginning—a thread in the new fabric of life you must now weave. Choose your color: You have known the blues and sunk deep into them, yet also known the calming of a cloudless sky. You have known reds, sublime sunsets, flashes of anger, flames of passion. What about green? You have known the gentle cushion, the balmy restfulness of a grassy verge. Known also the green-eyed monster, jealous of those who still have what you have lost. You have seen the sunny yellows absent for a while now overtaken by gray.

Choose these threads of hope, draw them together; take the positives, turn the grays into silvers. Remember how it was and know you will once again, some time, come to that place of harmony. But first, choose your threads carefully and much later, much stitching later, weaving, working. After much hard work, love, and care, your fabric will glow again a different fabric. For it can never be the same, but it will be beautiful, a new form of beautiful.

Carolyn S., TCF Walcha, New South Wales
The only thing that comes to my mind when trying to compare this pain to a life experience is when you skid and fall, and keep sliding. You badly scrape and cut a knee or an elbow or both. The pain is so unbearable. It's hard to move without it hurting. Your body goes into shock. When it finally starts scabbing over and healing, the slightest movement can open the wound back up; it oozes and it seeps, and you ask if this misery will ever stop! And then the healing process starts all over again.

Finally, the scab is gone, but a scar remains. At first, the scar is red and very tender until it gets used to being there. Then it becomes taught and tight! Then, one day when someone points out the scar—you say, yes, it's a reminder of a very painful accident. I see it every day, but now I am able to bend it without pain.

Some days when the weather changes it becomes harder to bend. It gets stiff and hurts; it's a fresh reminder of the day I hurt it. But most days I live with it just as it is; it is now a part of me. I remember how painful it was; I remember the scab. But now, I see the scar, and sometimes it even makes me smile.

Julie Eagleston, TCF Southlake, Texas

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. Thanks to:

Robert and Mary Jo Reade, in memory of their daughter, Robin Leslie Reade.

Donations 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 or to our Chapter Treasurer, Doug Scott, 6550 Madison Street, Davenport, Iowa 52806. Checks should be made out to The Compassionate Friends. Your gifts are tax deductible.
Gender Differences in Grief

It is no surprise that men and women are profoundly different in a variety of ways and one of these key differences is the area of grief. It can be helpful to understand how gender differences play a part in how we grieve, whether we are the person grieving or if it is a family member or friend.

Women frequently express that they feel their male counterparts are not grieving or supportive; often men say that they do not know how to best support their female loved ones, or how to handle the emotion and pain that stems from grief.

Men tend to be more comfortable attending to life changes by taking on new roles and responsibilities that result from the death of a loved one. Learning new non-traditional roles such as cooking, cleaning or becoming a single parent can be a distraction from their grief. Males often view social relationships as more of a time to share activities than emotions. So often they state that they know the story in their head and they don’t need to retell it. They tend to want to “fix it” and will rely on their own resources – often keeping feelings and emotions to themselves.

Women, on the other hand, tend to be more emotional and will work on their grief by talking about it. They will tell their story over and over again because they say it helps them process and work through their grief. Women confide in friends, outwardly express their feelings and emotions and “feel” their way through grief.

Men say that they limit their expression of emotion because they may not want to appear weak. Women report frustration with men demonstrating little emotion and not wanting to talk about the person who died. Women may view this as cold and think that the man is not grieving. Men often feel the expectation to be strong and so may be given or may accept little social support. Society has traditionally taught little boys not to cry, while comforting little girls who do. Hopefully as we educate more, this message is changing. These conflicting gender messages can carry through one’s entire life and may cause misunderstandings between males and females who are grieving. This can lead to frustration, anger, and feeling isolated in one’s grief for both genders.

Men are generally “inward” thinkers; they think of the “situation,” not the emotional responses. This does not make them less emotional, or less responsive to those around them; they just have a different method of looking at the emotional response. The woman in grief is traditionally looking for support. She will look to those that can understand and listen to her express her emotions. She is not looking to “fix” anything, but to regain her perspective and understand some purpose in her grief. Both men and women need support in grief. They need to hear from...
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.