



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

November 2008, Volume XXI, Number 10

The Quad City Chapter

Inside

Resources for Grieving Parents and Siblings	2
A Time of Meditation	3
TCF Bulletin Board	4
The Empty Chair	5
What a Difference a Year Made	5
Little Things Mean a Lot	6
The Significance of Thanksgiving	7
A Note About Winter	8
Thanks to God for My Redeemer	9
Speaking Love	9
What's It All About?	9
Christmas Memorial Service	11

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Who then can so softly bind up the wound of another as he who has felt the same wound himself?

Thomas Jefferson

Several months ago, one of our good friends was anticipating the birth of her first grandchild. Instead of a joyous birth, they experienced the pain of an early birth, the death of their precious granddaughter, and the resulting grief.

A few weeks ago a friend at church shared her excitement and joy that in May her first grandchild to live nearby would be born. This week she tearfully shared the loss of that baby to miscarriage.

In one year, 1984-1985, we experienced the death of our daughter and the loss of two children to miscarriage. While we would never want to relive those tough times, we are grateful to God who has allowed us over the years to reach out to other people who

are grieving the death of their child and mourning babies they never had the chance to get to know.

Carol met her good friend, whose grandchild died in March, shortly after Anna died. Although this friend never knew Anna, her friendship was instrumental in helping Carol through the grief process over the course of the next few years. Now Carol has been given the chance to walk with this friend through *her* valley of sorrow.

We do not believe that God "zaps" us with difficult circumstances so that we will become better people or more useful servants for Him. However, we do believe that He can use every circumstance in our life, no matter how hard or painful to reach out to others and make a difference for Him in this world. Anna would be 25 this year the day before Thanksgiving. We are grateful for her life and the difference she has made in ours.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb



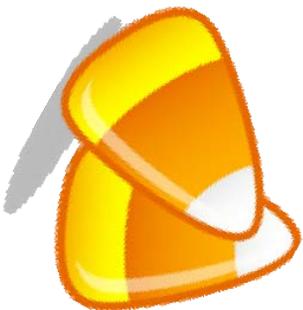
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Quad City Chapter



1830 6th Avenue,
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.

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Chapter Meetings November 20, 2008 — 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm Bethel Assembly of God Church

3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL

From John Deere Road, turn right at 38th St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38th Ave. The church will be on your right. We meet in the downstairs fellowship hall. (Or you can turn into the church driveway off of 38th St.; the church is on the west side of the road.) Call Sharon and Dave Ulseth (792-0529) for directions or information. **The meeting for December is on Thursday the 4th at 7:00 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) 263-2737 for directions or information.
Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group	Meets the second Tuesday each month at 7:00 pm in the office of Family Resources located in Building 9 of the Annie Wittenmeyer Complex off Eastern Avenue in Davenport. For more information, contact Dave Happ at (563)785-6133.
Mom's Group meets in Aledo	A group of moms who have had children die meet once a month in Aledo to support and encourage one another as they go through the grief process. You are invited to join them at the Happy Joe's in Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309) 582-7789.
Rick's House of Hope	Located at 4867 Forest Grove Drive in Bettendorf, this community resource is for children and adolescents dealing with grief. "Children and adolescents experiencing grief and trauma often need a safe place to express their feelings. They need companions for the journey of grief who are outside their family and not themselves grieving." The volunteer mentors at Rick's House of Hope provide this for young people and their families during painful and confusing times of grief. There is no fee for services. For more information call Director Denise Tatoian at (563) 324-9580 or 563-421-7970. Find Rick's House of Hope on the web: www.genesishealth.com — keywords "children and grief."
Quad City SHARE	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday of each month at Grace Lutheran Church, 1140 East High Street, Davenport, Iowa. For more information, call (309)792-7808.
Survivors of a Suicide Loss Support Group	For those who have lost someone to suicide, this group, facilitated by a peer survivor and a professional, meets the third Monday of the month in Moline, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. For details, contact Joel M. Moore (309)737-1363 or moore-jm@sbcglobal.net

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday December 4, 2008
at 7:00 P.M.
Bethel Assembly of God Church
3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL

Our Christmas Memorial Service is for every bereaved parent who would like to have his or her child remembered at our candle lighting ceremony. We will light a candle in memory of each child. (We will provide the candles.) All family members are invited. A time of fellowship will follow the service.

If you plan to attend the meeting, or if you cannot make the meeting but would like a candle lit in your child's memory, please complete and return the form below or give Michelle Cauwels an email mcauwels0783@yahoo.com so we will have an idea of how many candles to order. If you have a candle from previous years, please bring it with you.

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Death: _____

Parents' Names: _____

We plan to attend (please circle): yes no

We are unable to attend, but would like our child remembered (please circle): Yes No

I/We would be willing to help in some way (cookies, special music, set-up, clean up). _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Send to: **Michelle Cauwels**
351 15th Ave
East Moline IL 61244.

If you would like to make a love gift to TCF in memory of your child, you may do so at the service or by sending your contribution to our treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks should be addressed to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents, please share them with us, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242.

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

If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, we would be happy to add them to our mailing list.

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter, we would appreciate you letting us know. Thanks. Jerry and Carol Webb (Editors), Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242, (309)654-2727.

Hope for the Holidays — Sunday Nov. 23rd – 6:00PM
Homewood Evangelical Free Church, 3303 60th Street, Moline, IL

Designed to minister to individuals and families who have lost a loved one during recent years, this service will bring hope, peace and a renewed sense of confidence in God's love as you grieve the loss of your loved one.

A Time of Meditation continued from page 3

Death is a final ending to life on earth. For bereaved parents, however, who suffer the pain, the tragedy, the terrible doubts, the ending of a life can be a beginning of new feelings, new understanding and hopefully, new compassion. But first we need to follow the instincts of our souls and allow our bodies and hearts to grieve.

TCF/Terre Haute, IN



When autumn lingers
In the gleaming trees
With painful beauty,
Golden melancholy -
When we recall the wealth
Of bygone harvest
And wait the haunting
Of a lifeless winter -
Hope is so far away,
Spring is so far away,
But spring will come!

A Time of Meditation

Thanksgiving...a time of meditation and thankfulness. *Thanksgiving... a time of bitter pain and haunting memories...for many a bereaved parent.* are not only expected to forget, we are also expected to be filled with joy.

“How will we cope with the holiday?” *“How will we survive this happy time?”* “WHAT IS THERE TO BE THANKFUL FOR?” These questions toss upon our souls at times, at the very dark times, and taunt us with doubt and fear. Fighting the creeping bitterness, we wait and long for the day of January.

As the years pass, however, the holidays are no longer totally tinged with horror and emptiness. As the acceptance of the death settles in our hearts, the holiday smiles become more genuine. At least some of the warmth returns.

But for the parents who have only recently (and recently can encompass months or years) suffered the death of a child, the holidays are bleak indeed. Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that despondency and sorrow at this time of the year are normal. What else could be expected of a grieving parent? Joy? Laughter? A sense of overflowing love and outstretched arms? No...never.

But as all bereaved parents know, these very emotions that are so alien at this time in our lives, are often expected and demanded. We

What can we do? We can refrain from demanding too much of ourselves. We can recognize that at this point we are emotionally exhausted; we are lonely and we are sad. Maybe we are also angry, guilty and/or bitter. The feelings that arrive with the beginning of a holiday without our beloved children are not to be ignored or pushed aside into corners of our hearts. By recognizing all of this, we can say “No” to situations or people, even loved friends, who will create more pain. We can cry, silently or loudly, without shame. We can long for the essence of our children, and we can remember them with love.

The dreams of lifetimes die when children die. The hurt is often nearly unbearable. But if we allow ourselves the freedom of grief and sorrow, we also open the paths to new happiness and new hopes and new dreams. And the child who was a part of us will live in our memories and our hearts.

I recently read a child's book about beginnings and endings depicting how days don't end but night begins; autumn marks the beginning of winter; and leaves fall from the tree to the ground and feed the earth for new life.

Continued on page 10

TCF Bulletin Board

Contact www.preciousparents.org which publishes a newsletter titled HEARTLINE for parents whose infants have died.

The monthly meeting of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is on November 20th at 7:00 PM at the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island.

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 Web site 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 The Compassionate Friends national Web site, and a portion of the purchase price will be donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases, not just books, made from the Amazon.com site.

We Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter
One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families that contact the national office.
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
(877)969-0010
Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
Web site: www.compassionatefriends.org
Visit the sibling resource page at www.compassionatefriends.org

Iowa SIDS Foundation's
Vine and Dine
Wine Pairings Dinner
and Silent Auction
November 7, 2008
6:00 PM
Davenport Country Club

Love Gifts

There are no dues or fees to belong to TCF. 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.

Thanks to: Pat Mart, in memory of her daughter, Ann Mart, 4/22/66-6/1/00

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.

Speaking Love

Thoughtful mornings in November;
Winter gray and chill at twilight.
Soon there will be colored candles.
Soon there will be celebration.

Do not force your heart from sorrow
At this time of happy splendor;
This is also time for speaking
Love to dead and silent children.

Sascha Wagner



What's it all about?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others be supportive.

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

The Quad City Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

meets bi-monthly on the fourth Thursday of the month in Rock Island, Illinois. See the newsletter for schedule.

Quad City Chapter Newsletter Editors

Jerry and Carol Webb
Box 71, Cordova, IL 61242

e-newsletter is now available from the National Office! The monthly e-newsletter will contain notes and happening 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.

Winter will shortly be upon us, bringing with it many fluctuating emotions. Winter is a time of barrenness and coldness which often leaves us feeling the same way. It seems as if the joy and warmth of spring and summer is fading away and the dreariness of winter is strong upon us. But winter doesn't have to be cold and barren if we don't want it to. We can overcome the dread of winter in many ways. We can still have the joy and warmth of spring and summer though the world around us is bare and cold.

We can warm our hearts and have the joy we deserve by reflecting on the precious and loving moments with our children. Though we may feel sadness, those memories can fill us with an unending flood of warmth and love. They can warm us and bring us joy even on the bitterest cold days and nights.

Talking and reaching out to other bereaved parents can also bring us relief and joy. We can share memories of our children, our feelings, and find release from our dreary moments. We don't have to be cold and barren if we don't want to – the choice is ours.

Just as winter fades away and God once again whispers the promise of a rose, so will our pain and despair lessen and pass, and we will once again have contentment, peace and joy in our lives. Sadness may drift in once in a while, but we can overcome it and let the sunshine of our being and joy come abounding through. So during this winter, let us hold on to the promise of that springtime rose. If we reflect upon the beautiful times we had with our children and reach out to others, we will have that promise of that rose and along with it, a lessening sense of pain and sorrow.

Deborah Wells
TCF, Baltimore Chapter

What a Difference a Year Made, continued from page 5

Had you asked me before my son died how I thought I would be able to gauge my forward progress after he died, I assure you that my ability to cook turkey, dressing, wild rice, giblet gravy, green beans, sweet potato soufflé and ambrosia would have been near the end of my list of guesses. Don't we have to measure progress in strange ways?

Hope you make some progress this year, too. If this year isn't your year, next year might be. A year often makes a lot of difference. I encourage you to know it is possible and worth aiming for. I promise you that Benihanna's will have room for you should you, too, decide to forget it all on Thanksgiving Day. Just isn't a busy day for them for some reason!

I remember the first Thanksgiving after Tony was killed. I didn't know how we could possibly get through that dinner with his empty chair.

The solution that occurred to me was to fill his chair with someone else—SEVERAL someones. Grandpa came to spend the week; a newly widowed friend came to dinner and so did her delightful young nephew and his bride, who had just moved to town. They brought the salad. And we were thankful—for each other and the love among us, and for the memories.

If this will be your first Thanksgiving, do something different. The pattern for your life has been broken. Break it some more! Have dinner at a different place or with different people. Go away for the weekend. Be kind to yourself. You do not HAVE IT ALL, but you have SOMETHING.

Ronnie Peterson, Northern New York TCF

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MADE

Mary Cleckley, Bereaved Parents/USA

Because my son's birthday always fell very close to Thanksgiving Day, we always had his birthday dinner on his day, but everyone knew his real dinner was the Thanksgiving meal. He loved it and always piled his plate high – maybe more than once. The first Thanksgiving after my son died, my husband, my daughter and I determined we wanted no part of old traditions that day. Not only could I not shop for and cook the meal, but I discovered no one wanted me to. It was painful for us all. We steered clear of family and friends and had dinner at the Benihanna of Tokyo restaurant. You can't get much further away from tradition than that! But it was what we needed to do that year.

The next year we were invited out for the Thanksgiving meal. Going to a restaurant was better for us than having to be part of a family gathering. It was easier to pretend that it was just another day and nothing special.

The third year I decided to have a go at shopping for and cooking "the" meal. I only invited family who would understand hot dogs at the last minute.

The next year, I found I approached that day and meal with confidence. I knew I had recovered to a point where it wasn't going to be traumatic for me. It was encouraging for me to recognize that progress. I'm not saying we didn't miss our son, but we were learning to create a life without him.

Continued, page 8

Little Things Mean a Lot

by Nita Aasen, St. Peter, Minnesota

The words, “little things mean a lot,” took on an entirely different meaning when my husband and I received a candle from one of his friends shortly after the death of our two sons. This thoughtful gift began the meaningful ritual of lighting a candle each evening during the dinner hour, and symbolized that nothing will ever extinguish the light of Erik and David that we carry with love in the depths of our hearts. I am quite sure that this friend never imagined that his gift would provide such lasting comfort. Such a seemingly little thing – but it has meant so much.

One of the lessons grief has taught me is how important it is to remember those who have lost a loved one by death – whether it is a spouse, child, sibling, parent or significant other – at any time, but especially during the holiday season. I reasoned that if I had been comforted by receiving a candle gift, perhaps others might be comforted as well.

And so another tradition was born, more or less, by happenstance. As I became aware of those who have experienced the death of a loved one during the year, I noted the loss. Then, as the holiday season approached, I wrote to each of them, acknowledged their changed lives, shared a reflection about their loved one if I had known them personally, and included a candle as a symbol of everlasting love.

Notes of gratitude told how this simple gesture had warmed hurting hearts. Surprise was a common response. Some commented at how touched they were that someone outside of their family and/or who did not know them personally had acknowledged their changed lives. Others wrote that receiving the note and candle “out of the blue,” months after their loved one had died, had comforted them – especially if they were beginning to feel alone in their grief. Several told how they lighted the candle as they wrote their Christmas cards or how they planned to burn the candle during their Christmas dinner. A couple shared that they were going to adopt the idea (just I had adopted it) and send candles to others who were grieving the death of a loved one.

The most visible candle lighting remembrance is likely The Compassionate Friends’ Worldwide Candle Lighting Event. Taking advantage of the technology available through the Internet and acknowledging the multiple emotions and cultural pressures associated with the holiday season, the second Sunday in December was chosen for this commemoration. Just like the handoff of a baton in a relay race, the lighting of the candles begins at the International Date line at 7:00 p.m., the candles stay lit for one hour

and are extinguished just as the bereaved parents in the next time zone light their candles. The ceremony ends when all the bereaved parents in all of the time zones have lit their candles. Visualizing an untold number of candles circling and illuminating the globe in a twenty-four hour wave of love lights contributes to a powerful feeling among bereaved families and the assurance that they are not alone in their grief.

An important benefit of this kind of remembrances is that friends and family members are given an opportunity to talk about the deceased with the bereaved family. Those who intended to share their memoirs at “the right time,” but never did because “the time had never seemed right,” are given a second chance to act on their intentions of weeks, months, or years past and share their reflections, stories, and memories about the one who died.

There are other meaningful ways to break the silence, to give the bereaved an opportunity to give a voice to his or her grief experience – maybe it is by sending a candle, a note of reflection, a flower, a phone call, or some other meaningful symbol. Seemingly a little thing, but it can mean a lot whether the gift is given or received, not only during the holiday season, but anytime.

***Bereavement Magazine* Holiday Issue**
Bereavement Publishing, Inc.
4765 Carefree Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80917

The real significance behind the celebration and observance of Thanksgiving Day is simply giving thanks.

When the Mayflower landed at Plymouth in 1620, the Pilgrims never realized that their first winter would be so harsh. Half their numbers died and painfully were buried in the frozen soil. The following springtime, with great determination, they sowed their seed and carefully tended the fields all summer long. These colonists knew that their very lives depended upon the fall harvest. Finally, for the abundance that was given them, they shared their bounty with friendly Indians and humbly gave thanks to the Provider and Source of all their blessings.

And so it is, the events of that first Thanksgiving clearly remind us that out of Faith and Hope we can overcome any hardship or struggle against great odds.

Harold E. Mitchell,
TCF/Albany, Saratoga & S. Glen Falls, NY

