



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

February 2009, Volume XXII, Number 2

# The Quad City Chapter

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

Jerry and I will be celebrating our 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in September. We are trying to put together a concert sometime this fall that includes some of our favorite music performed by some of our favorite musicians. I am the choir accompanist at our church and this Sunday the choir will be singing the song, *Finally Home*. This song was played on the radio a good deal during the four months of our daughter's life. As it became apparent that she probably would not live very long and as she struggled for breath, I used to whisper it to her, letting her know what was in store for her. We had the song sung at her funeral and even though we hear it infrequently now, it continues to be very meaningful to us. I was a little surprised as I

heard the choir practice it last week how the words still pull at my emotions and draw my thoughts to her. The chorus of this song, written by Don Wyrzten goes like this.

But just think of stepping on shore and finding it heaven  
 Of touching a hand and finding it God's!  
 Of breathing new air and finding it celestial!  
 Of waking up in glory and finding it home!

I'm hoping the choir will be willing to sing it at our concert this fall. Certainly the promise in that song as well as the memory of loved ones now in heaven have been defining parts of our almost 35 year marriage.

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 Monthly Meeting: February 26, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island, IL  
From John Deere Road, turn right at 38<sup>th</sup> St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38<sup>th</sup> 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 38<sup>th</sup> St.; the church is on the west side of the road.) Call Sharon and Dave Ulseth (792-0529) for directions or information. (Meetings for subsequent months: March 26rd and April 23rd.)

<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)263-2737 for directions or information.
<b>Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group</b>	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.
<b>Mom's Group meets in Aledo</b>	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 12:30 on the third Saturday of the month at the Happy Joe's in Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309)582-7789.
<b>Rick's House of Hope</b>	Located at 4867 Forest Grove Drive in Bettendorf is a 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 Carol Kelly at 563 324-9580 or 563-421-7970. Find Rick's House of Hope on the web: <a href="http://www.genesishealth.com">www.genesishealth.com</a> — keywords "children and grief."
<b>Quad City SHARE</b>	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, still-birth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday of each month at Grace Lutheran Church, 1140 East High Street, Davenport, Iowa. For more information, call (309)792-7808.
<b>Survivors of Suicide Support Group, Fulton</b>	Location: Second Reformed Church, 703 14th Ave., Fulton, Illinois This support group meets the second Monday of each month and is open to anyone who has lost a loved one through suicide, it's a safe place where survivors share their experiences and support each other. The group is completely free and light refreshments will be served. For more information, call 589-3425.
<b>Survivors of a Suicide Loss Support Group, Moline</b>	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 the Moline Library, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. For details, contact Joel M. Moore 309.235.7174 or <a href="mailto:qcsos@yahoo.com">qcsos@yahoo.com</a>

### Something to Think About From *Alive Alone*, by Kay Bevington

In our country we do not hesitate to remember our dead heroes. We are taught the dates of birth and death of past presidents and many other people that have special places in our heritage. We often have public services to remember these special people. Why then are parents told that it is not right to openly remember the dates so important to us (the birth and death of our children)? Maybe our children didn't have time in their short lives to make a great impact on the whole nation. But they did make a great impact on us.

We need to educate people that, just as they will always remember JFK or some other famous person that died. We have every right to remember our loved ones and not feel that we have to hide our feelings. These are the same feelings that set us apart from the rest of creation, the ability to love and remember. Our children are special to us and undoubtedly, to many other people. So, to all our children, you are gone but will never be forgotten.

### Reminder

Did you wake up in the morning with tears in your heart?  
Did you say to yourself, "I should not feel like crying, not like this, every morning."

But you do know the truth, don't you?  
When life deals us such a tragic blow, such enormous damage, we need many mornings to recover. We need more than a few moments to heal.

Take for yourself the grace of one quiet healing-step at a time.  
Trying to rush the work of grief will slow down your renewal.

You only need remember that you will recover some day.  
You only need to remember that we all have our own pace,  
and we all move in our own measure.

Healing takes time.

Sascha Wagner

**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.

## For grandparents – a double grief

From the moment you became a parent yourself, you have sought to protect your child from the pain and sorrows in life. Mostly, you have been successful, you've had the ability to solve problems, the power to lessen hurts. Suddenly your adult child is facing a pain far deeper than any other pain in life. It may be deeper than anything that you have ever experienced, or perhaps you can understand this sorrow because you, too, have lost a child.

Either way, you are now experiencing a variety of emotions: helplessness, frustration, grief, guilt, and anger. You are suffering a "double grief." You are grieving for your grandchild; all your hopes and dreams have been shattered, your "promise" of immortality has been broken. You had wondered if he or she would "favor" your side of the family, wondered what he would "become" and had perhaps even bought gifts for "later on" (like a first tricycle or special doll). Your grief might not even be recognized by your own child, but you are, most definitely, entitled to it. Grandparents are often referred to as "the forgotten grievers." You had a special relationship with your grandchild--one of unconditional love unhampered by parental responsibility.

You are, at the same time, grieving just as deeply for your own child. You feel frustrated and helpless because this is one pain that you can't "just kiss away." All the little ways that you had to coax a smile from that child are useless now, all the magic words that used to solve the problems are empty. You can only sit by, offer support, and watch your adult child learn to live with this loss. Grandparents often think that "they should cope better, have all the answers, control the situation and be an example." When all that they have offered: advice, financial aid, babysitting, experience, and help, is not accepted, asked for, or is even rejected, they feel guilt, frustration, and anger.

Iowa SIDS Foundation - [www.iowasids.org](http://www.iowasids.org)

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“Although we know that after such a loss the acute state of mourning will subside, we also know that we shall remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute. No matter what may fill the gap, even if it be filled completely, it nevertheless remains something else.”

**Sigmund Freud**, in a letter to a friend after the death of his 36-year-old daughter

## Grandparent Grief

*I am powerlessness. I am helplessness. I am frustration. I sit with her and I cry with her. She cries for her daughter and I cry for mine. I can't help her. I can't reach inside her and take her broken heart. I must watch her suffer day after day.*

*I listen to her tell me over and over how she misses Emily, how she wants her back. I can't bring Emily back for her. I can't buy her an even better Emily than she had, like I could buy her an even better toy when she was a child. I can't kiss the hurt and make it go away. I can't even kiss even a small part of it away. There's no band aid large enough to cover her bleeding heart.*

*There was a time I could listen to her talk about a fickle boyfriend and tell her it would be okay, and know in my heart that in two weeks she wouldn't even think of him. Can I tell her it'll be okay in two years when I know it will never be okay, that she will carry this pain of "what might have been" in her deepest heart for the rest of her life?*

*I see this young woman, my child, who was once carefree and fun-loving and bubbling with life, slumped in a chair with her eyes full of agony. Where is my power now? Where is my mother's bag of tricks that will make it all better?*

*Why can't I join her in the aloneness of her grief? As tight as my arms wrap around her, I can't reach that aloneness.*

*What can I give her to make her better? A cold, wet cloth will ease the swelling of her crying eyes, but it won't stop the reason for her tears. What treat will bring joy back to her? What prize will bring that happy child smile back? Where are the magic words to give her comfort? What chapter in Dr. Spock tells me how to do this? He has told me everything else I've needed to know.*

*Where are the answers?*

*I should have them.*

*I'm the mother.*

*I know that someday she'll find happiness again, that her life will have meaning again. I can hold out hope for her someday, but what about now? this minute? this hour? this day?*

*I can give her my love and my prayers and my care and my concern. I could give her my life. But even that won't help.*

by Margaret H. Gerner

# TCF Bulletin Board

Contact [www.preciousparents.org](http://www.preciousparents.org) which publishes a newsletter titled HEARTLINE for parents whose infants have died.

## 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](http://www.centering.org). When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.

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

The monthly meeting of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is on February 26th at 7:00 PM at the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island.

## 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.

Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to [www.Bethany-qc.org](http://www.Bethany-qc.org) for copies of the last four years of The Quad City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends Newsletter. They are download-able in Adobe Acrobat format.

# 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:

- ♥ Linda Young, in memory of her daughter, Michelle, 10/30/1967 — 3/30/2006
- ♥ Bill Steinhauser and Laurie Boyce-Steinhauser, in memory of their daughter, Maggie, 1/08/1999 — 2/17/2005

**L**ove 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.



## 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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Compassionate Friends (TCF) is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child at any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

**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.

## It's About Life!!

I happened to meet one of Marc's friends the other day, and we sat down to talk. I asked him what he was doing. "Medical school," he said. "I'm going to apply." I was surprised. He had always had the instincts of an artist. But he had carried the casket of his two best friends, and he was only twenty-four.

Maybe he needed to give his soul a rest. He asked me what I was doing. "Compassionate Friends," I said. "I'm the chapter leader now." "Why?" he asked, "It's so morbid. Aren't you tired of talking about death?"

It's not about death," I thought. "It's about life. It's about surviving, at first minute by minute, then day by day, month by month. It's not about death; it's really about life." As I reflect on that conversation I think about how best to explain to people who haven't been or do not come back to our meetings that The Compassionate Friends is an organization that embraces life. It is not a group of people sitting around talking about death, but talking about ways to go on living for the other people in their lives – their spouse, children, relatives and mostly for themselves.

I tried to think how to explain to this twenty-four year old that our meetings are not morbid but hopeful and how our meetings are caring and nurturing places where people can talk about problems no one else can understand or care to listen to. Our meetings are places where we can talk about our children in a totally comfortable and relaxed way surrounded by friends who understand and care.

No, The Compassionate Friends is not a morbid organization at all. It is helpful, hopeful, and loving. We at Compassionate Friends know each other's children better than we ever knew other people's children before we were forced to join this exclusive club. We know their strengths, and we know their weaknesses. We truly can share our children and our feelings about them as we can in no other place.

So I turned to Marc's friend Jeff, who is a warm fuzzy kind of person and said, "No, Jeff, it's not morbid at all. It's uplifting and a relief to be able to talk and laugh about Marc with these people who truly understand."

And then I remembered something my husband Norm read in a magazine. It said that "Time heals a broken heart, but people heal a broken spirit. I knew what he had read was right and that is why I go to Compassionate Friends, Jeff, ...to allow the time to go by to mend my broken heart. But more importantly, to be with people who will help mend my broken spirit."

Toby Eisenberg, TCF/San Diego

Yesterday,

I did not even know you existed.

But when I heard,

In the midst of all the other emotions,  
love flickered.

Today,

I think of you,  
nestled in your dark, warm,  
watery world, growing,  
cell adding to cell,  
miracle to miracle.  
and somehow, another miracle happens,  
and I love you.

Today,

I remember holding your sisters  
hours after they were born.  
They were beautiful, perfect,  
fresh from the hand of God.  
I was filled with awe,  
and I loved them.

But I will never hold you, dear little one,  
never marvel at your newness,  
never be awe-struck at your  
special beauty.

In some miraculous way,

I must cram a lifetime of a grandma's loving  
into two brief days.

And so, dear little one,

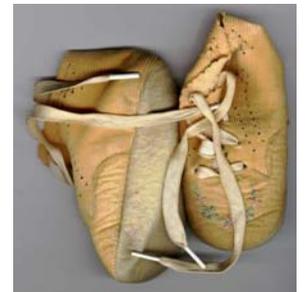
here is a gift of your grandma's love,  
hugs and kisses,  
cuddled rocking,  
quiet lullabies,  
good-bye kisses that never stop,  
silly giggles,  
animal crackers,  
Winnie and Peter and Stuart and Horton,  
all our special secrets,  
all our times of special joy.

I love you, dear little one,

no more no less than your sisters,  
but with a special love  
of might-have-beens and couldn'ts.  
rest well in the arms of God, dear heart.  
He will hold you  
until it is my turn.

**To My Grandchild,  
Whom I Will Never  
Have a Chance to  
Know**

Katherine P. Brouwer  
Grosse Pointe Woods, MI



## To My Husband

Your tears flow within your heart.  
Mine flow down my cheeks.  
Your anger lies with thoughts and movement.  
Mine gallops forward for all to see.  
Your despair shows in your now dull eyes.  
Mine shows in line after written line.  
You grieve over the death of your son.  
I grieve over the death of my baby.  
But we're still the same, still one,  
Only we grieve at different times  
Over different memories and at different lengths.  
Yet we both realize  
The death of our child.

Pam Burden, TCF/Augusta, GA

## Why Didn't the World Stop That Day?

Kathleen Evans, San Diego, CA

**Why**

didn't the world stop that day?

It seemed so disrespectful, that life should keep going,  
Not missing a single beat, when Charlie's world  
Stopped long enough for him to step off.

Even while we mourned his loss,  
People bustled through shopping malls,  
Shouted curses at befuddled drivers  
On busy city streets,

And even laughed out loud –  
As if they could enjoy themselves on this solemn day.  
They filled shopping carts in grocery stores,  
As if they could count on another day.

Spinning,  
Spinning,  
The world keeps spinning.  
Today, I'm dizzy from all the spinning.

From *Bereavement Magazine*

## I F O N L Y

**IF ONLY** you could have loved yourself as I do.  
You were a real mans' man. Any woman's dream come true. Six feet tall, broad shoulders, baby blue eyes and dark curly hair.  
You were called Early Bird as a child because you arrived sooner than expected.  
And my dear brother you also died far too soon.  
I always felt there was no one good enough for you. You thought you weren't good enough for anyone.

**IF ONLY** you could have loved yourself as I do.  
You gave your love freely. Always trying to help the less fortunate. Not ever willing to take for yourself, the help you willingly gave to others.

**IF ONLY** you could have loved yourself as I do.  
You risked your own life to protect the one you loved the most. And as the result of that tragic night and years of trying to be everything to everyone, the beginning of the end began.

**IF ONLY** you could have loved yourself as I do.  
You knew there were no answers in the bottom of a bottle. Only The Book. The Good Book, The Bible.  
By your own choice you are now free of pain and sorrow. In my heart you are beside me protecting, advising, laughing and loving, Baby Brother.

**IF ONLY** you could have loved yourself as I do. Maybe I would still have you.  
In memory of John Early Sessions IV,  
Written by Johnatha Sessions Sumners, TCF/Montgomery, AL

## N o t Y e t

I can't write of healing as yet,  
I see sparks and flickers which may  
someday leap to flame,  
But for now I'm still spiraling,  
in death's unspeakable grip.

I try to write of love and hope,  
But what comes out is desolate pain,  
Deepest longing, and darkest  
despair.

I can write of faith,  
It seems my only solace now,  
That day by day, inch by inch,  
God carries me, shelters me beneath  
His wings,  
And nurtures me for the day  
When I can finally write of healing.

Rachel Block, for Derek  
TCF/Northwest Suburban Chapter  
Arlington Heights, IL