



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

Quad City Chapter



1830 6th Avenue,
Moline, Illinois 61265

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No.190
Rock Island, Illinois

Return Service Requested



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

You are not alone in your grief.

The Quad City Chapter



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

September 2009, Volume XXII, Number 8

Inside

Vine and Dine	2
First Encounter	2
The Storm of Grief	3
Set-backs	3
Bulletin Board	4
Grief is Normal	5
I Said I Could Not Do It, But I Did	5
Loss of an Adult Child: My Child, My Friend	6
Getting "Better"	7
Cheated	8
What is It All About?	9
Love Gifts	9
Reflections	10
Resources	11

Dear Compassionate Friends,

In July, we had the opportunity to share Compassionate Friends with the Geneseo Kiwanis group. We told them some history of the organization both locally and nationally, how we first became involved, the advent of the newsletter, and then some hopefully helpful suggestions of things to do and not do when trying to help a friend who has experienced the death of a child. When I first looked out at our audience – all men – most over 60, I wondered, “Will they relate? ...Are they going to be interested in an organization that deals with

grief and feelings? ...What are they thinking?” I should not have been surprised by the large number of men who came to speak to us afterwards and shared about their child who had died. It was a reminder of how many families over the years have had to face the loss of a beloved child. How feelings of grief and a longing for that child last for a lifetime. How important an organization like Compassionate Friends is to share a message of hope and healing.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

Turn Again to Life

If I should die and leave you here awhile,
Be not like others, sore undone, who keep
Long vigil by the silent dust and weep.
For my sake turn again to life and smile,
Nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do
That which will comfort other souls than thine;
Complete these dear unfinished tasks of mine,
And I, perchance, may therein comfort you.

Mary Lee Hall

V i n e a n d D i n e

Wine Pairings, Dinner, and Silent Auction

Friday, November 6, 2009 – 6:00 p.m.

Davenport Country Club

Fundraiser for the Iowa SIDS Foundation

For more information, call (563) 332-6265 or visit the www.iowasids.org

The Iowa SIDS Foundation provides support to families touched by SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), educates professionals and the public of ways to reduce the risk of SIDS, and funds research into the causes of SIDS.

First Encounter

When grief first enters our life, it tends to invade us . . . completely and . . . relentlessly. We are without comfort, we do not feel pleasure, we find no joy. We ache in mind and body. We feel weak and numb. In the deepest core of our being, we are ready to accept that we will never know happiness again. What's more, we feel that this state is entirely appropriate, natural, and irreversible. Nothing can convince us that, given time, we will learn to live again. But we will.

Sascha from *Wintersun*

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.

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Monthly Meeting: September 24, 2009 at 7:00 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.) Alan and Rosemary Shoemaker — 309-441-5586, or Michelle Cauwels — 309-755-0783 for directions or information. Next month: October 22, 2009.

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 Kirby White at (563)271-5908.
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 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.
Rick's House of Hope	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 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, 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 Chalyn Fornero-Green at (309)496-2568.
Survivors of Suicide Support Group, Fulton	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 are served. For more information, call 589-3425.
Survivors of a Suicide Loss Support Group, Moline	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 qcsos@yahoo.com

Had I Known

Had I known that I would hold you for only one brief moment –
Would I have held you closer,
Or pushed you from me –
So as to lessen the hurt of your leaving?

Had I known you'd leave so soon –
Would I have paced my life so as to fill it with more of you,
Or would I have visited only occasionally –
To help soften the eventual absence of you in my life?

Had I known we would have to say good-bye –
Would I have let you leave my sight for even one precious moment,
Or would I rather we'd never met at all?

I think not –
For the sometimes overwhelming pain of losing you,
Has been far worth the joy of knowing you!

Jackie Deems – Perrysville, OH

Faith does not always come from quiet contemplation or meditation. It is sometimes born among the raging questions with no answers, pain with no relief, hope that has no reason to exist.

Randy Becton

You do not "get over" grief. Anyone who says you can, or tells you how they did, is not to be believed. Grief keepers accept their grief and weave it into the fabric of their lives.

Harold Ivan Smith

Our Family Portrait

Having our family portrait taken now is a bittersweet experience. We are proud of our family, especially of our new baby son. But you see only three of us in the picture, and we are a family of four. Our first son, you never see, but he is there with us in our hearts. The camera only takes a picture of what it sees.

It cannot see our absent son, or the love we have for him, or our memories, our pain, our longing. I wish the camera could take a portrait of the heart, then other people would see Jonathon Andrew there. You only see one precious son; we always see two.

LouAnn Tennant – Share Newsletter

The Storm of Grief

It comes like a huge thunderbolt -shocking and deafening you to all else around you. Suddenly the world that has been so bright is black and desolate. There seems to be no hope.

The tears come like torrential rains. The winds of reality come, and you are torn by the pains and fears caused by the storm. Even when the tears stop for a while, the dark clouds loom over you, threatening you with more tears and more pain.

Most passersby can't help you through the storm because they have never been caught in one like it – and some don't seem to care. There are a few who will reach out their hand and try to pull you from the storm, but the storm must be endured. And then there are the special ones – the ones who are willing to walk with you through the storm. Usually these are people who have been there before and now the storm can be survived.

After a time, the torrential rains turn to slow showers, and then the showers come less often. But the clouds don't go away. The sadness and pain remain, but they become more bearable.

Eventually, as the clouds begin to part, there may even be a rainbow— a sign of hope. And as the sun begins to shine a little more, flowers of memory will be enjoyed. I don't think the showers will ever end, but I believe, as they get farther apart, the sky will get bluer; we will see more rainbows; and the flowers will bloom more and more.

Perhaps it is even good to have a shower now and then – to cleanse our souls and to revive those special flowers of memory.

Mary Jo Pierce – TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL

Set-backs and detours in healing are caused by internal as well as external events.

Anniversaries, things people say, a touch of the flu, bad luck in traffic, a child at Halloween, his favorite food at the supermarket, a friend moving to another city – the list goes on.

As life goes on in its ordinary fashion, it cannot fail but to present us with reminders of our own loss and tragedy. Relatively minor things, such as changes, thoughtlessness or

neglect can overwhelm us completely.

When the first onslaught of pain begins to fade, we should try to accept the fact that healing from grief rarely happens in a quick and unbroken line of progress. Grievers and their friends do well to remember that grief will take us all on a journey of set-backs and detours. Healing work requires patience.

And when grief threatens the fiber of our life, we need to remind ourselves over and over again that patience is the exercise of hope.

Sascha Wagner – TCF/Aurora, CO

TCF Bulletin Board

Contact 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. 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

Web site: www.compassionatefriends.org

Visit the [sibling resource](#) page at

www.compassionatefriends.org

The next monthly meeting of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is on September 24th 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 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:

Bob and Mary Jo Reade, in memory of their daughter, Robin Reade, 9/16/63-2/4/90

Jerry and Carol Webb, in memory of their daughter, Anna Katherine, 11/26/83-3/27/84

Patsy Mart, in memory of her daughter, Ann 4/22/66-6/16/00

Alan and Rosemary Shoemaker, in memory of their son, Bradley, 11/21/74-9/24/04

Love gifts are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to newly bereaved families. Some of the love gifts are used for materials to share with first time attendees at our meetings or to purchase books for our library. Our thanks to the many families who provide love gifts so that the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue. If you would like to send a love gift, please send it to our treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

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

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 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.

C h e a t e d

I feel cheated. I know that's selfish. My son is in Heaven – Paradise. I'm happy for him and am thankful to God for that. However, here, in my own little corner of the world, I feel, among many other things, cheated.

I was looking forward to seeing how tall Zach would be. I was excited about his future and wondered what career path he would follow. I imagined him attending college for a year or two in England because he loved it so much over there. I was looking forward to seeing who he would marry and if he would have kids.

Although I won't have to endure the pain that other parents experience when their teenage driving children are late, believe it or not, I feel cheated about that as well. I feel cheated when I pass the stadium on a very brisk autumn day. I should be freezing in the stands with the other parents while watching my son in the marching band.

There will be no prom, no graduation. There will be no arguments as he struggles to find himself and becomes a man. There will be no gradual letting go as he learns to fly.

Letting go suddenly, unexpectedly and permanently is too hard. I'm jealous of the parents who get to experience the turmoil – as well as joy – of their children's adolescence. I still complain when I have trying times with my almost-seven-year-old little girl. But, deep down, I cherish it. I would give almost anything to experience anything, even turmoil, with my boy.

I miss you, Zachy, more than anyone can know...

8-14-08 Barb Dreyer – Quad Cities TCF / Zach Hughes' mom

Continued from page 6
Your heart will remind you thousands of times, however, that your life has been torn apart by grief. Listen to your heart, and give yourself the precious gift of time. Get out the photo albums. Remember fishing trips, vacations, and silly antics at birthday parties. Allow

memories of your child, your friend, to wrap your heart in daily comfort. Continue to remind yourself that with each passing day you are moving forward in the most difficult journey you'll ever take: walking through the grief of child loss.

Clara Hinton - www.silentgrief.com

“Grief is a normal response to a not normal event in your life.” When we became parents none of us could have anticipated that our children could possibly die before we would. That is not the natural order of things. What you are feeling as you grieve is not abnormal even though you may have friends and family members who tell you that you need to “move on,” “get over it,” “put the past behind you,” “accept what has happened.” Grief is a normal and necessary response to a terrible disruption to what for you was “normal.” Grieving takes time and energy. Everybody grieves in his or her own unique way. Even though it may not seem possible, someday your life will once again take on a “normal” configuration. But you will not be the same. Your child's life, your child's death, and the ways you deal with your grief will leave indelible marks on your life. A phrase from the song “Share the Love” by Joe and Elisabeth Rousseau, says it well – “Live today, live tomorrow as we grieve and we grow.”

Carol Webb – TCF/Quad Cities, IL

I Said I Could Not Do It, But I Did!

Exactly 8:05 a.m., Friday, July 9, 1971, was the last time I looked at my eight-year-old daughter with her eyes open. I walked beside her as they rolled her down the hall to the elevator that would take her down to the operating room for her simple, routine, tonsillectomy. At exactly 1:30 that afternoon, I was told she was dead. I said then I could not live a day without her. I just could not do it.

BUT I DID.

During the drive home I said I would never be able to walk in that house without her.

BUT I DID.

As I walked in that empty house, someone quickly ran and shut her door – the door to her room where she kept all the things she loved. The room where she played and slept. I said I could never go in there again. I said I could not do it.

BUT I DID.

When they said, “Come, let's go to the funeral, the Rosary, the Mass,” I said I could not do it.

BUT I DID.

For months that followed, I just knew my life would never be the same, and it wasn't. All the things I said I could not do,

did get done. All the life I said I could not live did get lived. Differently, but I did live. Now comes today – 16 years later. I have to admit; I had to look it up to be sure. Sixteen years! Palmer Ann would have been 24 years old. I had to stop and think about that too.

I stood before her portrait today and stared a long, long time, and yes, I remembered the pain with total recall of July 9, 1971. I reached out, touching what's left of my memory of her, and I offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to God – a prayer of gratitude, for giving me such a beautiful eight years with a lovely daughter, and most of all the opportunity to be able to stand there and realize that I had said I could not do it, but I did.

YES, I DID.

And each month when I come to a Compassionate Friends meeting with you, the new member, I share the pain that I know you are feeling – that hopelessness of the future. I smile to myself, because inside I know a secret – you will be okay. You will touch again, love again, laugh again, and live again. After all, I said I could not do it, but I did and...

YOU WILL, TOO!

Betz Crump, TCF/Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Loss of an Adult Child: My Child, My Friend

As parents, we often go through periods of wanting to rush our children through certain different stages in life. We can't wait for the terrible two's to end. Then, we move on to the stage where everything is answered with a resounding "no!" From there, we struggle through the teen years, which for many are turbulent times that we often wish we didn't have to experience with our children. Finally, our children reach an adult level of maturity, and we can say the words, "My child is my most wonderful friend." Adult children can be such a pleasurable blessing.

Somehow, we seem to be able to forget the years of struggle, and we are finally able to enjoy our child on a new level – a place of friendship. Because we have our hearts linked together in parental love, the friendship is even more beautiful than we imagined. We long to be together. We actually enjoy the company of our child!! When an adult child dies, a parent's grief is quite often misunderstood. So many times, well-meaning people think that an adult death is far easier than the death of a much younger child because the adult child was given more years in which to live out some of his dreams and to have time experiencing life. The years lived on this earth create many precious memories for parents and the loved one. The fact still remains that child loss causes dramatic changes. It

will take more than several months for you to readjust your thinking. Losing an adult child is a double blow to a parent's heart. Not only has a child been taken out of her natural order of life and death, but often a best friend has been snatched away, too. There is a depth of loneliness following the death of an adult child that very few people understand. How does a parent move through this double loss, the loss of a child and a friend? It's not easy to move forward in this grief, because often we call on our friends to help us through life's most difficult pain. When an adult child is lost, we've lost a best friend, too.

Parents who have lost an adult child should not try to rush through this deep, lingering grief. Because this is a double grief, it becomes more difficult to move forward. I know many, many parents who have lost adult children, and there seems to be one overwhelming thing that is done to help ease the pain. The parents keep visible pictures of the child throughout the house. There is a great comfort found in walking past a picture and having a physical reminder of wonderful moments together with that child.

Society says that we should get back to work in three days, and move on with our lives following the death of a child.

Continued, page 8

Getting "Better"

By Sue Dudek

As I write this, the fourth anniversary of my son's death is days away. Every year when the calendar turns to October my thoughts turn to all the "lasts" we experienced with Chris – our last Parents' Weekend, our last family celebration, his last visit home, our last hug good-bye. October is painful; it represents the moment in history that divides my life into the "before" and "after." Life "before" was good; our family was happy; the future was bright. Life "after" has been a struggle to survive unspeakable pain, reestablish a new normal, and face a future that is littered with shattered dreams, assumptions, and expectation.

The person I am now barely resembles who I was four years ago. I have gained an acute awareness of suffering and a heightened sense of empathy, yet I have lost the ability to dream, the luxury of lightheartedness, and what it feels like to experience joy. At the best of times, I have a tenuous peace with sorrow; in my worst moments I am consumed by a profound sense of emptiness. At all times I ache with missing him, an ache I expect will never ease. How could anything or anyone fill his place in my heart, my mind, my soul? It is his space, his and mine; it is sacred.

And yet, as I have recently admitted to a select few, I have begun to feel "better." Better does not mean I am "moving on" without Chris, that I am

"getting over" the loss, or that I am regaining my former self. For me, better means leaning to coexist with the sorrow and letting go of the "Shy?" There isn't an answer to the why that could possibly satisfy me, that could make me say, "Oh, so that's why he died. Now I understand. I'm okay with that." Learning to live with mystery is akin to admitting that there is little in this life that we actually control; the only thing we do control is how we react to life's experiences. In the case of losing a child, the option to choose is very slow in coming because the shock is disabling and prolonged. Eventually the opportunity to choose comes, but it is not easy or simple or even obvious. To choose to let go of the blackness is a choice that needs to be made each and every day – consciously, actively, and repeatedly. Feeling better is a journey, not an endpoint.

I will never stop loving Chris; never love him less than completely and wholeheartedly. For the rest of my life, I will regret that he is not here to share, to love, to experience, to be. Despite all the pain and heartache, I thank God every single day that I had him for 21 years. I wanted more – for him, for me, for my husband and girls, for everyone who loves him. It was not to be. I am grateful for what I had. Perhaps that is what "better" is all about.

From Summer 2009 issue of *We Need Not Walk Alone*

