



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.

The Quad City Chapter



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November 2009, Volume XXII, Number 10

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

Thanksgiving day this year would be our daughter Anna's 26th birthday. That is almost beyond comprehension. What would she look like? Who would she be? How would our family be different had she lived? Thanksgiving time is a little bittersweet because the holiday is so intimately tied to her life and a reminder each year of our loss. I am currently reading with a friend the book, *Choosing Gratitude: A Journey to Joy* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss. It is a thought-provoking book. When you are in the midst of grief, your pain may be so great that it is hard to imagine feeling grateful for anything. In her book Nancy Leigh DeMoss says, "True, Christ-centered, grace motivated gratitude fits everywhere, even in life's most desperate moments and difficult situations. Even when there are no 'answers,' it gives hope. It transforms overwhelmed strugglers into triumphant conquerors." We think the words from the following old hymn are particularly appropriate for this time of year. We pray that each of you will be able to choose gratitude this Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Jerry and Carol Webb

Thanks to God for My Redeemer by August L. Storm

Thanks to God for my Redeemer, thanks for all Thou dost provide!

Thanks for times now but a mem'ry, thanks for Jesus by my side!

Thanks for pleasant, balmy springtime, Thanks for dark and dreary fall!

Thanks for tears by now forgotten, thanks for peace within my soul!

Thanks for prayers that Thou hast answered, thanks for what Thou dost deny!

Thanks for storms that I have weathered, thanks for all Thou dost supply!

Thanks for pain and thanks for pleasure, thanks for comfort in despair!

Thanks for grace that none can measure, thanks for love beyond compare!

Thanks for roses by the wayside, thanks for thorns their stems contain!

Thanks for homes and thanks for fireside, thanks for hope, that sweet refrain!

Thanks for joy and thanks for sorrow, thanks for heav'nly peace with Thee!

Thanks for hope in the tomorrow, thanks thro' all eternity!

Moving Away from Grief

Moving away from intense grief is often described by words like “recovery, healing, and acceptance.” Being able to measure small steps of healing during the grief can provide the hope that is needed for complete recovery and wellness.

The journey is long and difficult with very little obvious progress unless one knows what to look for. Look for small increments of healing rather than jumps and leaps. Our hope for healing comes when we move from thinking about our children’s deaths all the time to remembering their lives and the contributions of love they made while they were with us.

We gain hope for healing when our respites from the pain is more frequent; when the duration between the pain lengthens. That’s healing and that’s what we can hope for! When we can laugh about our children being normal and mischievous instead of always thinking of their perfect behaviors; when we can enjoy, without guilt, social gatherings again and have fun! When we can mentally contribute to

society again with our talents and gifts and so with resolve to “do it for our child” and make their lives meaningful.

Is healing available for all of us? We have to conclude that it is since so many persons have experienced it without merit. It doesn’t happen to just “special” people who have the mental fortitude and faith to make it happen!

But receiving it is hard work. Many agree that grief work is the hardest work they’ve ever done. Some even fall along the way because of the difficulty and struggle for healing longer than others. However, some “dive in; experience the pain” and find they’re healing faster.

Whatever we do, the choice is ours. Healing is available for everyone at their own pace. Be patient with yourself and as you experience the pain, give yourself the gift of experiencing the healing as it comes. You’ve earned it!

Chuck Prestwood, TCF/Jackson, MS

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 242, (309)654-2727.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

**Thursday December 3, 2009
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 service, or if you cannot make it but would like a candle lit in your child’s memory, please complete and return this form or give Michelle Cauwels a call (number below) 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 (309.755.0783)**
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.

Progress

On better days
I fill my life with laughter
Enjoy the charm of other people's
children
And think about new flowers for my
garden.

On better days
I start the morning proudly.
I disregard
The forecast of bad weather
And look ahead
To possible adventures.

On better days
I look at faded pictures,
Recall vacations
In the rainy season,
Remember kissing
Baby-powdered feet.

On better days
I hardly cry at all.

Sascha



Say Goodbye to Those Guilty Feelings

Close on the heels of a death experience, you may notice feelings of regret, remorse or guilt. These feelings are very common in the grieving process.

You may feel remorse for things you said or did not say, or things you did or didn't do. Some people blame themselves for not living up to others' expectations or for grieving too much or not enough.

All of these regrets and guilty feelings can preoccupy you and sometimes render you incapable of living fully in the present as a caring, loving, and responsible person.

To work with these feelings, you need to recognize that there are two kinds of guilt: real and unreal. Both types feel the same. Just because you feel guilty does not mean that you are.

In looking at the different areas where you feel guilt, be honest and fair to yourself. In which of the circumstances can you see that you actually did no wrong? In which of the cases can you say you did the best you could under the circumstances at the time? If you did the best you could under the circumstances at the time, it is only fair that you acknowledge your best effort and good intentions. You can mourn the fact that things turned out differently than you wanted or expected, but remind yourself that you can only do your best. You are not infallible. Can you accept yourself as the real and human person that you are and release your feelings of unreal guilt?

Once you have weeded out the unreal guilt feelings, you can take a look at

your real guilt. Look for a way to resolve it. First, become clear on what you did that was wrong. If it involved a person who is living, ask for his or her forgiveness. If it involved the person who died, ask forgiveness by talking to him or her at the grave, by speaking to a picture, or by explaining how you feel and why in a letter. Perhaps a minister can help you in this area and can further help you get in touch with the love, compassion, understanding and forgiving nature of God.

It may also help to talk out your guilt feelings with a trusted friend or a counselor who may be able to help you to reach forgiveness. Be patient with yourself and know that intellectually you may accept that you have been forgiven before you notice a change in your emotions.

You can help your emotions on their journey toward healing by believing in yourself and noting that you are a good person. List all the things you have done well. Be kind to yourself by accepting your imperfect human nature. Forgive yourself. Take notice of the people you have forgiven. Then you will be able to believe others will forgive you. Expect that you can and will live a life free to develop into the best person you can become.

Dee Malena, Metro Team Bereavement Counselor – Des Moines, IA



TCF Bulletin Board

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

The next monthly meeting of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is on November 19 at 6:30 PM at the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island.

Thursday, November 19 – Sharing Your Child
Thursday, December 3 – Christmas Candlelight

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 91577, 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

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.

Hope for the Holidays

Saturday, November 14, 2009
at 6:00 p.m.

Homewood Evangelical Free Church
3303 60th St. Moline IL

Hope for the Holidays is an annual service hosted by Homewood Evangelical Free Church. The service is especially designed to minister to individuals and families who have lost a loved one during the year or recent years. The service brings hope, peace, and a renewed sense of confidence in God's love. Join us this year to bring healing as you grieve the loss of a loved one.

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.

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.



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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.

I loved the boy with the utmost love of which my soul is capable of and he is taken from me -Yet in the agony of my spirit in surrendering such a treasure,

I feel a thousand times richer than if I had never possessed it.

William Wordsworth

When Grief is New

When grief is new
You need not find a reason
however good and brave
to temper your despair.

When grief is new
The heart accepts no answer
-however wise and kind-
to ease your mourning.

When grief is new
your life can only know
Disintegration,
Overwhelming pain.

My friend, try to believe
What other grievers learned:
You will not always hurt
As you hurt now-
Time will return
The soundness of your mind.

(All other words
are shadows on the wind
when grief is new.)

Sascha Wager
TCF/Central Iowa Chapter

Carry On

We reach within and find resources to carry on when things are toughest. The most devastating of life's experiences often bring out our best qualities.

When things get better we look back and wonder how we ever did it. But we did and it proves we have a great strength within us.

Courage, that has never been tested before, surfaces and sustains us when it is really needed.

Let us be persistent and keep that courage and strength working now that we have discovered it.

Let its light shine so that others in their dark hours may see it and think, "If they can do it, I can too."

Shine your lights on the paths of your fellow sufferers, we have shared our suffering, now let us share our joys.

Make your life, your struggles, count!

Fay Harden, TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL



Thoughts for the Holidays

Plan Ahead

Bereaved individuals who experience the most difficulty with the holiday season are those who have given little thought to the challenges they will encounter. Consider ahead of time what may be expected of you, both socially and emotionally, as well as your own preferences.

Accept your Limitations

Grief consumes most of your available energy no matter what the season. The holidays place additional demands on your time and emotions. Plan to lower your expectations to accommodate current needs.

Make Changes

Your circumstances have changed. Expect to make necessary alterations in holiday plans to accommodate those changes. Consider changing your surroundings, rituals, and/or traditions to diminish stress. Serve notice on family and friends that this year things may be somewhat different.

Trim Down to Essentials

Limit social and family commitments to suit your available energy. Shop early or use catalog sales. Re-evaluate priorities and forego unnecessary activities and obligations.

Ask For and Accept Help

Accept offers for assistance with holiday shopping, decorating, cleaning,

cooking, etc. Chances are loved ones are looking for ways to lessen your burden at this time of year. Allow those who care about you to offer their support in concrete ways.

Inform Others of Your Needs

Give family and friends the tools they need to help you through the holidays. Be specific with them about your preferences and desires and keep them up to date when those needs change.

Build in Flexibility

Learn to "play it by ear." There is no concrete formula for learning to deal with loss. You are the foremost authority on what is best for you and your needs may legitimately change from day to day. Accept the fluctuations that must occur when walking in unknown territory, and learn to take each moment as it comes.

Give Yourself permission "To Be"

Allow breathing space and expect fluctuations in mood and perspective. The bereaved work overtime. Not only is life more complicated, but also all energy is siphoned into mental and emotional resolution. Grieving is nature's way of healing the mind and heart from the greatest injury of all. Allow yourself the privilege of limping till your wounds have healed and you can learn to run again.

Joanetta Hendel
Bereavement Magazine,
November/December 1989

Grief is a normal response to losses in life. Just as a cast enables our broken bones to mend, so does the process of mourning give emotional wounds the time and environment they need in order to heal.

The idea of mourning is extremely old. In the ancient Greek language, the root meaning of the word is “to care.” To grieve and be burdened with sorrow is only part of the mourning process. Actually mourning is the way in which we adjust our lives from what “was” to “what is.”

Glen W. Davidson, a national healthcare leader and author of *Living With Dying* says, “Mourning is a process that takes you on the journey from where you were before loss to where you will be as you struggle to adapt to the change in your life.” Quite simply, mourning is the restructuring of life.

Many women think men aren’t grieving because they aren’t talking. In our society, most men are still less socialized to verbal expression than most women. Our early training being what it is, both sexes have a great deal to learn from each other about grief. Many women need to learn that there are other ways to deal with feelings than talking. And men need to learn that verbally expressing feelings can do a lot to help a person feel better. It’s important to look at the actions of a person who isn’t talking before judging whether the grief process is underway.

Ann Kaiser Stearns, Living through Personal Crisis

IMAGINE

Imagine for a moment a mobile. All the shapes are of different weight and design, but they hang together harmoniously, each catching the sunlight and creating a melodious rhythm in the wind. Now snip one of the pieces: there is chaos. Each of the remaining pieces smash into one another, and what was a melodious sound is now a clanging, almost a wailing in the wind. When a child is snatched by death from a family, the results are the same, multiplied innumerable times.

Stephen Barrett TCF /Ottawa, IL

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities
Monthly Meeting: November 19, 2009 at 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Theme: Sharing Your Child

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: December 3, 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 of 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