



THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS



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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



THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS

July-August 2010, Volume XXIII, Number 7

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

*This past week* a long time friend was diagnosed with a serious cancer. He is a father with young children, and we cannot begin to imagine what he and his family may be feeling as they face a future filled with challenges and uncertainty. When we heard his diagnosis, my first thought was "there are no words." No words to express our sadness, our concern, our deep desire to be of assistance. When our child died I suspect that many if not most of our friends felt similar things. They wanted to be there for us but were not sure how. The efforts of some were remarkably helpful and those of others sometimes fell far from the mark and were sometimes hurtful. Included in this month's newsletter is a list of Do's and Don'ts that you may find helpful to share with family and friends. As I read through them I know there were some good reminders for me that I hope will benefit our friends as we reach out to them in the days and weeks to come.

Please note that this is a combined newsletter for July and August. There will be a chapter meeting in August. There will not be an August newsletter.

Sincerely,  
Jerry and Carol Webb

**How** do we go on? The most straightforward answer I can give is: the same way that generations before have gone on. We acknowledge the pain and the loss. We develop rituals – religious services, music, funerals, and wakes – where friends gather, hug one another, cry together, and share stories and laughs. And we remember.

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, *Beyond Tragedy*

## SOME WAYS TO HELP A GRIEVING SPOUSE

- ◆ Assign top priority to your marriage relationship.
- ◆ Cultivate transparency, openness, and honesty.
- ◆ Accept the pain that you feel. Be willing to share it and to listen to your spouse's expression of the pain he or she is feeling.
- ◆ Be patient with your spouse and with yourself. Recognize that your spouse is probably not at the same place in the grief process as you, and that is okay.
- ◆ Don't expect your spouse to be your only source of healing. Keep working at communication. Give special attention to your affection for each other. Learn and practice gestures of love. Remember to stay in touch physically; the importance of human touching and hugging is hard to overestimate.
- ◆ Allow or create space in your relationship. Everyone is entitled to a degree of privacy with their feelings, including their grief.
- ◆ Allow yourselves to enjoy life and each other. Be willing to laugh together, as well as to cry together. Work at finding some fun things to do together.
- ◆ Help each other to remember that life is more than this child who has died. As important as this child is to you, and as much as you feel pain over his or her death, your marriage relationship involves far more than this child.

Howard Cupp, TCF /Norman, OK

**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.

### e-Newsletter Now Available!

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

Thank you to **Maggie's Fund and Bethany for Children & Families** for printing this month's newsletter. If you would be willing to prepare the newsletter for the post office, please contact Jerry and Carol Webb (309) 654-2727.

"I don't think I am getting any better." I have heard those words from virtually every bereaved parent that I have ever talked to. Bereaved parents don't see their own grief improve because they are with it 24 hours per day. Answer the following questions to see if you are getting better:

- Have I gotten through one hour without crying?
- Have I gotten through the morning without screaming?
- Have I slept at least two hours without waking?
- Have I caught myself smiling instead of crying when I think about my child?

We have to remember to take our grief one step at a time. If you answered "yes" to at least one of the questions above, then you are making progress – you have just taken another step.

Pam Duke – TCF/Dallas, TX

### 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.

*Dear Jack,*

*There are no words to dispel your feelings at this time, and there is no time that will ever dispel them. Nor is it any easier the second time than it was the first. And yet I cannot share your grief, because no one could share mine.*

*When one of your children goes out of your life, you think of what he might have done with a few more years and you wonder what you are going to do with the rest of yours. You never really accept it; you just go through the motions.*

*Then one day, because there is a world to be lived in, you find yourself a part of it again, trying to accomplish something - something that he did not have time enough to do.*

*And, perhaps that is the reason for it all. I hope so.*

*Sincerely,  
Joe*

A letter written by Joseph Kennedy to a friend whose son had died following brain surgery.

## CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

AN IMPORTANT WAY TO COPE WITH GRIEF IS HAVING AN OUTLET, BE IT INTERPERSONAL, BE IT ARTISTIC, WHICH WILL ALLOW YOU TO NOT HAVE TO CONTAIN YOUR GRIEF, BUT WILL GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS IT, TO EXTERNALIZE IT TO SOME DEGREE.

R. BINYAMIN CARLEN, GRIEF COUNSELOR

PROGRESS ALWAYS INVOLVES RISK; YOU CAN'T STEAL SECOND BASE AND KEEP YOUR FOOT ON FIRST.

FREDERICK WILCOX

FRIENDSHIP IMPROVES HAPPINESS AND ABATES MISERY, BY THE DOUBLING OF OUR JOY AND THE DIVIDING OF OUR GRIEF.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

Listen gentle people, and hear my truest needs . . . I hear you stumbling for words. Relax. There are no words. I hear you remembering a funny story about my loved one and looking embarrassed because you are laughing. Share with me. Let me laugh. It gives me something to hold on to in the middle of the night when I feel only pain... Be your happy self – and let me be me. On days when I can laugh, I will. On days when I can speak of my loved one, I need you to share my memories. You don't have to give me answers, for I will learn to live without them. You don't have to pretend my loved one never existed, thinking I will forget if you do. Let me speak his name, and you speak it, too. He is always there, that one I love so deeply, always part of who I am. If you take that from me, I will be less than who I am.

Jacqueline L. Rogers, *I Want To Help But I don't Know How*

If you're fortunate enough to have surviving children, when was the last time you:

**T**old them how important they are to you?

**T**hanked them for their patience with you during these dark hours?

**A**ssured them had it been one of them who died, it would have been just the same?

**T**old them the reason you struggle so hard to survive is because you want to enjoy life with them again?

**R**eassure them there will be joy and some happiness in your family's life again when you all have had the necessary time to create your new life?

If you haven't told them lately – even if you have – tell them again. Both you and they need that reassurance.

Mary Cleckley – TCF/Atlanta, GA

## There's a Hole in Me

There's a hole in me. You see, a part of me is missing. I keep looking for my son, and all I find are bits and pieces of him – something he wrote, a picture he took, a book he read, a tape he made, something he drew – but there is an emptiness in me that these bits and pieces cannot fill, that nothing will ever fill. I wander around, and sometimes without realizing I am doing it, I shake my head in disbelief, thinking it can't be true. But I know it is. My son is gone and he is not coming back. I will have to go to him and someday I will.

There's a hole in me, and it hurts terribly, much worse than I ever imagined anything could hurt. I am angry – not at God or at my son for leaving me as some have suggested. I am not angry at anyone or anything in particular. I am just angry. I want to scream and strike out at something. Sometimes I feel as if I am going to explode and I expect to see pieces of me flying in all directions.

I want to fill this hole in me so that everything that is left within me will not spill out. I want someone else who loved him to hug me when I cry and tell me it will be all right, even though I think it will never be.

Johnie Maxwell TCF/Lake Jackson, TX

## Change Is Natural

Sometimes I sit and think of what my life would be like today if my brother were still alive. I think of my graduation day and cry because he wasn't there to share my laughter and joy when I received my diploma. Then I think back to his graduation day, knowing how happy he was and how excited he was to join the real world. Now that I have graduated, I don't feel that same excitement or joy because he is not here to share it with me.

The loss of my brother has changed my life forever. I would do anything to bring him back so everything would be the same as it was before. But I can't. I love my brother and I always will. I miss him more than anything.

When you lose someone, as close to you as a brother, you tend to change for good and for bad. Sometimes people change by becoming more loving to others who are close to them and that can be good. There are some people who change by becoming more withdrawn into themselves. That is what happened to me.

Before my brother's death, I would very rarely discuss my problems with someone else. Now I don't discuss them at all. Now I tend to react much more quickly to all kinds of situations. Sometimes I blow up at people when they did nothing wrong. I will apologize, and they think I am crazy. But if you simply explain the situation and apologize, they do understand.

What I am trying to say is that change is a natural thing; we just have unique circumstances under which we change. Most people will automatically understand, but there are a few who need some explanations. Just know that you are okay, and don't worry about what others think. Know inside that you are doing what you need to do to get better.

Marydith Ferris – TCF/St. Petersburg, FL

**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 downloadable in Adobe Acrobat format.**

### 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 website, and a portion of the purchase price is donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases, not just books, made from the Amazon.com site.



## 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

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.



## 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 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.

## Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

**Monthly Meeting: July 22, and August 26, 2010, at 6:30 pm**

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island, Illinois

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.) Alan and Rosemary Shoemaker — (309)441-5586, or Michelle Cauwels — (309)755-0783 for directions or information.

<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.
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<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 Kirby White at (563)271-5908.
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<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.
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<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 (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."
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<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 Chalyn Fornero-Green at (309)496-2568.
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<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 are served. For more information, call 589-3425.
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<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> .
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## ORDINARY SYMPTOMS

We live in a society that recognizes the symptoms of common and ordinary illnesses such as mumps, chicken pox or measles – and why not? They are a part of life. They have happened often enough to us or to someone we know and when we are told the diagnosis is one of these diseases, we know we must allow the symptoms to run their course. You can't escape nor rush them. We know to encourage the one suffering the effects that it won't last forever and though some scars may remain after the illness has run its course, it will be better. We comfort with our understanding of the situation.

Isn't it strange the same isn't true when someone dies? We all have people die who are vital to our lives and yet when death occurs the people around us are, for the most part, totally unprepared to know what to say, do, or expect. They do not know to allow the very normal symptoms of grief. They fail to recognize that just as the symptoms of illnesses must run their course, so must those of grief. They, too, cannot be rushed or avoided.

The person who is grieving, if this is his first major loss, is himself just as unprepared for the onslaught of

symptoms. He is caught up in the denial of grief, for society has taught him well and he doesn't recognize death is not a rare and unusual occurrence. He feels certain that no one has ever before had the feelings and pain he is experiencing. He is sure he cannot survive.



It is time for our society to stop playing ostrich; time we stop allowing sandboxes deep enough for heart burying, for

grief is a normal and natural thing with symptoms that are just as predictable as those of any well-known illness. Like disease, death is a part of life and has been since man has been on this earth. Grief hurts, bewilders, confuses and beats us to a bloody pulp, but mankind has suffered loss and pain and has survived, for we do have within us that kind of strength.

The surviving will be easier when the society around is an educated one who encourages us to know we're okay and there is nothing unusual about our reaction to loss; that like some illnesses, grief will leave scars, but it, too, will be better. When this happens the ones who are grieving will be comforted and encouraged by that understanding.

**Mary Cleckley**

## Create a Permanent Memorial Website

When bereaved parents are asked their greatest fear, you're likely to hear they're most afraid that their child will be forgotten.

The Compassionate Friends is always seeking new ways to better serve our membership. With that in mind, we've struck a partnership that will allow you a way to permanently remember your child, sibling, or grandchild with an online Memorial Website.

When I viewed some existing memorial websites that had been created by moms, dads, grandparents and siblings, a sense of peace ran through me as I realized this could truly be a place where I could come to remember my children — to look upon their pictures, read notes from their friends, listen to their favorite music, and reflect upon their importance in my life

I hope you'll check out some of the remembrance websites and imagine the possibilities.

**Patricia Loder**  
**Executive Director, TCF-USA**

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The Compassionate Friends is pleased to offer you the opportunity through a partnership with the premier Internet memorial website Legacy.com to give you a unique way to remember and pay tribute to your child, sibling, or grandchild. With these unique easy-to-create memorial tributes, you can customize the design, yet create the site in 5 minutes using Legacy.com's 4-step process. Include photos, videos, stories, add music, invite family and friends to contribute and join in celebrating the life of your child. This opportunity gives you a timeless and touching site for you, family and friends to remember and honor the child you miss, but will always remember.

To review a couple of websites on Legacy.com created by bereaved parents, please visit <http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/BlakeMcKenzieHarris/homepage.aspx> (created and sponsored by Blake Harris' dad) and <http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/SNOOKIE/homepage.aspx> (created and sponsored by Samantha Davis' mom).

When you enter through our portal, a portion of the proceeds from the memorial website you create will go to support The Compassionate Friends and its many national programs designed to aid families going through the natural grieving process following the death of a child.

We are currently offering you a FREE 14 day trial and, for a limited time, receive 25% off the first year sponsorship of your site. For more information and to start creating your site, please visit Create a Memorial Website!  
[http://www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/Create\\_a\\_Memorial\\_Website.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/Create_a_Memorial_Website.aspx)

E-Newsletter/The Compassionate Friends

## SHARDS OF GRIEF LINGER AFTER MURDER

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was Anne, our daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived.

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne's life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived. There was the awful anger against the legal system for being callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne's death were already deep and unhealing, but listening and reading about the insinuations and innuendos by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt, but we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence. I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain that faith. All the fears are real, but so far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has

been found, tried, and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders, and we could restart living our lives. Somehow we survived. How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne's life and character. Each individual is endowed with certain instruments and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone. Anne's instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we can still hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us.

Anne's instrument of hope for a future in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the backbone of her dreams. The songs of hope in work, in life, and the goodness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us.

Anne's instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family, and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night. We will not believe Anne's dreams have ended, but will believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope, and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever. The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.

**Bill Boggs, TCF/Augusta, GA**