



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS



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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



December 2010, Volume XXIII, Number 11

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

Thursday, December 2nd marks the 22nd year that the Quad City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends has sponsored a candle-lighting service in memory of our children who have died. When Kay McDaniel planned the first such service in 1988, I didn't think it was a very good idea. To make it worse I had to go alone because Jerry was in Ohio for a funeral that week. I was wrong. It was a good idea. And now for 22 years many parents have walked to the front of the room, lit a candle for their child, then, if they wished, shared a few words of memory acknowledging the joy of child's life and the pain of their loss. We invite you to join together this December 2nd to remember our children.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

Candles

Sascha Wagner

It is not easy to remember dead children.

But, easy or not,
we know that we will not -
and do not want to -
forget them.

Therefore we reach out together again,
to love them and to celebrate their memory.

Again, we light their special candles
and we say their beloved names.

We remember our children, who died.
They remain forever part of us,
and we are richer for having shared their lives, however
briefly.



Often even the simple tasks of everyday living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feelings you had as you passed up his or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child the same age as yours in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food – you probably didn't even taste it. Or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back the tears? Sometimes even getting through the day in your own home makes you feel like you've run a marathon and leaves you in

The Little Things

worse shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the laundry could make you cry or getting a piece of mail in your child's name could suck your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't possibly know the strength you must summon day after day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely.

Perhaps this quote puts it in a nutshell; "One sad thing about this world is that the acts that take the most out of you are usually the ones that other people will never know about."

Ann Tyler, Sacramento Valley, CA

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.

Thank you to **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.



CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday December 2, 2010
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 the meeting 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). **Yes** **No**

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.



When Loss Shadows the Holidays, continued from page 7

take a friend with you, or even have someone shop for you. **Find a special way to remember your loved one.** Use the Christmas money you would have spent on him or her to buy a gift for a needy person, or donate it in his or her name to a favorite charity. Have friends and family members write their most precious memories of the loved one, and put them in a special stocking. Then read them during your celebration. I have a "Jeremy" candle that I light during our gatherings. It's a big red candle with a winter scene and it

represents Jeremy and our love for him. **Trust your own feelings.** Do whatever is best for you and your family, not what others think you should do. They may mean well, but only you can know what is best. Yes, the holidays are painful when someone we love has died. But the only way to take away the pain would be to erase memories we would never give up. Through these memories, we celebrate our loved ones and our hope of seeing them again.

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.

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:

- Brad and Sheri Hilligoss, in memory of their son, Tyler Bradley.
- Glen and Sylvia Just, in memory of their son, Shawn.
- Ken and Sandy Keller, in memory of their son, Adrian.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Another Year

Another year is starting. A new slate. Fresh. Nothing written on it. No joys. No sorrows.

It's an opportunity, an obligation.
What will it be like? What will it bring?
There will be many events over which we have no control. And there will be things we can do to exert our influence.

What do we want from this New Year?
After that, realize there is no magic. Solvable problems are the realistic ones to tackle. Take some time to discuss and identify a few things you can do to make this new year at least decent. (And remember, you're allowed to be happy.)

There is a song that includes in its lyrics, "All the people tell me so. What do the people know?" If they haven't walked in your shoes, most of them don't know much about what you're having to do. So, **Don't Measure Yourself With Their Yardstick!** They think you should have done this, not done that, have completed the other. You're the one who's doing it. So you figure out what's realistic and possible for you. And try it. Don't be afraid to revise your plan, revamp your schedule. It's not written in stone.

Be Good to Yourself! Small pleasures can bring small joys. Small joys are better than none. The odd occasional treat – flowers, a special food, out to dinner, a trip, calling a friend, a walk on a nice day – you know what pleasures you. Don't be afraid to be kind to you.

Help Someone Else. It may not sound logical, but to reach out to another hurting heart in friendship, love and caring helps to heal our own wounds. A hug, a note, a phone call, sharing something you've written, doing things for your chapter that will help others – they need you too.

Another year is starting. With work and determination, **Together We Can Make It!**

Joan D. Schmidt
TCF/Central Jersey



Mary's Tears

Strains of Christmas carols
Echo in the still of night
As frosty air numbs my outward senses.
I stand transfixed before illuminated figures
Of the Nativity.
I have stood here before
But I have not seen
These small crystals, like diamonds
Shimmering in the eyes
Of Mary.
And I have not felt until this year,
Mary's tears.
Before now I did not understand
That Mary knew
What was to come.
She has felt this pain that lies
So heavily upon my heart.
That thought touches me
Deep inside
And lessens my burden.
For I know she has
Also felt the joy
That I can only look forward to.
Such sweet joy
When flesh and spirit reunite
And my own dear child can gently
Brush away
My Tears.

Karen Nelson

TCF/Box Elder County Chapter, UT



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.

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Monthly Meeting: Thursday, December 2, 2010, Candle Lighting Memorial Service at 7:00 pm

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL

For information and directions, call

Rosemary Shoemaker (309-441-5586) or Michelle Cauwels (309-644-0486).

From John Deere Road – follow the signs to Rock Island, turn right at 38th St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38th Ave. The church is 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.) Next month: January 20, 2011 at 6:30 pm

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine	Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at (563)260-3626 for directions or information or contact them at linmac67@machlink.com
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. Please call ahead to verify the meeting location. 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 403 SW 10th Avenue, Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309)582-7789.
Rick's House of Hope	Located at 4867 Forest Grove Drive in Bettendorf, this 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, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the first Thursday of each month, 6:30 pm, in the Wallen Room at the Larson Center next to Illini Hospital, 855 Illini Drive, Silvis, IL, and the third Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Adler Room # 1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at (309)373-2568 or chalyn@shareqc.com or www.shareqc.com
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 odd numbered months in the Moline Library, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. For details, contact Joel M. Moore (309)235-7174 or gcsos@yahoo.com .

A Look at You and Me

I was not prepared for it, I thought I'd put all your pictures in predictable places, where I wouldn't be knifed by them, unexpectedly, ripped apart by our separation.

So I was not prepared, when all of a sudden, your face appeared, in a photo I hadn't even known existed and which had fallen unseen, into an envelope of some ordinary looking papers.

Extraordinary! Your little face – your funny face, and funny hair – the happy gleam in your eyes, and the wet sand clinging to your wet legs. Of course! That day at the shore.

The sound of it, the smell of it, the feel of you all comes back. Every fiber of my mother's being leaps with memory of every inch and fold and curve and round of your toddler's body.

And I long for you, and the dam breaks. All the controlled sobbing, released. All the wailing, spent. Our life has gone on, as though – almost – you hadn't existed. Yet the longing in my heart testifies that, I will say it, you were my life.

And I don't know what to do without you, with the pain of having known you and lost you, and with becoming impatient of every seeing you again. I don't know how to do it, how to live without you.

But, every day that I do it, I guess I am learning how.

Beth Cokeloy, TCF/Somerville, NY

Just For Today

Just for today
I will be happy!
Just for today
I will search for and find
A new beauty to gladden my heart
As in the days of my long ago.

Just for today
I will put yesterday with its pain
behind me
And bask in the warmth of today.
I will lift up my eyes to sunshine,
Let my fingertips touch
The glad rays of a new day,
My peace shall not be of yesterday
or tomorrow,
My peace shall be of today!

Mary Wildman, TCF/Moro, IL



How to Handle the Holidays

(from a Quad City SHARE Newsletter – 10/97)

- ◆ No matter what we do, the holidays will come and the anticipation is usually worse than the actual day itself.
- ◆ Being in the presence of those who let us talk freely about our child is the best; often these are not relatives.
- ◆ You and your family come first. Whatever is most comfortable for all of you is what should be done.
- ◆ Discuss with your children how they feel and what they would like to do. Remember this is a Christmas of grief for them also.
- ◆ Don't force yourself to take on anymore than you can handle.
- ◆ Try to use any support outlets you have such as your spouse, friends, children, The Compassionate Friends.
- ◆ Remember there will be dear people who say dumb things – Christmas is no exception. They have no way of understanding. You wouldn't want them to experience what it would take for them to understand.
- ◆ Take time, maybe before dinner to ask everyone to have a moment of silence to think about your child or to share a special memory.
- ◆ Hang a Christmas stocking for your child. Write down some thoughts about your child and put them in the stocking. Perhaps you would like to give others who are at your home permission to read what you have written.
- ◆ Burn a special candle all Christmas day in memory of your child.



WHEN LOSS SHADOWS THE HOLIDAYS

By Nancy Lindstrom

Christmas is supposed to be the happiest time of the year. Homes are gaily lit with Christmas lights, trees twinkle from behind windows, and stores play Christmas carols for crowds of shoppers. Yet for some, the holidays are sad, lonely, and almost intolerable. These are people who have recently lost a loved one.

The first Christmas after my son, Jeremy, died, I just wanted to sleep the season away. But I had a younger son who expected Santa to come just as he always had. So I was forced to discover some things to make the holidays a little easier.

Don't strive for perfection. In fact, the harder I tried to make Christmas perfect, the more I felt Jeremy's absence. Without Jeremy, I finally realized this Christmas simply could not be perfect.

Don't try to do everything yourself. Let family and friends help you with shopping and cooking, especially if you don't feel up to it. And contrary to what you may think, the world won't come to an end if everything doesn't get done.

Get plenty of rest. You will be using up a lot of energy getting through the day emotionally and being tired makes it that much harder. I discovered that just getting out of bed and dressing

took more energy than it used to, not to mention doing the other things that were expected of me. So go to bed a little earlier, sleep a little later, and take rest breaks when you need them.

Don't try to be festive all the time. Let yourself grieve for the things that cannot be. Decorating the Christmas tree was difficult for me. I cried, holding the ornaments Jeremy had made or been given. But it's OK to change a tradition from the past into a tradition of remembering a loved one, and to cry when you feel like it.

Do what feels right. If the traditional Christmas seems more than you and your family can bear, try something different. Take a trip, buy new decorations, start new traditions. The first year after Jeremy's death, my husband's parents flew out from Arizona to be with us, and they were a great help and comfort.

Concentrate on the real meaning of Christmas. Think of the birth of Jesus, His love for you, your love for others.

Christmas is so much more than shopping, decorating, cooking, and gifts. It is being with those we love and celebrating the hope we have because of Christ's birth.

Do only what feels important. Gift shopping, for example, was really hard for me after Jeremy's death. So I bought easy things, like gift certificates. You can shop when the stores are least busy,