

The Quad City Chapter



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

November 2011 – Volume XXIV, Number 10

Inside

2 Hope Through the Holidays
What is Left

3 Memorial Service

4 Vine and Dine for Iowa AIDS Alive Alone
Grief Materials

5 Whispers
What's It All About?

6 Lifts to the Heart—
Preparing for Thanksgiving

7 Lift to the Heart—
Preparing for Thanksgiving

8 Resources for Grieving Parents and Siblings

9 Thankful vs. Thankless
Thank you from the TCF National Conference

10 Control Isn't Ours
How I Struggled
Chalkboard Reflections

11 Memorial Service



Dear Compassionate Friends,

Last April, our critically ill grandson was airlifted to St. Mary's hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, on a cold windy night. As I drove north alone, I called my father to update him on our situation. He told me that he had a word to share with me. I listened as my 85 year old father, who for 10 years watched his best friend and helpmate decline from the effects of Primary Progressive Aphasia, gave me the following wise word:

"Remember to count your blessings."

For the first minute or two I felt irritated. That's it?? These words seemed so inadequate or impossible or trite or ...

But as I drove through the dark I realized the wisdom of his words. Later that night as I drifted off to sleep in our hotel room, I thought about what my blessings were and the next morning I began a list that I have continued throughout the months of Logan's illness. The following article puts the idea of thankfulness into the context of the loss of a child. Hard as it may be, a thankful heart will make a difference as you continue on your grief journey.

Thankful Heart

Did you know that it is possible to be thankful even though your son or daughter has died! There are many blessings in everyday things that we all take for granted and just assume should be ours. We can become thankful for these things and make it become part of our life; our new life we are given in our children's death. In this a healing can take place. I'm not saying it's easy. Sometimes, in fact, it is very hard. But, maybe it is time to take a look at things differently and be thankful for them. A thank you may not always come from the heart but rather from the head. It may not always be spontaneous, but sometimes require a deliberate effort. Sometimes I can end up changing my whole attitude by forcing myself to think up something, however small, to be thankful for. I can start out feeling down and depressed and bring myself up into a much more pleasant frame of mind. Just as people grieve differently, there are not set rules. What to be thankful for can vary from person to person. I generally start with little things and work my way up. A new life has formed within me as a result of my daughter's dying, and I vow to make it a positive change - one of growth in respect to her life and as a tribute to her. I'm thankful for her, for what she's meant to me and for what her dying has meant to me. Yes, I miss her and think of her every day and sometimes wonder what it would be like to have her here. I imagine all the joy that I'm missing because she's not here. I feel the pain of her absence. It would be better and I'd rather have her here, of course. Sometimes I think it's unfair and miss her more and more each day. There is a hurt that will never go away completely until I see her again. But, at the same time, I can be thankful for things I do have. If I can only think of just one little thing each day and think about that, as the days go by, my list will grow and so will I.

Bart Netzek - TCFNew Ulm, MN

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

You are not alone in your grief.

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.

To



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Nonprofit Org.
PAID
Permit No.190
Rock Island, Illinois



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bethany
For Children of Families

1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265

Hope Through the Holidays
Friday, November 18 - 7:00 PM
Homewood Evangelical Free Church
3303 60th Street, Moline, IL

Hope through the Holidays is a uniquely designed memorial service for adults and mature teens who have experienced the loss of a loved one within the past year. Included in the evening will be singing, scripture and poetry readings and prayer. Gary Nor-dick, a licensed clinical professional counselor and clinical psychologist,

will also share a helpful message with us. During the service each person will be invited to light a candle in memory of their loved one, and will also have the opportunity to share thoughts and memories of their loved one with others in a small group format. After the service, a time of fellowship will include our time together. Individuals are encouraged to bring along a friend or relative if they would like. The entire evening is designed to provide help and hope as the holiday season approaches. Contact Pastor Jim (309-797-2000) with any questions.

What is Left?

When a child dies, you ask, among other questions, what is left? A

beautiful, sensitive, intelligent son has chosen to end his life. What can be left after such a crushing blow? Others will point out that you have a spouse, other children or grandchildren, perhaps relatives and friends. They are all left. Perhaps you have a career that is left. And yet, how meaningless all of those are to a bereaved parent, to one who is suffering the most devastating loss of all. So you continue to search for what it is that is left.

You read books on bereavement, scarcely remembering what you have read; you attend meetings, talk with others who have suffered a loss like yours. If you are fortunate, you have one or two good friends who, while they cannot fully understand, are there to love and listen. Perhaps there is a therapist who guides you in your search for an answer. But, for a long while, everything you read or

hear has little meaning and certainly cannot provide the answer to your question.

Or can it? Does all that you have read and heard and experienced finally come together and answer the questions of what is left? For me it does. The answer was 13 months in coming, but how clear it seems now. I AM LEFT. That's it! I am left, and I have been left with the love of Scott. It is a new love, it is different, more intense, it is undemanding, it need not be reciprocated, there are no strings attached. I love this love of Scott's. It warms me and comforts me. It is a wonderful love, but I cannot keep it. It would be wrong to do so, this love is too precious to keep to myself. I am left with love to spare and love to share. It will never run out. He will always be with me to replenish it. I have found my answer! I am left to share Scott's love with you.

Betty Stevens, TCF/Baltimore, MD

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

**Thursday December 8, 2011
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 Curtis 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 Curtis
18163 241st Avenue
Bettendorf, IA 52722
309-644-0486

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.

Control Isn't Ours

There are times when it is important to be in control. However, there also are times when it is vital to acknowledge that we are vulnerable, helpless and out of control.

Suffering, loss and death provide us with many vivid reminders that we need to let go of the need to have power and be in control. Support groups teach us what wonderful things can happen when people share their helplessness because they know that control isn't always in our hands.

Bereavement Magazine/October 1990

How I struggled that first Thanksgiving after Wade died to see how in the world I could possibly be thankful. The idea came to me to separate the two – what I could never be thankful for, from those things for which I was still thankful in spite of the tragedy that had come. I wrote my two lists on paper, and it helped!

Janet Reindle,
TCF/Houston NW Chapter, TX

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.

Thank you to:

Maureen Nowachek, in memory of her son, Nikolas Hartman Kenneth and Sandra Keller, in memory of their son, Adrian Bill Steinhauser and Laurie Boyce-Steinhauser, in memory of their niece, Bethy Hagerty.

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 downloadable 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.

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

May your Thanksgiving be filled with reasons to be thankful!
Having loved and having been loved is perhaps the most wonderful reason of all.
from *A JOURNEY TOGETHER* - www.bereavedparentusa.org.

"Misery loves company does not mean that the miserable seek to make others like unto themselves, but it is a universality in grief, a family of sorrow clinging to each other on the brink of the abyss of despair."
from
The Timepiece - Richard Evans

When autumn lingers in the gleaming trees with painful beauty golden melancholy when we recall the wealth of bygone harvest and wait the haunting of a lifeless winter - hope is so far away, spring is so far away. But spring will come!
Sascha

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.

Vine and Dine for Iowa SIDS Foundation

Wine Pairing Dinner and Auction
Friday, November 18, 2011
6:00 p.m.

Davenport Country Club

For sponsorship opportunities or additional information, call 563-332-6265 or visit the Iowa SIDS Foundation website at www.iowasids.org

Alive Alone

provides bereaved parents whose only or all children are deceased. This is a self-help network and publications including a bi-monthly newsletter to promote communication and healing.

Email: alivealone@bright.net
Website: www.alivealone.org
Alive Alone, Inc.
11115 Dull Robinson Road
Van Wert, Ohio 45891

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.

Thankful vs. Thankless

This is the time of the year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks and weeks – “I really am dreading the holidays.” And why not? When your grief is so new, you haven't had the necessary time to learn to live with life as it is for you now.

On the other hand, there are those of us who have had that necessary time and the proper support and are able to observe the holidays with less pain. We have kept some of those old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that doesn't include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We're different now, doing different things because losing a child forces you into that position if you are to survive in an emotionally healthy way.

The words thankful and thankless follow one another in my dictionary; so close together in a book, yet so far apart in meaning. When you think

about it, the difference between the two words are full and less. Those of us who have had more time do, like the more newly bereaved, have less in the way of family, but our lives still do have a fullness because we have learned to be thankful and appreciate that which we have left in the way of people and memories – more so than we ever thought possible.

As you approach this Thanksgiving, if you haven't yet been able to make your adjustment, I hope you will feel what you must for now because whatever you are feeling is okay. It isn't until you have reached a certain place in your grief that you can make some important changes in how you approach the holidays.

I hope the transition from thankful to thankless will be soon in coming for you, for that will mean some peace has returned to your life. Above all, I do wish you peace during this holiday season. I wish you more of the same in the new year.

**Mary Cleckley, Atlanta, GA -
BP/USA Bd. of Directors**

Thank you from The Compassionate Friends National Conference

Dear Rosemary and the Quad Cities Chapter,

Thank you for helping us create a successful auction/raffle this summer. Because of the generosity of individuals and chapters like yourselves, we truly had something for everyone. We raised funds and we brought smiles to those who took home a new treasure. Your chapter helped influence one of those smiles.

It was really fun to see the items that chapters put into creating their baskets, things that were produced or had their roots in home areas. I had never heard of Isabel Bloom or the Lagomarcino chocolates and had to look them up on the Internet. Beautiful and looked very yummy. Thank-you.

With gratitude,
Kim Bodreau

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

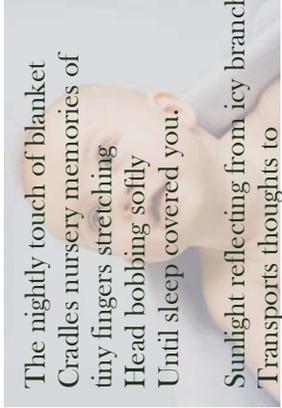
The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Monthly Meeting: Thursday, November 17, 2011 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL
Call Rosemary Shoemaker (309.441.5586) or Michelle Curtis (309.644.0486)
for information and directions.

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.) The December 8th meeting is the annual Candle Lighting Service.

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| 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 limmac67@machlink.com |
| Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group | Meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm in HomeRidge Inn Suites in Bettendorf east of the Bennigan's Restaurant. Please check at the front desk for room location. Please contact Kirby White ahead of time to verify the meeting location: kombo100@msn.com or (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 | This is a community resource 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@shareq.com or www.shareq.com |
| MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support | A peer group for suicide grief support that meets on the third Friday of every month, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Frances Banta Waggnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, (563)843-3655, there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org |

Whispers of you fill my senses,
Too powerful to be denied,
First full of pain,
Then softening to bittersweet,
Finally bringing comfort.



The nightly touch of blanket
Cradles nursery memories of
tiny fingers stretching
Head bobbing softly
Until sleep covered you.

Sunlight reflecting from icy branches
Transports thoughts to
When you pressed against
The glass to wonder
At winter's sculptor.
A taste of liconice
Brings your glorious smile
Ringed with dark smudges,
Hands clutching black strings
Bought with week's allowance.

Whiff of sizzling hot dogs
Recalls you straining against railing
And leaping onto your seat
To force your team to score
Against screaming home fans.
Uncertain cough of vehicle
Flashes back hours of clashing gears
And nonparallel parking
Until you glided up the drive
New license proudly displayed.

I thank God for whispers of you
Triumphing over death
Through time and eternity,
Keeping you close,
Giving me peace.

Marcia F. Alig
TCF/Hightstown, NJ



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 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.

LIFTS TO THE HEART PREPARING FOR THANKSGIVING

Elaine Stillwell - Bereaved mother, Rockville Centre, NY

Many of us who are grieving feel that Thanksgiving is a useless and painful holiday because we do not feel very thankful with our terribly hurting hearts.

Maybe we could prepare our hearts for Thanksgiving by peeking into them to find at least one and maybe even more blessings that we could count at this special time of the year.

After I lost my two oldest children, 19 year old Peggy and 21 year old Denis, in the same car accident, I learned that the tiniest thing that could ease my heart's burden was indeed a blessing! Discovering these "lifts to the heart" may help you prepare your heart for

Thanksgiving. Sometimes amid all the pain, we forget what we could be grateful for. Take an "inventory" of your heart. Perhaps you could be thankful for:

THE STRENGTH TO GET UP EACH DAY

--even if it is not fun. Grieving takes 10 times the energy to get through a day. Exhaustion can be one of the hardest parts of grieving.

THE LOVE OF ONE SPECIAL PERSON

--whether it be spouse, child or friend giving us encouragement and support. I call my husband "my blotter" because he picks up all my tears and says, "It's okay."

SOMEONE NEEDING OUR LOVE

--a person giving us reason to live, to nurture, to plan for, to hug.

A SPECIAL HOBBY OR INTEREST

--an activity that consumes our time and keeps our mind busy. It could be reading "grief" books to survive, writing our thoughts in a journal, making crafts, playing the piano, listening to music, planting a garden, walking along the beach.

A JOB

--that keeps our attention and makes hours, days, weeks, and month pass by quickly.

PICTURES

--that make special moments treasures and keep our happy memories very much alive.

THE YEARS

--we had with our loved one.

SOMEONE REACHING OUT TO US

--in a special way. It could be a new friend, a fellow employee, a support group.

MUSIC OR POETRY

--that soothes our soul.

Continued from previous page.

A PET

--that makes us laugh, listens to our troubles and never tells anybody, who allows us to cry and needs us. I could never "repay" my 15 year old Labrador retriever for his untiring devotion!

CLERGY AND DOCTORS

--who try to help heal us.

A LINKING OBJECT

--something that belonged to our loved one and brings joy to our hearts, such as a ring, bracelet, watch, jacket, book, golf clubs, garden.

FAVORITE RECIPES

--of our loved one that brings smiles to our faces. It's French Toast for my Denis and Angel Food Cake for my Peggy!

THOUGHTFUL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

--who have tried to understand our needs and not frustrated us with a "time and schedule."

TRADITIONS OR RITUALS

--that bring a moment's peace to our hearts. Going to the beach, watching a football game, lighting a candle, hanging a Christmas stocking, coloring Easter eggs, attending church services—whatever touches your heart.

NATURE

--a pretty flower, a sunset, a gorgeous mountain or ocean view to stir the love of beauty in our hearts.

CARDS

--with just the right message -- to let us know someone cares about us or remembers our loved one in a special way.

THE PHONE

--to heal us when we're feeling low and need to talk to someone else.

BOOKS

--to bring a soothing message to our weary hearts and to give us a "thought" to carry us for the moment.

PRAYER

--to our loved one or to our God or both to send us strength to keep us going

through the "Valley of the Shadow." Talking to our loved one helps our hearts. Including them in our plans makes them a part of the occasion. I always put Peggy and Denis "in charge" of the weather for our special events like weddings and parties. They do such a good job that friends ask for their help too. In addition to the weather, Peggy and Denis are great at finding parking places.

