



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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 COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
**QUAD CITY AREA CHAPTER**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

April 2012—Volume XXV, Number 4

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

**I**n 1988, Jerry and I attended a National TCF conference in Columbus, Ohio. The Quad City TCF newsletter was an outgrowth of ideas, encouragement, and inspiration we received from some of the sessions. Recently, Rosemary Shoemaker attended a regional conference in Frankfort, Kentucky. This is what Rosemary has to say about her recent experience.

*"I can't say enough about the regional conference in Frankfort KY but I will. Alan and I have been to two national conferences (also very excellent), but this annual one is so close to our area and done so well. When you first walk into the hallway at the hotel where the memory table is set up you feel like you are home. It displayed loved and cherished items and photos of children, young and old.*

*"After seven years without my son Brad I felt like I was with a family of people who know me very well, who are on the same journey in life. You just can't go up to most friends or family to speak about how you still miss your child without their getting real quiet or changing the subject. Sometimes for me it seems as if people have not only forgotten that Brad is not here, but have forgotten that I have lost someone very precious to me and it has changed me. Brad is more a part of me now than ever before. I have incorporated his loss into my life and carry his memory with me in most of what I choose to do.*

*"The candle light service was small enough that first night for everyone to be able to light a candle and say their child's name. Some of the speakers at the workshops were fellow bereaved parents Alan Pedersen, Darcie Sims, and Mitch Carmody. Picture buttons and a video of our children were just some of the touches that made Kentucky's conference so special. If you want to go to a smaller conference then try to make a regional one. You will not regret the effort."*

Sincerely,  
Jerry and Carol Webb

## What do we need during grief?

### Time

Time alone, and time with others whom you can trust and who will listen when you talk, months and years of time to feel and understand the feelings that go along with loss.

### Rest-Relaxation-Exercise-Nourishment-Diversion

You may need extra amounts of things you needed before. Hot baths, afternoon naps, a trip, a 'cause' to work for to help others – any of these may give you a lift. Grief is an exhausting process emotionally. You need to replenish yourself. Follow what feels healing to you and what connects you to the people and things you love.

### Security

Try to reduce or find help for financial or other stresses in your life. Allow yourself to be close to those you trust. Getting back into routine helps. You may need to allow yourself to do things at your own pace.

### Hope

You may find hope and comfort from those who have experienced a similar loss. Knowing something that helped them and realizing that they have recovered and time does help, may give you hope that some time in the future your grief will be less raw and painful.

### Caring

Try to allow yourself to accept the experience of caring from others even though they may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative also suffering the same loss may bring a feeling or closeness with that person.

### Goals

For a while it will seem that much of life is without meaning. At times like

these, small goals are helpful. Something to look forward to, like playing tennis with a friend next week, a movie tomorrow night, a trip next month, helps you get through the time in the immediate future. Living one day at a time is the rule of thumb. At first don't be surprised if your enjoyment of these things isn't the same. This is normal. As time passes you may need to work on some longer range goals to give some structure and direction to your life. You may need guidance or counseling to help with this.

### Small Pleasures

Do not underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures as you are ready. Sunsets, a walk in the woods, a favorite food – all are small steps towards regaining your pleasure in life itself.

### Permission to Backslide

Sometimes after a period of feeling good, we find ourselves back in the old feelings of extreme sadness, despair, or anger. This is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. It happens because as humans we cannot take all of the pain and the meaning of death at once. So we let it in a little at a time.

### Drugs are Not Helpful

Even medication used to help people get through periods of shock, under a physician's guidance, may prolong and delay the necessary process of grieving. We cannot prevent or cure grief.

The only way **OUT** is **THROUGH**.

Judith Herr, MSW for Hilltop Hospice,  
Grand Junction, CO



## TCF 2012 National/International Conference Costa Mesa, California July 20-22, 2012

You will be able to mail in a registration form or register online on TCF's national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).

For all the latest information and updates as they become available, and more information about the event keynote speakers, please visit the official TCF National Conference/International Gathering site at [TCF 2012 National/International Conference](http://TCF 2012 National/International Conference).

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which virtually guarantees that suppressed feelings will surface and wreak emotional havoc.

If you are a bereaved parent, try to get some exercise. It can be running, or it can be something else – swimming, aerobic dancing, bicycling, hiking. Grief work can be exhausting, and many days you may feel unable to walk across the room, let alone run or dance or bike yourself into a sweat. But make an effort. Exercise can fight tension and depression in more ways than one. I'm living, and running, proof. Dave Jordan, TCF/Portland, Oregon



## CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

We give our loved ones back to God.  
And just as He first gave them to us  
and did not lose them in the giving,  
so we have not lost them  
in returning them to Him . . .  
for life is eternal,  
love is immortal.

**Helen Steiner Rice**

People are forever changed by the  
experience of grief in their lives. We, as  
humans, do not 'get over' our grief, but  
work to reconcile ourselves to living with  
it. Anyone who attempts to prescribe a  
specific time-frame for the experience  
only creates another barrier to the  
healing process" **Alan Wolfelt**

Grief may be intensified  
because we grieve over  
losses suffered in the past  
at the same time we are  
grieving over our present  
loss. This is because any  
emotional crisis may trigger  
our remembrance of earlier  
painful experiences.

**Ruth Eiseman, Louisville, KY** - in  
memory of her daughter, **Mimi**

## 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.

**W**e are alike; at the same time we are very unlike. Our stories are different, our solutions are different, our ways of handling our grief are different; but we are alike in that we all hurt to the depths of our capacity to hurt, we experience many of the grief symptoms alike and we are alike in our need for help. While we cannot give each other definite answers or take away each other's pain, we can help each other by simply being there and listening to each other.

**Dennis Klass - TCF/St. Louis, MO**

## 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:

**John Page, in memory of his granddaughter, Anna Katherine Webb**

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](http://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.

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 and Maggie's Fund** 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.

## Gone Too Soon

**Like a comet  
Blazing 'cross the evening sky  
Gone too soon.**

**Like a rainbow  
Fading in the twinkling of an eye  
Gone too soon.**

**Shiny and sparkly  
And splendidly bright  
Here one day  
Gone one night.**

**Like the loss of sunlight  
On a cloudy afternoon  
Gone too soon.**

**Like a castle  
Built upon a sandy beach  
Gone too soon.**

**Like a perfect flower  
That is just beyond your reach  
Gone too soon.**

**Born to amuse, to inspire, to delight  
Here one day  
Gone one night.**

**Like a sunset  
Dying with the rising of the moon  
Gone too soon  
Gone too soon.**



Buz Kohan  
(recorded by Michael Jackson  
in memory of teenager Ryan White)

## Thoughts on a Fifth Anniversary—Janis Heil

It's true that she's always in  
the back of my mind.  
But she's not always on my mind.

When I think of her now,  
I remember her warmly.  
I rarely cry anymore out of  
hurt or anger.

But there are times when something  
can throw me right back to that very day.

And the depth of my feelings of  
loss and pain once again equal  
the depth of my love for her.

And I cry. And I hurt.  
But it reminds me all the more  
that she will always be my child,  
part of my life, and that she's  
special enough to care about.  
Time has healed me.  
But time has not made me forget.

## A Terrible Blow . . .

The loss of a loved one is often referred to as a "blow" That is exactly what it is, an emotional blow that affects the spirit the same way that a crushing blow on the head affects the body. For a while you are going to be dazed. None of your reactions will be as in normal life. In a way, this numbness is a merciful thing because it deadens the psychic pain while it lasts, but no one who has lost a loved one should expect to feel the same as always or apologize for behavior that is temporarily erratic or different.

This is the choice we grievors always have. Our precious things have gotten out of our hands and our lives have been broken and weeping is utterly, utterly appropriate; but there comes a time that we either live the rest of our lives in sadness and anger and resentment, or we find by the courage that God gives, and the companionship of compassionate friends, that we do have the strength to stoop over, pick up the pieces, and see what we can make of what is left.

**The Reverend John Claypool – Keynote Address  
TCF National Conference, 1989**

**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](mailto:alivealone@bright.net)  
Website: [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)  
Alive Alone, Inc.  
11115 Dull Robinson Road



## Sign up for National Monthly e-newsletter

The Compassionate Friends National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its more than 625 chapters.

Published once a month (as well as occasional special editions), the e-newsletter includes information on such things as TCF National Conferences, the Walk to Remember, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, regional conferences, and other events of importance.

Each e-newsletter also includes a story specially selected from a past edition of We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends. For the siblings, the e-newsletter features a past question and answer column by Dr. Mary Paulson.

All you have to do to receive The Compassionate Friends e-newsletter is sign up for it online by visiting The Compassionate Friends national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and clicking on e-newsletter at the top of the Home page.

## Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

**Monthly Meeting: Thursday, April 25, 2012, 6:30 pm**

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38<sup>th</sup> 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 38<sup>th</sup> St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. The church is 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.) Next meeting: May 24, 2012, at 6:30 pm.

<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)260-3626 for directions or information, or contact them at <a href="mailto:linmac67@machlink.com">linmac67@machlink.com</a>
<b>Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group</b>	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: <a href="mailto:kombo100@msn.com">kombo100@msn.com</a> or (563)271-5908.
<b>Mom's Group meets in Aledo</b>	A group of moms whose child(ren) have died 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.
<b>Rick's House of Hope</b>	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. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. For more information call (563) 324-9580 or 563-421-7970. Or go to <a href="http://www.genesishealth.com">www.genesishealth.com</a> Keywords "children and grief."
<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 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 <a href="mailto:chalyn@shareqc.com">chalyn@shareqc.com</a> or <a href="http://www.shareqc.com">www.shareqc.com</a>
<b>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support</b>	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 Waggner Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, (563)843-3655, <a href="mailto:there.is.hope@hotmail.com">there.is.hope@hotmail.com</a> — <a href="http://www.mjlfoundation.org">http://www.mjlfoundation.org</a>

## Hope

Do you know what HOPE is? I recently heard it described as "the desire for something and the expectation of achieving it." That struck home with me. I have been hoping for happiness ever since my son, Darren, was killed two years ago, and although it has been a long, hard struggle, often two steps forward and three steps backward, I am to the point in my life where I now have the expectation of achieving happiness.

Oh, it will be a different kind of happiness, that's for sure. Nothing will ever be the same as it was 2 ½ years ago. But already I can feel it working within me; it's a deeper, more meaningful happiness. It's a happiness that will last longer than a moment. It's a good feeling. It's something that people can see in me, and they have told me so. It's something that all of you have helped me with.

Maybe it can better be described as peace of mind. Whatever words you use to describe it, I hope it comes into your life, too. I'm not saying that I will never have a bad day again; I will, and I still do occasionally. But I'm convinced that happiness can come to all of us if we are willing to work for it.

You've all heard the expression, "Nothing comes easily." Well, this is no different, even more difficult, but very much worth the effort. After all, if anyone deserves it, WE DO!

Marion Roznowski, TCF/Pittsburgh, PA



## 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 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.

## Grieving Your Own Way

Each of us is an individual. Each of us grieves in his or her own way. With certain variations, there are generally two types of grieving: outward and inward.

The person who grieves outwardly will seek comfort through friends and relatives, books and articles, and support groups such as The Compassionate Friends. The outward griever may feel the need to go over the events of the death again and again, or keep the child's memory alive in special ways. The inward griever reacts quite the opposite. He or she may refuse to discuss either the child or the death. This silence may be misconstrued as a form of denial or indifference.

Each of these grieving reactions is quite natural depending on the personality of the individual. The problems arise when spouses are at opposite ends of the scale. The father who is an inward griever may become angry when his wife introduces the name of the dead child into a conversation. The mother who is an outward griever may believe her husband didn't love the child as much as she did because he keeps his emotions in check.

The death of a child is a traumatic experience and we expect others to react in the same way we do. If our spouse's grieving pattern differs from our own, misunderstandings may arise causing anger and resentment.

The first way to ease the tensions that arise in a marriage when a child dies is to realize that husband and wife are each entitled to grieve in their own way. Simply understanding that your partner is reacting in a normal way for his or her own personality type will reduce your own anxiety. Grief is a burden enough without feeling guilty because your emotions differ.

The second step toward healing is to recognize your own personality type. Are you an outward or an inward griever? If you are an outward griever, do not hesitate to seek support from outside sources. If you want to talk about your grief and your spouse refuses to discuss it, find a friend or group that will allow you to express your feelings.

If you are an inward griever, do not feel ashamed or guilty because you cannot bear to discuss your child's death. If the subject comes up in the conversation and you don't want to participate, simply excuse yourself from the group and busy yourself with another task. If you do not mind listening but do not want to take part directly, then listen but brush aside direct questions.

The most important things to remember is that you have to grieve in the way that is right for you. Grief over the death of a child can be likened to drowning in a swimming pool. Each of you is struggling to keep your head above water. To add to the dilemma, you are swimming in opposite directions. There is no way you can save each other. Attempting to do so will only drag both of you under. You have to concentrate on saving yourself through whatever means possible.

The healing of grief is an individual process. Respecting the fact that your spouse's healing process differs from your own will reduce the strain on both of you. Treasure the moments when you are able to share your grief, but at the same time, allow each other the room to grieve individually, whether it be inwardly or outwardly.

**Michele Aprias  
TCF/Bay Area, Texas**

## The Bereaved Runner

- When I began running in June 1982, my 17-year-old daughter Dawn was both pleased and amused. She was pleased because old Dad, who a year earlier had kicked a three-packs-a-day cigarette habit, was trying another step toward good health. She was amused because old Dad, at age 38, was flabby and out of shape and wheezed like a faulty steam engine when he ran.

Dawn, who skied, played soccer, and ran the hurdles on her school track team, worked out with me a couple of times that summer. She cruised effortlessly at my side, gazing discreetly into the distance in an attempt to conceal the smile provoked by my chug-chug-chug breathing. To encourage my efforts, she joined me in signing up for a community footrace that would be run on Labor Day. We would challenge each other at 3.1 miles.

On August 22, 15 days before the race, Dawn died in a vehicle accident.

I almost quit running. I had lost 14 pounds in the two months since I had started, and I was in better physical condition than I had experienced in 20 years, but the idea of pulling on shorts and jogging through the sunshine seemed ludicrous. Considering the cold, dark state of my mind and heart, every time I thought of the Labor Day race, I went into an emotional tailspin. I had intended to run that race with Dawn. The organizers had an entrant's number and a souvenir T-shirt reserved for her. She would never wear either.

Eventually I realized that Dawn would have been disappointed and upset to think she had caused me to abandon running in general and the Labor Day race in particular. She had wanted me to run. She would want me to run still.

So I forced myself out of the house to trudge through the August sunshine, and a peculiar thing happened. As I ran, I sensed that Dawn was there with me, watching me move along,

smiling. I felt a warm tingle across my shoulders, as if her arm were gently hugging me. I spoke to her silently, in my mind, and I suspected she could hear me; she was listening. I vowed I would continue running.

I ran in the Labor Day race, wearing Dawn's entry number. Her mother took the souvenir T-shirt as a keepsake.

Since then I have competed in forty more races, at distances from one mile to a marathon. I no longer wheeze when I run, and I've even managed to win a few ribbons. But the racing competition is far from the most important aspect of my running. More importantly, running has provided me with an emotional release and time to be alone. If you have lost a child, you are in for more than a few bad days – days when the darkness of despair enfolds you like a moonless night, days when you feel like throwing back your head and cutting loose with an ear-ravaging scream. Screaming may be good therapy of a sort, but often it's not acceptable socially. Exercise is.

Many evenings since Dawn's death I have returned home with my pulse racing and my teeth clenched after a day of struggling simultaneously to keep up with my job and swim against a tide of depression. Most evenings I pulled on my running gear, hit the road for two or three miles, and came back feeling purged, cleaned out, far more relaxed.

Every time I ran, I took a few minutes to think about Dawn, and how I was dealing with her death. I was alone, with no distractions but the pounding of my feet, and I could focus on her and my feelings. I tried to coach myself a bit, inch myself toward the light. That done, I often moved on to what I thought of the weather, how my conditioning was going, what her younger brothers were up to. Frequently, I sensed she was nearby, cruising at my elbow, listening. I believe a few daily minutes spent this way helped me avoid the classic grieving father's error of forcing my child's death out of my mind,

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