



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No.190
Rock Island, Illinois

Return Service Requested



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

October 2012 – Volume XXV, Number 9

Inside

Masks We Wear	2
Love Gifts Our Newsletter	3
Vine and Dine A Solitary Journey People who pray...	4
What's it All About? Angel of Hope	5
A Child's Reaction to Grief	6
Unbroken Dreams	7
Resources for Grieving Parents and Siblings	8
Coping with Grief at the Holidays	9
Chalkboard Reflections	10
Wearing A Mask When You... Grief Materials	11

Dear Compassionate Friends,

In March 2011 our grandson suffered a devastating brain injury as the result of an unexplained seizure. These last 18 months, we have watched him, with the help of his family, fight and work to regain his many lost skills.

While he still has much recovery ahead of him, we have been deeply encouraged by his progress and maintain hope that someday he will be completely restored. While nothing like the grief one feels at the death of a child, all in our family have experienced grief as they mourned the many things Logan has lost and the challenges his family faces daily. I have been deeply impressed by my daughter-in-law's determined facing of each new challenge and her positive attitude in the face of life circumstances she would have never chosen. She has and continues to "carry on."

While exploring some internet resources, I came across a song written by psychologist Paul Coleman. He initially wrote the song in response to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. In a blog he shares that the song expresses his feelings related to the many tragedies our country has faced since then as well as to the grief experiences of all grieving people. Paul calls it an anthem of hope. The chorus goes like this:

**Carry on. Carry on. Your life is still a life worth living.
You got dreams still left to dream and they can happen.
Carry on. Carry on. Remember when you grieve you're giving
Your heart a voice to sing of love forever.**

You can hear the song in its entirety along with a moving video tribute at <http://www.opentohope.com/?post=carry-on-a-song-of-hope>



Sometimes the very best we can do as grieving parents and siblings is to "carry on."

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

Masks We Wear

We have started a new ministry at First Steps called Creatasphere. It is a word we made up which means, "healing in an atmosphere of creativity." Our hurting children gather monthly and we always have a form of artistic expression for them to do. The first month we made mandalas using chalk on black paper. This month we are making gingerbread houses! We plan to let them drum, paint, and make sculptures. The point is that creating something allows them to express their feelings using their own childlike language of symbolism.



Last month we made these giant masks. It was October and we knew they would all be thinking about Halloween and so making the masks was a great tool. Each child used lots of things including markers, pipe cleaners, tissue paper, gems and glue to create their feelings. On the inside of the mask were their true feelings. On one side, on the front of the mask, they expressed how they had felt when the hurt occurred and on the other how they hoped to feel someday. The masks were beautiful expressions of authentic pain mixed with hope!

My favorite part of the evening, though, was when we had them hold their masks up so everyone could see the others. We told them that we understood that many times, grieving people wear masks. They try and pretend that they feel better than they really do. They try and con-

vince others that they are fine even when they are not!

One child turned to me and said, "But in here, we don't have to wear our masks!" I invited everyone to take off their masks and lay them down. We talked about how important it is, during times of grief, to find places and people where we do not wear our masks. It was the nicest

compliment about the work of First Steps I could ever receive. The children who come to us do not have to wear a mask. We have created a place where they are free to name their pain... fully and without shame. This, I believe, is the key to healing!

This is not only true for children is it? All of us need people and places where we can go and be ourselves...happy, proud, scared, mad, grief-stricken... where we can take off our masks and simply be the people we are!

The holidays are right around the corner. Many of us will have feelings emerge that are not in company with the joyful music and happy pictures on the cards we will receive. Holidays are a time of heightened emotions and I beg you to find someone...someplace... where you can regularly take off your mask and be the person you really are.

Identify that place or person right now and then get out your calendar and figure out when you will see them or go there. Then do not change those dates! Taking care of yourself is the very best gift you can give yourself this holiday season!! From www.1ststeps.net

Wearing a Mask

Halloween is a great time to pretend to be someone else. You can be mean and nasty even though you're usually a pretty nice person, or you can be scary when you usually are the one that gets scared. You can pretend to be strong and powerful or beautiful or mysterious or famous. You can pretend to be anything on Halloween. It isn't fun, though, to try to always wear a mask. Sometimes, for a person who is grieving, it seems like you need to always pretend to be your old happy self. Your friends and others may want you to forget about your loss and go on as if nothing much has changed. But it is really hard to mask your true feelings all the time. It is much better for you, if you can, to take off your mask and just be yourself sometimes. If you let your feelings out, then you are being honest with yourself and others. By taking off your mask and revealing your

true self, you will be a much more REAL person. It's better to save masks for Halloween.

From the Central Iowa TCF Chapter newsletter



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.

When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am in who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.

Frederick Buechner,
*Whistling In the Dark: A Doubt-
er's Dictionary*, 1988, West Cen-
tral Iowa Chapter of TCF

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

Happiness does not depend on what happens outside of you, but rather on what happens inside of you. It is measured by the spirit in which you meet the problems of life. The master secret of happiness is to meet the challenge of each new day in remembering to look for the rainbows as assurance God is with us through the storms of life.

TCF/Homdel, NJ

Since we could not bottle our children's laughter to keep and partake of when we need it, isn't it nice that there are other children, that ours weren't the only ones, so that in needed times we can still have the pleasure, the gift, of children's laughter to remind us of our own precious one . . . laughing.

fay harden heartlines

When someone dies, you don't get over it by forgetting; you get over it by remembering, and you are aware that no person is ever truly lost or gone once they have been in our life and loved us, as we have loved them.

Leslie Marmon Silko

Tomorrow will come. The pain will ease. But you will never forget your precious child. It takes hope and time and love for the healing to take place. Remember along the way to accept but not forget.

Sherokee Ilse

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:

Dixie Shaff in memory of her son, David

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.

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.

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

Vine and Dine

Wine Pairings Dinner and Silent Auction

Friday November 2, 2012

6:00 p.m.

Davenport Country Club

Iowa SIDS Foundation

563-332-6265 - www.iowasids.org

A Solitary Journey

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

Helen Steiner Rice

People who pray for miracles usually don't get the miracles . . . but people who pray for courage, for strength to bear the unbearable, for the grace to remember what they have left instead of what they have lost, very often find their prayers answered. Their prayers helped them tap hidden reserves of faith and courage which were not available to them before.

from *Good Grief* by
Deborah Morris Coryell

Continued from Page 7

Many years have passed, yet the thought of unfairness still comes, and I still feel my tears when I think of my first two babies, or when I hear of precious children being abused and neglected. This is when I remember the lessons I have learned and, instead of dwelling on loss, I strive to embrace the hope I know is real. I now give my love and support to organizations that dedicate themselves to the lives of children and to mending their broken dreams. Giving of myself is the only way I can ever give back the blessings life has given me.

We all have something to give, and it is through this act of giving and risking to love again that we ultimately find a way to heal. Often we uncover sacred gifts of our own just by listening to others who are hurting, or by holding someone's hand and letting them know we care. Each of us

has a story, and each of us feels alone with our heartache. Yet we are never truly alone when we let ourselves be unafraid to share our feelings, and to give what is in our hearts. Sharing connects us and makes us realize how much people need one another in this world.

I still look up into the night sky sometimes and think about those two little boys that were with me for such a short while. And sometimes I find myself wondering what they would be like today if they could have grown up with their brother and sister. Then I remember that although they are with the angels, in some wonderful way they are still with me — because love never dies. It is the strength we carry with us forever.

Flavia Weedn - copyright Weedn Family Trust. All rights reserved (Reprint permission granted to TCF)

Coping With Grief at the Holidays

Parish Hall – Christ the King Catholic Church - 3205 60th St., Moline, IL
Tuesday, November 13 7:00 p.m.

Genesis Hospice Bereavement Services is offering a one evening class on how to cope with grief this holiday season. This class is designed to help grieving persons with sound suggestions on how to prepare for the holiday season after the loss of a loved one. This class is open to anyone, who has experienced the death of someone close to them and is finding the upcoming holiday season difficult.

Registration for this class is not necessary, but appreciated. There is no charge for this program.

Please call Chris at 309-762-4634, Ext 200 or Judy at 309-593-2180

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, October 25, 2012, 6:30 pm

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

Call Rosemary Shoemaker (309.945.6738) 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.) Next meeting: No November meeting. Candle-lighting Service, TBA

Quad City Chapter Website: <http://www.orgsites.com/il/tcfquadcityareachapter/index.html>

Previous editions of this newsletter are found at: <http://www.bethany-qc/.org/docs>

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 lin-mac67@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 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.
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. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. For more information call Emily Gordon, program director, by phone (563-324-9580) or email (egordon@rhoh.org) or go to www.genesishealth.com Keywords "children and grief."
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 Wagnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, (563) 843-3655, there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org



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. 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 Quad City Area Chapter is when a child dies at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Vision Statement

The vision statement of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us.

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.



Angel of Hope

Lisa Ornelis, an East Moline bereaved mother of two children, is earnestly pursuing the creation of a local memorial garden that will include the Angel of Hope statue. The Angel of Hope, an exact replica of the Christmas Box Angel statue located in Salt Lake City, Utah, stands as a symbol of hope for all parents who have experienced the death of a child. Right now the nearest statues are in Rockford, Iowa City and Coal City, IL. Peoria is in the early stages of obtaining a statue. She welcomes any help or input at this time and would like to have a committee to work towards this common goal. Contact information for Angel of Hope QC Angel of Hope - qcangelofhope@gmail.com 309-737-3448

A Child's Reaction to Grief

My brother John died March 1967, but even at this distance in time I can recall clearly my feelings at that time. I remember an incredible sensation of emptiness in my chest that felt as if it could never be filled again. Feeling overwhelmed by his absence; knowing what he would say if he was here at his own funeral – it is all right to cry, to be angry – but at whom or what? It was nobody's fault.

I remember resentment toward people who told me not to cry because it was worse for mum and dad than me; that I have to be strong. It almost made me angry with mum and dad, but I realized even then, that they were not saying that. Now years later, I can see that it was worse for them because it was their second son to die (we five girls never knew their first son) and also that there is a very special bond between parents and child. However, I was not ready then to have to deal with their special pain because my own was very great and I needed to work through that.

It was a long time before I could laugh about something, and not immediately afterwards feel guilty about doing so, because after all, my brother was dead. It was a long time before I stopped experiencing those shocks of rushing over to a green VW expecting to see him there to collect me from school, and find it was a stranger.

I loved my friends who put their arms around me and gave me a hug and

cried a bit themselves sometimes. I loved my parents and sisters who spoke of him and remembered what he'd said or done.

I hated those who tried to make me act as if nothing of great importance had taken place, who said, "Come on, life must go on!" They were right, of course, but their timing was wrong. I needed time to grieve to really feel my loss – to know that I would never be teased quite that same way again; to never again plan together a surprise for mum; never to argue with him about the rights and wrongs of this and that.

With time, the empty space got filled with other things. I still miss him, but in a quiet way. It is good to speak of him, to know he will always be my brother.

I do believe that with time we all get used to living with the fact that someone close to us has died. We get used to it in our own way and in our own time. We may experience some of the same feelings that others have in similar circumstances, but how we deal with them varies according to our natures, our needs. We are fortunate indeed if those who matter most to us can recognize that and give us what we need.

Marjon
TCF/Wagga Wagga, Australia
1981

Unbroken Dreams

I grew up believing in dreams. As a child, my dream was to some day have children. I remember looking into the night sky and believing angels were watching over my unborn babies until it was time for them to become a part of my life.

Years later, when I first learned I was going to have a baby, I wanted to stop strangers on the street and tell them. I was absolutely filled with love.

I was in disbelief when months later my baby boy died soon after his birth. I felt the first crack in my dream, and thought my twenty-five-year-old heart would break. The love which had filled my heart so completely had suddenly turned into emptiness, and I was touched with the reality that life is too brief and fragile. My second little boy was born the next year, also prematurely, and like his brother before him, he lived only a short time. It was a different place, a different time, but the same deep heartache and darkness returned to my world. A part of me had died with each of these babies, and there were no words to explain how I felt. I kept my heart closed, my feelings unshared, and my silent hurt buried deep inside.

I had not yet learned that from every loss there is something gained. Living through the loss of a child can lead us to a deeper knowledge of life's gifts, and a kind of strength we never knew we had. The time came when I could no longer dwell on questions which had no answers, and I searched for insight and a rite of passage to change my focus toward positive memories and feelings. My healing began when I realized I could not have felt this sadness about losing my babies unless I had first

been blessed with the joy of loving and wanting them. The real emptiness in my heart would have been never having had them at all.

As I worked through my grief, I was beginning to learn some of life's lessons. The pain of losing someone we love, especially a child, never really leaves us, for it is a part of our lives that will always be unfinished and unexplained. It's never easy to accept the unfairness of life, and yet it touches us all. And sometimes, only because life has touched us in this way, do we become more aware of its wonder and the pure blessing life gives us.

I came to understand that each time I had allowed myself to love, it meant taking a risk. And each time I had reached for a dream also meant taking a risk. I knew the only way I could live life fully was to let go of the emptiness and become unafraid to risk again. I promised myself that I would let love back into my heart, for it is much too precious a gift to waste, and my days and nights too precious to be covered with sadness. I began to cherish life even more.

My third baby son was born the next year, and two years later, my baby daughter. Both again premature, but thanks to God, a wonderfully dedicated pediatrician, and advanced medical technology, they survived. Their hospital stays were long and filled with frightening moments, but in spite of the odds that faced them, they clung tightly to life. Months later when they came home, I slowly found I was mending my broken dreams with the love I was giving to them. And I was beginning a new dream.