



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



1830 6th Avenue  
Moline, Illinois 61265

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**T**o 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

November 2012 — Volume XXV, Number 10

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

**T**wenty-nine years ago, two days after Thanksgiving, our second child and only daughter was born. She lived only 4 months, succumbing to the impact of multiple birth defects.

When she was born our hearts soared with joy. We fought diligently for her life, treasuring each small accomplishment, believing, with constant hope that she would persevere, in spite of the many difficulties she faced.

When she died, our hearts were broken. I recently read a book by Amy Julia Becker, *A Good and Perfect Gift*. The book shares the author's thoughts and feelings related to the birth and early years of her daughter, Penny, born with Down Syndrome. One of her statements resonated deeply with me. "All life is fragile and uncertain with potential for heartbreak and potential for great delight."

When we become parents there are no guarantees. Our child's life is a precious gift, but with the advent of every child is the reality that we do not know what challenges will face them or us. Yet the joy each child brings is immeasurable. Each life is precious, no matter how long they live. Each of our children becomes part of who we are regardless of how we are able to parent them. And



while Anna's death brought a degree of heartbreak we could not imagine, we give thanks for the great delight of knowing her, even for so brief a time, and the impact her life continues to have on our lives.

Sincerely,  
Jerry and Carol Webb

## Quad City Chapter Announcements

The November meeting of The Compassionate Friends will be held on November 15th at 6:30 pm at Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island.

Starting in January, we will be having our meetings at Bethany for Children & Families 1830 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Moline, Illinois.

Meeting time will remain at 6:30 pm for now. Please bring a photo of your child to share or place on our bulletin board. Also if you wish you can share an item of your child's for our Show and Tell time.

The annual Candlelight Memorial Service in memory of our deceased children will be held on December 6, 2012, at Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island.

**Rosemary Shoemaker**

## 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.

## Coping With Grief at the Holidays

Parish Hall – Christ the King Catholic Church - 3205 60<sup>th</sup> St., Moline, IL  
**November 13, 2012**

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 and is finding the upcoming holiday season difficult. It will be held on Tuesday, November 13th at 7:00 p.m. 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.

### For the Special Child I Carry Now

When you are old enough to understand, I hope you will know how thrilled I am that you have been alive long enough to understand.

I hope you will never feel less special than the child who came before you. We never thought of you as a replacement. We will always miss our first baby; but no more than we would have missed you. In fact, you are all of our hopes and dreams. We love you so.

When you are old enough, I hope that you will understand that right now I am praying that someday you will be old enough to understand. And, even if you never understand, I will just be glad that you are old enough. **Lisa Casimer TCF/Chicago, IL**

# CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday December 6, 2012  
at 7:00 P.M.  
Bethel Assembly of God Church  
3535 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island, IL

Our Candlelight 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. (Please bring a favorite candle or one will be provided. You can also bring a photo of your child to place with the candle.) 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 attend 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.

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. If you would like to bring refreshments: finger food or fruit, music, set-up, clean up. **Yes No**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: **Michelle Curtis** (309.644.0486)  
18163 241st Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722

**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.**



## CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

The past is part of us and also our future.  
He who tells us to forget does not understand  
the past or the future.

Sascha

How complicated and individual mending  
is; the time required for healing can-  
not be measured against any fixed  
calendar.

Mary Jane Moffat

As long as you love  
You will feel me in the sun.  
In the warming of the sun  
I will be there.

Cindy Bullens,  
"As Long As You Love"

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO TAKE IT ON BLIND FAITH  
THAT YOUR HEART IS HEALING. IT MAY NOT FEEL  
LIKE THE PAIN IS GOING AWAY. YOU MIGHT STILL CRY  
JUST AS HARD AS EVER. BUT STRENGTH, CONFIDENCE,  
AND WISDOM GROW INVISIBLY, AND YOU MUST  
TRUST THAT IT IS THERE.

STEPHANIE ST. CLAIRE

## 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:

Tammy Saskowski

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.

It's hard to believe that another year has almost come and gone. But here we are with the last issue of the year. So many thoughts are going through my mind. What to cook for Thanksgiving, what presents should I buy for Christmas, what will the New Year bring. But most of all, my mind goes to the place that I don't like to visit... another holiday season without Brandon. Even as I write these words my throat is closing up, my heart is beating heavier and my eyes are filling with tears. This will be the ninth year without Brandon getting up before daylight, waking us all up to open presents. He would often set the alarm clock so that he would be sure and be the first one up. Even at seventeen he still would be so excited. I remember his last Christmas. He wanted a gun of his own to go hunting with. I can still see his face when he opened that gift. His whole face just lit up, I don't think he could have been more happy. In the days to come I would see him cleaning that gun, so very proud of it. How lucky I am to be his mother. He brought me such joy. It's hard at times to deal with all of the festivities of the hol-



idays. Just a few suggestions that may make it easier.

- Don't put too much pressure on yourself to perform. If you can't cook a big dinner, go out to eat.
- Don't put yourself into a situation that you can't get out of. Don't have the party at your house; go to someone else's home. Park where you can easily get out.
- Don't make firm plans, be flexible. If you need to back out of an event, do so and don't feel guilty about it.
- Think about doing something for someone else. Perhaps giving a gift in memory of your child. Or adopt a needy family for the holiday.
- Don't be afraid to have fun. Give yourself permission to laugh. Enjoy whatever you can. This is not dishonoring your child's memory.
- Remember as I have heard all

these years from many parents —It's not as bad as I built up in my mind that it would be. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season. Maybe I'll set the alarm clock this year.

## When Words Become Gifts

**On Thanksgiving** Day, 1994, two of my three young adult sons, Erik and David, were killed in a freak car accident. Years after the accident, my husband and I were at David's college alma mater for a holiday event. I was in the desert line when a woman came up to me and said, "I saw your name tag—are you David Aasen's mom?" After doing a double take (it had been some time since I had been asked what used to be a rather common question), I replied with much appreciation, "Yes, I am!" With those three, almost magical, words this person gave me five gifts.

Her first gift was saying David's name. Instead of just thinking to herself, *Hmmm, I bet that's David Aasen's mom but I better not say anything*, she said something. Her second gift was sharing a story with me about how her daughter, a classmate of David's, still treasures the friendship she and David shared. Acknowledging that I'm still a mom was her all-important third gift. While my sons' deaths have resulted in my becoming a bereaved mother, death cannot take away the fact that I am, and always will be, Erik and David's mom.

The fourth gift was permission to share a bit of my grief journey with her. Since their deaths, I explained, there haven't been any truly easy, carefree, feeling-on-top-of-the-world days, but taking each day as it comes has been the most "doable" way for me to go on. Her questions and manner did not make me feel obligated to cover up my grief and was the fifth gift. I felt valued for my honesty and my integrity remained intact.

The warmth of those five gifts has lingered on in my heart and has comforted me. As I reflect on the experience, I marvel at how just a few simple words had such an impact. I have come to the conclusion that most bereaved parents want nothing more than the opportunity to talk comfortably with others about their children. Just being able to share stories about our sons and daughters in a safe place, along with the permission to mourn in our own way and for as long as we need to, even for a lifetime, is what matters most to us. The real treasure comes when others introduce our children's names and stories into an everyday conversation. Knowing our sons and daughters are remembered and live on in the hearts and lives of others is a measure of the meaningful legacy that our sons and daughters have left to us and to the world.

Nita Aasen  
In memory of my sons, Erik and David Aasen  
St. Peter, Minnesota

## Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

**Monthly Meeting: Thursday, November 15, 2012 at 6:30 pm**

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

Call Rosemary Shoemaker (309.945.6738) 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: January 24, 2013 at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families.

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

<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 Emily Gordon, program director, by phone (563-324-9580) or email ( <a href="mailto:egordon@rhoh.org">egordon@rhoh.org</a> ) or go to <a href="http://www.genesishealth.com">www.genesishealth.com</a> Keywords "children and grief."
<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>
<b>SHARE</b>	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, still-birth, or early infant death. SHARE meets 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>



### 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](http://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.

**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](mailto:alivealone@bright.net)  
Website: [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)  
Alive Alone, Inc.  
11115 Dull Robinson Road  
Van Wert, Ohio 45891

# Quad City Angel of Hope

The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden has a future site. The city of Moline has graciously donated a site in Moline Memorial Park, 5001 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Moline, Illinois, for the future Quad City Angel of Hope and its landscaping. A diagram of a possible landscaping idea that was created by Meyers Landscaping appears on the opposite page, as well as a diagram of the cemetery with the location of the Angel of Hope indicated, and a photograph of the location. Other ideas will be developed for the Angel of Hope Planning Committee to consider. If you would like to be part of the Angel of Hope Planning Committee, please contact Lisa Ornelis (309.737.3448) or Rosemary Shoemaker (309.945.6738) .

Bethany for Children & Families is acting as the fiscal agent for the project and has set-up a restricted account for any donation made for the creation of the Angel of Hope monument. It is anticipated that the completed memorial will cost \$37,500. Donations can be mailed to:

Angel of Hope Monument  
 c/o Bethany for Children & Families  
 1830 6th Avenue  
 Moline, Illinois 61265

## About the Angel of Hope

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, Illinois; Iowa City, Iowa; and Coal City, Illinois. Peoria is in the early stages of obtaining a statue.

Lisa Ornelis has two deceased children and has been earnestly pursuing a place for all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings to honor and remember their loved ones.

She would like to have a committee to create policies, make decisions, etc., regarding this project.

Contact information is: [qcangelofohope@gmail.com](mailto:qcangelofohope@gmail.com) and the phone number for the project is 309-737-3448.



Moline Memorial Park Cemetery  
 5001 34th Avenue  
 Moline, Illinois 61265-5600  
 (309) 797-0790  
 FAX (309) 797-0728

