



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

January 2013 — Volume XXVI, Number 1

Inside

Loving Listeners	2
TCF News	
Love Gifts	3
Our Newsletter	
Band-aids	4
This Thought	
Lost Potential	
What's It All About?	5
If...	
Angel of Hope Monument	6
A New Year, A Time of Hope	7
Resources for Grieving Parents and Siblings	8
Waiting for Answers	9
Chalkboard Reflections	10
Healing Grief Rituals	11

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Our country was horrified by the tragic death of 20 school children and six teaching staff in Connecticut in December. None of us can imagine the horror of sending a precious child off to school, only to have to live with the knowledge that he or she was gunned down mercilessly by a madman. However those of us who are also bereaved parents can know in part some of the feelings these families are experiencing now and will be for years to come. Our hearts ache for them just as they do for any other parent whose beloved child has died. The Compassionate Friends is reaching out to help these families know they are not alone in their grief. The National Office released the following statement:

Our thoughts are with the parents and families of the young school children and adults whose lives were struck down December 14th at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. The Compassionate Friends National Office is working non-stop to find the best ways to help the families left behind by this tragedy. Visit www.compassionatefriends.org for news and information from TCF National.

The U.S. Postal Service has set up a dedicated P.O. Box allowing the public to send messages and condolences to the families of the Sandy Hook Elementary victims. The address is:

Messages of Condolence for Newtown
PO Box 3700, Newtown, CT 06470

Your note or letter might help one of these bereaved families make it through one more moment of one more day as they grieve the loss of their child.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

Loving Listeners

If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call:

Michelle Curtis
309-644-0486

Judy Delvecchio
563-349-8895
delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com

Kay Miller
309-738-4915

Michelle, Judy, and Kay are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don't feel alone.

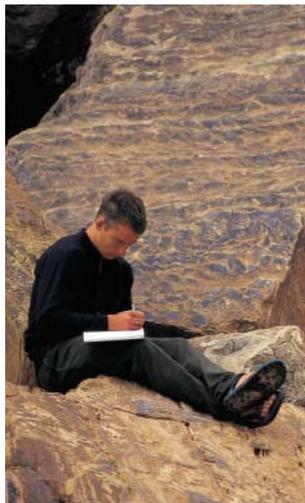
On behalf of our local TCF I would like to thank Bethel Assembly of God

Church for the many years they have been generous in sharing their facilities with us; not only for our meetings, but for the Candle Light Service in December as well. They also stored our materials, books, etc., with everything always in its place. When I asked them for help it was always quickly provided. They made us feel welcome. We appreciate and thank them.

Rosemary Shoemaker

TCF National Office Seeks Your Stories and Articles!

For many years, The Compassionate Friends National Office has provided on its Leadership Site stories and poems by TCF members that can be cut and pasted into chapter newsletters around the country. The National Office, in order to better serve its newsletter editors and members who receive support from chapter newsletters, has committed to doubling, over the next two years, the number of articles and poems available to the chapter newsletter editors. Currently, the Newsletter Editor Database has 500 stories and 150 poems. The National Office would like to include your personal grief related stories and poems. Please submit your articles and poems to TCF's Public Awareness Coordinator, Wayne Loder, at wayne@compassionatefriends.org. Please include your name and chapter affiliation.



Healing Grief Rituals to remember our loves ones

The value of creating "Grief Rituals" is to help us remember our loves ones in loving, healing ways and with a sense of peace.

- ♥ Buy a Christmas ornament each year to remember your loved one.
- ♥ Buy a special candle and light it at times that are special to your loved one's memory.
- ♥ Christmas stockings – hang one up for a loved one and have everyone write a note to put inside.
- ♥ Create a scrapbook of memories/photos ... a memory book.
- ♥ Create a scholarship in your loves one's name.
- ♥ Donate gifts, quilts, etc., in a loved one's name. Find a tree in the woods, tie a yellow ribbon around it. Go frequently to remember (this is especially helpful when ashes have been scattered, and there is no grave site).
- ♥ Have a birthday party for your loved one on his/her birthday.
- ♥ Have a family "memory" evening where you share pictures, reminisce about special times, create a scrapbook of memories, etc.
- ♥ Help feed the hungry/homeless at Thanksgiving, holidays, etc.
- ♥ If you go on a trip, do something special to remember your love one (i.e. throw a rose in the ocean or light a candle).
- ♥ On birthdays, remembrance days, holidays, or other significant days, buy your loved one a gift and donate it to a hospital, nursing home, etc.
- ♥ Plant a strong, healthy tree or rosebush in a loves one's name.
- ♥ Write messages on balloons and let them go up.



From *To Touch a Grieving Heart*, Paracome Inc. and Healing Resources, 1995,
Shared by Lifetime Care

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

Whatever we do—
going or not going to our children's graves
sleeping with a toy
or closing the door to their room—
has only to be what we each need,
what we require to make it through the day
without them.
There is no other yardstick.

Elizabeth Edwards

Healing

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. Clair

I Never Believed

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness.
I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears.
I never expected to actually laugh again.
I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face.
I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die.
I never envisioned a world that could again be right and full of promise.
I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return...
But I was wrong and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on...that it can still have meaning...that even joy can touch your life once more.

Don Hackett, TCF-Hingham, MA

Love Gifts

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:

Randy and JoAnn Murdoch, in memory of their son, **Ryan**;
Terry Scott, in memory of her son, **Jacob Carter**;
Maria Thulion, in memory of her daughter, **Erin Nicole**;
Georgia Jurevitz, in memory of her son, **Bob**;
Ken and Sandy Keller, in memory of their son, **Adrian**;
Bob and Mary Jo Reade, in memory of their daughter, **Robin**;
Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in memory of their niece, **Beth Hagerty**,
and in memory of **Abby Scott**.

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.

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 website at www.centering.org. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.

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.



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.

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.

Band Aids

They gave me band-aids
to cover a gaping wound:
You should be glad you have other children—
but my child is dead.
Thank God he didn't suffer—
but my child is dead.
You're young; you can have more children—
but my child is dead.
God needed another angel—
but I needed him too,
and my child is dead.
Time heals all wounds—
but it still hurts, and
my child is dead.
Be glad your child is in heaven—
but I'm still here, and
my child is dead.
Take away your band-aids and go away—
my child is still dead.



Lee Detrick TCF,
Van Wert, Ohio

This Thought

A sibling may become an only child; a younger child may become the oldest or the only child; the middle child may no longer have that title; or the parents may never be able to, or perhaps may choose not to have another child. Nonetheless, the birth order of the child who died is fixed permanently in the minds and hearts of the parents. Nothing can change the fact that this child is considered a part of the family forever, and the void in the family constellation created by the child's death also remains forever.

TCF Chapter Newsletter
Tucson, Arizona

Lost Potential

Last year I attended a workshop presented by a specialist in grief named Dr. Cable. Dr. Cable said many important things about the grief process, but as a bereaved parent one thing stuck in my mind.

He said that if you ask a bereaved person to describe his deceased mother, he will say, "Oh, she was so sweet. She always wore flowered dresses and loved to bake cookies." But, if you ask a bereaved parent to describe her deceased child, she will say, "Oh, he would be five this year and just starting kindergarten," or, "She would be twenty-two this year and graduating from college."

You see, we bereaved parents grieve the lost potential of our children. Our children don't stop growing in our minds. We grieve again and anew each year as our child would have been a different age.

Chris Anderson, TCF/Walla Walla, Washington

Waiting for Answers

Years ago, I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before, and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul.

But when I walked out into the spring air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory?

During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared *were* true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed.

My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said. "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

Mary Clark
In memory of Max
TCF/Sugar Land-SW Houston Chapter, Texas

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, January 24, 2013, at 6:30 pm

Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, 61265

Call Rosemary Shoemaker (309.945.6738) or Bill Steinhauer 309.736.6601 for information and directions. Directions to Bethany are: from the I-74: exit at 7th Avenue and go west to 18th Street. Turn right at 18th Street and enter the parking lot on the right, immediately north of the alleyway.

Next meeting: February 21, 2013, at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families.

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

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine	Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at (563)260-3626 for directions or information, or contact them at linmac67@machlink.com .
Helping Heavy Hearts—Grief Support Group	Meets the second Tuesday 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; komb0100@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 .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support	A peer group for suicide grief support 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 .
SHARE	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, still-birth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Adler Room #1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at (309)373-2568 or chalyn@shareqc.com or www.shareqc.com .
Alive Alone	Alive Alone is for 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 .



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, and everyone who finds us will be helped.

The Quad City Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets on the fourth Thursday of the month in Moline, Illinois. See the newsletter for schedule.

Quad City Chapter Newsletter Editors

Jerry and Carol Webb
Box 71, Cordova, IL 61242
<http://www.orgsites.com/il/tcfquadcityareachapter/index.html>

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 Website 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.

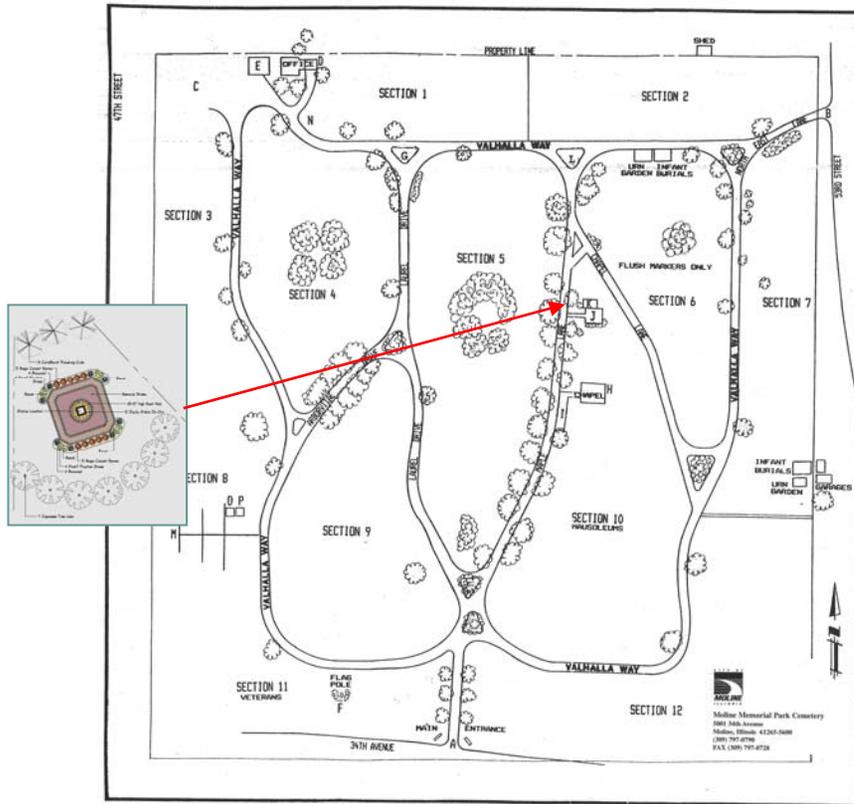
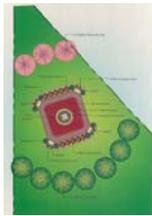
If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, we would be happy to add them to our mailing list.

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.



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 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois, for the future Quad City Angel of Hope and its landscaping. 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, IL 61265

The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us

and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories.... sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
 TCF/ Katy, TX
 In memory of her son,
Todd Mennen