



**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

February 2013 – Volume XXVI, Number 2

Dear Compassionate Friends,

*Recently* at my annual physical, the nurse, taking my history, asked how many children I had (surely that is in the chart somewhere already). Usually the question is, “How many pregnancies have you had?” and I answer confidently, “five.” But the question about children threw me. “Two,” I answered, “I mean 3, well 2, 1 is deceased.” Even after 29 years that question is a tough one – for me at least. The nurse did not blink an eye, didn’t comment, didn’t ask. It is after all, pretty old history.

On the wall in our bedroom, behind the door hang some of our Anna memories. Next to the baby samplers, her picture, and the pewter cross from her casket spray is a poem, *Were You Just a Dream*, by Lisa Sculley

The following portion is a continual reminder to me of the precious reality of our daughter’s life, short though her time on earth was.

*Were you a dream?  
Not hardly, my precious daughter.  
You were... and are... and will be...  
A happening in my life.  
A precious joyful memory...  
Even if laced with tears...  
A jewel to be treasured...  
A lesson to be taught...  
A voice to be heard...  
A memory to be sought...  
A life to be remembered...  
A love that can't be lost.*

*Sincerely,  
Jerry and Carol Webb*

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## 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](mailto: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.

## Memory of Significance

I can't say when the turning point came, but I think it must come for each of us, if we let it.

Every child who touches our lives, whether for a moment, or for decades, has significance. We may have to search deeply for them, but the essential blessings are there – these treasures and gifts from our children. A part of them lives on when we dare to let ourselves remember, because however brief their journey through this world, our memories are proof of their existence!

Dana Gensler from L.A.R.G.O.

## Grief Triggers

It occurred to me that a good part of traveling our journey is spent managing "grief triggers." In the beginning, after our child's death, life itself is a trigger. Just breathing and going through the motions of everyday life triggers the gut wrenching sadness and emptiness of life without our child.

Then as time goes on we start to notice that not every minute of the day is consumed by grief. We start to spend time crawling out of the pit of darkness into the light. We start to realize that we CAN live and that while even though we think of our child all the time we recognize the situations that "trigger" our grief. It may be seeing another child who reminds us of ours or discovering a picture of our child or a note or a video. At first these triggers completely take us off guard and throw us back in the pit.

But after awhile, we learn how to "manage" these triggers. Some of us avoid them altogether, such as not going to the cemetery or putting away the pictures. Some of us purposely look for the triggers because now we are strong enough to handle the emotion. Some of us cautiously make sure we always have a way out of a situation that might throw us into the grief pit. There is no one right way to manage the triggers of grief. Our journey is as individual as we are.

From the Bluegrass/TCF Newsletter



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

*The Frankfort, KY Chapter to host a  
Regional Conference  
"Walking Towards Stars of Hope"  
April 5 & 6, 2013*

*Registration information is available on our website*

*[www.thecompassionatefriendsfrankfortky.com](http://www.thecompassionatefriendsfrankfortky.com) contact Kathy Waincott or Karen Cantrell for more info at [khwaincott@yahoo.com](mailto:khwaincott@yahoo.com) or [Karen821285@yahoo.com](mailto:Karen821285@yahoo.com) or national website [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)*

*Capital Plaza Hotel is offering discounted room rates for TCF members that mention the conference when making their reservations- (502) 227-5100*

**Guest speakers from:**

✓ **University of Kentucky**  
✓ **Hospice of the Bluegrass**

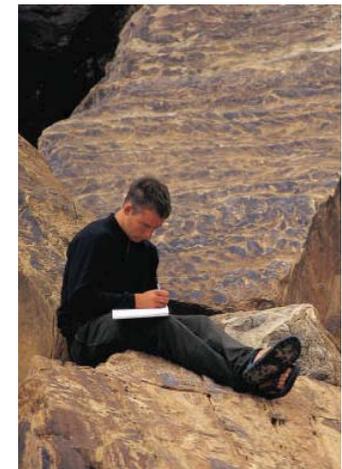
✓ **Local Professionals/bereaved parents**

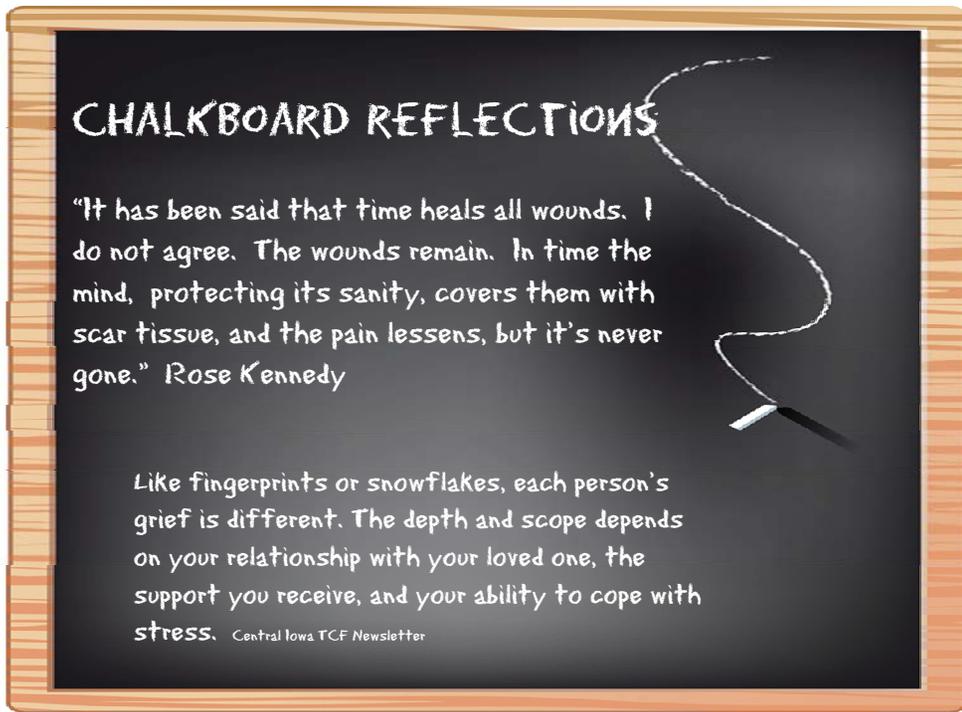
✓ **Special guest presenter Michael Nunley will conduct a workshop on grief/music and performance Friday evening.**

***We hope you will join us for a weekend of healing, comfort and friendship***

## 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](mailto:wayne@compassionatefriends.org). Please include your name and chapter affiliation.





## CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

"It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue, and the pain lessens, but it's never gone." Rose Kennedy

Like fingerprints or snowflakes, each person's grief is different. The depth and scope depends on your relationship with your loved one, the support you receive, and your ability to cope with stress.

Central Iowa TCF Newsletter

### Top Ten Ways To Live your Life In View of Your Child's Death

When someone asks, "Can I help?" Say yes. At the very least, borrow their ears to listen. When you offer to help someone, don't you like when they take you up on the offer?

Remember there is no deadline for grief. You are a parent to your child as long as you live. Find a way to remember them each day.

You loved your child with all your heart—live a good, loving life in their honor. Do not sit alone with your grief. There are other bereaved parents to meet. Join a group. Attend a Compassionate Friends meeting or one through a hospice or your church.

Recognize that everyone in the family grieves differently. The grief of your other children or your spouse/partner may look very different than your own.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. There is no valor in holding back tears. Reading can help. There are many good books written by and for bereaved parents.

Writing can help. Expressing emotions on a piece of paper or blog has been researched and shown to have positive health benefits. This can be as simple as jotting a few words on a calendar. Be gentle to yourself. Loosen up on your expectations for yourself. Listen to your heart; you are the best judge of what is good for you.

Transform your pain into something new: take a risk, help someone else, or revitalize important dates. Live your life larger. Reach for hope.

Love yourself. Love each other. Love...

from the Bluegrass/TCF Newsletter

## 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:

**Mindy Hallene Kruse, in memory of her son, Alex Hallene.**

**Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in memory of their daughter, Maggie.**

**Mary Jordan, 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.

### 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](http://www.centering.org). When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.

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 five years of The Quad City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends Newsletter. They are downloadable in Adobe Acrobat format.

### Amazon.com

When making a purchase from Amazon.com, enter through the link on the home page of The Compassionate Friends national website, and a portion of the purchase price is donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases, not just books, made from the Amazon.com.



### 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.

## "Getting on With Life" What Does It Mean?

Of all the statements and spiritual platitudes quoted at me since my son Daniel's death, the phrase that I hear most frequently makes me squirm the most. "You have got to get on with your life." Recently I quit squirming long enough to ponder the meaning behind this phrase that is usually said to the bereaved in the form of a command. Exactly what does this phrase mean? What are people implying when they say it?

I was pregnant when Daniel died, and three months later I gave birth to a baby girl. Wasn't that getting on with life? I nurtured my three children, took them to school, the park and birthday parties. Now wasn't that going on with life? I even cooked dinner at least four times a week!

At first after Daniel's death, I would have liked to literally stop my life and be buried next to my son, but I kept existing. Like a plastic bag tossed about by the wind, I was fluttering, being carried by the events of life. Seasons came and went. In the spring, I planted marigolds and tomato vines. In the autumn, I jumped in fallen leaves with my children. I continued; I am still continuing to live.

Now I may be bereaved, but I am by no means a fool. As I ponder the meaning behind "getting on with life," I know exactly what those who say this have in mind. "Forget your dead child. Quit grieving. You make me uncomfortable!" Getting on with life means don't acknowledge August 25, Daniel's birthday, anymore. Forget how he slid down the snowy bank in

the recycle bin, sang in the van and ate Gummy Bears. Forget he had cancer, suffered and died at only age four. Don't see the empty chair at the dinner table, don't cry, just live!

Some who are more "religious" would like to believe that a bereaved parent can claim, "My child is safe and happy in heaven. Therefore, why should I yearn for him?" Perhaps I pose a threat to certain types because I have let it be known I question God. I weep. I have been angry. I miss my Daniel. Maybe old friends feel if they hang around me too long I might convince them that a few of their illusions about life are just that, illusions. As my cries of

anguish are heard, there are those who can only think how to make me be quiet. To stop my heartfelt yearnings, they say quite sternly, "You must get on with your life."

I am living. I do move on with life with Daniel in my mind and in my heart, although he is not physically here as I continue to live and to love. To sever his memory totally from my life would cause destruction and damage that would ruin me. To push Daniel out of my life and not be able to freely mention his name or write & speak about who he was on earth would only bring more pain to my life. I'd shrivel up. Comfort for me comes in remembering with smiles how he drew with a blue marker on his sister's wall, ran outside naked and picked green tomatoes. For the reality is, getting on with life means continuing to cherish Daniel.

Alice J. Wisler,  
*Bereavement Magazine, Sept./Oct. 2000*

## Strength Born of Pain

I would say to those who mourn - look upon each day that comes as a challenge, a test of courage. The pain will come in waves, some days worse than others, for no apparent reason. Accept the pain. Do not suppress it. Never attempt to hide grief from yourself.

Little by little, just as the deaf, the blind, the handicapped develop with time an extra sense to balance disability, so the bereaved will find a new strength, new vision, born of the very pain and loneliness which seem at first, impossible to master.

*The Rebecca Notebook,*  
Daphne DuMaurier

## From a newly bereaved parent

"Intense grief has brought me to a place so foreign to me. Sorrow fills every empty moment. I'm searching for a word to describe its content - intense grief! There are no words. I feel as though I have become an alien to everyone - including myself. I want to find a soft place to land and hide until its agony subsides - but there's nowhere to go. Grief forces me into transparency. Hope seems an illusion and love an enemy. I try to silence my grief and the birds sing of it, the wind whispers it, the sky shouts good-bye and I cry and I cry and I cry! And I try and I try and I try. Why? Why? Why? There are no answers. There are no solutions. Grief has become who I am and I don't like me. Grief has become all I know. Its torment is my food and tears of anguish my only resting place. I'm all alone in a war that will not end until I leave this earth and each day my wounds are fresh and new."

Betty Jo Lackey

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**There** are those days in winter when your world is frozen into a vision of eternal ice, when earth and air are strangers to each other, when sound and color seem forever gone.

There are those days in winter when you feel like dying, when life itself surrenders you to anguish, to total mourning and to endless grief.

And then it happens: from the bitter sky, a timid sun strides to his silent battle against the gray and hostile universe—it changes ice to roses, sky to song.

And then it happens that your heart recalls some distant joy, a gladness from the past, a slender light at first, then larger, braver, until your mind returns to hope and peace.

Let memories be beauty in your life, like song and roses in the winter sun.

Sascha Wagner

## Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, February 28, 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: March 28, 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 <a href="mailto:linmac67@machlink.com">linmac67@machlink.com</a> .
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; <a href="mailto:komb0100@msn.com">komb0100@msn.com</a> 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 ( <a href="mailto:egordon@rhoh.org">egordon@rhoh.org</a> ) or go to <a href="http://www.genesishealth.com">www.genesishealth.com</a> .
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, <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> .
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 <a href="mailto:chalyn@shareqc.com">chalyn@shareqc.com</a> or <a href="http://www.shareqc.com">www.shareqc.com</a> .
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: <a href="mailto:alivealone@bright.net">alivealone@bright.net</a> -- Website: <a href="http://www.alivealone.org">www.alivealone.org</a> .



THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS

#### 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, 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.

Grieving allows us to heal,  
to remember with love  
rather than pain.

It is a sorting process.

One by one you let go  
of the things that are gone  
and you mourn for them

One by one you take hold  
of the things that have  
become a part of who you are  
and build again.

**Rachel Naomi Remen**

# Breadcrumbs

**O**n February 15, 2005, my daughter, Maggie, went happily off to kindergarten, a healthy six year old. At 2:00 pm, she suffered an unsurvivable intracranial hemorrhage. She died 44 hours later when life support was withdrawn from her 50 pounds and 50 inch-long barely-used body. My wife and I cradled her in our laps as together we held our daughter for the last time.

Eight years later, her toothbrush sits next to mine in the bathroom; her bike is still in the garage as if waiting for her to ride it; the red-hooded winter coat that she wore on her last day of school hangs in my closet; her beaniebabies and stuffed animals lie in a heart-shaped basket in our bedroom (including the horse that I purposely mistook for a dog and which became a long running daughter-dad game of teasing:

“Maggie, get your dog out of the family room.”  
“Daaad! It’s a HORSE!!!”)

In the basement underneath the stairs in three pink storage bins are some of her clothes that we could not part with. Her bedroom was long ago re-assigned to Luke, her best friend and closest brother. She would be appalled at what he’s done with it. Not the mess, mind you, just the guy stuff. In the living room her kindergarten picture hangs alongside those of her brothers, theirs having been changed many times over; hers seemingly frozen in time, forever six years old. In the kitchen, her sippy cup. She had long outgrown it, but it was the centerpiece of another of those

daughter-dad games. At day’s end, I would sit on the side of her bed and ask her how the day went. When she was done relaying all the news of the day and we had prayed the one prayer she had memorized (Angel of God), I’d give her a kiss and start heading downstairs. Invariably, she would call out, “Would you tell Mom to bring me a cup of water?” It was the opening line of the game we played every night. I would interrupt Maggie at the word “tell” and insert “ask.” She would correct her question and wait for me to turn to leave. She would call after me, “...in a sippy cup?” As the weeks of this game went by, Maggie starting adding to it: “...with ice cubes?” “...and a slice of lemon?” It was typical Maggie, always pushing the limits around her, testing what could be done and what could not. She left us before we wore out the game.

In my car is a CD of songs that helped me heal after she died. When I need to be with her again, I play the disc on the long rides to Chicago. My favorite is Billy Joel’s “Lullaby,” and I see Laurie and me holding her in our laps as we rocked her from this life to another.

*Like a boat out on the ocean,  
I’m rocking you to sleep,  
the water’s dark and deep,  
inside this ancient heart,  
you’ll always be a part of me.*

Continued on page 7

*Breadcrumbs*, continued from page 6

Kenny Chesney’s “Who You’d Be Today” calls to mind all of the future moments that we were supposed to have but lost on that bitterly cold blindingly- sunny day in February. “Amazing Grace,” by Judy Collins, echoes the hymn sung as her three brothers and her parents walked her casket out of the church.

In the years since she died, we have healed as a family and as individuals. The terrible pain of living with a broken heart has passed into the dull ache of always missing her. Our three boys have grown into fine young men. Laurie and I suspect that the boys’ memories of their sister have faded like photographs left too long in the sunlight. Perhaps that is why, alike to other parents who have lost a child, scattered throughout our home and our lives, like breadcrumbs in the forest, are those things that bring us back to her, back to those sacred memories, reminding us of whom we’ve lost and long to see again one day, lest we forget.

*Goodnight my angel, time to close your eyes and save these questions for another day.*

*I promised I would never leave you and you should always know wherever you may go, no matter where you are, I never will be far away.*

Bill Steinhauser  
TCF/Quad Cities

# Musings

Isn’t it strange that things we once took for granted, have changed so much? Things like the soft wings of a brilliant colored butterfly, or the radiant colors in the sky at dawn and sunset or perhaps a song we heard in passing or a movie we once took for granted. But now, these very same things can bring on tears and leave us feeling a deep sense of longing. Why? Are these not the same as before? What changed? We did. The things we once took for granted are now viewed with much more than human eyes. We now experience these things through the eyes of a broken heart.

I believe grief gives us a very different view on things. A heart bruised and broken by loss has a new tenderness and compassion. Just look inside yourself at how your views have changed. I also believe this is our children speaking to us saying, “Look at the beauty and know that I am still near.”

**Sheila Simons, TCF/Atlanta**  
**In memory of her son, Steven Simons**