



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



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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

March 2013 — Volume XXVI, Number 3

Dear Compassionate Friends,

*Our older* son was three years old in 1984 when his little sister died. I vividly remember the first time, just weeks after her death, when I dropped him off for a Sunday School picnic and within minutes of driving away was in a state of panic because I judged no one could watch him as well as I. I feared that if I left him, even for an evening of fun with trusted chaperones, something bad would happen to him. After our second son was born, any time we went out, I used to invent reasons I needed to call the babysitter as soon as we arrived at our destination just to make sure everything was OK. I am not sure I would have ever had the courage to leave him had we not had ministry commitments. For years I swallowed my fears and put a smile on my face as I sent my boys out the door to school or off to summer camp or for an afternoon outing with friends. I often said it was only by God's grace that I was able to allow them to take driver's ed and eventually drive off in the family car on their own. Thankfully, In spite of me (and I hope in part because of me), they have become self sufficient, independent adults.

One of the articles this month, called "Wagon Circling," is about the natural tendency of bereaved parents to over-protect our surviving children. Another is a reflection from Susan Salisbury-Richards about control and ways a bereaved parent may try to exercise control over what seems to them to be an out of control life and the impact that can have on the people around us especially our surviving children.

One of my favorite sayings is "The best gift we can give our children is roots and wings." Our surviving children deserve the freedom to fly.

Sincerely,  
Jerry and Carol Webb

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## Loving Listeners

If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):

Michelle Curtis  
309-644-0486

Judy Delvechio  
563-349-8895 or  
[delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com](mailto:delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com)

Kay Miller  
309-738-4915

Kirby White  
563-271-5908 or  
[kombo100@msn.com](mailto:kombo100@msn.com)

Michelle, Judy, Kirby, 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.

## TCF "Online Support Community" Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

The Compassionate Friends national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends, friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "No Surviving Children," "Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for surviving siblings.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.

## Compassionate Friends Offers Grief Related Webinar Series

The Compassionate Friends is expanding its outreach to bereaved families by offering a series of free online grief related seminars. The webinars, to be held once per month, are on various grief topics and guests are well-known experts in the field.

Webinars have included such topics as "Handling Grief Through the Holidays," "Getting 'Stuck' and 'Unstuck,'" "Caring for Your Health While Grieving," and "Coping with Guilt During Bereavement." These webinars were recorded and are available to view on demand on TCF's national website. To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to [http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News\\_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx). Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.



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

## The Frankfort, KY Chapter will host the Regional Conference "Walking Towards Stars of Hope" April 5 & 6, 2013

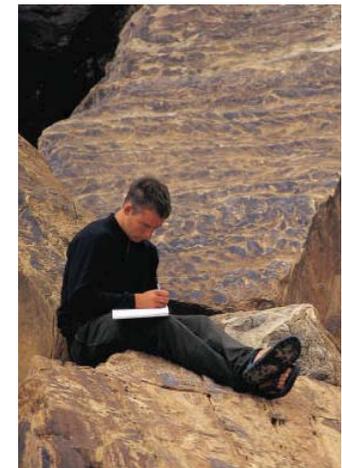
Registration information is available on the website [www.thecompassionatefriendsfrankfortky.com](http://www.thecompassionatefriendsfrankfortky.com) Contact Kathy Wainscott or Karen Cantrell for more info at [khwainscott@yahoo.com](mailto:khwainscott@yahoo.com) or [Karen821285@yahoo.com](mailto:Karen821285@yahoo.com) 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.

Three workshops are available from which to choose during each of the four workshop sessions. Speakers include TCF Board Member Chuck Collins and special guest presenter Michael Nunley, who will conduct a workshop on grief/music and performance Friday evening. Registration is \$60 per person. Registration information can be downloaded at: [http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News\\_Events/Conferences/Regional\\_Conferences.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Conferences/Regional_Conferences.aspx).

## 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

Remember it was not the body you loved  
...it was the unique and precious spirit  
that dwelled within.

That spirit is still with you!

Spirit is eternal...it does not die.

Though unseen, he walks beside you...as before,  
Safe, in the love you always knew.

Joan Walsh Anglund

### The Friend We Have Not met

Grief walks with you today, your  
constant companion. But in the  
morning, tomorrow, the sunrise of  
hope waits for you.

Sascha

What we have once  
enjoyed we can never  
lose. All that we  
love becomes a part  
of us.

Helen Keller

## Children and Grief

There is nothing in the life of children to prepare them for death. Parent(s) and other adults become their role models for grieving. Children pass through the same stages of grief as adults, but because of their limited life experiences, children will grieve differently than adults. It is important to remember that every person grieves differently and at his or her own pace.

A child may appear relatively unconcerned about a death in the family. This may be the way of coping with the death. Children may become engrossed in an activity that seems to be unconnected with the death; this may be another way of coping with the death. Play is a child's primary activity, and in it he or she find a familiar escape.

One mother found her child talking to the family dog about his dead brother. When she asked him why he was talking to the dog about his brother, he told her that when he talked to anyone else they started to cry and this upset him. If an unconcerned and unknowing attitude continues in a child, he or she should be encouraged to talk about feelings and emotions.

Children want information about (and participation in) the grief process. Very young children may need only very basic information. Death produces hundreds of questions for children. Since children function in the present, they may want to know where their brother, sister, or parent is and if and when they can visit. Allow them to ask these questions; it is a part of their grieving process.

from *Suicide Bereavement Support March 2004*, The Dougy Center

## 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:

**Dennie and Mary Jordan in memory of their son, Joshua.**

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.

### 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](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.

### 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.

## Suicide

Once you were rich with life,  
you were self-confident  
and filled with beauty.

Until a darkness came  
to seize your mind,  
a force from out of silence,  
an ache without a reason,  
a pain without a name.

What was this darkness that  
would not be conquered?  
What force,  
what reason,  
what pain without a name  
would use your hands  
to take your life away?

Once you were rich with life,  
you were self-confident  
and filled with beauty.  
Now we are left alone  
without an answer.

Sascha

## The Smell of Spring

The smell of spring is in the  
air again, and whether we  
want to or not, we find our-  
selves “hoping” -for what,  
we may not always know.  
The promise of new life in  
nature spawns the hope of  
new and continuing life for  
us, too, and somehow we  
feel a bit of optimism that  
we may not have felt for a  
long time.

We may try to “reason away”  
this surge of hope, but it is  
there anyway. Let it happen!  
Let yourself feel hope! It is a  
natural and God given re-  
sponse, a promise of heal-  
ing and recovery.

Editorial, -TCF Monte Vista, CO

## Thoughts on Control

Often the most important insights come from casual conversation with others. A small group of compassionate friends was talking about the importance of “being in control”, “having control”, and “controlling” what happens in life. One individual described how important he felt it was to have control of his life with his family, his job, and his involvement in the Compassionate Friends. He realized that the need to control was presenting problems for him with his family and co-workers.

This started me thinking – was he different from other bereaved parents? Are issues of control stronger for bereaved parents than for a non-bereaved parent? I think they are.

As bereaved parents, we have experienced the ultimate loss of control-the death of our child. One of the most overwhelming feelings after the death of a child is the sense that we lack control and feel vulnerable, inept and unable to concentrate. Decision making becomes a monumental task - one we often can't handle. How often have you said or heard someone say, “I feel as though my life is out of control?” We all know what that person is talking about.

Control in our lives is healthy; it is part of the healing process. However, the line can be crossed when our needs move from being in control of our lives to controlling events and those around us. We can become rigid and intractable – so determined are we in our need to feel in control. Surviving children may begin to refer to our “overprotectiveness” in less than charitable tones. Being referred to as “strong willed” can become an understatement regarding our behavior.

We need to be aware of the impact our behavior can have on the people we love, as well as those with whom we work. As bereaved parents, we can be very determined about things that are important to us. However, when we become controlling in our behavior, this can potentially set us apart from those we care about and need for support. We work hard to put our lives back together - to find relief and healing for our pain. Part of the healing process is in finding a way for our pendulum of emotion and need to swing toward the middle.

Susan Salisbury-Richards – former TCF Executive Director

## Wagon Circling

It's a common reaction, when you've had someone die as important in your life as your child, to want to make sure that this won't happen again. You may think “if only” you'd given better advice and training, kept a closer watch or a tighter rein, that this child would still be alive. As a result you may find yourself reeling in any slack in your line that attaches you to others in your life who are equally important.

This position against future tragedy could be compared to days of old when the only defense people on the trail under attack had was to form an inner circle within a circle of wagons. If your child died away from you in a sudden and unexpected way, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that if you hover over those you have left and keep them well within your circle, that it won't happen again. Unfortunately, this doesn't work because we are not the all-powerful parents we sometimes think we are. We cannot, as much as we love and care, control someone else's fate. There are parents in our group whose children died accidentally, while in their presence, who can attest to this fact.



Small children, who are kept too tightly tethered within the inner circle and who sense your anxiety over their well-being, can grow to be hand-capped, fearful adults because they were never allowed to be on their own and try new things.

Older children or young adults who are denied freedom from the inner circle, as they struggle to establish who they are, separate and apart from you, will so resent being kept within the circled wagons that you may end up losing them in another way, as they pull away not to return and participate in a friendly relationship as they mature.

If you have been guilty of overprotecting, try to start rectifying this by letting go a little at a time of the abnormal lengths to which you have gone to try to protect your surviving children.

It isn't easy to let go once you've known the pain of losing a child, but when you remember that your goal as a parent is to raise a self sufficient adult, who is capable of standing alone and taking care of him or herself, independent of parents, you will know that risk is really a part of life and worth it if you are to produce an emotionally healthy adult. Start now un-circling your wagons so that your family can continue in a healthy way on this trail called life.

Mary Cleckley, TCF/Atlanta, GA

## Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

**Monthly Meeting: Thursday, March 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: April 25, 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>	We are a support group for people who have suffered a tragic loss of life whether a child, sibling, or other. We are great at listening and offer tender shoulders when you contact us. We are flexible to meet any time of day or night. Death needs no appointment and neither do you. We are not professional counselors, but we do have a degree in life experiences. Please contact Kirby White, 563-271-5908 or <a href="mailto:kombo100@msn.com">kombo100@msn.com</a>
<b>Rick's House of Hope</b>	This is a community resource for children and adolescents dealing with grief. 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. The group for 14 year olds and older meets Sunday from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, 52806. 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.rhoh.org">www.rhoh.org</a> .
<b>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support</b>	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> .
<b>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support</b>	Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meets on second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252 from 7:00pm - 9:00pm. Contact: Laura Wessels, 815-589-3425 or <a href="mailto:laura@secondreformedchurch.net">laura@secondreformedchurch.net</a>
<b>SHARE</b>	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> .
<b>Alive Alone</b>	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, 650 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.

**O**ur grief will take more time and energy than those around us could ever imagine. The lack of understanding of our grief can cause us to feel detached from them. It is vital to our well being to find someone to share our grief with. Other bereaved parents and siblings have many of the same grief symptoms, know the depth of despair, and our need for help. More seasoned bereaved families can help us get through our bad days by showing us there is light at the end of the tunnel, and how we can become stronger than we ever wanted to be.

**Marie Hofmockel  
TCF/Valley Forge PA**

## The Flowers Around the Mailbox

I have visited my daughters several times in Atlanta since I moved away in the fall of 1984, but each time I choose not to drive by the home where Keith, Audrey, and I lived. It was here Keith helped me plant a beautiful array of tulips and daffodils around our mailbox. Keith and I enjoyed the beauty of spring and the flowers in bloom in 1983, and the flowers were just as beautiful the following spring after Keith's death in the cold of December.

The flowers have kept multiplying since I moved away, and I'm beginning to realize that the bed of tulips and daffodils represent my growth, searching and finding a new life. My growing process has given me permission to want life, the desire to celebrate what was precious about Keith's life, and to appreciate and value the relationship I have with my three surviving daughters, a supportive mate, and loving family and friends.



With each new spring, the tulips and daffodils have grown in number, and I choose for now to imagine a meadow of bright flowers at our former residence that are intertwined with loving memories of Keith. I feel very blessed by an ever growing flower bed – the living memories of Keith continue to grow and nourish there and in my heart.

My message to all newly bereaved parents and siblings is: there is hope, a new beginning, and life does continue! I pray that each of you finds your own flower bed of living and loving memories of your child.

Carol Joyce - TCF/Broward County/Greater Ft. Lauderdale, FL

## Random Reflections

It's been a year now  
And the books say I should be  
Getting back to "normal."

But I still can't pass your picture  
On the bookcase without  
Touching your face.

I still wake up in the night  
Sometimes and can almost  
Hear your voice in the quiet.  
I still run to the window when the  
Dogs bark at night with the hope  
In the back of my mind that somehow  
You've wandered into the yard.

I still whisper your name into the wind  
When I walk down our lane in the still  
Of evening and strain to hear an answer.

When I'm troubled and upset  
I still talk to you like  
I always did and  
Imagine the advice you'd give me.

I will stop on our dark country road  
Sometimes and turn off the car engine  
And lights and wait and hope that  
I can see or hear you.

It's been a year now and the  
Memories are still so vivid  
That I can almost touch them.

It's been a year now and I know  
With all my heart that your  
Presence will never fade in my mind.

Tammy Walmann - TCF/Miami County, KS

## Please Be Gentle An Afterloss Creed

Please be gentle with me, for I am grieving. The sea I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow. I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path. Please, will you walk beside me?

Jill Englar – Westminster, MD from  
*Bereavement Magazine*