



Dear Compassionate Friends,

Each of our children is unique. We have marveled at how our sons, so different in temperament, could have received their genetic makeup from and been parented by the same two people. Our oldest son is quiet, a deep thinker, lover of books, often turned inward, with a witty, wry sense of humor. Our younger son is gregarious, enthusiastic, impulsive, observant, detail-oriented and creative.

And our daughter - what would she have been like? Even in her short four months we saw her personality developing - gentle, peaceful, snuggling with mom; happy coos and excited laughter for dad; a ready smile for the camera.

At the moment of conception, our children become a piece of the tapestry of our life. That is one reason it is so hard to have them ripped away from us. Many bereaved parents have such an overwhelming desire to share with others the specialness of our children even years after their death. In the first few years after her death I remember having a compulsive need to tell new acquaintances about my daughter. Many attenders have shared that a big reason they appreciate TCF meetings is because it is a safe and welcoming environment to tell others about their beloved child. Check out the article in this month's newsletter, "What Was He Really Like." It is from a TCF Sibling Newsletter.

Sincerely,
 Jerry and Carol Webb

Please note that this newsletter is for July/August. While there will be a chapter meeting in August, there will not be a newsletter sent in August.

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You are not alone in your grief.

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.

To



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What Was He Really Like? After meeting a friend that I had not seen for quite some time and exchanging catch up information, something wonderful happened to me. This beloved friend expressed the usual condolences over the loss of my brother but went on to pose the question, "What was he really like?" My eyes must have sparkled like fire. The question itself ignited an unbelievable response. Unleashing all my memories, I began immediately bursting at the seams.

Oh, he was so kind and gentle. He was so seldom angry that you remembered the exact moment when he lost his temper – because it just didn't happen that often. And he was so good at telling stories. Believe me, he could embellish a story. His left eye would wink, and he'd get a silly grin on his face as if he weren't going to tell you the ending. But then he'd spout out the ending, knowing that he had teased you once more. And oh my, he was so respectful to Mom and Dad that I wanted to slug him sometimes. He would always tell me that I wouldn't get into trouble if I'd just keep my mouth shut! And never, never could I outlast him at night. He would come in from a date at midnight and still have enough energy to watch the late movie. Brilliant – why he never had to crack one book in high school!

And I could have gone on and on. I told my friend that I didn't want to keep her and that I certainly didn't mean to get so carried away, but so few people ask me that question. She told me that she would have liked to know him. This instance may be rare with friends who have not experienced the death of a loved one. But may we, in Compassionate Friends, keep asking each other over and over, "What was he really like?"

Julie Cameron
TCF/ Louisville, KY

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been, and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,

A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.
The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.

Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY

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](#) Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.

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 and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.

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

The TCF National Magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*, is available to read online without charge. To sign up for access to the magazine online, go to www.compassionatefriends.org and review the options at the top of the page.

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

"I have been trying to make the best of grief and am just beginning to learn to allow it to make the best of me." — Barbara Lazar Ascher

Memory can tell us only what we were, in company with those we loved. It cannot help us find what each of us alone must now become. Yet no one is really alone; those who live no more echo still within our thoughts and words, and what they did is part of what we have become.

From *Gates of Prayer*,
Reform Judaism Prayerbook

GRIEF IS LIKE A LONG VALLEY, A
WINDING VALLEY WHERE ANY BEND
MAY REVEAL A TOTALLY NEW
LANDSCAPE.

A GRIEF OBSERVED BY C.S. LEWIS

SOLACE

In the smallest hour of your day, when you are alone with things remembered, questions unanswered and unfinished dreams, then: Give to yourself the gifts of your kindness, bring to yourself the comforts of forgiving, share with yourself, the mercy of your love.

Sascha Wagner

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:

William and Diane Stock in memory of their granddaughter, Claire.

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.

Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to 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.

Our Journey

It has been six months since our son, Joshua, died of cancer. He was 35 years old but had lived with us his entire life because he had a type of autism called Asperger's Syndrome. He wasn't able to live on his own and we were privileged to be his caregivers.

He was a "gentle giant" with a wry sense of humor and was highly intelligent, always keeping us on our toes with thought provoking questions and discussions.

We can't get used to the empty chair at the dinner table. We feel as though we've lost our purpose – like we are now the "Two Musketeers."

The tears come less often now but the heartache is a constant companion to us.

We've realized that it can be as difficult to lose an older "child" as it would have been to lose him as a young child.

Joshua's older sister misses him terribly too – often tearfully reminiscing with us about her memories of growing up with him.

Our family will eventually heal but we'll always treasure the precious years we were able to share with Joshua.

Our journey has given us the gift of compassion towards other parents who are mourning the loss of a child.

We pray God will grant them peace and healing

Mary and Dennis Jordan
TCF/Missouri

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

When Couples Grieve

Bereaved individuals remember all too well that defining moment when their lives were forever changed. For some, it started with a knock on the door or a call in the middle of the night. For me, it was the moment of impact, the surreal sound of metal hitting metal, as my car seemed to move in slow motion to its final resting place twenty-six feet from where it began.

In those days I was naïve. I thought I was living in a perfect world. A great husband, two wonderful children—a little girl and a little boy. We were living the American dream. Bad things don't happen to good people, or so I thought. So as ambulance after ambulance arrived on the scene to treat my children and me on the first day of spring many years ago, the thought never occurred to me that my children could or would die. My mind just didn't go there.

But my five-year-old son, Stephen, did die that spring day. His eight-year-old sister, Stephanie, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on her death certificate. The journey Wayne and I began that day impacted every aspect of our lives, including our marriage. One day we were parents with two beautiful children, and the next we were facing life alone.

Together, but very much alone, for we were a bereaved couple, and would need to redefine not only who we were as individuals, but also who we were as a couple.

As I was being treated in the emergency room, Wayne had the horrendous task of telling me that our son was dead and our daughter was in extremely critical condition. She was to be flown to Children's Hospital. "Go," I implored. "She needs you!" Within hours, he phoned to tell me the tests showed Stephanie had no brain activity. We were facing the death of our second child.

Wayne went on autopilot, while I fell to pieces. He made funeral arrangements, decided on flowers for the casket, and made phone calls. When the funeral was over, we took turns in that autopilot mode, seemingly dealing with life, but merely going through the motions.

I sought comfort in my grief. I wanted Wayne to "fix" what had happened. I wasn't sure how he was supposed to do that, but I wanted him to fix it! Wasn't that his job?

After all he was the husband, the protector, the great problem-solver, right? He did such a wonderful job handling everything right after the accident. Why was he now "falling down on his job"? What I didn't realize at the time was that he was feeling the same way and asking himself the same sort of questions. How could he right this terrible wrong that had happened to us?

One day Wayne looked at me with eyes pleading, begging for understanding as I bombarded him with a series of questions that had no answers. He finally broke his silence when he said, "It's hard for me to throw you a lifeline when I'm drowning myself." Those words became a turning point for me. Grief can be such a selfish emotion. He was hurting, too, and needed time and space and understanding, just as I did.

Prior to attending Compassionate Friends meetings, we each thought the other was handling grief wrong. But we learned from others that what we were doing wasn't wrong, it was just different. And different was okay.

Wayne needed quiet time; time to think, time to be alone. He was content to sit on the riding mower, put the tractor in low gear and slowly mow the grass, just to give himself extra alone time. He was also content to run errands so he could be alone in the car with his thoughts and feelings.

I needed so badly to talk about what had happened, and I talked ad nauseam. I came to the realization that I needed to find good friends who were willing to listen instead of bombarding Wayne with my endless chatter. I had to respect that he needed time to be alone with his thoughts, and he learned that there were times he just had to let me talk about what happened and about the kids, or I was going to explode.

Continued on page 5.



Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, July 25, 2013 at 6:30 pm

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

Call Rosemary Shoemaker (309.945.6738) or Michelle Curtis (309.644.0486) 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: August 22, 2013, at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families.
Quad City Chapter Website: <http://www.orgsites.com/il/tcfquadcityreachapter/index.html>

<p>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Helping Heavy Hearts—Grief Support Group</p>	<p>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 kombol100@msn.com</p>
<p>Rick's House of Hope</p>	<p>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 (egordon@rhoh.org) or go to www.rhoh.org.</p>
<p>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support</p>	<p>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 Waggoner Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, (563)843-3655, there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org.</p>
<p>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support</p>	<p>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 laura@secondreformedchurch.net</p>
<p>SHARE</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Alive Alone</p>	<p>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.</p>



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

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/tcfquadcityreachapter/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

Couples...continued from page 9

We also needed time together, time to grieve, and time to grow as a couple. We learned as we traveled through our grief journey that the most important lesson could be summed up by the wonderful seven-letter word *respect*. Respect for the differences in our grief, the pain we were each going through, and the love we still had for one another.

Pat Loder
TCF Executive Director

THE PRICE

It is not really a question of whether I could have wanted never to have you with me, if had I known how deeply your dying would break my life today.

There is only one certain truth: Even if I had known that there would come to me the cruel grief I suffer today, I would endure it all again for the wonder of having had you in my life.

Sascha Wagner

Summertime

With summer comes more time for relaxation and more time for get-togethers with family and friends. After our son died it left a void in all those family activities and lots of time for thoughts of summers gone by – vacations, 4th of July, Bible schools, camps, baseball games, swimming lessons, skiing at the lake, and many other memories.

It still seems important for us to participate in those same activities because on each occasion some memory is stirred of a time when our son was a part of these activities that made summer such a special time for us. At first those memories made us so sad, but now when we remember what he did or said in certain situations, our hearts are a little lighter and even sometimes a little smile appears on our faces.

These memories are what we have left, and they are so very precious. Summers are a good time to relax and remember our happy times together.

Carol Linch
TCF/LaGrange, Georgia



Sascha Wagner

About Feeling Guilty

Do you blame yourself? Are you strangled by the burden of things you did not do and things you should have done, as if these were the things that killed him? What can you do with this relentless torment?

Dear Griever, take time to remember that grief makes all of us look for escape routes where there may be no escape.

Death is not in your hands.

Grief makes you look for reasons, where often there are no reasons. Blame is not the answer. Hold to your heart now with the tenderness your love deserves.

Grief has its rhythm—first the wind, Swift tide of dark despair;
The time of bleak aloneness,
When even God's not there.

And then the slow receding
Till quiet calms the sea,
And bare, washed sand is everywhere
Where castles used to be.

The gentle lapping of the waves
Upon the shore---and then
The pearl-lined shells of memories
To help us smile again.

Helen Lowrie Marshall

There's a Hole in Me

There's a hole in me. You see, a part of me is missing. I keep looking for my son, and all I find are bits and pieces of him - something he wrote, a picture he took, a book he read, a tape he made, something he drew - but there is an emptiness in me that these bits and pieces cannot fill, that nothing will ever fill. I wander around, and sometimes without realizing I am doing it, I shake my head in disbelief, thinking it can't be true. But I know it is. My son is gone, and he is not coming back. I will have to go to him and someday I will.

There's a hole in me and it hurts terribly, much worse than I ever imagined anything could hurt. I am angry-not at God or at my son for leaving me, as some have suggested. I am not angry with anyone or anything in particular. I am just angry. I want to scream and strike out at something. Sometimes I feel as if I am going to explode and I expect to see pieces of me flying in all directions.

I want to fill this hole in me so that everything that is left within me will not spill out. I want someone else who loved him to hug me when I cry and tell me it will be all right, even though I think it will never be.

Johnie Maxell
TCF/Lake Jackson, Texas

A New Beginning

Susan Erling

This must be the final goodbye,
Another little one is squirming inside
me now

I must no longer be obsessed with
Agonizing thoughts of the child I
Never held or kissed or got to mother.

I must learn to tear myself away
From these sad visions from my recent
past.

And try to envision myself sharing
my life with a beautiful, viable,
Unique new person.

One child, alive in my thoughts,
Another, my reality
Siblings - never to meet
in this lifetime.

This must be the final
goodbye,
Or maybe just a new
beginning.



Am I Healing?

Am I healing? I'm able to gaze at her photograph without that tournament tightening around my throat, clamping memory...

I'm beginning to see her in her life, and not only myself bereft of her life...

Piece by piece, I re-enter the world. A new phase. A new body, a new voice. Birds console me by flying, trees by growing, dogs by the warm patch they leave behind on the sofa. Unknown people merely by performing their motions. It's like a slow recovery from a sickness, this recovery of one's self...

Toby Talbot
TCF/Volusia/Flagler, Florida