



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter
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.



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October 2013

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Inside

Dear Compassionate Friends,

By the time you receive this letter, Jerry and I will have just returned from Ukraine where we will have the privilege of presenting two Marriage Encounter Weekends. Our hope is that God will use us to encourage the couples we meet and that we will have a small part in marriages being renewed and restored. The Weekends there will mark 30 years since we presented our first United Marriage Encounter Weekend. I celebrated my 30th birthday on that first Weekend, and was largely pregnant with our second child. Little did I know that five weeks later our precious daughter would be born and that only four months after that, her life would end, far, far too soon. "A life that touches the hearts of others goes on forever" is a thought I saw recently in an old TCF newsletter. Anna certainly touched our lives, the lives of our other children, our extended family and friends. But she also lives on as we reach out to care for other people and live out our lives without her physical presence but with the knowledge that she will always be our precious and beloved child.

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

Kay Miller
309-738-4915

Kirby White
563-271-5908 or
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.

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.

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.

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

Patience in an Instant World

We are such a hurried society. From the moment we get up in the morning until the time we go to bed we rush to get "everything" done. But, we always come up short – there is simply no way to accomplish all that we have decided we need to finish.

We tend to wait, quite impatiently, for most of our day. We wait in line at the bank, the store, the fast food line – everywhere we go. It seems "the hurrier we go, the behinder we get", as the old adage says.

To add to the frustration we are told that things will only "take a minute" as we wait for what seems like hours. We are conditioned to believe or maybe hope, that we will only have to wait those promised "few minutes. But as the clock ticks away so does our patience. Once again, we have been deceived. In frustration we may demand, "I want help now; I can't wait any longer."

Society sets us up with unreasonable demands about grief too. According to "everyone that knows about such things" we should be over the grief process in anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 months. We panic as we realize that we are in fact not "over" our grief in the time allotted. We may still be in shock after 2 weeks. But that doesn't matter, our "Instant World" tells us things like, "Put it in the past" and "Go on with your life".. Personally my favorite one is "You must not be trusting in God or you wouldn't be having such a hard time." This is usually said to make the griever see the error of his ways but is realistically said to make the "comforter" seem knowledgeable or personally more comfortable.

What does God say about waiting, not just in grief, but in all of our day to day situations?

In Hebrews 12:1 we are told to run with patience the race set before us. The race this verse is talking about is the race of everyday living.

In James 1:2-3 we are told that we go through trials so that patience or endurance can be produced in our lives.

Psalm 27:14 tells us that we should wait on or have patience with the Lord. That involves trusting Him to do what is best in our lives.

Our reward for waiting is found in Isaiah 40:31:

Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength;

They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

We can run frantically around in circles, trying to "cover up" our grief by planning too much to do in a day. But the grief will not go away. It, like the fast food lines, takes time and patience. Even when we say, "I want help now; I can't wait any longer," even that does not make it go away or happen any more quickly. We can ask the Lord to slowly and carefully extract the painful dark threads of impatience. It is only when we "wait on Him" that we will be able to fully recover. It is only then that we will truly rest.



Jackie Deems

CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

All who have been touched by beauty are
touched by sorrow at its passing.

Louise Cordana

I seem to be falling apart.

My attention span can be measured in
seconds.

My patience in minutes.

I cry at the drop of a hat.

I forget things instantly.

The morning toast burns daily.

I forget to sign the checks.

Half of everything in the house is mis-
placed.

Feelings of anxiety and restlessness are
my constant companions.

Rainy days seem extra dreary.

Sunny days seem an outrage.

Other people's pain and frustration seem
insignificant.

Laughing, happy people seem out of place in
my world.

It has become routine to feel half crazy.

I am normal, I am told.

I am a newly grieving person.

Eloise Cole

SHARE Newsletter, Lancaster, PA

The other thing that helped me
was the realization that there
was still a lot of life, and a lot
of people, and a lot of meaning
still present in the world, even
though one of the people who
had blessed my life immensely
was not alive. I had to decide
whether I would spend the rest
of my life focused on the loss,
or if I would have the courage to
look and see what was left, and
then find a way to pick up the
pieces of what was left and
make some meaning out of that.

John Claypool

One of the things that happened then was that I began to reach out to
other parents who had lost children. I discovered I was not alone in what
had happened to me. There was something about getting involved with
other people's suffering that energized me; the more I stayed to myself
and focused on my grief, the lower I seemed to go; the more I reached
out to other suffering, crying people, the more I found commonality and
perspective. I began to see that I was needed, as well as wounded.

John Claypool

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.

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 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.

There is a story of a woman who came to the Buddha seeking help after the death of her child and was told that, for healing, she need only find a mustard seed from a household that had never known sorrow. According to the story, she traveled over all the world in vain never finding such a household, but found instead: understanding, compassion, friendship, and truth.

The world of desolation is a world that calls many of us. There is no going around it. There is only going through it, if we are to find healing and new life. It is a world worth exploring, and it offers to us those same qualities the bereaved mother found: understanding, compassion, friendship, truth.

Nothing is to be gained by running away from the truth. When the circumstances of my life are grim, I will face the grimness, learn what it has to teach me, and walk on through.

From the book, *Healing After Loss*, by Martha Whimore Hickman

It's funny how some little thing can bring back a happy memory and turn your thoughts to someone who means so much. It might be the sound of far away laughter, the aroma of a backyard cookout or a souvenir of a place visited, a time shared. Very often some little thing will come along and make us think of you. And when we do, we always smile... remembering our times together.

I wanted to be angry that this had happened, this attack of a bear, this strange thing, this terrible offense, this attack of nature on my life and my heart. I wanted to say, "My God! I don't deserve this!" But deserving had nothing whatsoever to do with it. I was not unique. I was not alone. This is the human condition, this pain, this loss, and even this violence. Around the world, people lost whole families and friends every day to war, disease, starvation, or circumstance. This pain – and the search for meaning in its wake – is what it is to be human. Realizing this did not assuage my pain, but it did tell me that I was not alone.

Shannon Huffman Polson
– *North of Hope*



Hope for the moment. There are times when it is hard to believe in the future, when we are temporarily just not brave enough. When this happens, concentrate on the present. Cultivate le petit bonheur (the little happiness) until courage returns. Look forward to the beauty of the next moment, the next hour, the promise of a good meal, sleep, a book, a movie, the likelihood that tonight the stars will shine and tomorrow the sun will shine. Sink roots into the present until strength grows to think about tomorrow.

Ardis Whitman, *Reader's Digest*

Successful grief, or mourning, is not just coming out of it comfortable and with equanimity; it is really coming out, better than you went in. It's coming out enriched and a better person because you have lived through all of that pain, because you have assessed your life, assessed your marriage, and assessed yourself. You become more sympathetic with people and have a greater joy in life. You sense the preciousness of time. You are focused on what is important. In sum you not only survive, you are much more alive.

PEOPLE, 1981
TCF/Colorado Springs, CO

When man finds that it is his destiny to suffer, he will have to accept suffering as his task; his single and unique task. He will have to acknowledge that even in suffering he is unique and alone in the universe. No one can relieve him of his suffering, or suffer in his place. His unique opportunity lies in the way he bears his burden.

Victor Frankl,
Man's Search for Meaning



Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities

Monthly Meeting: Thursday, October 24, 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: November 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	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 kombo100@msn.com .
Rick's House of Hope	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, IA, 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 .
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 .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support	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 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Contact: Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425 or laura@secondreformedchurch.net .
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 .



The Compassionate Friends
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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/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.

New Resources

Understanding Suicide: ASAP (Awareness, Support, Action, Prevention). A confidential group that meets biweekly to serve individuals who have contemplated or attempted suicide and those coping with the suicide of a loved ones. Christian Care. 2209 3rd Ave Rock Island – First and Third Wednesday 4:00-5:30 pm.

Bereaved parents magazine to read online and reprint articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent when a new issue is available.

http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm

The Pain of Dealing with “Little Grievs”

We, as grieving parents, not only have to contend and deal with the overwhelming loss of our child, the sadness, the loneliness, the anger, often feelings of guilt, and yes, the sheer agony of frustration and helplessness. But we, as grieving parents, also have to contend and deal with the little “mini grievfs” of things that used to be so routine in our daily lives. So routine that we never really gave them any thought at all.

I remember the first several months after our son John died (7 years and 5 months ago), that walking down the aisle of the supermarket was terrible for me. The tears would start and that awful choking in my throat and the pounding of my heart would start, as I passed the “Cream of Wheat” and the “Nestles Quick” so neatly stacked on the shelves of the store. Sometimes I would have this great urge to take my hand and in one big sweep knock all those neatly stacked shelves to the floor. But what I did do was leave the shopping cart right there in the aisle and go running out of the store with tears streaming down my cheeks. Our pantry became very bare because I could not stay in a store long enough to buy anything. But that was O.K., because I didn’t cook anymore anyway. For at least six months, we ate TV dinners and sandwiches (John hated TV dinners and sandwiches.) John’s favorite meal was fried chicken legs and cheesecake and Nestle’s Quick. It is ironic, but that was the last meal he ate the night before he died. He had begged me for two months to make him a cheesecake (which I hated to make) and I made cheesecake the evening before he died. Isn’t that strange? Was my subconscious pre-

paring me for something that my conscious mind could not accept that night?

It was at least six months after he died before I could fry chicken again and it was basted with many tears, because the whole time I was cooking, I cried. It was at least a year and a half before I made another cheesecake, and it sat in the fridge because no one seemed to want to eat it, even though everyone in the family likes cheesecake, and we eat it quite often...now, seven years later.

I’m sure every bereaved mother whose child still lived at home knows that awful feeling in the pit of the stomach when she goes to do the laundry and the jeans and clothes of her dead child are not dirty and are not in the dirty clothes hamper.

A few times, right at first, I would take a pair of John’s jeans or a shirt out of the drawer and throw them in with the laundry, just so things would SEEM normal.

Society wouldn’t understand washing a dead child’s clean clothes, but I bet a grieving Mom would. Of course, most of the time I “forgot” to do the laundry after John died.

Before he died, I would do at least two loads of laundry a day, but after he died, I’d forget and the dirty clothes would just pile up for a week or until one of the other children would come and say they had no more clean socks in their drawer. Doing laundry was a

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The Pain, continued from page 6

“little grievf” for me and I would just block it out by forgetting to do the laundry.

I remember the first “water bill” we received after John died. It was so much lower than it had always been when he was alive. Because you see, he was seventeen and at seventeen a boy becomes very particular about hygiene. He took at least two showers a day and washed his hair sometimes twice a day and changed his clothes at least twice a day, and he used a lot of towels. Well, with him gone, the extra water that was used for all that cleanliness showed up as a minus on our next water bill, and I remember getting so angry because the bill was lower after he died. I even got mad at the water company about it. Now society would surely not understand getting angry because a water bill was lower than usual.

Then there is the “little grievf” of the gallon of milk. When John was alive, we used at least a gallon of milk a day, sometimes more. He was our milk drinker of the family. After he died, a gallon of milk would last the family



three days. And that grievd me and made me sad and angry. Sometimes the milk would spoil and I would

have to throw it out. I would always think, “Such a waste, Johnny would not have let it spoil.” Oh there are so many more of those “little grievfs,” “little hurts” that I had... and have.

Each bereaved parent has a whole set of them, some may be different than mine, but they have them nonetheless. And all of these little grievfs add up to our “big grievf.” All of these little grievfs, our friends and relatives usually don’t even know about, and if they did, they wouldn’t understand, because they don’t understand any of our grievf anyway.

Let me say, though, that after seven and a half years, I have learned to deal with the “little grievfs” that used to hurt me so. I can now go to Safeway and pass by the Cream of Wheat and Nestle’s Quick with hardly a thought. (I just don’t look.) And I’m back to doing the laundry with almost no problems.

But I still cannot fry a chicken leg or make a cheesecake without thinking of John. But now instead of tears while cooking them, there is a smile. I smile because his last meal was his favorite, and I’m glad I was a good mother to fry enough chicken that last night. Because he ate six chicken legs and two large pieces of cheesecake! Maybe not a well-balanced meal, but if it was to be his last, I’m glad it was his favorite meal.

Note: Did you notice how many times I used the word “died,” as I wrote the above article? That word is one grievf I’ll never get over.

**Verna Smith,
TCF, Ft. Worth, Texas**