



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



1830 6th Avenue  
Moline, Illinois 61265

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**T**o 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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**November 2013**

Volume XXVI, Number 10

*Inside*

Dear Compassionate Friends,

**Our daughter,** Anna, would have celebrated her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday this November. How long ago that seems in some ways, and yet I can still remember her warm weight in my arms, and I treasure my memories of her sparkling smiles.

This month in the newsletter we share an article about grandparents and grief. One of the things the article points out is that it is tough for grandparents to understand what their child is experiencing if they are not bereaved parents as well. That is probably true, but I will say, I deeply appreciate the sensitivity, understanding and love my parents showed us, both when our daughter was gravely ill and following her death. There was not a lot they could do to help ease our pain but they did many little loving things to show their care for us and make life a little easier. One of the things I appreciated the most were the notes or cards we received without fail from my mother both on Anna's birthday and her death date until my mother could no longer write. I also appreciated her asking for the birth sampler I had made for Anna. My mother wanted to hang it on the wall of her bedroom, and it remains there today, a tangible reminder to me of the love my mother had for her first granddaughter. My mom also spent a great deal of time redoing a family portrait taken at our church just a few weeks before Anna's death. Anna looked terrible. My mother spent hours fitting a better picture of her into the portrait, fixing the edges so that it would seem like it was originally part of the picture, and having it re-photographed and printed for us. (Manual Photoshopping.)

One thing we as bereaved parents can do is to be lovingly honest with our family and friends as to what is helpful or not helpful. We can also accept their efforts to show their love and care even if in our eyes they fall short. And we may need to accept the fact that for whatever reason our family cannot be part of meeting our grief needs, and we can find other avenues to process our grief (such as Compassionate Friends). One way you can share your grief with your family is to invite them to the **Candlelight Memorial Service on December 12th**. Your parents and other family members are also grieving the loss of a loved child and this might be healing for them as well.

Sincerely,  
Jerry and Carol Webb

Getting Through the *Giving Thanks*; Four Thanksgiving Tips for Those Who May Be Feeling Anything But Thankful 2

Love Gifts 3

A Message to Bereaved Grandparents 4

Printed & On-line Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings 5

Help Bring the Angel of Hope to the Quad Cities 6

Angel of Hope Memorial Garden Order Form What's It All About? TCF Mission/Vision 7

Support Groups for Grieving Parents and Siblings 8

The Unbroken 9

Chalkboard Reflections 10

Candlelight Memorial Service 11



## Getting Through the *Giving Thanks*: Four Thanksgiving Tips for Those Who May Be Feeling Anything But Thankful

### *Thanksgiving.*

Normally a time of festivity, feasting, and "fat pants," your Thanksgiving may instead be filled with dread, gloom or outright sadness if you are coping with the loss of a loved one. Rather than celebratory, you may be feeling like:

- You have nothing to be thankful for.
- Celebrating is pointless.
- Going through the motions for the sake of the kids, the parents, the distant relatives you see only once a year and/or the world at large.
- Forgetting the whole thing and staying in bed with Heath Bar Crunch ice cream (my flavor of choice).

I understand all of these feelings and I would not blame anyone dealing with loss for having any one or all of them. However, attempting to "hide" from a holiday does not make the holiday go away. In fact attempting to "hide" from this or any holiday can actually make things worse. Whether you choose to acknowledge it or not, the holiday is still going to happen -- and if you have chosen against being proactive, you just may wind up morosely sitting alone with your Heath Bar Crunch, dwelling on the fact that you are without your loved one...*still*.

The lesson? "Creative avoidance" changes nothing. Taking *control* over your approach to Thanksgiving (and the holidays that follow) can help brighten your outlook and bring you a measure of peace.

Following are four tips to help you not just get through Thanksgiving Day, but maybe -- just maybe -- even enjoy it as well:

Whether you are celebrating Thanksgiving in your home and you are the chef or you are going elsewhere and are expected to bring a dish, prepare something that was your loved one's favorite or perhaps a dish that they used to make themselves. For example, you know that green bean casserole with the fried onion topping that has a jillion calories, no particular redeeming nutritional value and is sinfully delightfully *delicious*? This is the dish that my late husband made every year and to this day, regardless of whatever else is on the table at Thanksgiving, the green bean casserole is on the table as well. You will be surprised at how much comfort something as simple as a favorite dish or dessert will bring to you.

Just about every family enjoys the tradition of going around the table and letting everyone share that for which they are thankful. You can switch this up a bit and share a funny story about your loved one. Finish by lifting a glass and proposing a toast with their favorite drink. Remember, it is OK to smile and it is OK to laugh; even if smiling and laughing is through tears.

If celebrating with longstanding family traditions is just too painful right now, do not be afraid to make changes. For instance, if Thanksgiving is always at your house, let someone else host this year at their home. Another alternative to consider might be going to a favorite restaurant that serves Thanksgiving dinner. My mother, my daughter and I did this on the first Thanksgiving after Mike died.

*Giving Thanks* continued on page 3

## CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday, December 12, 2013  
at 7:00 P.M.  
Bethel Assembly of God Church  
3535 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island, IL

The Chapter's Candlelight Memorial Service is for every bereaved parent who would like to have his or her child(ren) remembered at the candle lighting ceremony. You may light a candle in memory of your child. (Please bring a favorite candle or one will be provided. You can also bring a photo of your child to place with the candle.) All family members are invited. A time of fellowship will follow the service.

If you cannot attend and would like a candle lighted in your child's memory, please complete and return this form or call Rosemary Shoemaker (309.945.6738) so the appropriate number of candles are on hand.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

You are welcome to bring a favorite finger-food, help with set up at 6:00 pm or clean up afterwards.

Please send to: **Rosemary Shoemaker**  
c/o Bethany for Children & Families,  
1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265

If you would like to make a love gift to TCF in memory of your child, you may do so at the service or by sending your contribution to our treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.



## CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

Some wounds do not heal even given an eternity. The scars they leave are permanent and can only be woven into the fabric of one's life.

Bernice Rubens  
from her book, *Brothers*

The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure, but rather we honor, we remember, and incorporate our deceased children and siblings into our lives in a new way. In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive in your mind and heart is an important part of your healing journey.

Harriet Schiff

Grieving people don't need their feelings about God stifled or re-directed. God can handle the anger of humans without our defense or justification. Anger is a normal, healthy part of the grief process.

Reverend Al Miles

In remembering our children, in sharing with each other, in supporting each other, we ease our pain, we share each step, we help smooth the road, and we serve as witnesses to the fact that we can make it beyond grief as we support each other.

Roy Peterson,  
Past National President TCF

*Giving Thanks*, continued from page 2

Because we had broken from tradition for that particular "first holiday," we were able to more peacefully enjoy both the day and one another. Or you might choose to go way outside of tradition by taking a mini-vacation. There is nothing wrong with doing something different and perhaps even beginning new traditions of your own.

There is a huge difference between "celebrating" and "observing." As opposed to celebrating with a lot of people around or otherwise putting yourself in a situation where you feel that you have to paste a smile on your face in order to be social, there is nothing wrong with quietly *observing* Thanksgiving (or any holiday for that matter) in whatever way that you wish. This might include attending a church service on the day and making yourself a lovely dinner at home or volunteering at a local shelter or soup kitchen.

Above all else remember this: Though it may not feel like it right this minute, you *do* have reasons to be thankful. Stop and take a moment to think about that for which you are thankful -- your health, your family, your loved ones, your home and whatever else you treasure in and about your life. Most of all, embrace and remember that you had the love of a wonderful person -- whomever that person is -- whose legacies of love and memories will be with you always.



I wish you a Thanksgiving filled with warmth, comfort and peace.

Carol Brody Fleet



## 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:

**Ken and Sandy Keller, in memory of their son, Adrian**

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.

## A MESSAGE TO BEREAVED GRANDPARENTS

I sat with a young bereaved mother who was pouring out her pain and utter desolation to me. She was angry and hurt that those around her couldn't understand what was wrong with her. After all, it had been eight months since her two-year-old son had died – she should be better by now. To her, they implied she was wallowing in her grief and not trying to “get over it.” Between sobs she said, “Even my mother and father now seem to avoid me. They don't even mention his name, and they change the subject when I talk about Tommy. That hurts so much.”

I listened, I remembered how much I had wanted my parent's' help when my son died, but they lived 600 miles from me. I also thought, “How would I be able to help my own grieving daughter today if I hadn't experienced my own child's death almost 13 years ago, and didn't KNOW what she was going through?” I could see how desperately this young mother needed her parents. I could also see how frustrated and helpless they must feel, how painful it must be for them. If only they knew how important they could be in helping their daughter, how they, of all people, were needed by her, and how they had the opportunity to add a lasting element to their relationship with their child.

I wanted to tell them how very much she simply needed them to listen to her talk about her child and her pain. I wanted them to listen to her pour out her agony, without one word from them of how she should or should not feel.

The subject of death and grief is uncomfortable for all of us. We will accept anyone's discussion of happy things, but we shy away from talk of grief and death.

One of the reasons for this is that, in some way, it makes us aware of our own death and mortality. For those of us who are older it is even more true. We need to recognize how this unconscious fear might be one of the reasons we avoid discussing our own grandchild's death.

Grandparents who have not lost a child cannot know the depth of the grief their child is experiencing. We may have lost parents or

spouses, but the intensity of parental grief is so much greater. WE talk of how we felt when our parents or spouses died and say we know how it feels. We do NOT know how it feels if we ourselves have not lost a child. We are most helpful if we admit this to our child. To be a helpful parent to a grieving parent, we should learn about what our child is experiencing. We can learn of that by reading the books on grief, especially *The Bereaved Parent* by Harriet Schiff. When the children were growing up we read *Baby and Child Care* by Benjamin Spock or Haim Ginott's *Between Parent and Child*. Why not now read Harriet Schiff's book of Earl Grollman's *Living When a Loved One Has Died?* We need to know what the symptoms of parental grief are so that we, ourselves, are reassured that our child is not emotionally disturbed.

We need to know there is no timetable for grief. We should be careful of our expectations of how our child “should be doing” at this time. In the early months of grief our bereaved children may appear to be doing well. Then, at four to six months they seem to “fall apart.” It is reassuring to know that this is normal. In the early months our children do fairly well because they have not yet accepted the full reality of their child's death. It isn't until one faces the reality that real grief begins. This is the most painful and the longest part of the grief process. This is the time we are expecting them to “get better,” and when they get worse we can't understand it, and we fear for their sanity. At this time others turn away from them because they can't understand. This is the time our children need us the most. How desolate they must feel if the two people they could always rely on now turn away from them. Grandfathers are needed at this time more than ever. Fathers have always been the ones who could solve every problem for their children. They are the strength in the family, and the bereaved child needs to tap that strength now. Fathers used to provide the biggest, warmest lap for comforting. Now their arms can provide the safe harbor that most grieving children crave at times.

Message, continued, page 9

Message, continued from page 4

Grieving is not done on a consistently upward path. We may talk to our children on a good day and rejoice that they were finally improving, only to find they have taken several steps backward when we next see them. We need to realize that the normal process of grief is a constant ebb and flow of terrible and not so terrible days. Even though our bereaved children seem to revert to more painful grief at times, they are not going back to where they started. They do, however need extra support and understanding on the bad days. We must allow our children to grieve in their own way, according to their own personality. Some of our children are more verbal in expressing their emotions. Others may keep it all inside of themselves until something causes it to come out in a torrent. We accepted their personality differences from the time they were little children. We must accept them now.

Our grieving children need us. When our children hurt, we hurt. It has been said that a grief shared is a grief halved. No! We cannot take half of our child's suffering, as much as we would like to do so. But I can say from

personal needs that were not met when my own child died, it can sure make it a lot easier. Over the years of rearing our children, we suffered many times for them or because of them. Now we are being asked to do it again. It was not easy then, and it will not be easy now. But because we love our children, we can do it.

Some of us, for whatever reason, are not able to be of help to our children. Maybe we simply cannot face our children in their misery. It may be more pain than we, ourselves, can take. Some of us cannot accept the fact that to grieve openly and with others is the “right” way to do it. For some of us, our own personalities will not allow us to express our emotions or tolerate such expression in others. As hard as it may be to admit, we can at least be helpful to our children by being open and honest and telling them that we cannot help. As cruel as this may seem, letting them know of our inability to help saves them from the repeated disappointment of our backing away from them when they come to us.

Margaret H. Gerner – TCF/St. Louis, MO -  
(bereaved parent and bereaved grandparent)

## The Unbroken

There is a brokenness out of which comes the unbroken,  
a shatteredness out of which blooms the unshatterable.

There is sorrow beyond all grief, which leads to joy and a fragility out of those depths emerges strength.

There is a hollow space too vast for words through which we pass with each loss out of whose darkness we are sanctioned into being.



There is a cry deeper than all sound whose serrated edges cut the heart as we break open to the place inside which is unbreakable and whole, while learning to sing.

By Rashani

## Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

**Monthly Meeting: Thursday, November 21, 2013 at 6:30 pm**

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

Call Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, 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 at the alleyway. Next meeting: January 23, 2014, at 6:30 pm.

**On December 12, 2013 at 7:00 pm, the annual Candlelight Memorial Service will be held at the Bethel Church, 3535 38<sup>th</sup> Ave., Rock Island, IL**

<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 linmac67@machlink.com.
<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. 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 ( <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 Wagnor 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 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. 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, stillbirth, 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>Loving Listeners</b>	If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):  <b>Michelle Curtis</b> 309-644-0486 <b>Judy Delvecchio</b> 563-349-8895 or <a href="mailto:delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com">delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com</a> <b>Kay Miller</b> 309-738-4915 <b>Kirby White</b> 563-271-5908 or <a href="mailto:kombo100@msn.com">kombo100@msn.com</a>

## Printed & On-line Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

<b>TCF Online Support Community</b>	TCF's 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 sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.
<b>Understanding Suicide</b>	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 one. Christian Care. 2209 3rd Ave Rock Island — First and Third Wednesday 4:00-5:30 pm.
<b>TCF's Grief Related Webinars</b>	Held monthly, the webinars are on various grief topics with well-known experts in the field. To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx">http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx</a> . Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.
<b>TCF National Magazine</b>	<i>We Need Not Walk Alone</i> , is available to read online without charge. Go to <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> and review the options at the top of the page.  e-newsletter is also available from the National Office -- To subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-newsletter link.
<b>Grief Materials</b>	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 <a href="http://www.centering.org">www.centering.org</a> . When ordering, be sure to mention you
<b>Our Newsletter</b>	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.
<b>Amazon.com</b>	When making a purchase from Amazon.com enter through the link on the home page of TCF national website and a portion of the purchase price is donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases made at Amazon.com.
<b>Previous Newsletter Editions</b>	Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to <a href="http://www.bethany-qc.org">www.bethany-qc.org</a> for copies of the last several years of The Quad City Chapter of TCF-QC Chapter Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.
<b>Alive Alone</b>	A newsletter for bereaved parents whose only or all children are deceased. A self-help network and publication to promote healing and communication can be reached at <a href="http://www.alivealone.org">www.alivealone.org</a> or
<b>Bereaved Parents' Magazine</b>	Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. <a href="http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm">http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm</a>

### Please contact the editors, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242...

- ☼ If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents and would like to share it.
- ☼ If you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, send us your new address.
- ☼ If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, send his/her/their name and address.
- ☼ If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter.
- ☼ If you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

## Angel of Hope Memorial Garden

Help bring to the Quad Cities the *Angel of Hope*, a statue that stands as a symbol of hope for all parents who have experienced the death of a child.

The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden is a place where families can gather to remember and pay tribute to those children who have passed on. The Angel was inspired by the national bestselling novel, *The Christmas Box*, by Richard Paul Evans.

The Angel is made of bronze, is 4 foot, 3 inches tall, and has a wingspan of 5 feet, 2 inches. In Moline, the statue will be placed within a circular (20' diameter) garden designed with more than 1600 decorative bricks and four benches.

The memorial will have areas with designated paving stones that are suitable for inscription. These stones will be available to parents, siblings, and families who would like to remember a deceased child, adult-child, sibling, niece, nephew, or grandchild.

Bethany for Children & Families is acting as the fiscal agent for the project and has set up a restricted account for any donation made for the creation of the Angel of Hope monument. It is anticipated that the completed memorial will cost \$60,000. To raise funds for the project, memorial bricks will be sold for \$100 or \$200, depending on the size, and engraved with up to three or six lines depending on the brick size. Memorial purchases and/or donations to the Quad City Angel of Hope Memorial Garden can be made to:

**Angel of Hope Memorial Garden**  
**c/o Bethany for Children & Families**  
**1830 6th Avenue**  
**Moline, Illinois 61265**

Please call (309)736-6601 with questions or for more information. The next page contains a form for those who would like to purchase a memorial brick.



## Angel of Hope Order Form

Name			
Address			
City, State, Zip			
Email address			
Telephone			
4"x 8" brick with inscription	\$100	1,433 bricks available	Character limit 15 per line, 1 to 3 lines
8"x 8" brick with inscription	\$200	210 bricks available	Character limit 15 per line, 1 to 6 lines

Inscription on brick (print)  
 4"x 8" brick


8"x 8" brick




### 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.