



**The Compassionate Friends**

Quad City Area Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



1830 6th Avenue  
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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**January 2014**

Volume XXVII, Number 1

*Inside*

Dear Compassionate Friends,

**Almost** eight years ago Jerry and I became first time grandparents. Nothing could have prepared us for the joy we felt at the birth of our precious granddaughter and the later births of each of her brothers, or the continued joy of being an active part of their lives.

For every parent who grieves the loss of their child there is probably one or more grandparents who are also grieving. While not the same as the grief when your child dies, the grief of a grandparent is still profound. The grief of grandparents is compounded by the circumstance that as they grieve the loss of their beloved grandchild they also have to face their helplessness to ease the grief of their beloved child. We felt a little of that when our grandson experienced his severe seizure and subsequent brain injury three years ago. As his life hung in the balance and in the following days when we all had to face the serious long-term nature of his injury, our hearts broke as we watched the suffering of our son and his wife. Even now some of those memories bring tears to my eyes. We knew the pain of watching our daughter suffer and wondering if she would survive, and we were helpless to spare our son that same pain.

One of this month's articles is shared especially for grandparents. We encourage grieving parents to share this with your child's grandparents. Then talk to them about how you feel and also how they feel. Perhaps you will find new healing as you share parts of this road of grief together.

Sincerely,  
Jerry and Carol Webb

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## Journaling: An Expression of the Heart

A journal is the one place you can go to express all of your thoughts and feelings.

Some suggestions on getting started:

**Materials** - Choose the style that makes you feel most comfortable.

Notebook or Journal

- A spiral or three-ring notebook with blank pages
- A pre-printed journal to channel your thoughts
- A journal with blank pages
- A calendar – with space to write on.
- Choose a pen that writes freely and is easy to read.



**Place** - Choose a place that makes you feel safe and free to express yourself.

- \* Sunny breakfast table
- \* Front porch
- \* Cozy chair in family room or bedroom
- \* In your garden
- \* The choice is yours.

**Things to keep in mind.**

**Do not worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar.** You can always edit later, if it bothers you. Editing as you write tends to sidetrack your thoughts.

**Do not think you have to write everyday or "on schedule."** If you miss days of writing, it will just give you more to write about when you pick it back up. The benefits are the same.

**Do not think you have to write according to someone else's pattern.** Create your own comfortable style. Your style may change continuously, if you like. Formal writing, casual writing, or just doodling...the choice is yours.

**Go back and read what you have written.** You can see how your thoughts and perspectives can change, after you have a chance to express your true feelings.

**Do not think you have to save every journal.** If you wish to destroy what you have written, do not let it bother you. Journaling is a personal experience; it is not always meant for others eyes.

**Journaling can be a shared experience.** Between spouses, siblings, or close friends it can be a source of communication.

There are health benefits to journaling. Studies in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that writing about a stressful experience reduces physical symptoms in patients with chronic illnesses. Journaling is good not only for the soul, but the body as well.

Deborah Calhoun,  
TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

## This Can Be a Constructive, If Not a Happy Year

Happy New Year???? "How can it ever be again?" "How will we make it though another year of this torment?"

When we are hurting and so terribly depressed, it is hard to see any good in our new year, but we must try. First we must hold on tightly to the idea that we will not always be this miserable, that we will someday feel good again. This is almost impossible to believe, but even if we don't believe it, we must tell ourselves over and over again that it is true – because it is! Many parents whose children have died in the past will attest to this. Remember also, no one can suffer indefinitely as you are suffering now.

Second we must face the new year with the knowledge that this year offers us a CHOICE – whether we will be on our way to healing this time next year or still be in the pit of intense grief. We must remind ourselves that if we choose to be on our way to healing by the following year, we must work to get there and that work entails allowing ourselves to go through our grief, to cry, to be angry, to talk about our guilt, to do whatever is necessary to move toward healing.

Third, we must look for good in our lives and find reasons to go on and accept the fact that our continued suffering will not bring our child back. Many of us have other children and a spouse for whom we must go on. Most important, we have our own lives that must be lived. Most of us know that our dead children would want us to go on!

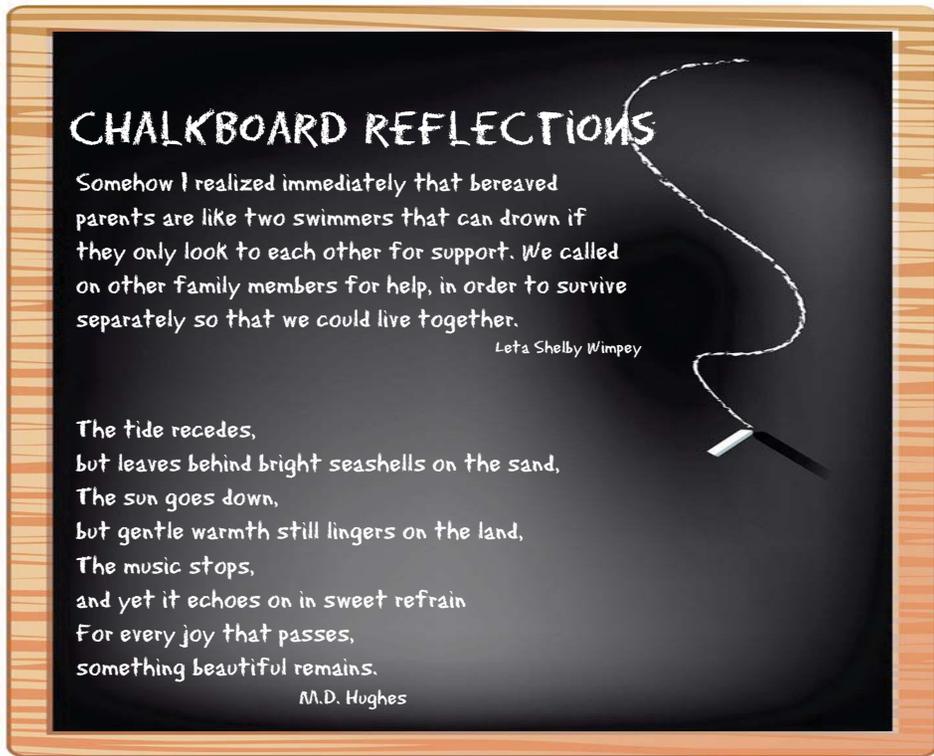
No, this coming year may not be a happy one, but it can be a constructive one. Through our grief we can grow and become more understanding, loving, compassionate, and aware of the real values in life. Let us not waste this new year.

Margaret H. Gerner, BP/USA St. Louis, MO

### National Conference

SAVE THE DATE: The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Chicago, Illinois, will be the site of the 37th TCF National Conference July 11-13, 2014. "Miles of Compassion through The Winds of Hope" is the theme of this year's event. The 2014 conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, just minutes from the airport. Details will be updated on the national website as well as on the TCF/USA Facebook Page. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming and helpful experience.

Volunteers are needed for this very special conference. If you would like to volunteer, please call the National Office at 877.969.0010. Sponsorships are available. For additional information, please contact the National Office.



## 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:

**Bob and Jo Reade, in memory of their daughter, Robin**

**Rusty and Kenis Johnson, in memory of their son, Royce**

**Glen Just in memory of his son, Justin**

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

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.

## Who Would Understand?

For many of us, there are few people with whom we can share our innermost feelings; yet these very feelings may be nearly exploding to get out! Perhaps for the first time in your life, you are really angry- angry at God? - angry at your dead child? Just angry?! Are any of you bereaved parents going about your daily routines, appearing to those around you to be “doing well?” Yet in your “alone moments,” you hurt so badly you think you may never feel better again? Or perhaps you’re not even resuming a routine, lack motivation, are barely functioning. Many bereaved parents have shared these feelings with each other.

Who would understand if you told them you started sobbing when you passed your dead child’s favorite food in the grocery store? Or that you had an urge to yell at the crowds nonchalantly walking in the shopping center, “Don’t you know my child has died?” Another bereaved parent would probably understand.

How many of your friends could you tell that you kept some of your child’s clothing “handy” and experienced a bittersweet feeling when you smelled these clothes? Another bereaved parent would probably not think this unusual.

How fortunate you are if you can share these and other feelings with your spouse, family members, your minister, or good friends. However, many times, these people from whom you would expect the most support aren’t equipped or can’t handle your normal feelings of grief. One of the most often mentioned benefits of The Compassionate Friends, whether that be by attending the meetings, using the available listeners by phone or through the newsletter, is hearing that your feelings are not that unusual after all. It is also most comforting to hear from bereaved parents for whom it has been three, four, six, or seven years since their child died that they experienced many of these same feelings, worked their way through their grief and can now say, “I don’t feel that way anymore. I can really laugh and not feel guilty. I’m leading a productive life again. I may think of my child almost every day, and still miss him/her, but I no longer review details of the accident or illness or circumstance surrounding their death. I’m no longer angry or feel guilty. Most memories are pleasant memories.”

This is why we “old-timers” continue to attend meetings, remain available by telephone and try to meet people’s’ needs through the newsletter.

**Carolyn Reineke, Fort Wayne, IN**

## Am I Making Progress?

January and February are months for making promises, commitments and resolutions (which are fancy promises). We begin our new year with high hopes, strong wills and long lists of things that will be different this year.

As we spend time looking back over the road we've traveled, sometimes we wonder if we have made any progress at all. In the beginning we misplaced car keys, checkbooks, toothbrushes, relatives and important stuff like the TV Guide.

We had to begin making lists of everything. We simply couldn't remember anything. I couldn't remember my address, Social Security number, zip code or my mother-in-law's birthday. (I never could remember that.) I even started making lists of my lists! I knew I was going to be OK when I first discovered I could remember that I had made a list.

You know you're making progress when you can coordinate an entire outfit again. Shoes, belts, ties, purses – even sweaters and jackets – often got left, simply because when we were hurting so terribly we couldn't think about what to wear. Many of us didn't even know that the pantyhose were on backwards or that the tie was crooked. If you are wearing matched shoes right now, then you are making progress.

You're making progress if you no longer choke back tears when you say your loved one's name. When you can walk down the cereal aisle in the supermarket and not dissolve into tears, progress is being made. When you can enjoy baking his or her favorite cookies or pie or cake again, you are on your way.

When you again can set the pictures out and wander through the scrapbooks – letting the

smiles peek through the tears – hope is returning. When, for the most part, memories bring comfort and warmth instead of emptiness and pain, January grows softer. When you begin to understand that putting away your loved one's things does NOT mean putting her out of your life, your step becomes lighter.

Progress occurs when you completely understand that though your loved one died, the love you shared can never be destroyed. Hope begins to return when you can hear laughter again – and some of that laughter is your own.

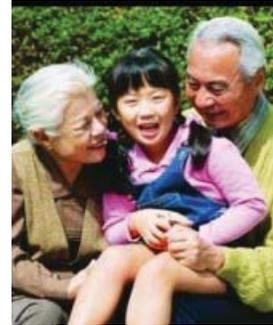
Making progress through grief doesn't mean that we no longer miss our loved ones. They will be part of our lives forever, but their roles in our lives have changed. Our lifestyles and habits now reflect a different family landscape.

As we look back, it is amazing to see how the life fabric is no longer a gaping hole, torn apart. It's mended now with tiny stitches (perhaps a bit lumpy, like lots of us), patched with time, effort and love. Old threads and new threads have been rewoven and blended into a pattern not quite the same as we had originally planned. It is a tapestry of love given and received, love remembered and shared.

As the winter of our grief turns into spring, the renewed energy and love we feel becomes a memorial to our loved ones. Our tributes are not in the grave markers we decorate, not in the books we write, not in the speeches we give; they are in the love we share and pass on.

You know you are making progress when all of this begins to make some sense.

Darcie Sims



## For Grandparents

### Forgive Me, My Daughter

I want you to be the little girl who tore her many-layered petticoats on the parallel bars at school, and once even chipped a tooth.

I want you to be the child with bloody knees who had matching holes in her new leotards.

Or maybe the one who fell from a swing and needed a half dozen stitches beneath her eye.

Oh, I could hold you then; there was magic in my kisses that stemmed the pain and a doctor nearby for more tangible aid.

But what do I do now, now that you are a woman, and your sorrows are commensurate with your age?

I stand immobile as your wan face leans over the broken turf where your infant son, your only child, will soon be interred.

I clench my fist knowing there is no solace any longer in my arms for agony of this magnitude.

You are deaf, too, to my murmurings; you hear only the echoes of his laughter and his cries.

Of course,

I am here when you need me. But I can only pretend I am a strong and wise grandmother when, in truth,

I remain a mother, heart-broken twice.



SIDS Survival Guide  
Joani Nelson Horchler and Robin Rice Morris

## Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

### The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

**Monthly Meeting: Thursday, January 23, 2014, at 6:30 pm**

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

Call Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, for information and directions. Next meeting: February 27, 2014, at 6:30 pm.

<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. 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, 563.324.9580, or ( <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 (DeWitt)</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 (Fulton)</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>	<b>If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):</b>  <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>
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## Printed 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. <b>TCF e-newsletter</b> 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 are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.
<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 <a href="mailto:alivealone@bright.net">alivealone@bright.net</a> .
<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*



**The Angel of Hope Memorial Garden here in the Quad Cities is becoming a reality!** Fundraising for the memorial garden, to be located in the Moline Memorial Cemetery, 5001 34th Avenue, Moline, has progressed well over the last several months. **Nearly \$17,000 (toward the goal of \$60,000) has been raised to date.** Parents and families have purchased memorial bricks and memorial benches as part of the overall plan to create the garden.

The memorial has areas with engraved paving stones. These stones are available to parents, siblings, and families who would like to remember a deceased child, adult-child, sibling, niece, nephew, or grandchild.

Memorial purchases and/or donations can be made to:

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

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	\$100	Inscription limits: 15 characters per line (including spaces & punctuation), 1 to 3 lines
8"x 8" brick	\$200	Inscription limits: 15 characters per line (including spaces & punctuation), 1 to 6 lines

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


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


Questions? Call 309-736-6601.



**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.