



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

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NEWSLETTER - Issue #1
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
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Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll Free 877-969-0010; Fax (630) 990-0246

National TCF Website:
www.compassionatefriends.org

NEW Topeka TCF Chapter Website:
www.tcftopeka.org

January-February 2015
Editor: Susan Chan
3448 S.W. Mission Ave.
Topeka, KS 66614-3629
(785) 272-4895

JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 26, 2015
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m

What's in a Name? - For this program we will go around the group and invite members to share something about their child's name. Why did they choose it? Did it have a special meaning? Was it a family name? Did the child ever go by a nickname and how did they get it? Naming people is a very important part of many world cultures. Some religions have a ceremony for naming at birth. Nicknames can develop among family, friends, or groups. Nicknames often stay with us for the rest of our lives. What names are special and even sacred to your child? We all know we love to hear our child's name spoken and this is an opportunity not only to speak their name but also share its significance.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Monday, February 23, 2015
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Anger and Guilt: Two Roadblocks to Healing - Everyone who has a child die will probably experience anger and guilt in some manner. Anger might be sudden, intense and may frighten and confuse us. It may also come out in ways that we do not recognize as anger or in taking things out on others around us in an unreasonable fashion. Guilt can paralyze or maim us as we struggle through the memory of things done or left undone, said or not said. We will discuss the different forms of anger and guilt, how we recognize them and how we might work through them. We will share alternative outlets of expression for anger and ways that we work on in "letting go" of our guilt; of asking our child's forgiveness, etc.

Meetings are always held on the fourth Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. Listen to radio & TV for cancellations due to severe weather conditions.

This newsletter is sponsored by:

*Margaret Kramar in loving memory of her son
Spenser Thomas Good who was born on January 30th*

*Gary & Linda Ramey in loving memory of their
daughter Kiley Ramey who was born on February*



*Don & Julie Strathman in loving memory of
their son Keith who died on January 8th*

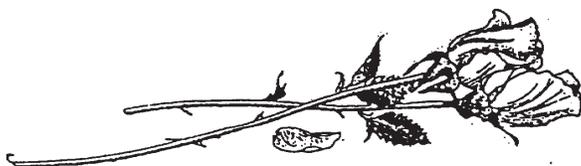
*Todd & Kathleen Williams in loving memory of Baby
Boy Williams who was born and died on February 23rd*

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purposes are to promote and aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experience following the death of a child of any age, from any cause; and to foster the physical and emotional health of all bereaved parents, grandparents and surviving siblings.

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ATTENTION! PLEASE NOTE

It's that time of year again when we need you to let us know if you wish to remain on the Newsletter Mailing List for 2015. If you have just begun receiving this newsletter in 2014, you will continue to get it through 2015. If you received it prior to 2014, you will need to let us know if you wish to continue receiving it. Look for the yellow RSVP Sheet in this newsletter!



We Need Not Walk Alone

From the Chapter Coordinator

Local Topeka TCF Chapter contact info:
Phone - 785-272-4895; Email - chanx2@cox.net

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

In March of 1992 my husband Gary and I lost our 18-year-old daughter in a motorcycle/deer accident. In July of 1992 we attended our first Compassionate Friends meeting. Like many of you, we did not know what to expect or where our future would lead us following Rachael death. In TCF we found a source of support, acceptance, comfort and hope that I am not sure we could have found anywhere else. While we certainly appreciated the efforts of those who were coordinating the Chapter at that time, we could see the group was struggling. And so it was in late 1993 that we agreed to become Co-Chapter Leaders for the Topeka Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. We knew how important the group had been for us and we wanted to make sure that it continued to exist for those who would need it in the future.

Now, some 21+ years later, we are stepping down, effective June 1st, from our leadership positions in the Topeka Chapter. In mid-2014 Damon Tucker agreed to serve as Co-Chapter Leader with me and Gary stepped back but remained on the Chapter Steering Committee. Over the past several years we have built a strong and dedicated Steering Committee who will be taking on the responsibility of Chapter meeting programs and memorial events. Current members of the Steering Committee are: Damon and Collene Tucker, Dee Hobelman, Debra Fisher, Jennifer Meyer, Chris and Trista Phillipi, and Duane and Mary Eberhardt. Gary and I will remain on the Steering Committee in an advisory capacity. For the foreseeable future, I will also continue to edit this newsletter.

It has been truly one of the great experiences of our lives to have had the privilege of getting to know so many of you and accompanying and supporting you on your individual grief journeys. Compassionate Friends is near and dear to our hearts and we will certainly do our best to ensure that the leadership transition is a smooth one and that the Chapter remains vital and strong. We hope many of you will consider volunteering to help out the Chapter as it moves forward. Reaching out to help can be an important part of your own personal healing, and a wonderful way to honor your loved one's memory. Thank you for your support over the years and we wish each of you peace and beautiful memories of your child, grandchild or sibling carried forever in your hearts.

In Love They Are Remembered. In Memory They Live.
Until next time, be patient and let the healing happen

~Susan Chan, Coordinator

Please don't forget to fill in and return the yellow form in this newsletter in order to continue receiving the newsletter in 2015. The yellow form has further information and also offers you an opportunity to help support the Topeka TCF Chapter financially. Since we charge no dues or fees to participate in TCF, we do rely solely on donations in the form of Love Gifts or Newsletter Sponsorships to help meet the expenses of the Chapter including our memorial events and the publication and mailing of this newsletter. Please be as generous as you are able and we thank you in advance for your continuing support.



Hope to See You in Dallas!
Check out the TCF website
for further information.
www.compassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

July 10-12, 2015 - 38th National Compassionate Friends Conference in Dallas, TX. See more information at www.compassionatefriends.org

October 2-4, 2015 - TCF Regional Conference, Rochester, MN. The theme of this conference is "Hope and Healing for Our Broken Hearts"

Love Gifts

**Your Love Gifts Help Spread
the Message of Hope & Healing ~ Won't You Help Today?**

What is a Love Gift? A Love Gift is a gift of money (or books, etc.) to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child, grandchild or sibling who has died, but it may be from individuals who wish to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanks that their children are alive, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help. The Compassionate Friends charges *no individual dues* or fees and depends on such Love Gifts to meet the Chapter's expenses, including the printing and mailing of this newsletter. When you make a donation, **make sure to check** to see if your employer may have a **"matching gifts"** program as this could double the amount of your donation. If you are not sure whether your company has such a program, check with your Personnel Department. This month we thank:

♥ *The Congregation of Potwin Presbyterian Church in Topeka for supporting the mission of the Topeka Chapter of The Compassionate Friends through their Love Gift donation.*

Thank you for your gifts which enable us to print this newsletter and reach out to newly bereaved families. Donations are our only source of income and are **tax deductible**. If you would like to sponsor a newsletter, the cost is \$30.00. If we have more than one sponsor, we recognize all of them. If you wish to send a Love Gift, any amount is appreciated. It is whatever you feel you can give. Donations of books that you have found helpful to the Topeka Chapter Library are also greatly appreciated, and it is a nice way to remember your child or other loved one. If you would like to send a Love Gift or a Newsletter Sponsorship, you may do so by sending it to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. For Newsletter Sponsorships, please indicate which issue you wish to sponsor (Jan/Feb, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, or November/December). Makes checks payable to "TCF".

DO YOU NEED TO TALK? LOVING LISTENERS AVAILABLE

Yvonne Albright - Sudden Infant Death
Leader, Infant Loss Group (785) 246-3298

Carol Cummings - Heart Surgery
Former Coordinator (785) 272-2155

Donna Martin - Accident
Former Coordinator (785) 286-0538

BeBe Bahr - Bicycle/Car Accident
Advisory Board (785) 234-2897

Tom and Carolyn Voth - Cancer
Former Coordinator (785) 235-5406

Susan Chan - Motorcycle Accident
Current Coordinator (785) 272-4895

Leslie Johnson-Wingert - auto accident
and SIDS (785) 840-0512

Debi Harvey - Drug Overdose
(785) 806-2836



Submit a Memory Page

Remember your child, grandchild or sibling in a special way by submitting a Memory Page to be published in the Topeka Chapter Newsletter. You may include a photo, drawing, a poem, letter to your child, etc - just about anything you would like to put on it in memory of your child. You do not have to put the page together - I can help you with this from the materials you select to use. Memory Page submissions should be sent to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. Photos will be returned, but DO NOT send a photo of which you only have one copy. No charge for page.

TCF National Office email:
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Compassionate Friends web address:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter NEW web address:
www.tcftopeka.org

Kansas Regional Coordinator:
Tom & Carol Weatherd - (785) 283-4704

Our Thanks to:

Midland Care Connection for giving us a mailbox and Most Pure Heart of Mary Church for allowing us to meet at their facility.

TCF Mission Statement: 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.

And We Remember.....

Because of the potential for the hurtful crime of identity theft, TCF Chapter Newsletters will now only publish the date of a child's birth or death without listing the year of each event. This is a directive from the National TCF Office to protect all TCF members.

Ian Arthur Atchison, son of Martha and David Atchison and brother of Meg Atchison, died March 18th

Kathy Bahr, daughter of LeRoy & BeBe Bahr, born March 26th

Errick M. Baldwin, son of Roxanne Baldwin, died February 23rd

Jeff Balch, son of Dan and Pam Balch, who died on March 30th

Daiana Barber, daughter of Barbara and Tim Barber, died on February 27th



Anne J. Cameron Barton, daughter of Alan and Alice Cameron, born February 11th

Brandee Earlene Bastian, daughter of Robert Bastian and Cary Roudybush, died March 1st

Logan Monroe Baublitz, son of Sandra Baublitz, who was born on March 6th

Michael Bidinger, son of June Bidinger, who died on February 22nd

Samantha Jo Bishop, daughter of Denise Bishop, died March 19th

Richard Blair, son of Kenny and Jodi Blair, born Feb. 7th; died March 25th

Brian Lynn Blecha, son of Lynn and Alice Blecha, born February 9th

Aubrey Jane Brabb, granddaughter of Doug and Tammi Brabb, stillborn on February 24th

Monty Brentlinger, son of Don and Carolyn Brentlinger, born February 6th

Devin Brungardt, daughter of Deb Ballard, died February 25th

Alexia Elaine Buessing, daughter of Arthur and Lori Buessing, born and died February 4th

Gary D. Burkett, Jr., son of Gary D. and Linda P. Burkett, died February 6th

James Dean Cavin, son of Robert and Roberta Cavin, born March 21st



Rachael Reneé Chan, daughter of Gary & Susan Chan, who died on March 17th

Kenneth Dean Chapman, son of Richard Chapman and Mildred (Chapman) Toburen, died February 3rd

Brianna Michelle Clark, daughter of Ryan and Kimberly Clark, born March 30th

Brianne Clark, daughter of Leanna Clark, died on February 16th

Andy Conger, son of Leon E. and Suzanne Conger, born March 4th

Stephanie Nicole Corbett, granddaughter of Emery and Judy Corbett, born March 8th

Patrick Cummings, son of Carol Cummings, born March 30th

Wendi Sue Cushing, daughter of Scott and Denise Cushing; sister of Deana and Dylan Cushing, born March 17th

Corey Allen Davis, son of Tammy L. Davis, died February 2nd

Mitchell Davison, son of Wilbur and Peggy Post, born February 25th; died March 1st



Lt. David K. Dillon [Douglas Cty. Sheriff's Dept.], son of John and Joyce Dillon, born on February 18th

Michael Bert Doud, son of Mary A. Doud, died February 9th

Trudy Elizabeth Douglas, daughter of Carole A. Rost and stepdaughter of Tom Rost, died February 20th

Timothy Lynn Drayer, son of Donald W. Drayer (deceased) and Vada V. Drayer, died March 4th

Evan Douglas Epoch, son of Nancy S. Epoch, born March 10th
Emilio Felipe Esquibel, Jr., son of Julie A. Nolting and Emilio F. Esquibel, Sr., died March 18th

Denny Warren Ferrin, Jr., son of Mary G. Tidwell, born February 4th

Luke Edwin Forsberg, son of Gene and Peggy Forsberg, who died on March 25th

Garen Lee Gideon, son of Shawn and Renee Gideon, born February 11th

Augustine Isaac Samuel Gomez, son of Deborah Ortega, stillborn on March 4th

James C. Graber, son of Walter J. Graber and Theresa M. Murrey, died March 8th

Kelli Rae Grauer, daughter of Harold and Marilyn Grauer, born March 27th

Kenneth Hagen, son of Pat Nichol, died March 25th



Trever Antwan Harness, son of Tonie R. Harness and John K. Perkins, born February 5th

John Carl Harrington, son of Mary Harrington died March 18th

Jaime M. Harrington, daughter of Mary Harrington, born and died February 3rd

Terry Harris, son of George and Polly Harris, born February 1st

Gary Hayes, son of Ed and Judy Hayes, born February 4th

Ronald Max Herbel, son of Norris Herbel and Peggy Herbel Blanding, born February 14th

Melissa Ann Hernandez, daughter of Cathy Lorraine Hernandez, died February 19th

Robert R. Herrick, Jr., son of Phyllis Ashcraft, died March 9th

Donnie L. Higbee, son of Susan Vega, who was born on March 11th

Charles "Chaz" Ronald Hill II, son of Charles R. Hill and Shondi L. Ward, born and died February 27th

Conner Jonathan Hitchens, son of Jared and Sarah Hitchens, born on February 24th and died on February 28th

And We Remember.... (Cont'd)

Nason John Hobelman, son of Dee Hobelman, who was born on February 14th

Timothy Hopkins, son of Dorothy C. Hopkins and brother of Michelle Eakes, born on March 24th

Zachary James Hudec, son of Greg and Liz Hudec, died March 25th



Dennis Earl Hunt, grandson of Velma Ogle Smidt, died March 18th

Dylan Michel Hynek, son of Lori and Mike Hynek, born and died March 18th

Rodney Jennings II, son of Sharon Harris, born March 2nd

Nicholas Johnson, son of Janet Johnson, born on February 16th

Madeline Ruth Jones, sister of Sara Hobbs, died February 12th

Abbey Jordan, daughter of Don and Joanie Jordan, who died on March 1st

Scott Daniel Jordan, son of Terry and Julie Jordan, died February 17th

Karen Kay Karnes, daughter of Wilson and Maxine Karnes, born March 2nd

Andrew Kohake, son of Joe and Denise Kohake, born March 4th

Lawrence Alan Kout, son of Murlyn and Lucille Kout, died March 24th

David M. Lackey, son of Galen and Marilyn Lackey, born February 5th

Ben Lake, grandson of Patty Lake, who was born on March 21st

Charles Duane "Chuck" Lawson, son of Charles and Patsy Lawson, born March 2nd

Austin Isreal Lewis, son of Amy Marker and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Smallwood, born February 2nd

Richard L. "Rick" Linder Jr., son of Richard and Patricia Linder, died February 15th

Gregory Scott Longbine, son of Jeff Longbine and Gwen Yarnell-Longbine, born March 11th

Gylnn Guerry Lough, son of Billy D. and Inez G. Lough, died Feb. 21st

Billy Lucas, son of Bernie and Jeanette Bialek, died on February 18th



William Henry "Hank" Lumpkin, son of Joe and Penny Lumpkin, who was born on February 1st

Amy Lundin, daughter of Ralph and Judy Lundin, born on February 16th

Tara Lee Stilson Lyman, daughter of Terry and Connie Stilson, died February 10th

Kirk William Manwaring, son of Kimberly Manwaring, born on March 26th

Stuart McKinnon, son of Sandra McKinnon, born March 16th

Michael L. McQuilkin, son of Wilson and Margaret McQuilkin, born March 28th; died February 12th

Gregory Dean Michael, son of Lawrence J. Michael and Marianne Michael Carlson, born March 22nd



Tracy Kevin Michael, son of Lawrence J. Michael and Marianne Michael Carlson, died March 22nd

Emily Caroline Mulanax, daughter of Douglas and Jamie Mulanax, stillborn March 1st

Madison "Maddie" Rae Naill, daughter of Lori Neddermeyer and Eric Naill; step-daughter of Mark Neddermeyer; sister of Jesse and Allie Naill; step-sister of Cale and Braden Neddermeyer; and granddaughter of Bruce and Ginny Miller and Allan and Marge Neddermeyer, died on March 19th

David Ogle, son of Velma Ogle Smidt and brother of Janice Hunt, born February 18th; died March 3rd

Chad O'Leary, son of Patricia Shomaker, died on March 24th

Shaun Ostertag, son of Nancy Meyer, died March 3rd

Michael Dean Patterson, son of Rosalie A. Bearce, born February 17th; died March 12th



Zachary Patton son of Terry & Debbie Patton and grandson of Ester D. Coe, died March 26th

Jeremy Pechanec, son of Tobias and Pamela Pechanec, died on February 22nd

Jamie Barks Pursley, daughter of Dave and Kathy Barks, died on March 29th

Kiley Ramey, daughter of Gary and Linda Ramey, born February 28th

Michael Wayne Reece, son of Arthur C. and Marilyn K. Reece, died February 18th

David Wayne Reese, son of Tom and Bonnie Reese, born March 12th

Nancy Laverne Reives, sister of Carol Daughenbaugh, born February 16th



Michael Lee Reser, son of Donald L. and Mary L. Reser, died February 20th

Chris Riddle, son of Henry and Carolyn Riddle, born March 13th

Daniel Rusher, son of Joe and Helen Rusher, born March 24th

Lauren Rosso, daughter of Erin Lesser, who was born on March 11th

Jordan Alexander Ryans, son of Dwayne Ryan and Patty Worthington, born February 6th; died February 17th

Trisha Dawn Shay, daughter of Mark A. Shay and Carol S. Lang, born February 14th

Anita Sheffel, daughter of Irving & Beth Sheffel, born March 8th

Scott Edward Sobba, son of Harold and Linda Sobba, born February 20th

Ansley Spencer, granddaughter of Loren and Beth Mitchell, who was born on March 12th

And We Remember..... (Cont'd)

Shane Sterrett, son of Michel and Lois Sterrett; brother of Shannon Schenk who died on March 28th

Natalie Nicole Stucky, daughter of Morris and Diana Stucky, died February 20th

Peter Andrew Swalm, son of Mike and Jan Swalm, born February 5th



Rachel Swanson, daughter of Del and Kim White, born March 7th

Gladys Ann Stewart Tipton, daughter of John and Arletia Stewart, died February 7th

Neil Bradley Stroh, son of Ronald R. and Kay L Norris; brother of Kristy D. Stroh, died February 22nd

Michelle Studebaker, daughter of Kathy Studebaker; sister of Jeff Studebaker and Julie Hafenstine, who was born on February 9th

Gregory D. Talley, son of Garland and Carol Talley, born on March 8th

Brittany Nicole Tucker, daughter of Damon and Collene Tucker, died March 11th

Tom Uhl, son of Dwight and Doris Uhl, died March 20th

Carmen Cristina Urdaneta, daughter of Leonel and Judy Urdaneta, born February 13th; died February 3rd

Jason R. VanDam, son of Will and Kay Hasty, born March 25th

Mary Jane Varner, daughter of Will and Kay Hasty, born February 8th



Cody Vines, son of Rebecca Percival and Brad Vines, died on February 28th

Clint Wahquahboshkuk, son of Timothy Ramirez and Jackie Mitchell, born February 26th

Larry Eugene Walters, son of Hubert and Margaret Walters, born February 14th

Michael Scott Watson, son of Warren and Beth Watson, who died on February 23rd

Christopher Wempe, son of Dan and JoAnn Wempe, born March 9th

Jacob Wessel, son of Mark and Susan Wessel, born on March 15th

Victoria Nicole White, daughter of Kalila Boldridge and Robert A.F. White, born March 25th

Taylor William Clay Watson, son of Terry and Kathy Watson, died March 16th

Baby Boy Williams, son of Todd and Kathleen Williams, stillborn February 23rd



Melissa Wingert, daughter of Allan and Patricia Dalton, born March 27th

George Winter, son of Cindy Taylor and brother of Elizabeth and Jolene Winter, who died on February 15th

Amanda Wohlgemuth, daughter of Penny Alton, died February 2nd

Robb Zeller, son of Robert and Sherry Zeller, died February 20th

(Use the form below to submit your listing if you have not already done so. Once you have submitted your listing you **do not** have to do so every year. Your child's name and dates will remain on the We Remember database unless you request their removal. This month's listing includes birth and death anniversary dates for February and March)

And We Remember - If you wish your child, grandchild or sibling included in the We Remember section of this newsletter, please fill out the form below and return to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may also email the information to chanx2@cox.net. We do not automatically list your information just because you are receiving this newsletter. We only list information for those parents requesting it. If you have previously submitted your child's information and it has appeared in the newsletter during the past year, you **do not** need to resubmit it. If you have just begun receiving this newsletter, or have never submitted this information, you will need to do so in order for it to be included. **Please type or print clearly.**

Child's Name _____ Son__ Daughter__ Grandchild__ Brother__ Sister__

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Father _____ Mother _____

Note: Please list your address and phone number. You will only be contacted if there is a question about your listing.

Is this a change of address for you? (please circle) YES NO

Lament for My Child

We have lost our precious child
So our days have not been mild
We cried, and cried, and cried
Said, "We're were fine" but knew we lied
We had many a bad day
The pain just would not go away
Our anger became very intense
Nothing really made much sense
A child should not die before a parent
To us this seems very apparent
But God has shown us the way
And all we have to do is pray
He taught us how to cope
And has given us so much hope
We have learned to forgive
And we know now how to live
So we honor our child today
In a very special way

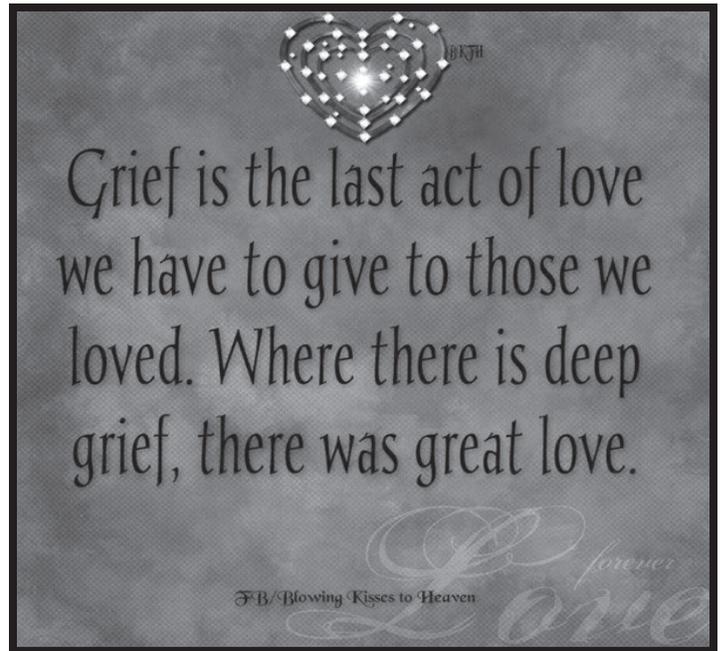
~ Mary E. Eberhardt in memory of her son Jerry Eberhardt

In the end, all we have left are memories. Bits and pieces of the time we've spent together. No matter how long the time was. It'll never seem like enough....

Maud Berben



 The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



TCF Facebook Resources

The following are closed and moderated Facebook groups for various kinds of loss. You can connect with any of these groups through the listed links and by requesting to join the group.

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes
Moderators: Barbara Allen and Mary Lemley
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1515193738693712/>

TCF - Loss to Suicide
Moderators: Cathy Seehuetter and Donna Adams <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1550029471893532/>

TCF - Loss to Homicide
Moderators: Debbie Floyd and Kathleen Willoughby <https://www.facebook.com/groups/924779440868148/>

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss
Moderators: Susan Peavler and Tiffany Barraso
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1511758585777339/>

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes
Moderators: Andrea Keller and Barbara Allen
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1516508415263760/>

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings) Moderators: Tracy Milne and Keith Singer
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/>

The Compassionate Friends Chapter Leadership (for anyone currently serving on a Chapter Steering Committee)
Moderator: Debbie Rambis
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1422251371371148/>

Moving Through the Grief of Losing a Child

By Carolin Flohr, Author of *Heaven's Child*

I was a woman like many others; focused on my five children and family, living a quiet life on Bainbridge Island in the state of Washington. And then, in August 2004, our lives changed. That night, eight teenagers piled into an SUV and took a midnight joyride. My 16-year-old twin daughter, Sarah, was killed.

The thought of losing a child--if "losing" is the correct verb--had never crossed my mind. Tragedies, as such, were something that happened to someone else, something you read about in the paper or heard from a neighbor. Nothing could have prepared me for the deep pain...but nothing could have prepared me for the peace that now permeates my mind and heart.

The shock sets in; everything moves in slow motion as if time comes to a halt, and time has halted.

An acquaintance delivers a candle on day six with a card inscribed, "Place this candle in your kitchen. Each night while you prepare the family meal know that the shimmering of the candlelight reflects the child who now lives within you." A lovely thought. Eight years later, I still light a candle on my kitchen windowsill. My child lives within me now.

The days turn to weeks. Friends surround you, keeping you busy, your mind occupied. Absorb their kindness. Accept their help. Eliminate expectations. Learn to be gentle with yourself. Give yourself space. Make room for quiet. Always remember that grief is personal, as is death. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve.

Seek out therapy. You may be ready. Share your story and connect with others. Surround yourself with those who will listen, not necessarily those who will offer advice. For it is when others listen that we can sort out our thoughts and settle our mind.

Your inner strength seeks you out, sometimes sooner in the process, sometimes later. That strength moves you forward--tiny steps in this process.

Let the memories fill your mind. Let yourself laugh again. Smile. Sing out when a favorite song you shared plays on the radio. Let your heart awaken to the joys memories bring.

Pay attention to the synchronicity and patterns in your life. Pay attention to your intuition. And pray. It doesn't matter what you believe. Just ask, notice, and respond. Faith, hope and love all intersect. Maybe things will begin to make a little sense, just maybe.

Look to your children who live. Note their resilience and strength during this epic period of trauma. Let their sense of life and hope inspire you.

When the pain returns, and it will, allow yourself to go to the depths of that pain. Cry. I promise, you will be okay when you resurface.

And as you move towards years four and five, you will learn that yes, life has been a living nightmare, and it is okay to admit that. Realize that as the years pass, you will learn to weave your loss into your daily life. Accepting the loss of a loved one is to release, but not erase. To hold. But not to hold the pain.

As year five turns towards eight, my hope is that you can slowly wrap yourself around the idea that you can celebrate life and celebrate death. Death and gratitude can go hand in hand. Just possibly, it is those who have passed before us who are our greatest teachers. Remember always that you never walk alone because the life of someone who passes lives on in the love you shared.

Author's Bio:

Caroline is the author of *Heaven's Child*, www.HeavensChild.com. From the knock on the door to the realization that death and gratitude can walk hand in hand, the reader walks beside Caroline in this most raw and real story.

Today she lives full-time with her family on Bainbridge Island in Puget Sound, watching the ferries pass to and from downtown Seattle. She claims inspiration from combing the beach for sea glass and treasures, running the island's trails with her yellow lab, tending her perennial garden, skiing in the Cascade Mountains, reading good literature, traveling, biking, hiking, playing tennis, and writing. www.HeavensChild.com

This day is remembered and quietly kept

No words are needed,

we shall never forget,

For those we love don't go away,

They walk beside us every day.

Unseen and unheard, but always near,

So loved, so missed, and so very dear.

~*Author Unknown*

Where Do I Go?

Now that you're gone, where do I go
to see your fair smile
to hear your tinkling giggle
to smell your damp hair after a swim
to listen to your questions
to touch your gentle cheek
to feel your bear hug?

Where do I go
to share all my years of wisdom
to find someone who'll tell me the truth
to answer the phone that won't ring
to tell you I'm sorry
to know that I am loved and
to pour out my love and my tears?

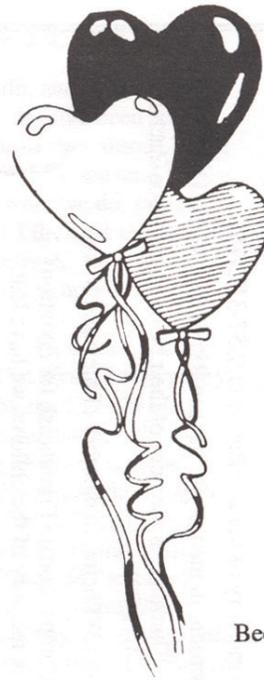
I shall go
to the pictures that hold you forever
to the books we shared
to the music you taught me to love
to the woods we explored as one
to the memories that never fail
to the innermost reaches of my heart
to where we are always together.

~Marcia Alig, TCF, Mercer, NJ

To One In Sorrow

Let me come in where you are weeping,
friend,
And let me take your hand.
I, who have known a sorrow such as yours,
can understand.
Let me come in--I would be very still beside
you in your grief;
I would not bid you cease your weeping,
friend,
Tears bring relief. Let me come in--
and hold your hand,
For I have known a sorrow such as yours,
And understand.

~ Grace Noll Crowell



I WILL LOVE YOU

As long as I can dream,
As long as I can think,
As long as I have a memory...
I will love you.

As long as I have eyes to see,
and ears to hear,
and lips to speak...
I will love you.

As long as I have a heart to feel,
a soul stirring within me,
An imagination to hold you...
I will love you.

As long as there is time,
As long as there is love,
As long as I have a breath
to speak your name...

Because I loved you more than anything...
In all the world.

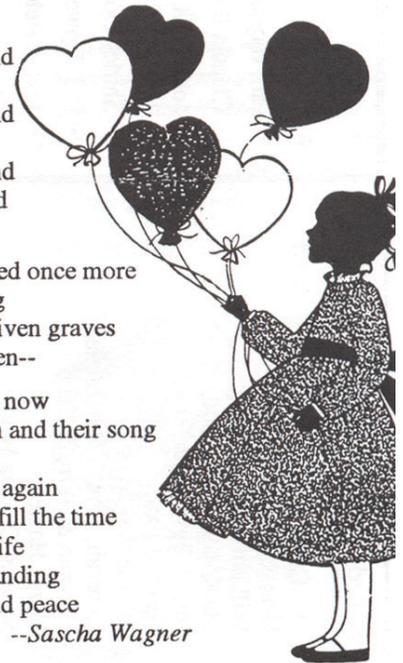
--Daniel Haughian, *Coeur d'Alene Chapter TCF*

we who were left behind
to know the shadows
we who were left behind
to touch the night
we who were left behind
to heal the darkness and
to share this day

we who have turned once more
to hope and loving
though we were given graves
and lifeless children--

we hear them now
these children and their song
reminding us
reminding us again
that we must fill the time
we spend in life
with understanding
tenderness and peace

--Sascha Wagner



BACK INTO THE WORLD

There would always come those moments when a bright red top found under the lilac, a snatch of tune, a small mitten at the back of a closet, a child's footprint in the soft earth of the back yard would cut into me, sweeping Teddy back with terrible force, and I would go down into the basement and sit on one of the sawhorses and give way to long shuddering sobs, until the seizure finally wore itself out and let me go again. And then I would wipe my face and climb back upstairs again, where the world--impossibly, capriciously--was going along exactly as it had before.

--Anton Myrer, *The Last Convertible*

An Emergency Kit for a Bad Day

By Elaine Stillwell, Rockville Centre, NY

As hard as we try to keep our heads above water in grief, there are some days that sneak up on us and catch us totally offguard, spiraling us backwards to what seems like day one. It just doesn't seem fair to fall down when we thought we were doing so well or were giving it our best effort.

So, do yourself a favor and plan ahead. Be ready for that black day that knocks you over in your grief. Start right now putting together your emergency kit so you can shift immediately into "Plan B" whenever you are blindsided by some event, circumstance or happening.

For our emergency kits, some of us might only need a simple carton or a box the size of a carry-on suitcase. Others might need an old-fashion sized trunk-use whatever it is that fits your needs, because each of us grieves differently. Here are a few suggestions that might help you get started.

Loving Listener Address Book

You might grab this handy, specially made, little phone book that lists those friends who give you their loving presence while offering no advice for your hurting heart. A quick call to one of them might be just what you need to get out of the doldrums as you share what has knocked you back into the grief pit. We know talking is the best medicine, so this might be immediate, vital, first aid. On our grief journey, many of us learn that we need to rewrite our address book, so this can be a grand opportunity to add new support persons and delete some folks who have not been there for us. This is a perfect time to create this handy item and to make sure it is in our emergency kit for quick use.

Magic Wand

This useful tool might bring a smile to our faces as we wave it a few times, hoping that its magical powers will restore our hope, motivation and determination. It might just help us focus on happy memories that lighten the burden of our grief. It might make us feel more in control and more able to make the decisions we need to climb out of the hole. My wand came from a memorable sweet-sixteen birthday party, and it still has those magical powers to make me feel joy. You might have a similar item that conveys the same message to your heart, something that stirs a lot of memories for you, like a team pennant, a fishing rod, a baseball cap, a letter or a photo album. Find the linking object that works for you.

Huggables

Something cuddly to hug can help our hearts, especially if it is a teddy bear or pillow made from our loved one's pajamas, bathrobe, sweatshirt or favorite outfit. We can sense their presence and almost feel them hugging back. It could be any plush toy or quilt, but it should be something that has meaning to us and brings us comfort when we hold it. Denis' Ziggy doll that has "I is a brane"

emblazoned on its chest cracks me up every time I look at it. And Peggy's loveable unicorn reminds me of all her dreams and plans. Anything huggable that has history can give you a boost as you relivethe memories it brings to your mind.

Uplifting Book

Carefully selecting a favorite book that has a warm, healing message offers a soothing note for broken spirits. Whether prose or poetry, finding words that bring back a loving feeling in our hearts can help on a gloomy day. We might smile again as we reread favorite passages that open doors to healing for us. You will forget you are having a bad day!

Binoculars

Besides giving us a new perspective, these glasses can help us find those colorful, chirping birds that enjoy our garden, flit around our feeders and fly around our trees. Listening to their daily songs and becoming a "birder" can be a key therapy for the bereaved. So begin listing the birds you see and then doing your homework to find out more about them. You may learn to see your life through new eyes.

Family Recipe

Including a popular recipe in the kit might get us out of bed and headed for the kitchen. Sometimes preparing a favorite dish that we love or that our loved one enjoyed makes us feel better. Getting involved with all the ingredients and planning this special dish is a delicious distraction from pain. It gets us busy with something that has happy memories. We might even want to call someone to share it with us. This can be the beginning of feeling social again.

Music

On a tough day, music can be very healing to some souls. Be sure you include a favorite CD, or iPad selection to get you out of a dark mood as you hum along. Years ago, I had my Walkman all primed ready to go each time I walked the dog, because the music talked to my soul. So whatever your musical choices, classical, spiritual, big band, country, Motown, heavy metal or rap, make sure you include the songs that brighten your spirit.

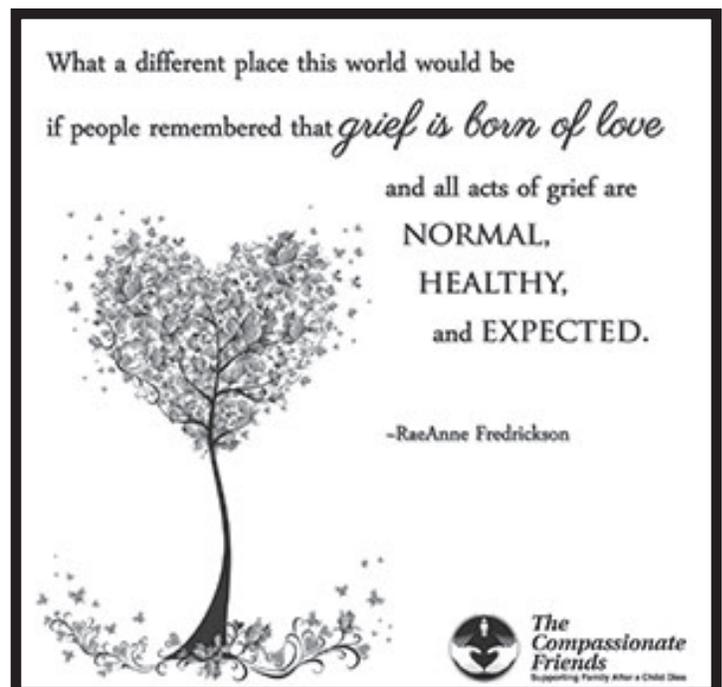
Don't waste another minute. Start assembling all the emergency-kit items that will have you ready with "Plan B." As time goes along, you can add and subtract, continually updating and insuring you that you can have a better day. Our new mantra will be just like the Boy Scouts, "Be Prepared."

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Centering Corporation, Omaha, Nebraska
866-218-0101 www.centering.org*

New Year's Resolutions for Bereaved Parents

- That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a timetable on my grief.
- That I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.
- That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be “brave” or “getting better” or “healing by now.”
- That I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.
- That I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how I feel.
- That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.
- That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.
- That I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that I won't feel compelled to explain this communion to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.
- I will keep the truth in my heart--the truth that my child is always with me in spirit.
- That I will try to eat, sleep, and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.
- To know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all a normal part of the grief process.
- To know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.
- To let myself heal and not feel guilty about not feeling better sooner.
- To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous--that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that “slipping backward” is also a normal part of the mourning process, and that these moods, too, will pass.
- To try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.
- That I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.
- That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

—From the Brooksville/Spring Hill FL TCF Newsletter



The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter, c/o Midland Hospice Care., Inc.
200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, KS 66606-2800

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

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We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.
We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us.
Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.
We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.
We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief,
but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers.
Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace.
But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share,
just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together.
We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace,
share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

A Special and Important Message to Our New Compassionate Friends

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first Compassionate Friends meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared at meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return. We would like to let you know that these feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel".

Please give us at least **three** tries before you decide whether or not the meetings are for you. You will find a network of caring and support which will help you as you travel your grief journey, and most assuredly, you will find hope along the way. We truly care about you and want to make certain that no bereaved parent ever needs to walk this path alone.

---Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

CALL FOR PHOTOS

If you would like your loved one's photo included in our TCF Chapter's memorial slide presentation, please do one of the following:

1. If you have computer access and can send a jpg file of your child's photo electronically, please send to dtucker35@cox.net. Be sure to include your loved one's full name, birth and death dates.
2. If you are not able to send a photo file electronically, you may send a photo print (do not send the only copy you have!) so that we may scan it into digital format. Send the photo plus the full name, birth and death dates for your loved one to: Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of your photo. We will continue to collect photos throughout the year to add to the slide presentation. If you already sent in a photo, you need not resend one.

Are You Moving?

If you move, please let us know your new address so you can continue to receive this newsletter. It costs the Chapter 65 cents every time a newsletter is returned by the Post Office with an outdated address. Please send address changes to: Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may email address changes to chanx2@cox.net. We appreciate your cooperation as this will save the Chapter money which can be better spent on bereavement outreach. If, for any reason, you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list, please drop me a note or email and I will take your name off the list.

Additional Support Group Resources

HEALs - Healing after loss of suicide offers support to all survivors affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide. Meetings are at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. Pozez Center (north side of Stormont Vail). Contact Information: Jay Sheer 785-220-1368 or Sandy Reams 785-249-3792.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Group - Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 6-8 p.m. at the Pozez Education Center. The group, which has regular meetings to share information and experiences, also has a blog for members that offers communication, resources and support. If you are interested in learning more about the blog, please email lrosen@stormontvail.org. For information call (785) 354-5225.

ForTheSurvivors - this website offers resources, support and connection for those who have experienced the death of a child. See <http://www.forthesurvivors.org/>

From Victims to Survivors - Support group for families who have had a loved one murdered. The group meets the fourth or last Wednesday of each month at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4775 S.W. 21st. For more information, call Bill Lucero at 232-5958 or see <http://fromvictimstosurvivors.com>.

Do You Have a Book Checked Out of the Topeka TCF Library?

If you have checked out a book(s) from the Topeka Chapter Library, we would greatly appreciate it if you could return it (them) as soon as possible. We want to keep the books available for others to use. We ask that you keep Library materials no longer than two (2) months. You may return books at a regular monthly meeting or leave them in the Most Pure Heart main Office. Please place books in a sack marked "For Susan Chan, Compassionate Friends". It is very expensive for us to try and replace missing materials so your cooperation is greatly appreciated. THANKS!

FREE online subscription of TCF's national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*, now available

The Compassionate Friends national magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone* is now available free through an online subscription. TCF is also archiving past editions at TCF National Magazine and Archive.

Those who do not wish to subscribe can view the magazine in the archive once the next issue has been published. Past issues of *We Need Not Walk Alone*, starting with Winter/Spring 2011-2012, are available in the archive.

On the home page, click on Find Support, then Online Community, then Sign Up for National Publications. You can also sign up for the TCF E-Newsletter at this site to keep up with all that is happening in the organization.

A NEW YEAR IS FOR HOPE

It has been a different number,
Days have gone by.
We've accumulated more time
Between ourselves and our child/sibling's death.
We may have rearranged our
Perspective -- have different
Ideas about what is most
Important and what hardly matters.
In this New Year, we know that
There will be ups and downs, some
Good moments and some bad moments.
And if we take just one moment,
Just one hour, just one step at a time --

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT.

~Joan Schmidt/TCF, Central Jersey

Dwelling on Our Loss

To an outsider, the idea of meeting with a group of people for the purpose of discussing death, our personal experiences with the death of our children, the "grief process," etc., may seem grim if not altogether morbid. All of us who are involved in The Compassionate Friends have run into someone who has asked, "Why do you do this?" or "Why don't you just try to let it go?"

The idea of "dwelling on the loss" is always stated with negative connotations, yet dwelling on the death of a child is not something we can avoid. Indeed, "dwelling" is part of the healing process. It's how we come to grips with the questions "Why, what if...?" that uncontrollably pop up in our minds, and it is how we learn to accept the unacceptable.

Certainly, there is a wealth of information in books dealing with death and dying. Our faith, our pastors, priests, and rabbis have much to contribute to our healing. Psychologists, psychiatrists and therapy may be necessary.

The Compassionate Friends encourages grieving parents to utilize any or all of the above tools, but we also realize the value of learning to verbalize, openly, publicly, the grief and the loss we feel....not in the privacy of our doctor or minister's office, where we are very sheltered, but openly among people who know full well how hard it is to say, "My child is dead." We do not put any pressure on people attending our meeting to say anything, but the beautiful part of this group is that it enables you to see people who are "down the long road" a way further and to realize that you will be there in time.

Are we dwelling on our loss? Absolutely. But we are learning to dwell on it constructively, to dwell on it without guilt and without the isolation we have all felt. We learn how to reach out (in time) to others with a compassion that brings healing to others as well as to ourselves.

~ Philip Barker - TCF, California

An Employment Agency Named Grief

Did you know that the minute your child died, you immediately joined the ranks of the employed? Never mind that you already had a job, or that your every moment was taken up by your role as wife/mother or husband/father, or that you had more than you could handle on a volunteer basis. You now have another job that carries with it no title of importance, but it is important nonetheless.

This new job involves the sad, but necessary task of creating a new life that does not include your dead child, and you don't even want to do it. For most, it is full-time employment for the next couple of years, if you are newly bereaved. It seems impossible in the beginning when your every waking moment is filled with thoughts of your old life with your child, but even the reliving of memories is a start toward the rebuilding of your life. You can't move forward until you have revisited these old memories enough times. Eventually, you learn by process of experiencing all those special family times how it is you get on with the business of surviving without your child, how to start new traditions.

The job description for your new position calls for abilities you may not feel you qualify for at this time, things such as: an ability to be consumed by anger, and yet you let go of it once you have dealt with it honestly; an ability to acknowledge feelings of guilt and yet be able to eventually forgive yourself because you did the best you could under the circumstances; and a capacity for inordinate amounts of patience with yourself and others around you as you make your way through pain-filled days. You also learn to maintain some hope for better days ahead. All of these are prerequisites to succeeding at your new job. By bravely reaching out in the days and months ahead, you'll find that you are slowly learning how to build one day upon the other until finally you realize you are maintaining a balance you once thought impossible.

You'll look back and discover you're going on with life and that a new life does go on without your lost child. You will note that I did not say a better life - just a new life. Then you'll find you need not continue full-time at your job of grief. Maintaining the *status quo* of your new life will require some attention from time to time. That's when you become employed on a part-time basis. Look forward to that time.

~ Mary Cleckley TCF Atlanta, GA

