



# The Compassionate Friends

**Topeka Chapter**  
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

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NEWSLETTER - Issue #1  
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National TCF Website:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:  
[www.tcftopeka.org](http://www.tcftopeka.org)

January ~ February 2016  
Editor: Susan Chan  
3448 S.W. Mission Ave.  
Topeka, KS 66614-3629  
(785) 272-4895

## JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 25, 2016  
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church  
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

**Signs, Symbols & Dreams** - At this month's meeting we will have the chance to talk about unusual happenings we may have experienced since the death of our child, grandchild or sibling. Bereaved people often talk about something that has happened to them that made them feel as though they were somehow contacted or felt more connected to their deceased loved one. Sometimes dreams about our child can be comforting, sometimes unsettling. This meeting will offer us the opportunity to share any such events that have happened to us in an open and non-judgemental setting.

## FEBRUARY MEETING

Monday, February 22, 2016  
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church  
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

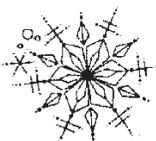
**Know Me, Know My Child** - This meeting offers each of us an opportunity to share something about our child, grandchild or sibling. Plan to bring a story, a poem, some music, a piece of clothing, a book, a photograph, or a toy--anything that you would like to share that relates to your loved one. In our group we understand the importance of remembering and being able to talk about our children in a loving and supportive atmosphere of acceptance and non-judgement. As we get to know each other, let's also get to know each child's story, their likes and dislikes, their favorite thing to eat, whatever you would like to share.

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:*

*Hank & Cathy Harman in loving memory of their  
son Shawn M. Hatfield who was born on January 11<sup>th</sup>*

*Margaret & Tad Kramar & Benjamin Good in loving  
memory of her son and his brother Spenser Thomas  
Good who was born on January 30<sup>th</sup>*



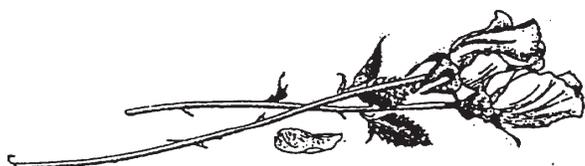
*James & Doris Palmberg in loving memory of  
their son Eric Alan Palmberg who died on January 1<sup>st</sup>*

*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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### **Newsletter Mailing List Update**

**If you have not already returned your yellow newsletter renewal form that was in the Nov/Dec issue, you need to do so by February 15, 2016 in order for your name to remain on our mailing list for 2016. We will be culling the list for the March/April newsletter of those who have not returned their form. The ONLY exception is for those families whose child died in 2015 and thus far in 2016. If you have misplaced your form, please mail your info to the editor at the address above or email the information to [tcftopeka@gmail.com](mailto:tcftopeka@gmail.com)/ We need to hear from you NOW!**



**We Need Not Walk Alone**

## From the Newsletter Editor

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

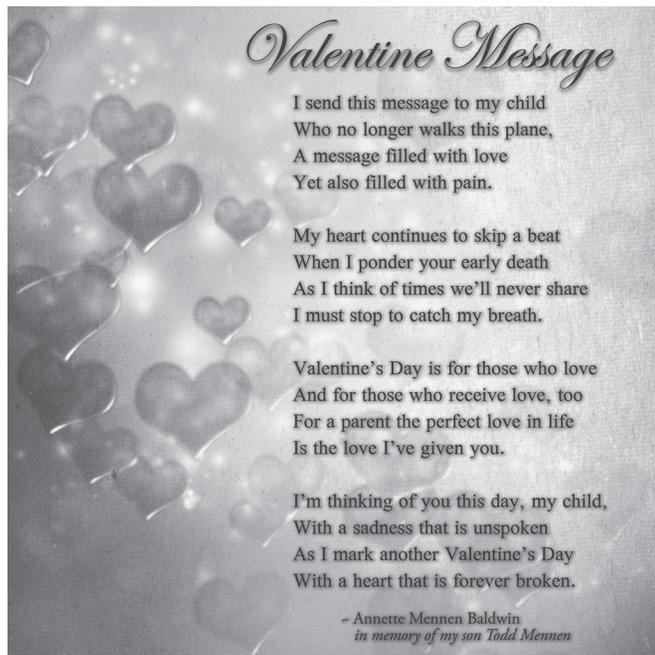
I want to thank those of you who have taken the time to return your yellow Newsletter Mailing Update forms. If you have not already done this, please remember you need to have your form returned to us **by February 15, 2016** in order to remain on our mailing list and receive the March/April 2016 newsletter. This is true for everyone on our mailing list with ONE EXCEPTION: Those families whose loved one died in 2015 or thus far in 2016 will automatically be kept on the mailing list for one full year unless they request in writing to have their name removed. We certainly want everyone who wishes to receive the newsletter to do so, but we do need to cull our list of those who do not respond once a year. On this year's form, you also had the option to begin receiving the newsletter electronically at your email address. We hope to be able to begin to do this starting with the May/June issue. Also, be aware that past and current newsletters are available in PDF on our Topeka Chapter website ([www.tcftopeka.org](http://www.tcftopeka.org) under "Newsletters" on the menu bar).

We are very grateful to several individuals who have made very generous donations to the Topeka Chapter to help meet our current operating expenses. Keep in mind that your employer may have a "matching funds" program that could double the amount of your donation. If you are not sure if your employer offers this, check with your personnel department. It is usually a simple process that requires only filling out a form and showing proof of your own donation. We will continue to need your support throughout 2016 to maintain printing and mailing of our newsletter so we would encourage you to consider sponsoring a newsletter (\$30) in your loved one's memory or sending in a Love Gift in any amount that works for your budget. Our newsletter, along with our website, is our primary outreach tool to reach bereaved families and offer them support, keep them aware of upcoming events and provide that all-important connection with others who have suffered a similar loss. We are hoping that we will be able to expand the newsletter back to 12 pages per issue before the end of 2016.

If you have not signed up for the Dillons Community Rewards program, we would encourage you to do so. By doing this and designating the Topeka TCF Chapter as your choice, we will receive a percentage of the money that you spend at Dillons. You do need to have a Dillons Shopper's Card to participate in this program. The assigned number for the Topeka TCF Chapter is 65403. Participating in this program does not affect your accumulation of fuel points. Just go to [www.dillons.com/communityrewards](http://www.dillons.com/communityrewards) and click on "Register". If you need assistance in setting up your account, call toll-free at 1-800-576-4377 and select Option 3.

I also wanted to remind you that we maintain a photo gallery of our beloved children, grandchild and siblings that is displayed at every meeting. If you would like your loved one represented, send in a 1 inch photo (vertical or horizontal presentation) along with their full name, their birth and death dates and your name. You can send these to me at my address on the front page of the newsletter.

I hope you can begin your new year with hope and precious memories to hold forever in your heart. Until next time, be gentle with yourself and let the healing happen.



~ Susan Chan, Rachael's Mom

### To Honor You



To honor you, I get up every day and take a breath and start another day without you in it. To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile and the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge. To honor you, I take chances, I say what I feel, hold nothing back, risk making a fool of myself; dance every dance. You were my light, my gift of love from the very highest source. So everyday I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love. Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

~ Connie Kiefer Bryd, St. Paul, MN TCF Chapter

# 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:

- ♥ Elaine Bandstra in support of the mission of the Topeka TCF Chapter
- ♥ Mary H. Harrington in loving memory of her daughter Jaime M. Harrington who was stillborn on February 3<sup>rd</sup>
- ♥ Phillip & Louise Jenkins in loving memory of their daughter Teresa Jenkins Carson who died April 7<sup>th</sup>
- ♥ Lou Kuhn in loving memory of her son Raymond Avila who was born on February 1<sup>st</sup> and died on February 17<sup>th</sup>
- ♥ Don & Julie Strathman in loving memory of their son Keith Strathman who died on January 8<sup>th</sup>

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".

### Notice on Memory Pages

Because of the necessity to cut the newsletter from 12 to 8 pages due to costs, we are currently unable to accept any Memory Pages. We will be reevaluating our policy on the use of Memory Pages including size limitations, frequency, and the potential of a cost associated with having a Memory Page in honor of your child, grandchild or sibling. We will announce any new guidelines in a future newsletter and appreciate your patience while we attempt to figure out ways of generating more income to expand the newsletter back to the usual 12 pages.

**TCF National Office email:**  
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

**Compassionate Friends web address:**  
www.compassionatefriends.org

**Topeka TCF Chapter web and email addresses:**  
www.tcftopeka.org tcftopeka@gmail.com

**Kansas Regional Coordinator:**  
Marty & Renda Weaver - (785) 823-7191  
mweaver@cox.net

**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.

### Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

**July 8-10, 2016** - The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Scottsdale, Arizona, will be the site of the 39<sup>th</sup> TCF National Conference. "Hope Rises on the Wings of Love" is the theme of next year's event. The 2016 Conference will be held at the The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess Resort. Hotel reservations are scheduled to open January 1, 2016. Conference Registration will begin February 1, 2016. Watch this newsletter, our Chapter website ([www.tcftopeka.org](http://www.tcftopeka.org)) or the National TCF website ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)) under News and Events for further information as it becomes available. The Conference will offer over 100 workshops, sharing sessions, a Memorial Candle Lighting and a Walk to Remember among many other things. Plan to share this supportive and healing event.

**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. A special Thank You to ProPrint for helping to underwrite the printing cost of this newsletter.

**Pro**   
**Print**

**DIGITAL PRINT AND COPY SERVICES**

838 MASSACHUSETTS ST  
LAWRENCE, KS 66044  
785.842.3610

1033 SW GAGE BLVD, STE 200  
TOPEKA, KS 66604  
785.272.0070

# 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. Due to space constraints, only those families who remain current on our newsletter mailing list will be included in the We Remember section*

Brian Lynn Blecha, son of Lynn and Alice Blecha, born February 9<sup>th</sup>



Monty Brentlinger, son of Don and Carolyn Brentlinger, born February 6<sup>th</sup>

Rachael Reneé Chan, daughter of Gary and Susan Chan, died March 17<sup>th</sup>

Cotton Christenson, son of Tracy Christenson, who was born on March 19<sup>th</sup>

Patrick Cummings, son of Carol Cummings, born March 30<sup>th</sup>

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

Evan Douglas Epoch, son of Nancy S. Epoch, born March 10<sup>th</sup>



John Carl Harrington, son of Mary Harrington died March 18<sup>th</sup>

Jaime M. Harrington, daughter of Mary Harrington, born and died February 3<sup>rd</sup>

Nason John Hobelman, son of Dee Hobelman, who was born on February 14<sup>th</sup>

Zachary James Hudec, son of Greg and Liz Hudec, died March 25<sup>th</sup>

Bradley "Brad" Hurla, son of Mike and Judy Hurla, who died on February 15<sup>th</sup>

Karen Kay Kames, daughter of Wilson and Maxine Kames, born March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Ben Lake, grandson of Patty Lake, who was born on March 21<sup>st</sup>

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

Gylmn Guerry Lough, son of Billy D. and Inez G. Lough, died Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>



Billy Lucas, son of Bernie and Jeanette Bialek, died on February 18<sup>th</sup>

William Henry "Hank" Lumpkin, son of Joe and Penny Lumpkin, born February 1<sup>st</sup>



Amy Lundin, daughter of Ralph and Judy Lundin, born on February 16<sup>th</sup>

Belinda Meier, daughter of Maggie Walshire, who died on March 20<sup>th</sup>

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 19<sup>th</sup>

Kiley Ramey, daughter of Gary and Linda Ramey, born February 28<sup>th</sup>

Otto G. Schnellbacher, son of Mary Therese Sanders, who died on February 20<sup>th</sup>

Brittany Nicole Tucker, daughter of Damon and Collene Tucker, died March 11<sup>th</sup>

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

Jason R. VanDam, son of Will and Kay Hasty, born March 25<sup>th</sup>



Mary Jane Vamer, daughter of Will and Kay Hasty, born February 8<sup>th</sup>

Michael Scott Watson, son of Warren and Beth Watson, who died on February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Christopher Wempe, son of Dan and JoAnn Wempe, born March 9<sup>th</sup>

Taylor William Clay Watson, son of Terry and Kathy Watson, died March 16<sup>th</sup>

Baby Boy Williams, son of Todd and Kathleen Williams, stillborn February 23<sup>rd</sup>

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

(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 as long as you remain active on our mailing list. . 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 \_\_\_\_\_

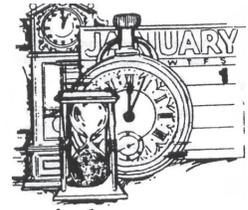
Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

**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**

# 7 Grief Strategies for the New Year

By Brad Stetson, [www.bradstetson.com](http://www.bradstetson.com)



The old saying is true: “If there is an elephant in the room, introduce him.” No good purpose is served by denial, yet we are very good at it. And when it comes to facing the pain of our grief with both eyes open, we often turn away instead. But when we have a psychological elephant in the room of our mind, we should acknowledge him, and plan a way to shrink him down to a manageable size then get him on his way. If we’ve had a loss recently, the new year provides a good opportunity for us to be honest about the pain of our grief, and resolve in the months to come to be proactive and do the necessary griefwork to begin addressing the elephant in the room.

## **#1. Write yourself a comforting and encouraging letter.**

Imagine you had a friend who you cared deeply for, and imagine that friend had just experienced the death of someone they love very much. You would want to help them, you’d want to comfort then and encourage them. Well, now substitute yourself for that friend. You are worthy of being comforted and encouraged too, so write yourself a letter saying to yourself the same sorts of things you would say to a good friend. Then, read the letter aloud to yourself once or twice, put it away for a few days or a week, then read it again. Do this for a few months, then write yourself a second letter, and so on. This is an act of self-compassion, treating yourself as gently as you would treat someone else. Avoid thinking that you are so ‘strong’ or ‘solid’ that you don’t need help and tender compassion. That is a misunderstanding of strength and personal fortitude. Feeling intense sorrow and bereavement is not a sign of weakness, to the contrary, it is a sign of deep humanity and personal capacity to love.

## **#2. Buy a big calendar, and use it.**

One of the main problems bereaved people face is the feeling that one day drags into the next, always the same. Grieving people also sometimes get pressured by other well-meaning people into doing activities they really don’t want to do. An ‘appointment calendar’ can solve both of those problems. Large calendars, like a desk calendar, give you room to write. So as the new year begins, grab your pen, sit down with the calendar, and start filling your days with appointments. Appointments with whom? Well, most importantly, with yourself. Without isolating yourself or taking yourself out of social circulation, you can pen in some ‘self-time’ and thereby reserve a lot of valuable quiet time. Now this quiet time does not have to be momentous. Just by reserving time for yourself, you will give yourself time to breathe and reflect as the new year, with all of its demands and changes, unfolds. Appointments like “movie with me,” or “reading with me,” “journaling with me” or “recreation with me” make it possible for you to always be able to tell others, when asked to go somewhere or do something, “Let me check my calendar, I may have an appointment.” This way you can say “No” in a socially graceful way, and if you want to accept someone’s invitation, you can always break an appointment with yourself, no one will be upset about that.

## **#3. Move your body, move your mind.**

As you slowly adjust to your life without the physical presence of your loved one who died, it’s vital you get outside and move your body. Notice, I didn’t say “exercise,” since for some people that may sound daunting (What do I wear? What gym do I join? What are the elements of my workout?). No need to make it a big undertaking, you’re not training for the Olympics. So pick short, achieve-able goals, like a very short hike, a walk around the block, a bike ride to the park, etc. Keep these jaunts short, as this will give you a sense of accomplishment, and you will derive the physical and psychological benefits of having enlisted your body in your ongoing encounter with grief. This is a great habit to form in the new year.

## **#4. Realize that you do not need to “understand” your grief, or fit your loss into your religious or philosophical worldview right now.**

When I coached Little League, I established the One Minute Rule. It was this: If I, or any player, gets hit by a batted or thrown baseball, whatever the person hit by the ball says for the first minute after being hit, is OK. Screaming and accusations were common after being hit by the baseball, but everyone knew that you got a free pass for a minute. And they knew that after a minute the hit person had to be ready to move on. Well, bereaved people get a lot longer than a minute, or a month, or a year, to integrate their experience into the rest of their outlook on life. So don’t feel any anxiety about fully grasping what has happened to you. Time will help clear your mind, and you will eventually be able to cognitively address your loss, the pain it has brought you, and the changes in your life that have ensued.

## **#5. Decide that in the new year, you will, in some new way, begin to focus a bit more on others, as a part of your loved one’s legacy.**

This is a valuable change you can make in your life. We all need to get out of our skin for a while, we need to get out of ourselves and just focus on other people, and their problems. Sometimes this helps us gain a fresh perspective on our own life. So plan on doing that this new year, and as you do it, you will no doubt talk with new people, and when the opportunity presents itself tell them about your loved one who has died. You don’t have to tell your loved one’s life story or anything like that, just mention them in passing, or say “My wife used to like to do this (activity).” You may feel a bit more comfortable talking about your loved one with people who didn’t know him or her, and it is very valuable to begin to talk out loud—in the past tense—about your loved one. It may be shocking for you to hear yourself speak out loud in the past tense about someone so close to you, but it will help you integrate their death into your life. Where do you go to be around other people? Start with local civic groups, like the Boys and Girls Club, the Historical Society, the

## 7 Strategies for the New Year (cont'd)

Kiwanis or Elks, the Library, Big Brothers and Sisters, a Habitat for Humanity project or a Rescue Mission.

### #6. Listen to the Music.

A recent study I saw asserted that sad people who listen to their favorite music that matches their mood, report feeling better. Music is therapeutic and soothing. Throughout human religious and cultural history, music has been central to the expression of human values and sentiments. Sit down with a pen and paper, and make a short list of some songs of different types that you have always liked. Then go to youtube.com and search for them and listen to them, or go to the library and listen to them, or order them online (if you are not accustomed to doing that on a computer, ask a friend to do it for you). Just get the music playing so you can listen to it. And as you do, let your mind take you where it will—daydream—and after a while I'll bet you'll feel relaxed and even renewed.

### #7. Wishing you well.

As the new year begins, write down what your loved one would want for you in the new year. Trouble imagining what that might be? It's probably the same as what you would wish for your loved one, had you been the one that died. So sit down at the computer, or put pen to paper, and make a list of five or seven or ten states of mind or attitudes or commodities that your loved one would want for you to attain as you move forward without

## Surviving Anniversaries

By Clara Hinton / Feb. 04, 2003

We learn from little up to mark special dates on our calendars. We write those dates in our journals. And, we anticipate several holidays each year. We love to celebrate joyful anniversaries! Our culture promotes this tradition of making note of special days and taking time away from our daily routine in order to observe anniversary dates.

When a child dies, there often is an entirely new slant on the way we view special anniversaries such as birthdays, a baby's due date, family vacations, or other significant days. Often, these anniversary days that were once anticipated with such joy have now become a source of dread and fear. The question is asked, "How will I survive the day?" An ominous feeling overcomes a parent as the anniversary day approaches.

How can a parent survive anniversary days when a child has died? Begin by telling someone about your fears. Don't try to face the day alone. Remind yourself that many times the build-up to the dreaded anniversary day is most often worse than the actual day.

Be aware of your needs, and take time to address those needs. Do you need time alone to visit the gravesite? Would it help to invite a few close friends to your home to reminisce good times shared with your child? Do you want to "do something" in order to give you a feeling of validating your grief on this anniversary day? Many have found that planting a flower, releasing a balloon, or reading a letter at the gravesite that you've written has tremendous healing power.

Be sure to pay special attention to your physical, as well as

them physically with you. For example, my mother would want me to look toward the future, and not be paralyzed by mourning. Or, my father would want me to be optimistic about what will happen to me this year, or my sister would want me to buy those expensive boots we used to talk about. And then, armed with your list, choose one of those dispositions or possessions and pursue it. Look back at your list after a few months, and check off the outlook or object you now have. Deliberately choose to achieve something your loved one would want you to have in this new year. By doing so, you will honor their memory.

So often, we think of grief or bereavement as something that happens to us, instead of something we do. This is unfortunate, since passivity and inaction will not help us to engage the new reality of loss in our lives. This is not to say that grief is a "problem" we can solve, or a "condition" we can hurry up and make go away, but it is to say that we can be active participants and even helpful agents in our own emotional well-being. By deliberately and purposefully facing our sorrow, and calmly, carefully thinking about what we can do to help integrate our sorrow into our larger life, we can contribute to forging our new identity. And this is a powerful choice to make as a new year and our new lives dawn.

Source: Reprinted with permission from *Grief Digest*, October 2015, Centering Corporation, Omaha, Nebraska, 866-218-0101

emotional, needs as the anniversary day approaches. Get extra rest. Stress and anxiety deplete the body of energy and tax every one of the body's resources. Eat nutritious meals, especially paying close attention to food that will aid you in maintaining a balanced diet. This is not a time to fill yourself with junk foods that have little to no nutritious value. Be sure to get ample exercise each day. Walking will get you outside of the house and will help your cardiovascular system which, in turn, will improve your overall health. Physical activity will also release chemicals that will help to improve your emotional health during times of stress, too.

Always be sure to drink adequate fluids every day, especially water. It is vitally important to keep your body hydrated. Staying hydrated helps you to stay mentally alert and physically healthy. Good self-care is not selfish. Rather, taking care of yourself is essential.

Create new memories and new traditions for anniversary dates. Trying to keep everything the same following the death of a child is an impossible and unrealistic task. When your child died, all of life changed dramatically. Try doing something different to help you get through the anniversary day. If you always ate dinner at a favorite restaurant on your child's birthday, then order take-out food, and eat dinner in or find a new favorite restaurant. Choose something that will be healing and will still validate your grief and loss. Try to honor the day with positive memories of your times with your child. In the case of early pregnancy loss, you can observe the day by recalling those precious few moments you had when your dreams were being realized.

Above all else, remember that there is no right or wrong way to survive anniversaries now that your child has died. When you get through the day, you will feel relieved as you note that you have survived. A new milestone in your grief work has been reached.

## 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

### ***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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Pozez Center (north side of Stormont Vail). Contact Information: Sandy Reams 785-249-3792 or email sreams67@gmail.com

**Pregnancy and Infant Loss Group** - Meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 [rosen@stormontvail.org](mailto:rosen@stormontvail.org). For information call (785) 354-5225.

**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>.

### **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 ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)), 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.

## 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 - *Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver*  
Moderators: Robin Landry and Rebecca Perkins  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/858226880883307/>

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/>

### **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!

### **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 71 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](mailto: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.

# **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.**

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
AT TOPEKA, KS  
PERMIT # 547

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **TCF CREDO**

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.