



The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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NEWSLETTER - Issue #6
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National TCF Website:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:
www.tcftopeka.org

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

NOVEMBER MEETING

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

How I Wish Others Could Be More Supportive - We all know how important it is for us to be supported as we heal from the loss of our beloved child, grandchild or sibling. Sometimes we find support comes from unexpected places. Sometimes we find that those we thought would be most supportive aren't. Family, friends and co-workers all make up the support network we need during our grief journey. We will discuss how people have been supportive for us, how we wish they could have been more supportive, and the relationship issues that may have resulted from any lack of expected support.

DECEMBER MEETING

Monday, October 14, 2015
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Memorial Candle Lighting - Please plan to join us for this special event to honor the lives of our children, grandchildren and siblings who "left too soon". You are asked to bring a framed desktop photo of your loved one (if you do not have photos, plan to bring something that represents them to you). During the Candle Lighting we will share special music, poetry and each person will have an opportunity to light a votive candle in memory of that special life and place that candle by their photo/memento. After the Candle Lighting we will have a time for fellowship and refreshments. You are encouraged to bring your child's favorite holiday treat to share with the group. Votive candles are provided.

Please note date change. This special event takes the place of our regular December meeting

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:

Mike and Ginny Becerra in loving memory of their daughter
Lori Ann Becerra who was born and died on December 15th

Ann Criger in loving memory of her grandson,
Hunter Levi Terrell who died on November 22nd

Mark and Debi Harvey in loving memory of their son
Nathan Harvey who was born on December 9th



Gene and Sandy Reams in loving memory of their son
Adam J. Reams who was born on November 24th

Joe and Ann Steinbock in loving memory of their
son Jeff Steinbock who was born on December 13th

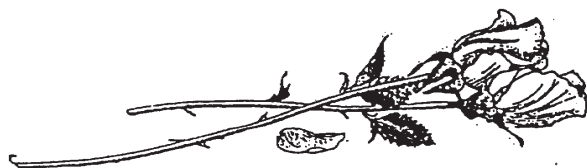
David & Laura Wiebler in loving memory of their son Eric
Edward Gordon Wiebler who was born on November 11th

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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Look Inside For Important Message

The Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee has some important information concerning the future of this newsletter and the continued existence of this Compassionate Friends Chapter in Topeka. We ask that you please read the message carefully so that you might better understand the current financial difficulties the Chapter is experiencing and ways in which you can help. Thank you.



We Need Not Walk Alone

Important Message from the Chapter Steering Committee

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

The following is an important message from the Topeka TCF Steering Committee and we encourage you to read it thoroughly. The Topeka TCF Chapter has been in existence serving bereaved families in northeast Kansas since July of 1976. All of the work of the Chapter is carried out by volunteers who are themselves bereaved parents, grandparents or siblings. Our Topeka Chapter has no paid staff.

Our TCF Chapter is one of over 900 across the USA. All TCF Chapters are nonprofit entities under the 501(c)(3) designation of The Compassionate Friends, Inc. According to the bylaws under which we operate, our Chapter is not allowed to charge any dues or fees for individuals and/or families to participate in our support group meetings, receive our newsletter, utilize the resources of our lending library or website, or participate in any of our Memorial Events. We operate strictly on donations made by members in memory of their child, grandchild or sibling, and occasional sponsorships from local businesses.

Few people, aside from the Steering Committee members, are aware of what it takes financially to successfully operate this TCF Chapter, so we thought we would give you some examples of the expenses associated with maintaining our Chapter at its current level.

1. The average cost of a 12-page newsletter is approximately \$500.00 per issue. (You will note that the issue in your hands is only 8 pages because that is what our treasury could afford this time around.)
2. The average cost of mailing the newsletter to our list of over 425 families and professionals is \$65.00 per mailing. We mail this newsletter under our nonprofit bulk-rate permit. We also have to pay an annual \$220.00 fee to the U.S. Postal Service to maintain use of this permit.
3. Unlike many TCF Chapters across the country we do not have to pay any fees for our support group meeting space. Most Pure Heart of Mary Parish has been very supportive and generous in offering our group free meeting space and also storage space for our library and meeting supplies. We do try each year to make a small donation to the MPH Children's Fund to show our appreciation for their support.
4. At our monthly support group meetings, along with access to our lending library, we also provide free handouts of various topics on grief and the bereavement experience. These handouts cost about \$250.00 a year to reprint.
5. In order to reach out to newly bereaved families and let them know of our existence, we send out First Contact Packets about a month after the obituary has appeared in the newspaper. These packets (and many of you may have received one) provide info on our group, what services and resources we have to offer, and also adds the new family to our newsletter mailing list where they will remain for one full year unless they request to be removed. These packets cost the Chapter about \$1.60 each with postage, personalized letter, assorted brochures and newsletter included. We send an average of 7-12 packets every six weeks.
6. Our Memorial Events also come with a cost. For example, our Memorial Picnic and Dove Release costs the Chapter \$150.00 for the rental of the shelter house and \$150.00 for the doves. Additional costs include paper-ware, beverages, programs, etc. for this event. Our Memorial Candle Lighting includes costs for votive holders and candles, refreshments, programs, song sheets, etc. Our Walk to Remember event, which we were not able to hold this year due to the increased fees from Topeka/Shawnee County Parks and Recreation, also came with expenses including rental of Snyder's Cabin in Gage Park. The Walk was our major fundraiser the past several years and this year we had no income from it since the event was not held. We hope to find options to allow us to hold a Walk to Remember in April of 2016.

The bottom line is that our expenses have remained pretty constant over time, but our income stream has diminished considerably. In 2014 we held a Walk to Remember and realized \$1426.00 in income from Walk registrations, and local business sponsorships. In 2015 we did not have this income. In 2014 we had \$1405.00 in Newsletter Sponsorships; in 2015 we have only received \$910.00 in Newsletter Sponsorships. In 2014 we received \$801.00 in Love Gifts; in 2015 we have received \$506.00. So where do we go from here to maintain the support and services to bereaved families in our area?

In this newsletter is the yellow form that you must return **by February 15, 2016** if you wish to remain on the newsletter mailing list for 2016. The form offers you the opportunity to do several things: 1) Sponsor a newsletter in memory of your child; 2) Send in a Love Gift in memory of that special life; and 3) Elect to receive the newsletter electronically rather than in hard copy (this will cut down on the number of copies we need to print and mail).

We would also encourage those of you who work to check with your employer to see if they have a Matching Gifts program that can double the amount of your donation by simply filing some paperwork. Our Chapter has also been accepted for the Dillions Community Rewards Program where, if you sign up, TCF will receive a percentage of your purchase price every time you scan your Rewards card when you shop at any Dillions store. There is another sheet in this newsletter explaining the program and showing you how to get signed up. Money from this source is known as "passive income" as there is no special effort that has to be made other than do your regular grocery shopping and scan your Rewards card. This income, however, will take time to build up and does not solve our immediate cash-flow issues but may prove helpful over time depending on level of member participation.

We thank you for reading this message and we are hopeful that we may continue to be able to provide hope and support for bereaved families in our area. Please consider a Newsletter Sponsorship, Love Gift, or year-end donation (all fully tax-deductible) to help the Topeka TCF Chapter continue to fulfill the TCF vision statement "That everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped".

In Loving Memory of All Our Kids,
Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

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:

♥ *Maxine Karnes in loving memory of her daughter Karen Kay Karnes who died on November 17th* ♥

♥ *Gary & Susan Chan in loving memory of their daughter Rachael Reneé Chan who was born on December 28th* ♥

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

December 13, 2015 - 7:00 p.m. (CST) The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. For more details see the national TCF website at www.compassionatefriends.org. An online Memorial Book will be available to leave a message for or about your child that night.

December 14, 2015 - 7:00-8:30 p.m. at regular meeting place. The Topeka TCF Chapter Memorial Candle Lighting. Votive candles are provided. Bring a photo of your child, grandchild or sibling in a tabletop frame for the Memory Tables. This event takes the place of our regular December support group meeting. You are also encouraged to bring your child's favorite holiday treat to share with the group.

July 8-10, 2016 - The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Scottsdale, Arizona, will be the site of the 39th 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 will open January 1, 2016. Conference Registration will begin February 1, 2016. Watch this newsletter, our Chapter website (www.tcftopeka.org) or the National TCF website (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.

An extra special "Thank You" to Apple Market in Seabrook for providing the meat and buns for our 2015 Memorial Picnic and Dove Release held September 26th at Lake Shawnee.

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

Olivia Anderson, daughter of Todd and Suzannah Anderson; sister of Eli Anderson, who died on January 17th

Lori Ann Becerra, daughter of Mike and Ginny Becerra, born on December 15th and died on December 15th

Ryan Broxterman, son of Kevin and Susan Broxterman, who died on December 6th



Rachael Reneé Chan, daughter of Gary and Susan Chan, born on December 28th

“Junior” Dickinson, son of Curtis and Debbi Dickinson, stillborn on December 24th

Angel Winter Dawn Dickinson, daughter of Curtis and Debbi Dickinson, stillborn on December 25th

Claire Elise Fisher, daughter of Debra Fisher, who died on January 2nd

Ryan Flanagan, son of Dennis Flanagan, who died on December 3rd

Spenser Thomas Good, son of Margaret Kramer, born on January 30th



John Carl Harrington, son of Mary Harrington, born on December 15th

Nathan Harvey, son of Mark and Debi Harvey; brother of Rachel, Amanda and Caleb Harvey; grandson of Velata Tibbs, born on December 9th

Shawn Michael Hatfield, son of Hank and Cathy Harman, born on January 11th; died on December 5th

David D. Morris, son of Merwin (Bud) and Velma C. Morris, born on December 18th

Eric Alan Palmberg, son of Jim and Doris Palmberg, who died on January 1st



Greg Lee Paulson, son-in-law of Frank and Brenda Bissey and brother-in-law of Brad Bissey, born on January 24th

Adam James Reams, son of Gene and Sandy Reams, brother of Nick Reams, who died on January 23rd

Kathryn (Katie) Rush, daughter of Thomas and Barbara Rush, died on January 24th

Jamie Lynn Russell, daughter of John and Elaine Chandler, born on January 7th; died on December 29th

Evan Michael Schuetz, son of Tom and Debbie Schuetz, born on January 23rd

Gregg W. Scott, son of Garry and Jo Scott, died on December 8th



Patrick Sprowl, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sprowl, who died on December 10th

Jeffery Alan Steinbock, son of Joe and Anne Steinbock, born on December 13th

Keith Strathman, son of Don and Julie Strathman, brother of Becky Strathman, died on January 8th

Brandon Toler, son of Marty Tyson, who died on January 18th

Mary Jane Varner, daughter of Will and Kay Hasty, died on January 3rd

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

Capacity to Love Part II

By Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Director
Center for Loss & Life Transitions, Ft. Collins, CO

***“We are all mirrors unto one another.
Look into me and you will find something of yourself as I will of you.”***

~ Walter Rinder

Love is a sacred partnership of communion with another human being. You take each other in, and even when you are apart, you are together. Wherever you go, you carry the person inside you.

Communion means the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially on a spiritual level. When two people love one another, they are connected. They are entwined.

The word “communion” comes from the Old French *comuner*, which means “to hold in common.” Note that this is different than “to have in common.” You may have very little in common with another person yet you can love them wholeheartedly. Instead, you hold things in common—that is, you consciously choose to share one another’s lives, hopes and dreams. You hold her heart, and she holds yours.

This experience of taking another person inside your heart is beyond definition and defies analysis. It is part of the mystery of love. Love has its own way with us. It knocks on our hearts and invites itself in. It cannot be seen, but we realize it has happened. It cannot be touched, yet we feel it.

When someone we love dies, we feel a gaping hole inside us. I have companioned hundreds of mourners who have said to me, “When she died, I felt like part of me died, too.” In what can feel like a very physical sense, something that was inside us now seems missing. We don’t mourn those who die from the outside in; we mourn them from the inside out.

The absence of the person you love wounds your spirit, creates downward movement in your psyche, and transforms your heart. Yet, even though you feel there is now a “hole inside you,” you will also come to learn (if you haven’t already) that those you love live on in your heart. You remain in communion with those you love forever and are inextricably connected to them for eternity.

Yes, you will grieve the person’s absence and need to express your feelings of grief. You must mourn. You must commune with your grief and take it into your heart, embracing your many thoughts and feelings. When you allow yourself to fully mourn, over time and with the support of others who care about you, you will come to find that the person you lost does indeed still live inside you.

Love abides in communion—during life and after death. And mourning is communion with your grief. With communion, comes understanding, meaning and a life of richness.

Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

***“Accept the things to which fate binds you,
and love the people with whom fate brings you together,
but do so with all your heart.”***

~ Marcus Aurelius

When you love another person, it can feel like one plus one equals three. I’m sure you’ve heard the saying, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Love is like that. Two people can come together and form a partnership that enables each person to be “more” in so many ways.

Here’s another way to think about this idea: Love is like an orchestra. You

may be a clarinet—a strong, fine wind instrument all by yourself. But when you surround yourself with other instruments, each of whom do the work of carrying their own parts and practicing their own music, together, as a group, you can blow the doors off the place.

I much prefer this expansive concept of love over the long-held reductionist belief that “two become one.” If two become one, both participants in the relationship are diminished. Conversely, what truly feeds the soul of a loving relationship is expansion, mutual-nurturance and growth.

Without doubt, being part of a synergistic, two-makes-three relationship requires a conscious commitment. Did your relationship with the person who died feel enhancing or diminishing? In synergistic relationships, there has to be space and encouragement to be real and authentic. Were you empowered to be your true self or disempowered to be something you were not? Did your two make three, or did your two make you less than one? If so, perhaps you are now faced with mourning what you never had but wished you did. How human is that?

If, on the other hand, your relationship with the person who died made you greater than the sum of your parts, what happens now that one of you is gone? You may feel diminished. You may feel empty. You may feel “less than.” Your self-identity may even seem to shrink as you struggle with your changing roles. If you are no longer a wife (or a mother or a sister or a daughter), what are you?

Also, the experience of mourning can feel piecemeal—a cry here, a burst of anger there; a deep sadness today, a crush of guilt tomorrow. You might feel a sense of disorientation from the scattered and ever-changing nature of your grief.

But when you trust in the process of grief and you surrender to the mystery, you will find that mourning, like love, is also greater than the sum of its parts. Leaning into your grief and always erring on the side of expressing rather than inhibiting or ignoring your thoughts and feelings—no matter how random and disjointed they might seem some days—will bring you to a place of transformation. You will not just be different from the person you were before the death. You will be greater. Your experience of love and grief will create a changed you who has not only survived but who has learned to thrive again in a new form and in a new way.

And just as love connects you to others, so should grief. You need the listening ears and open hearts of others as you express your thoughts and feelings about the death. You need the support of others as you mourn.

Yes, love and grief are both greater than the sum of their parts. The lesson I take from this is that whenever you engage fully and openly in life, experiencing both the joys and the sorrows head on, you are living the life you were meant to live.

“Reprinted with permission from Grief Digest. Centering Corporation, Omaha, Nebraska, 866-218-0101.”

(Editor’s Note: Part I of this article appeared in the July/August 2015 newsletter. It may be viewed on the Topeka TCF Chapter website (www.tcftopeka.org) under “Newsletters”. Click on the July/Aug 2015 PDF of this issue.)

About Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Author, educator, and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him. Perhaps best known for his model of “companionship” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well. Learn more at www.centerforloss.com



Helping Yourself Through the Holidays

By Dr. Lee Drake, Ph.D.

The stores and malls are already filled with many of the signs and sounds of the holidays. Each year the frenzies of buying and selling seems to begin earlier and earlier. The merchants want to get as much as possible out of this time of the year so the world is bombarded with the "sights and sounds" of the season.

Most individuals look forward with a certain amount of anticipation to Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas. The one who lost a child, grand child or sibling this past year or even years before looks to this time of year with great dread and even fear.

They wish, in a way, that they could go to bed on November 1st and wake up on January 2nd of next year.

The first holidays after the death of a loved one may be especially difficult for the survivors. If you or someone you know is facing the holiday season and dreading feelings of emptiness, there are a number of things you can do to cope. Don't be afraid to grieve if you need to and set aside time to be alone if you want. You can also relive the happy memories by talking about your loved one to those who care.

It has been suggested that people do what they want to do whether that means staying home, going to religious services or visiting family and friends. If you seem to enjoy this time or a special event, don't feel guilty. Experiencing joy is giving and receiving. This doesn't mean that you have forgotten your child or sibling or that you loved him or her any less.

The griever enters this time of the year with a number of questions about their grief. They have a number of fears and concerns. Let's look at some of them so we can get a better understanding of what the griever sees in most cases:

First, there is the anticipation of the pain of the holidays - the pain of facing "the first" holidays without that very special child. Then there is the fear and pain of other people being happy and joyous when you are not and feel very alone. We live in a family society and

while everyone else will be with family, you will be alone or missing a family member.

Solution - Try to plan ahead and be with someone and spend the day or a few days with those you love. Don't make it taboo to talk about your loved one and balance your time with others with some time alone for yourself.

Second, the fear of preparation for the holidays - Grief is very tiring and taxing. It drains those who are grieving. The holidays are also a very busy and tiring time as we all know. The sending of cards, the buying and wrapping of presents, cooking and giving of gifts. The holiday parties and even the special holiday music and programs seem to make the griever not have any energy at all. They want to be alone and not be involved.

Solution - No one says that you have to do any of those things. If it makes you feel good to cook and bake and buy--do so - if it doesn't, don't. Don't allow others to put you into their mold.

If you decide to do things - make a plan and work it. Send out a few cards a day - buy a gift at a time, not all at once. Pace yourself - don't overdo it! It is most important that you don't impose things on yourself that you can't do.

You might want to use special ways to memorialize your loved one. Suggestions might be:

- Give a gift in memory of your child, grandchild, or sibling.
- Attend a special memorial service and pay respect to those you love and miss.
- Make a special ornament and hang it on a tree in memory of your loved one.
- Do for others and it will make you feel good.
- Organize your shopping with a specific list and budget.
- Divide responsibilities for meals, decorating or wrapping with your family.

Take time for others - Contact your local churches or charities for information about serving food to the homeless or collecting gifts for needy children. This may be especially helpful if you're away from loved ones during the holidays.

Take time for yourself - Enjoy the holiday season as best you can. The purpose of the season is to create happiness. It's OK to have some moments of happiness amidst your grief and you shouldn't feel guilty about that.

Be careful of "shoulds" It is better to do what is most helpful for you and your family and not what others may "should you" into doing. If a situation looks especially difficult over the holidays, try not to get involved.

And don't forget: *Anticipation of any holiday is so much worse than the actual holiday.*

Keep a balance in your life and remember you are loved.

Dr. Drake is a bereaved sibling with a long background on the subject of grief and grief recovery. He is a public relations director for a funeral home group in Florida where he conducts group and individual counseling with bereaved families. he is a published author with articles in several bereavement focused magazines including Thantos. Dr. Drake has also written and published the booklets "Holiday Support" and "Helping the Hurting in Crisis".

This article appeared in the 1997 holiday issue of the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends We Need Not Walk Alone.

The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all children who have died

Worldwide Candle Lighting®

... that their light may always shine.

Sunday, December 13, 2015
7 PM Around the Globe

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 1st and 3rd 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 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 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), 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. 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.

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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.

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Be sure to join us for our Chapter Memorial Candle Lighting at 7 p.m. on Monday, December 14th