



The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Published Bimonthly by The Topeka TCF Chapter

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National TCF Website:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:
www.tcftopeka.org

November ~ December 2016

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

NOVEMBER MEETING

Monday, November 28, 2016
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

DECEMBER MEETING

Monday, December 12, 2016
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Please Note Date Change!!

Grief and Your Health - Grieving is probably the most difficult thing we may do in our lifetime. It is physically, emotionally and spiritually exhausting. The kind of strain we are under as we grieve can certainly affect our health and we need to be particularly mindful of this during the first two years following our loss. We will talk about some of the health issues we may face, strategies for keeping ourselves healthy as we grieve, and ways in which we can move forward on our grief journey without compromising our health.

Memorial Holiday 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 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 or your child's favorite holiday treat to share with the group. Votive candles are provided. PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE: This event takes the place of our regular December support group 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 on December 15th

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

George and Sharon Orff in loving memory of their niece Rachael Reneé Chan who was born on December 28th

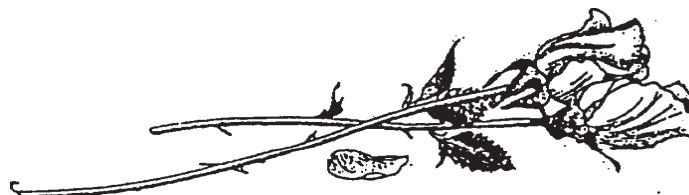


Joe and Ann Steinbock in loving memory of their son Jeff Steinbock who was born on December 13th

David and 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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We Need Not Walk Alone

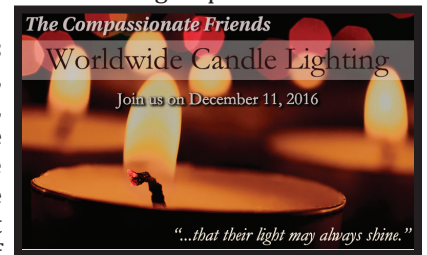
From the Newsletter Editor

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

Our TCF Chapter's 23rd Annual Memorial Picnic and Dove Release held September 17th at Lake Shawnee was a wonderful event with about 35 members and their families attending. I would like to thank all those who helped with the organizing, setting up, and cleaning up for this event. We were able to share special fellowship time together, remember our beloved children, grandchildren and siblings, and enjoy sampling everyone's favorite potluck food items. Because the turnout for this particular event has continued to decline in recent years, the Steering Committee will be discussing whether or not to hold this event in 2017 or to try and organize some other type of event to honor our kids.

Our next memorial event will be our **December Memorial Candle Lighting** which will be held on Monday, December 12, 2016 in the Formation Room at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church. **Please note that this is a date change** from our usual fourth Monday meeting time due to holiday scheduling at the church. This event also **takes the place of our regular December support group meeting**. The event will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. and will include special music, poetry readings and the candle lighting. You are reminded to bring a framed tabletop photo (no larger than 8 x 10 inch) to place on the memory tables. The Chapter will provide votive candles for you to light and place by your loved one's photo. If you do not have a photo available, please feel free to bring a small item representative of your special person. The program and candle lighting will be followed by a social time with refreshments and you are encouraged to bring your child's favorite holiday treat to share with the group.

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting which unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon, will be held on Sunday, October 11, 2016. Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 20th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WWCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten. During this event, candles will be lit at 7:00 p.m. in every time zone across the globe. Every year you are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website (www.compassionatefriends.org).



Dillions Community Rewards Program Helps Fund Chapter Expenses - AN UPDATE - Have you signed up to support our Topeka TCF Chapter yet by using your Dillions Shopper's Card? While we currently have only 18 families signed up, we could bring in a lot more passive income to help meet Chapter expenses if more of you would sign up. I wanted to update you all on how this program is benefitting our TCF Chapter. Our first quarterly check from Kroger was \$38.03 representing 8 households participating. Our second quarterly check was \$53.97 representing 10 households. Our most recent community rewards check was for \$161.52 representing participation by 18 households. As you can see, the more participants we have, the more income we can generate to help cover Chapter expenses such as the printing and mailing of this newsletter, website and memorial event expenses, and resource materials for our library.

I encourage you to go to www.dillions.com/community-rewards and click on "Register" at the top of the page. When you enroll you will be asked to designate which charity you wish to support. The Topeka Compassionate Friends Chapter NPO number is 65403. Once you have done so and have a Dillions Shopper's Card, every time you make a purchase at Dillions a portion of your total will be donated to the Topeka TCF Chapter. Participating in this program **costs you nothing** and **does not affect your fuel points** for gasoline purchases. If you need assistance in setting up your account, call toll-free at 1-800-576-4377 and select Option 3.

As the holiday season is upon us, I urge you to take good care of yourselves during what can be a very stressful time. While making your way through the barrage of holidays with its hustle and bustle, I hope you will hold fast to the beautiful memories of your child, grandchild or sibling...memories that will forever live on in your heart. I hope we will see many of you at our Holiday Memorial Candle Lighting on December 12th

Until next time, be gentle with yourself and let the healing happen. Remember, You Need Not Walk Alone

~ Susan Chan, Rachael's Mom

The melody that the loved one played upon the piano of your life will never be played quite that way again, but we must not close the keyboard and allow the instrument to gather dust. We must seek out other artists of the spirit, new friends who gradually will help us find the road to life again, who will walk that road with us.

~Rabbi Joshua Liebman,
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL



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:

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

♥ *Sheryl R. Bieker in loving memory of Jon Bieker who was born on August 5th and died on January 9th*

♥ *Elena M. Dyche in loving memory of James Arthur Dyche who was born on May 8th and died on April 19th*

♥ *Mark & Debbie Harvey in loving memory of their son Nathan Harvey who was born on December 9th*

♥ *Daniel P. Yoffe in loving memory of Rachael Reneé Chan who was born on December 28th; and in honor of her parents*

Gary and Susan Chan and the work they have done for TCF for the past 24 years

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".

TCF National Office e-mail:

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Compassionate Friends web address:

www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter web and e-mail addresses:

www.tcftopeka.org tcftopeka@gmail.com

Kansas Regional Coordinator:

Marty & Renda Weaver - (785) 823-7191
mweaver@cox.net

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 have already sent in a photo, you need not resend one.*

3. The Memorial Slide Presentation will be a part of our Candle Lighting Memorial on December 12th.

Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

December 11, 2016 - The Compassionate Friends 20th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting. Begins at 7:00 p.m. in each time zone around the world. See the national TCF website for more details (www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

December 12, 2016 - The Topeka TCF Chapter will hold its Memorial Candle Lighting Program at 7:00 p.m. in the Formation Room at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church. Bring a desktop framed photo of your child, grandchild or sibling. Votive Candles provided.

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

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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

Carlie Almond, daughter of Brad and Amy Almond, who died on December 3rd



Olivia Anderson, daughter of 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

Heidi Crarren, daughter of Julie Crarren, who was born on January 22nd

Rebecca Lynne Smith Crismas, daughter of BobbyJean Smith, who died on January 7th

“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, 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, 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, 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

(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 or choose to discontinue receiving this newsletter. This month's listing includes birth and death anniversary dates for December and January.

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

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 lrosen@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 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.

GRIEF

I had my own notion of grief.
I thought it was a sad time
That followed the death of someone you love.
And you had to push through it
To get to the other side.
But I'm learning there is no other side.
There is no pushing through.
But rather,
There is absorption.
Adjustment.
Acceptance.
And grief is not something that you
complete.
But rather you endure.
Grief is not a task to finish,
And move on,
But an element of yourself -
An alteration of your being.
A new way of seeing,
A new definition of self.

~ Gwen Flowers

BREAKTHROUGH

By Nel de Keijzer

The tears of grief
Have washed away
The clouds of sorrow,
And vision now is clarified

I miss you still
But see you new
In light of joy
And smile at your remembrance.

The love we shared
Still here to give
And to experience
The joy that comes from that, IS YOU!!!

Holiday Grief and the Lessons from Tangled Christmas Lights

By Jan Borgman, MSW, LISW-S, FT

I knew the holidays were coming but I didn't want to deal with them and I really didn't want to put up any of the holiday decorations. Well-meaning family and friends kept telling me that I needed to "get into the spirit" of the holidays. I agreed that I would at least get the boxes out of storage and go through them. I soon realized that each box held memories of past holidays and celebrations. At times, I was overwhelmed with the feelings that I experienced as I opened the boxes that held my precious decorations. By the time I found the holidays lights that were at the bottom of a box, I wasn't in the mood to deal with the impossible task that was before me as the lights were a tangled mess.

As I tried to untangle the ball of lights, I began to see this mangled mess as part of my grief journey. I felt tangled in my grief and my emotions were like a ball wadded up within me. It would have been much easier to just toss the lights aside and purchase new ones but I didn't want to face the crowds at the store.

For some reason, I got lost in the distraction as I tried to figure out the best way to untangle the strands of lights that were before me. I plugged them to make sure they worked before I would spend any time dealing with them. Through the tears that had gathered in my eyes, the lights seemed to sparkle. I found comfort in their brightness and I became determined to conquer the mess.

As I sat there trying to find which way to move the wires to get them free, I began to see how this tangled ball of lights represented my experience of grief. I realized that the only way I was going to get through this experience was to be patient. I've learned a lot about being patient as I deal with my grief. It would have been easy, so many times in the past year, to give up and to walk away from the memories and the pain. But when I faced my frustration and fears, I found strength I never knew I had.

This was a similar challenge was I tried to untangle the strands of lights. As the ball became smaller, I knew I was making progress. Each time I thought I was past the worst tangle, I would find another one, but this time it was smaller and easier to figure out. As I work through my grief, the same can be said. Each new challenge seems smaller and easier to manage because of the progress I have already made.

And as I gazed upon the lights, I realized that each of the colors represent a part of my grief. The red lights remind me of the love I shared. I recalled the happy times and the wonderful memories I hold in my heart. The red lights also remind me of the things I need to stop doing such as denying my feelings and blaming myself.



The blue lights represent my sadness. There are times when I feel "blue" or sad. Once I own my feelings of being down they are easier to accept because I'm embracing my pain instead of denying it. Admitting that I was sad made it easier to reach out and ask for help or to find things to distract me.

The yellow lights represent the brightness in my life as I smile at all the memories I hold. I found myself laughing at some of the past holiday experiences and the things we did or shared. I realize how full my life is because of the life we shared. The brightness truly outshines the sadness.

The orange lights remind me that the warmth of our love will always shine upon me because of the life we shared. I hold so many memories and I have been blessed to know the gift of love.

And the green lights represent my hope for the future. Hope gives me permission to move forward with my life as I learn to live with my loss. Learning to live with loss doesn't mean forgetting the person who died but being able to create new memories to compliment the memories already held.

As I finally got the last of the lights untangled, I felt a sense of accomplishment that I stayed with the task and didn't give up. When I plugged them in, I noticed that some of the bulbs were burnt out but the strand of lights were still lit. It reminded me that even though those we love may no longer be with us, they are still part of our lives. Just as the other lights stayed lit, when someone we love dies, it doesn't mean that we have to stop living.

Alone, the colors would not be as bright but together they provide a soft, comforting glow. The lights represent aspects of my life and my grief. The red, blue, yellow, orange and green lights represent my love, my sadness, my memories, my joy and my hope. I have the opportunity to keep the love glowing through my memories and the life I live.

I never imagined that those tangled Christmas lights would help me find meaning in my grief and strength to face the holidays.

Source: *Grief Digest Magazine*

Centering Corporation, 7230 Maple, Omaha, NE 68134
www.centering.org Toll-free: 866-218-0101

The Dreaded Holidays

The holidays are coming, and there are some things we can do to make the season easier to bear. If you are still in that robotic stage of grief, you may not even remember to flip the page of the calendar. People talk about the upcoming holidays and you feel "so what, my child is dead". Don't they understand? Can't they realize you don't feel thankful for anything, let alone look forward to a Thanksgiving dinner?

If it is the first Thanksgiving without your child, grandchild or sibling, give yourself permission to do nothing or as much as you feel comfortable with. As a bereaved parent, we often feel we "ought" to do the traditional thing. That is fine if you have enough energy, but right now don't spend the little bit you have by doing anything that isn't really necessary.

For the bereaved family, the first set of holidays to be faced without their child is especially confusing. Nothing you do will feel normal. You haven't experienced ways to face holidays without your loved one. It is a trial and error matter as we experiment with new ways to observe holidays without our child here. Try to do what you feel you can do. If it doesn't work, don't feel afraid to try something different. Each time you make the effort, each time you try to do something you learn from it. The whole grief thing is new; we haven't mastered it yet. Give yourself a break and don't put unrealistic expectations on yourself or others.

If it has been a while and you feel the need to resume the festivities again, by all means do so. The dreams of a lifetime died when your child died. If you have managed to overcome the pain and suffering, the terrible doubts, the "if onlys", rejoice in the fact you can see hope and a brighter future again. Celebrate and return to those things you once treasured or continue to enjoy the new traditions you may have started.



Whatever you do this holiday season, remember, start early, allow yourself plenty of extra time and keep the stress down as much as possible. Accomplishing small steps gives you the courage to tackle bigger ones. Don't put too much emphasis on doing what others want. As long as you take care of yourself and try to get through things as best you can, you will have done enough. Whenever it all seems like too much, remember, the Compassionate Friends will be there to help however they can. This holiday season, you need not walk alone.

~ Lynn Vines, TCF, South Bay/LA, CA

Remembering with Love

How do we remember our loved one during the holidays after his or her death? How do we find comfort, and what is helpful? For each of us, the answer comes from within. Some of us will embrace the familiar holiday traditions, and others will find new ones that pay tribute to the memory of our loved one. However you celebrate, we hope the holidays are filled with love, happy memories, and renewal for the new year.



It may be hard to be in the same place that you spent holidays together with your loved one. You may opt for a change of scene and go away, or you may stay home with the family members and friends whom you find most comforting.

Here are some suggestions other families have found helpful during the holiday season:

- Seek to share some of the season with those whose company you enjoy.
- Have a living Christmas tree, which you later plant, as part of your holiday remembrance.
- Buy a gift for a needy child or adult.
- Decorate the outside of a photo album with holiday trimmings, fill the album with past pictures of the holidays with your loved one and leave it out for others to look at. Include empty pages for people to write about their own memories or attach favorite photos.
- If hanging stocking is a part of your tradition, you may wish to also hang the stocking of your deceased child, grandchild or sibling and encourage friends and family to write down memories they have of that person and put them in the stocking.
- Attend a candle lighting service or light a candle in memory of your loved one. Remember that Sunday, December 11, 2016 is TCF's Worldwide Candle Lighting Observance beginning at 7:00 p.m. in each time zone. See more info on this at www.compassionatefriends.org
- Make ornaments in memory of your loved one and encourage grieving children to do the same.
- Share anecdotes and favorite stories. Sometimes others need permission from you to talk about the person who has died. Let them know you would rather keep their memory alive than pretend nothing has changed.

~ Partially excerpted from *For Those Who Give and Grieve*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Fall 1997 by Denise Stone, RN, MS.

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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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.