



OCTOBER—NOVEMBER—DECEMBER 2025



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

"A Nonprofit Self-Help Organization for Families Who Have Experienced the Death of a Child"
6705 SW 15th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97219 ~ (503) 307-8450 ~ www.portlandtcf.org

PORTLAND TCF WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY 2025

Please join us to celebrate our children at the 29th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting; a 24 hour virtual light around the world. Family & friends are welcome.

Sunday, December 14th - 7 pm.

**Please arrive by 6:45 to be sure you have your candle & are seated by the 7 pm. lighting.*



Sunnyside Seventh Day Adventist Church

(former Tuesday meeting location)

10501 SE Market St., Portland, OR 97216

- ♥ Candles will be provided. However, you are welcome to bring your own battery-operated candle.
- ♥ If you are interested in an origami butterfly please refer to page 13 for the order form.
- ♥ Social time will follow in the fellowship hall. Dessert & beverages will be provided.

- ♥ *There will be a slideshow of our loved ones during the ceremony.*

If you would like your child included in the slideshow (if you haven't done so before) please send a photo with your child's name & birthdate to Diane, dbar1207@comcast.net or mail to 6705 SW 15th Ave, Portland, OR 97219.



Deadline for photo submission is Monday, December 8, 2025

We hope to see you there!

PLEASE JOIN US ON THE 1ST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH @ 10:30 AM

First United Methodist Church, 1838 SW Jefferson, Rm. #134, Portland, OR 97205

FOR MORE INFORMATION: (503) 307-8450

Chapter Leader

Carolyn Harrington
(503) 307-8450
linerharrington@gmail.com

Saturday Leader

Nancy "Jag" Best
(503) 260-0378
jagstaruar@gmail.com

Saturday Leaders

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Debra Moon
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WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit, self-help organization composed of bereaved parents/grandparents & siblings. We offer friendship and understanding. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause, is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child/sibling and about the feelings they experience through the grieving process.

There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child/sibling, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings & issues that evolve around the death of a child.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

THE MUSIC BOX

GENESIS—SINCE I LOST YOU

By Phil Collins

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnjwdrZ2Gqg&list=RDPnjwdrZ2Gqg&start_radio=1

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Email your address change to Jenna Moon,
Member Database at jennarmoon84@gmail.com



~ CALENDAR ~

Oct. 4—Portland TCF in-person meeting
Oct. 13—Indigenous Day/Columbus Day
Nov. 1—Portland TCF in-person meeting
Nov. 2—Daylight Saving Time ends
Nov. 11—Veteran's Day
Nov. 27—Thanksgiving
Dec. 6—Portland TCF in-person meeting
Dec. 15—Hanukkah/Chanukah begins
Dec. 21—Winter Solstice
Dec. 25—Christmas Day



Future TCF meetings:
January 3rd, February 7th, March 7th, 2026

Please visit our newly designed website: portlandtcf.org

OTHER TCF CHAPTERS IN THE AREA

CLACKAMAS COUNTY CHAPTER #2047

4th Tuesday of the month 7:00 pm.
NAMI, 10202 SE 32nd Ave., Suite 501, Milwaukie, OR 97222

Phone contact Ellen White (503) 502-7767

EUGENE/SPRINGFIELD CHAPTER #2571

Willamette Christian Center
2500 W. 18th Ave. Eugene, OR 97402

*Contact Chapter co-facilitators Rachael at 541-221-5792
or Ben at 541-704-5938 or eugspfdtcf@gmail.com
for meeting dates & times

WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAPTER #1901

2nd Tuesday of the month 6:30—8:30 pm.
Reeds Crossing Health Center Building—Conference Room
7305 SE Circuit Dr., Hillsboro, OR

Phone contact: Phyllis H. (503) 310-2504

We Need Not Walk Alone magazine shares poems, articles, and expressions that touch the hearts of bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Items in the magazine offer different perspectives and experiences of grief from those who have been bereaved for varying lengths of time. We hope that you find the magazine relatable, supportive and filled with hope.

*You can find this e-mag at
www.compassionatefriends.org



Please support Portland TCF!

Just by shopping at Fred Meyer with your Rewards Card!! Through their Community Rewards Program they donate to local community organizations/nonprofits of your choice. You just link your Rewards Card and scan it every time you shop at Freddy's.

*Whenever you use your Rewards Card you will be helping Portland TCF earn a donation from Fred Meyer.

*You will still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points & Rebates, just as you do today.

Please see page 12 for more information.



The holidays can be very difficult when you're grieving the loss of a beloved child, grandchild, brother or sister. Please know that you are not alone. At The Compassionate Friends, we offer support in a variety of ways, both in-person and virtually. We hope that you will seek out our services as you need them.

- ♥ Online magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*. Current & archived issues available.
 - ♥ Find a local support group near you.
 - ♥ To find support online through one of our Facebook groups
 - ♥ To find support online through our chats
 - ♥ Read articles on our blog from bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents & professionals
- Booklet, *The Grief of Parents*

If you know someone who is newly bereaved who could use our support, please share this website to request a bereavement packet:

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/to-the-newly-bereaved/>.

To learn more about The Compassionate Friends, visit [compassionatefriends.org](https://www.compassionatefriends.org)

"In the Compassionate Friends, we never try to measure whose grief is worse or what kind of death is harder ... because for the one who carries the pain, his burden is heaviest.

~ From the Louisville, KY TCF



Love Notes

A Love Gift is a special note to your child that is printed in the newsletter. It is a wonderful way to remember and honor their memory! Families often submit these either on their birthday or anniversary date of their child, but it can be done at any time! There is no charge for printing a Love Gift, but many families choose to donate a tax deductible contribution to help support TCF expenses such as rent, brochures, outreach, special events, etc.

Please complete the form on the back page with your love note & submit with your favorite photo. To include a picture with your Love Gift, please email your special photo to debsmoon@gmail.com

DEADLINE to submit for the next newsletter is DECEMBER 10, 2025.

In Loving Memory of

CONFIDENTIAL

In Loving Memory of

CONFIDENTIAL

Take the love you shared with me and spread it out with gladness. My life will not have been in vain if you can fight the sadness. Take the love, it's yours to carry on. Grow that love forevermore and then I won't be gone.

~ Author unknown



FACEBOOK PAGE

Please join us at "[TCF PORTLAND](#)"

This a private Facebook group for the Portland members only.

♥ Since this is a private page, you will be asked a couple questions from the administrators when you request to join.

Administrators - Debra Moon, Bev Waterworth



Our children lovingly remembered...

CONFIDENTIAL

Our children lovingly remembered...

CONFIDENTIAL

Our children lovingly remembered...

CONFIDENTIAL

Our children lovingly remembered...

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



On Veteran's Day while we were here at home,
they traveled land and sea,
To make sure we stayed safe,
to protect and keep us free.

Words are not enough; to give them what they're due.
On Veteran's Day please thank them for their service,
to me and you.

~ Joanna Fuchs, Poemsources.com

First Encounter

When grief first enters our life, it tends to invade us ...
completely and ... relentlessly.

We are without comfort,
we do not feel pleasure, we find no joy.
We ache in mind and body. We feel weak and numb.
In the deepest core of our being, we are ready to
accept that we will never know happiness again.
What's more, we feel that this state is entirely
appropriate, natural and irreversible.
Nothing can convince us that, given time,
we will learn to live again.

But we will.

~ Sascha Wagner, TCF, Des Moines, IA

When Grief Comes Knocking

~ by Liz Newman

When grief first came knocking,
I thought I had two choices.
I could lock the door, close the blinds,
activate alarms, and shut it out.
But I still lived in fear of its intrusion,
of it finding a way around my security systems,
around my defenses.

Or I could invite it over for morning coffee,
I would set the terms, block out the time.
I would get my house in order and sit beside it,
let it say its piece and send it away
as quickly as it came.

But grief doesn't care much
for schedules or facades.
An unexpected visitor who comes
and goes as it pleases.

So, now I'm learning another way.
When grief comes to visit,
I leave the door unlocked.
Sometimes it frantically storms in,
sometimes, it taps quietly on the door
waiting for my response.

But I'm learning to let it in.

THANKSGIVING IS FOR THE BEREAVED & BROKEN

I have a hard time believing it is the season of holidays again. While this year should be easier since it will be our fifth Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's without Daniel, I still feel myself putting on an extra shield of courage.

In the cool afternoon air I am reminded of my first Thanksgiving since Daniel's death. On that day I wrote a poem; it wasn't very good, but it did express what I had learned from reflecting on the origins of this national American holiday.

For the first time I thought that the initial Thanksgiving among the settlers and the Indians couldn't have been that glamorous. Why not? For one, there had been many losses. Around those tables were certainly fathers and mothers who had had to bury children. While thankful for much, these parents held heavy hearts too.

Continuing to reflect this way helps me realize Thanksgiving is also a holiday with reality. It is not a Norman Rockwell painting. While we like the warmth this artist has created in his capturing of a happy Thanksgiving table, we know that in most families everyone is not present. Family members are gone from us and at times all we can notice are the silent empty chairs. How can we have Thanksgiving when we are lacking? This holiday does not have the bereaved in mind at all, we conclude.

But in time, we are able to reflect on the presence our loved children held in our lives instead of only focusing on their absences. They lived and we are the more blessed because of their lives—so vibrant & so loving. We become more aware of just how much they impacted our lives then—and even now.

Light a candle this Thanksgiving for those we miss. Recall how blessed we were to have them, even for a short while. And remember that the origin of Thanksgiving does not stem from the situations of cheery and perfectly intact families. There had been many deaths during the difficult trek to this land from England and Europe and once the settlers arrived, more deaths due to illness, occurred. The Native Americans experienced heart-breaking losses as well. Even so, these men & women found reasons to be thankful. So although our sorrow is great, we can be appreciative for the memories we hold in our hearts. Thanksgiving is a holiday which includes each of us—bereaved & broken.

*~ by Alice J. Wisler, reprinted & revised from LARGO, Winter 2001 Issue
Lovingly lifted from the St. Paul, MN Chapter of TCF*



OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS

SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

www.sbsnw.org
Facebook—SBSNW
(503) 200-0382

*Groups are being held several times per month on virtual Zoom meetings & in-person meetings. Please visit website for meeting dates/times/locations in the Portland metro area.
NE Portland * SW Portland * Milwaukie * Gresham * Hillsboro

HELPING PARENTS HEAL

Annie & Marc Adams
hphportlandoregon@gmail.com
Annie (503) 752-8024
Marc (503) 880-4467
www.helpingparentsheal.org

Support groups of grieving parents to connect with each other and with Spirit

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Ph. 503-699-8006
Spanish (503) 972-3376
Peace House, 2116 NE 18th St.
Portland ...2nd Mon 7 pm
Beaverton ...4th Thu 7 pm
Vancouver ...2nd Thu 7 pm
www.briefencounters.org

Support groups for parents who have experienced infant or pregnancy loss or who are considering or experiencing a subsequent pregnancy/adoption.

PARENTS OF MURDERED CHILDREN

Ph. 503-761-1304 or 503-656-8039
Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave
Portland ... 1st Mon @ 7 pm
www.pomc.com/portland

SIDS RESOURCES OF OREGON

4035 NE Sandy Blvd Suite 209
Portland
Ph. 503-287-8265

IN THIS TOGETHER

(formerly Me too, & Company)
Contact: Meg McCauley
Ph. 503-890-7027
www.oregonhospice.org

Supports children & families who have experienced the death of a family member or friend.

THE DOUGY CENTER

Ph. 503-775-5683, www.dougy.org
3909 SE 52nd Ave., Portland, OR 97206
Provides safe place for children, teens, young adults & their families who are grieving a death.

STEPPING STONES

Ph. 360-696-5120
SW Washington Medical Center, Vancouver, WA
Support groups specialize in helping children with their grief.



STEPPING STONES

Come, take my hand, the road is long.
We must travel by stepping stones.
No, you're not alone. I've been there.
Don't fear the darkness. I'll be with you.
We must take one step at a time.
But remember, we may have to stop awhile.
It's a long way to the other side
And there are many obstacles.

We have many stones to cross.
Some are bigger than others.
Shock, denial, and anger to start.
Then comes guilt, despair and loneliness.
It's a hard road to travel, but it must be done.
It's the only way to reach the other side.

Come, slip your hand in mine.
What? Oh, yes, it's strong.
I've held so many hands like yours.
Yes, mine was once small and weak like yours.
Once, you see, I had to take someone's hand
In order to take the first step.
Oops! You've stumbled. Go ahead and cry.
Don't be ashamed. I understand.
Let's wait here awhile so that you can
get your breath.
When you're stronger, we'll go on,
one step at a time.
There's no need to hurry.

Say, it's nice to hear you laugh.
Yes, I agree, the memories you shared are good.
Look, we're halfway there now.
I can see the other side.
It looks so warm and sunny.
Oh, have you noticed?
We're nearing the last stone
and you're standing alone.
And look, your hand, you've let go of mine.
We've reached the other side.

But wait, look back, someone is standing there.
They are alone and want to cross the stepping
stones.
I'd better go. They need my help.
What? Are you sure?
Why, yes, go ahead. I'll wait.
You know the way.
You've been there.
Yes, I agree. It's your turn, my friend ...
To help someone else cross the stepping stones.

~ Barbara Williams Copyright © Barbara Williams

I miss you.

"We cannot think our way out of grief.
We must feel our way out of grief."

~ Angie Corbett-Kuiper, Pinterest

STEPPING STONES TO VOLUNTEER

Your First Few TCF Meetings

- Were you surprised to meet others who were also grappling with the terrifying trauma and shock of losing a child, grandchild or sibling? Did this help you feel less isolated, more understood?
- Were you encouraged to talk about your loved one and say their name? Was there a genuine interest in your child?
- Did you notice that crying and tears are perfectly acceptable, and in fact, normal?

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE.

As Time Goes On

Grief has no timeline, it is different with each individual.

Talking about our child, sharing memories we hold dear, celebrating their birthday, honoring the day they died, are all helpful steps in the healing process. In time, the sharpest pain of grief softens, the sadness of loss always remains. OUR CHILDREN ALWAYS REMEMBERED, ALWAYS LOVED.

The Idea of Hope

Hope is a powerful and universal human experience. After the death of a child, hope for a normal life again may feel elusive. If you have reached out to welcome a new member, shared a hug of support, or just a gentle touch on the shoulder of another grieving person, you have extended HOPE. These small gestures help not only the deeply bereaved, but also help strengthen and heal yourself.

The Portland TCF Chapter is always seeking volunteers; to assure we have a presence in the community for newly bereaved families now and in the future. If you feel TCF has played a positive part in your healing journey and would like to help our chapter remain strong, we urge you to take a step forward and become a volunteer!

HELPING OTHERS ALWAYS HELPS OUR OWN HEART
GROW STRONGER.

Questions? Please contact Jeff Littman jwlittman@comcast.net or Carolyn Harrington linerharrington@gmail.com



HOLIDAYS



The holiday period is an especially difficult time for bereaved parents and particularly for the newly bereaved. The holidays, which have been our happiest times with our children, are a time when the changes that tragedy has made in our lives are most evident. As we gather our emotional forces to make a happy day for surviving children, grandparents and other family members, it can be a very difficult time.

It helps to know that you will find the holidays less difficult than your fear of them and you will find some of your happy memories, too. Our children live on in our memories and in the many happy holidays now past. We hope that during this period you can find some happy times to remember and to cherish. We were fortunate to have had these wonderful children as long as we did, and we will have our memories of the good times they enjoyed.

The pain of loss will always be there. We share that, and we have a special concern for those who are having their first holidays without their children, there will be hard times and sad days. Without grief, there would be nothing. In that grief there are some wonderful memories to cherish. We will be with you in spirit.

You are not alone ...

~ Dayton Robinson, TCF,
Tuscaloosa, AL



It's NOT Linear



One of my earliest frustrations on this unwanted journey of grief was the realization that a "good day" did not mean I was assured of the same tomorrow. I can recall quite vividly how, after a few days of doing better, a song, photo, food or memory could send me back into the darkness. I would be perplexed, wondering why the "setback"? I mistakenly thought I was no longer "healing", as I expected myself to. You are probably nodding your head, already knowing full well the strength to smile and laugh, then being reduced to tears. It's messy. It's all over the place. And it's unending. I recently saw a Netflix series where the main character was trying to solve a crime, a tragedy. Unbeknownst to me, it would soon be revealed that this detective lost his own son. I was hesitant to continue watching, but did. Though it was hard to watch I found myself so pleased that they portrayed his story, his tragedy, his pain, so authentically. It was made clear that he had been profoundly changed. Oh sure he had purpose, he did his job, he served his town. But everyone knew that he was permanently changed. This is what I wish most. That society, friends, family, etc. understood that we will not "get over it". We will learn to live with it. And it will never be easy. Like a missing limb we must make ongoing adaptations and adjustments. Because a missing limb is visual, often more grace and patience are given. Ours is hidden, and sometimes the same degree of grace is lacking. "Maybe get on meds" or "maybe you should go back to counseling" are things we hear. No amount of counseling will make us miss them less, or ache every holiday or birthday or special event. Yes, medications, counseling, and grief groups can be helpful tools. But it's a tool, not a cure. Our journey continues, together we will survive. Together we will get stronger. Together we will find comfort. Love and hugs to this tender family.

~ Michelle Thomason, TCF, Portland OR

Grief takes its own time moving across the landscape of our hearts.

~ Author unknown

Birthdays

If it's your child's birthday month, we invite you to join our monthly meeting and share their story!



Birthdays hold treasured memories & are especially difficult for surviving parents and siblings; TCF offers a wonderful venue to honor and celebrate the precious life-story of your loved one. Taking a few minutes to share a picture, memento, award or even their favorite toy is a gentle reminder to all that *love continues and grows* with each passing year.



Please Support Portland TCF . . .

Just by shopping at Fred Meyer with your Rewards Card!! Fred Meyer donates to local community organizations/nonprofits of your choice through their *Community Rewards Program*. Just link your Rewards Card and scan it every time you shop at Freddy's.

~ Whenever you use your Rewards Card you will be helping Portland TCF earn a donation from Fred Meyer.

~ You will still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points and Rebates, just as you do today.

Great Way for Families & Friends to Support TCF!

- Go to www.fredmeyer.com/community-rewards
- Sign up online (even if you already have a card, you must create an online account)
- You will immediately receive an email to confirm your account (check your Spam or Junk Mail!)
- Sign up using your email address and password
- From the top menu select: Reward —> Community Rewards
- Click **"LINK YOUR CARD HERE"**
- Enter # FT805
- Be sure to click the bubble!
The Compassionate Friends, P.O. Box 3065
Portland OR 97208

TCF Portland earned **\$42.37** during the 1st quarter!

2025 YTD = \$82.68

~ Thank you for participating
& enjoy shopping! ~

Open Letter to a Grieving Sibling
Continued from page 15

- ♦ Self-care. Take care of yourself as best you can. Retreat when you need to. Add fun into your life when it feels right. Find friends, family members, therapists, counselors to talk to when you need to get things out. Try to get the sleep, food, and exercise you need to stay well (and don't beat yourself up when you cannot).

Finally, consider how you might like to keep your sibling present in your life. That discussion could be a whole different letter, actually. For now, I'll just leave it there for you to think about, because to be honest, I'm still thinking it over myself. Because my sibling is not with me in the way that I wanted and expected through my life, I'm working on finding other ways to keep him close by.

Bereaved sibling, you are doing your best every day. I commend you. I stand with you.

With love, A fellow bereaved sibling



What Bereaved Siblings Want You to Know

- ♥ We will miss our sibling for the rest of our lives
- ♥ We often feel overlooked or forgotten
- ♥ When our sibling died, we lost part of our past and our future
- ♥ When our sibling died, we lost a part of ourselves and the family we knew



YOU'RE STILL HERE

At the finest level of my being,
you're still with me.
At that level beyond sight,
we talk and laugh with each other.
We still touch each other
on a level beyond touch.
We share time together
on a level called love.
But I cry alone for you
In a place called reality.
How I miss you.

~ Richard Lepinsky, TCF, Winnipeg, Manitoba

IDEAS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

~ Anonymous

- * On New Year's Eve, have a candle lighting ceremony: a blue candle for past joys, a red candle for present courage, and a yellow candle for hope for the future.
- * Toast five constants in your life.
- * Resolutions—be easy on yourself. Don't set yourself up.
- * You've had the worst day of your life, so why worry?

After the New Year, the cycle of days begins again—the special days, the holidays, the sad days, the happy days.

- * Plan ahead. Build structure—support—into these days. It's being caught off-guard that does you in.
- * Take care of yourself on these days. Rest. Treat yourself.
- * Feel the grief triggered by these days. Feel a little of the grief away.
- * Let people hold you on these days.
- * Remember—honor—your child or sibling in special ways on these days.



ORIGAMI BUTTERFLY ORNAMENTS

BUTTERFLIES can be ordered now through December.

Fluttering origami butterflies decorate the evergreen tree at our candle lighting ceremony each year; *Our Children Lovingly Remembered* with their names & special dates on each one. Many families have made it a tradition to collect and save them each year. What a wonderful way to remember your child and your enduring love for them! After the ceremony—don't forget to find your butterfly & take it home with you! If you can't make it to the event, they will be mailed to you.

**Please place a butterfly on the
"Our Children Lovingly Remembered Tree"
to honor the life of:**

Child's Name (please print) _____
 Child's Birth Date: ____/____/____
 Child's Anniversary Date: ____/____/____
 Your Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email _____ Phone _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

\$5—\$10 is the suggested contribution for each butterfly.)

**Submit to: linerharrington@gmail.com — OR — mail to:
TCF Portland, 6705 SW 15th Ave, Portland, OR 97219**

Please make your check payable to TCF Portland or charge:

VISA __ Master Card __ AMEX __ Expires _____

CVC# _____ Name as appears on card: _____

Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Zip code _____

Undo it, take it back, make every day the previous one until I am returned to the day before the one that made you gone. Or set me on an airplane travelling west, crossing the dateline again and again, losing this day, then that, until the day of loss is still ahead, and you are here, instead of sorrow.

~ Nessa Rapaport

TCF Sibling Zoom Meetings



- ⇒ SIB Suicide Support—Meets 4th Monday of the month at 9 pm ET
- ⇒ Meeting with Jordan—Meets Tuesdays at 7 pm ET
- ⇒ Grief Book Club—Meets 1st Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm ET
- ⇒ Write Your Soul—Meets 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 pm ET

- ⇒ Meeting with Jason—Meets Thursdays at 7 pm ET
- ⇒ LGBTQ+ Sibs Meeting—Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 9:30 pm ET
- ⇒ Canada Sibling Sharing Circle—Meets 2nd Saturday of the month at 1 pm ET
- ⇒ SIBS in Relationships and Partners—Meets 2nd Sunday of the month at 7 pm ET

To sign up for TCF SIBS newsletter, or read about the groups, visit siblingisland.com

Please refer to the National Compassionate Friends website:
compassionatefriends.org

*Time lets you heal
Love lets you
remember
Give thanks for love
and time*

~ Author unknown



REMEMBER

LIGHT A QUIET CANDLE, SEND A QUIET KISS, SAY A QUIET FARE-THEE-WELL TO THE ONE YOU MISS
LIGHT A QUIET CANDLE, SHED A QUIET TEAR, SING A QUIET LULLABY
AND THE QUIET CHRISTMAS STAR WILL HEAR.

~ Sascha Wagner, TCF, Des Moines, IA

THIS IS A LISTING OF SEVERAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Please visit www.compassionatefriends.org for links to the following support groups

24/7 ONLINE SUPPORT

The Compassionate Friends offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Several days & times available.

First-Time Chatter Orientation ~ Parents/Grandparents/Siblings ~ Loss to Substance Related Causes ~ Bereaved
More Than Three Years ~ No Surviving Children ~ Pregnancy/Infant Loss ~ Suicide Loss

PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. If you are waiting approval, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

Loss to COVID-19 & Other Infectious Diseases ~ Loss of a Stepchild ~ Loss of a Grandchild ~ Sibs (for bereaved siblings) ~ Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a Child ~ Loss of a LGBTQ+ Child ~ Multiple Losses ~ Men in Grief ~ Daughterless Mothers ~ Sudden Death ~ Loss to Substance Related Causes ~ Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes ~ Loss to Suicide ~ Loss to Homicide ~ Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver ~ Loss to Cancer ~ Loss of a Child with Special Needs ~ Loss to Long-term Illness ~ Loss After Withdrawing Life Support ~ Loss to Mental Illness ~ Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth ~ Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Loss of an Infant Grandchild ~ Infant & Toddler Loss ~ Loss of a Child 4—12 Years Old ~ Loss of a Child 13—19 Years Old ~ Loss of an Adult Child ~ Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children ~ Finding Hope for Parents Through TCF SIBS ~ Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren ~ Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation Issues ~ Inclusion and Diversity ~ Grieving with Faith and Hope ~ Secular Support ~ Reading Your Way Through Grief ~ Crafty Corner ~ Loss of a Child

Open Letter to a Grieving Sibling

~ Sarah Kravits

Hello,

This letter is to you, and just you. You are grieving as part of a family group, yes—but you have your own unique grief as a sibling, and you need your own letter.

I cannot say that I “welcome” you into this club that no one wants to join. But I want you to know that you are not alone. There are many of us, bereaved siblings, too many. We can be hard to find, and your status is not often obvious. Especially when we’ve lost our siblings as adults, when we no longer live day-to-day with them, the community doesn’t notice the absence of our sibling the way they would the more stark absence of a family member who lived in our homes—a young sibling, a child, a spouse.

As we learn of the death of your sibling, some of us may come out of the woodwork and reveal that we have lost a sibling as well. The stories we tell range from similar to yours to utterly different, but we have something in common: we carry this loss with us through life. Some have carried it long, others only a short time; some carry it openly, some quietly; some have processed it somewhat, others have not dealt with it much, if at all; some keep it in a pocket like a worn stone to contemplate daily, others put it in a box in the back of a closet and rarely take it out.

Living with the loss of a sibling may bring unique experiences. For example, you may find that people ask more often about your parents than they do about you—or that they ask about your parents first. Some may assume that the loss of a sibling is less painful than the loss of a spouse or child, and might even tell you that. The first time this happened to me, I

couldn’t even find words, so I stayed silent. Now I prefer to say, in response, that my pain is not less; rather, it is different ... it is other. It cannot be identified as a point on a scale. It has no quantity or relative value. It is my pain.

You may set your own grief aside in favor of supporting those around you—your parents, other siblings if you have them, your sibling’s family if there is one, your sibling’s friends if you know them. You may hold it together around others who are falling apart. You might worry about causing family members, especially your parents, any more grief than they already have. People may even say things like this to you: “Be safe, stay healthy, stay out of trouble, your parents can’t take any more heart-break.” You may find yourself working hard to avoid meeting some horrible end and making your parents’ lives even tougher than they are now.

“I’m ok,” you may say to yourself as you keep pushing on and helping others. And you might truly feel ok—but that doesn’t mean that you have less pain to process, less work to do. Grief will wait. Know this if you find you are prioritizing support for others’ grief over your own, and consider when you might make that same space, and time, for your own grief. As for your own friends, they may react in different ways. Some may show up for you consistently (and it may surprise you who those friends are, sometimes they are not the ones you expected to show up). Others may support you enormously at first but then fade away. Still others may seem to disappear from the beginning. With all good intent, friends may say, “Let me know what you need.”



However, you may not often know what you need, and for this reason, you may struggle to reach out for help. It’s hard to ask for support when you cannot think of anything that would make you feel better.

What can you do to manage this new and unwanted path? Knowledge will give you strength to choose each step; communication will give you power to keep moving; self-care will help you cope.

- ◆ Knowledge. Know that whatever you are feeling, it is real, and it is ok. Know that your pain is not better or worse than anyone else’s. Know that your grief will not follow an established pattern, and may come and go in unexpected ways. Know that there is no “right way” to grieve the loss of your sibling, and that it’s never too late to grieve.
- ◆ Communication. Communicate with your friends about what you need, if you can. If you need to keep talking about your sibling way past what they think is reasonable, tell them. If you need to be sad and stay home when they think you should get out & have fun, tell them. Communicate with your parents about how you are feeling. Chances are they want to help you even as they are challenged by their own grief. If parents & surviving children can express emotions and needs to one another, they have an opportunity to share the burden of grief rather than shouldering it alone.

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The Compassionate Friends
Portland Oregon Chapter
6705 SW 15th Avenue
Portland, OR 97219



OCTOBER—NOVEMBER—DECEMBER
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