



JANUARY—FEBRUARY—MARCH 2022

CONTACT US

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



P.O Box 3065
Portland, OR 97208-3065
Ph. 503-248-0102
www.portlandtcf.org

“A Nonprofit Self-Help Organization for Families
Who Have Experienced the Death of a Child”

Portland, Oregon

We talk about them because we're proud. We talk about them because they deserve to be remembered. We talk about them because even though they are not physically with us, they are never far from our mind. We talk about them because they are part of us, a part that we could never ignore or disown. We talk about them because we love them still & always will. Forever. Nothing will ever change that.

~ Scribbles & Crumbs

Please, Be Gentle . . .

Please be gentle with me for I am grieving.

The sea I swim is a lonely one,

And the shore seems miles away.

Waves of despair numb my soul

As I struggle through each day.

My heart is heavy with sorrow.

I want to shout & scream repeatedly

And ask "Why?"

At times, my grief overwhelms me,

And I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on.

I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal.

Companion me through my tears

And sit with me in loving silence.

Honor where I am in my journey,

Not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story.

I may need to tell it over and over again.

It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss.

Nurture me when I seem distant and inconsolable.

A small flame still burns within my heart, and

Shared memories may trigger laughter & tears.

I need your support and understanding.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

I must find my own path.

Please, will you walk beside me?

~ Jill Englar, TCF, Westminster, Livonia, MI

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

***Physical meetings have been cancelled due to Coronavirus until further notice. In it's place is a Zoom group meeting available at the same day & time. Contact Jeff Littman or Peggy Smith to participate.**

503-284-2725 ~ jwlittman@comcast.net

FOR MORE INFORMATION: (503) 248-0102

Chapter Leader

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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/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 experience of a child.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone



"Just for today, I will allow myself to be happy, for I know that I am not deserting him by living on. Just for today, I will accept that I did not die when my child did. My life did go on and I am the only one who can make that life worthwhile once more."

~ Vicki Tushingham

INTRODUCING
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The Compassionate Friends,

**CALENDAR OF
EVENTS**

JAN. 1—New Year's Day
JAN. 17—Martin Luther King Day
FEB. 14—Valentine's Day
FEB. 21—President's Day
MARCH 13—DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Grief is more than missing someone; it is an unrelenting ache for reality to be different and for the impossible to come true.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to COVID-19 most of our chapters are currently not holding a physical chapter meeting. Many chapters are offering a virtual meeting, please reach out to your local chapter to get information about what they will be offering.

OTHER TCF CHAPTERS IN THE AREA:

WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAPTER

Elsie Stuhr Center
5550 SW Hall Blvd.
Beaverton, OR 97005
2nd Tuesday
6:30 PM—8:30 PM
Phyllis (503) 324-2504

CLACKAMAS COUNTY CHAPTER

1500 Division Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
Email:
tcfclackamasco@gmail.com



4th Tuesday
7:00 PM

10 HARD FACTS ABOUT GRIEF:

1. Some things are beyond our control.
2. There are consequences to being mortal.
3. It's suppose to hurt.
4. Life will never be the same.
5. The rest of the world doesn't share our grief.
6. People will say dumb things.
7. Friends and family will disappoint us.
8. We have to be assertive.
9. Decisions still have to be made.
10. There is no time frame and no road map for grief.

~ Author unknown



Managing Grief

Pace Yourself: Grief can be exhausting. It takes a lot of energy to feel so intensely. Allow yourself plenty of time to do everyday activities and don't over-schedule yourself. Rest when you need to and offer yourself some grace.

~ Anonymous



Surviving the loss of a child is its own kind of test. To tell our story is a way of affirming the life of the loved one we have lost—the experiences we had together, the favorite family stories. To tell the story is a way of moving the grief along, and so contributes to our own healing.

~ Martha Whitmore Hickman

45TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

Houston, TX · August 5-7, 2022

We are excited to announce The Compassionate Friends 2022 National Conference! Our 45th National Conference is going to be held in Houston, Texas from August 5-7, 2022. Join us at the [Marriott Marquis Houston](#) for three days of connection, community, education, and support. In the coming weeks, we will be sending out more information about our conference

THE MUSIC BOX

PRECIOUS CHILD—GONE TOO SOON

Written & sung by Karen Taylor Good

An



emotionally touching

musical selection on YouTube

A Day

A laugh a day keeps the heart pumping.
A tear a day keeps the mind clear.
A smile a day gives joy to others.
A hug a day gives the hopeless hope.
A thought a day brings loved ones near.
A memory a day brings you closer to me.
Laughter, tears, smiles, hugs stitched with thoughts and memories—
They're all in my days without you.

~ Pam Burden, TCF, Augusta, GA

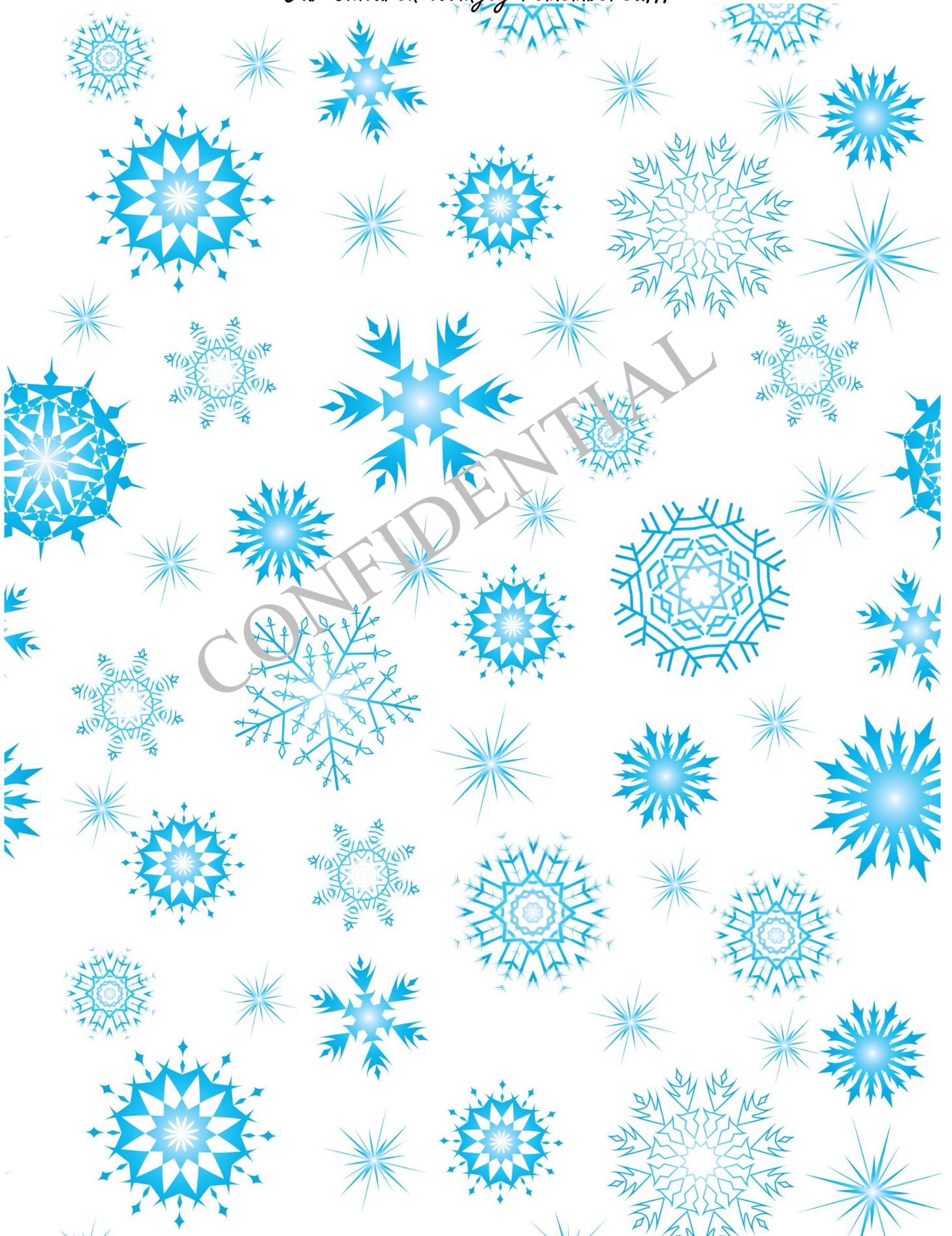
CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Email your address change to Jenna Pingeon,

Our children lovingly remembered...



Our children lovingly remembered...



Our children lovingly remembered...



A good life is when you smile at the memories you've created, dream even when you fear, share love & compassion while in pain, and recognize the blessings that surround you.

~ nicolestephens.com

*Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry or sneezing when your nose itches.
It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.*

~ Earl Grollman

*We quickly find there are no words to describe the experience of losing a child.
For those who have not lost a child no explanation will do.
For those of you who have, no explanation is necessary.*

~ Mary Lige

Remembering Presidents Day ...



No one is immune ...

Did you know that 20 of our past presidents and their wives were bereaved parents? For example, President Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower’s son, Doug Dwight, “Ikky,” three years old, died at Camp Mead, Maryland. In President Eisenhower’s autobiography written in 1969 (49 years after Icky died), he stated, “With his death a pall fell over the camp. When we started the long trip back to Denver for his burial, the entire command turned out in respect to Icky. We were completely crushed—it was a tragedy from which we never recovered. I do not know how others have felt when facing the same situation, but I have never known such a blow. Today when I think of it, even as I now write of it, the keenness of my loss comes back to me as fresh and terrible as it was in that long, dark day soon after Christmas, 1920.”

Thomas Jefferson had six children and only two lived to maturity. One daughter, Mary, 26, died while he was president.

John Quincy Adams lost a daughter in infancy; a son died while Adams was president; and another son died five years later.

Our sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln, lost two sons during his lifetime: Edward, four years old, while President Lincoln was in office; and William, 11 years old.

John & Jacqueline Kennedy’s two-day-old son, Patrick died while JFK was president; Kennedy lost another infant prior to becoming president.



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Tears are the words my heart uses to explain
whenever my smiles can’t cover up my pain

My world lay shattered around me. Gone were the flowers and the sun. The path ahead looked dark and threatening. I heard a voice saying, “You have to travel this path alone.”

“I don’t want to go down that path. I can’t,” I protested. “I liked the old path.”

“The choice is yours,” said the voice, “but you may never go back to the old path. You may stay here at the crossroads where anger and pain will keep you company and wither your spirit. Or, you may run off into the surrounding woods and pretend you are going somewhere, but you will become disoriented and lost. The only peace is to

be found at the end of the path ahead.” “If you have the courage to set forth upon the new path and keep struggling through the storms, you will discover depths in yourself that you never knew existed. If you reach out you will find those who have already traveled this difficult way and are there to support and guide you. Though it seems impossible now, your path will become beautiful again, as will your spirit. You will emerge from the desolation a stronger, wiser, and more compassionate person. Then you too can turn and extend your hand to those who are still on the way.”

I made a choice. I picked up the re-

mains of my life, my aching heart and wounded spirit, my broken dreams and disbelief, and wrapped them carefully in my blanket of grief. Holding them closely to me, I walked steadfastly ahead into the storm with faith in the promise of peace on the other side.

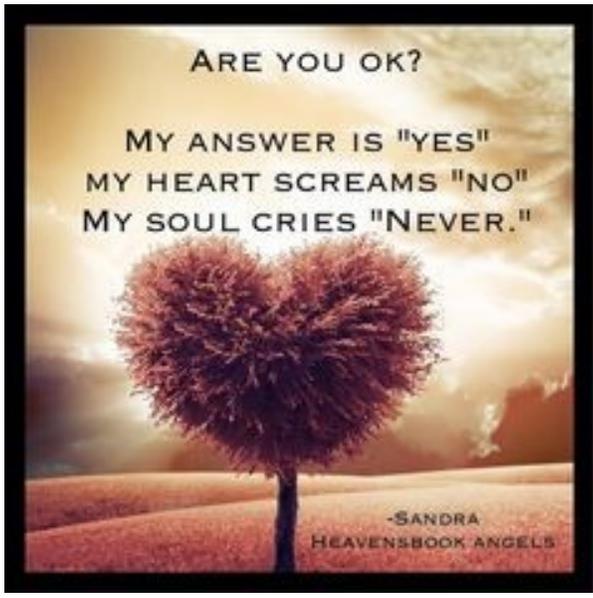
~ Sharron Cordaro, Riverside CA





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 newsletter expenses, brochures, outreach, special events, etc. Please complete the form on the back page with your love note and submit with your favorite photo.

To include a picture with your Love Gift, please email your special photo to debsmoon@gmail.com or mail to TCF, PO Box 3065, Portland, OR 97208. *Your photo will be returned with current address.



Valentine Message

I send this message to my child
 Who no longer walks this plane,
 A message filled with love
 Yet also filled with pain. 

My heart continues to skip a beat
 When I ponder your early death
 As I think of times we'll never share
 I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love
 And for those who receive love too.
 For a parent the perfect love in life
 Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,
 With a sadness that is unspoken

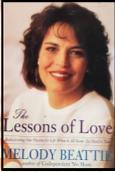
In Loving Memory of

CONFIDENTIAL

THE LESSONS OF LOVE

Melody Beattie, author

#2019.6-31



Rediscovering our passion for life when it all seems too hard to take. "...grieving is inherently and mysteriously connected to loving deeply. It's a book about opening the heart, living from the heart, trusting the heart. It's a learning to live again

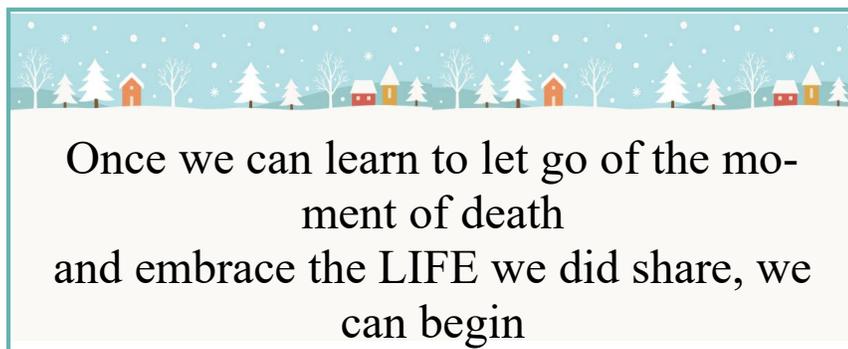


When February comes, there is finally an end in sight to the long winter. Sometimes, melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even the exquisite blossom itself, a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape of graying snow and biting wind and ominous sky. A small promise of new life to come.

My heart, grieving for my son, who died, was like that image of winter. For somehow, even during the darkest, coldest moments, an unexpected sign of hope would intrude. And the hours and days and months dragged on, my heart finally learned, once again, to be open to the promise of new life. Painful memories melted into loving ones. Life that seemed forever dormant once again sprang forth from my heart.

In living hopefully and lovingly, the seasons of the heart can change. The loving memories of your special child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

~ Marilyn Kramer, TCF, Arlington Heights, IL



Once we can learn to let go of the moment of death and embrace the LIFE we did share, we can begin

to know peace and a return of inner joy.

JANUARY—FEBRUARY—MARCH 2022

~ Darcie Sims, "Footsteps"

OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS:

SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

www.sbsnw.org

Facebook—SBSNW

(503) 200-0382

*Currently groups are being held several times per month on virtual Zoom meetings & will resume in-person meetings when it is safe & allowed by State regulations

NEW...

HELPING PARENTS HEAL

Annie & Marc Adams

hphportlandoregon@gmail.com

Annie (503)752-8024

Marc (503) 880-4467

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

ME, TOO & COMPANY

Children, parents, whole families

Ph. 503-228-2104

www.oregonhospice.org

Supports children and 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.

The Eternal Legacy of Names

When people reference a deceased person, it is not unusual to hear his or her name referred to in the past tense. For example, upon learning that two of my sons are deceased, I have been asked “What *were* their names?” The hair immediately stands up on the back of my neck as I use the present tense and say (while trying to conceal my irritation), “Their names *are* Erik and David.”

While it is indisputable that death takes away the physical relationship with one’s loved one, death cannot take away the spiritual relationship we continue to have with them, nor can death take away their name. Their name becomes the living reference point for our relationship with them throughout their lives and following their deaths.

Upon a person’s birth (or perhaps before), the first gift one’s parents give to their newly born son or daughter is a name. In making that choice, different options for the first and middle names may be written out to see how they look with the last name. Or perhaps these names were spoken out loud in order to hear which combina-

tions sounded the best. Many times it is important that a child’s name have a family connection. Much love, thought, and time are typically spent in choosing a name that gives one’s son or daughter a space and place in the world that is just for them.

From the very beginning of our lives, our names are linked eternally with a specific family. Over time, our names serve as an historical framework for our developmental progress, our medical records, school records, work performance, and leisure and civic interests. References to one’s personal characteristics, personality, reputation, character, and contributions to make this world a better place are inevitably linked to one’s name.

There is simply no other efficient or meaningful way to make the connection. One’s name becomes a kind of shorthand that serves as a starting point for conversation about an individual’s specific attributes.

Following a loved one’s death, his or her name makes it possible to continue to share stories, tributes, and memories; to plant trees, give

awards, or do acts of kindness in their honor. Decades or even hundreds of years after an ancestor’s death, families wanting to connect with their family roots could not begin their search without a name. The documentation of one’s name available in numerous records—birth, death, marriage, church, cemetery, plat books, obituaries, pictures, old letters, and many more—connects descendants to other missing puzzle pieces and leads them to many other names and stories in their family tree.

A poem by John Rezmerski, professor at Gustavus Adolphus College, was written as a living tribute to the thousands of patients who were interred on the grounds of the state hospital for the “insane” in St. Peter, Minnesota. The graves were marked with numbers instead of names. More than a hundred years later, markers with names have gradually been placed above the numbers. Following is a portion of that poem:

A name is a seed that encases a whole tree, the memory of a whole species.
Our names say: “However different

Solitary Journey

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

Steiner Rice

~ Helen

“WHEN I GET TO HEAVEN,
THE FIRST THING I AM GOING TO DO IS
FIND YOU. THE SECOND THING
I WILL DO IS NEVER LET YOU
GO AGAIN.”

HEALING HUGS



I bet you cringed when you saw the title, bracing yourself against such an expression! Trust me, I am not referring to anything to do with our loved ones, their possessions or our memories!! I am referring to our expectations of ourselves this year. It is clear we will never "get over" the absence of our loved one, nor the desire to remain connected, but perhaps some of us need to "let go" of who we were before. I, for one, bristle at that statement, being a stubborn Italian, believing that I will in fact "return" to who I once was. Some of us judge ourselves on the progress of that, or lack thereof. I believed "I" should remain otherwise I let tragedy win. I felt I needed to return to the "who" I was, "how" I was, and all the things I used to do. Failing in any of those areas meant I let grief dominate. Try harder I thought. Muster more courage I believed. Deny the pain and do what you used to. Besides it not working, the revelation (or maybe just realization) that my misguided notion of wanting ME to remain the same was more a reflection of my desire that my life remained the same. But it didn't. Loss came. My child left. Accepting that means accepting we are not the same, nor can we be. Oh yes we survived, but so do our deep scars. We will see things



THE ROLE

I watch with wonderment
As you go about your
daily tasks.
I see the determination,
The quiet confidence, and
Wonder if you were always
like that,
Or did your child's death
Touch you deep inside
And soften your soul?

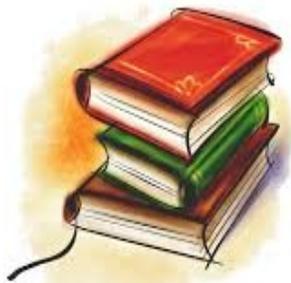
Did your priorities change?
Did you pace slow?
Am I seeing the new you
or the old?
I see you laughing
And talking with friends
And wonder if you still cry
When you're alone and
Remember your child
with death memories
Too bitter to own?

Or have you traveled
To a higher plane,
Another phase beyond the
tears
And grief and fears and untold
sorrows that trap me in
their maze?
I don't know.
I know only that I look at you
And hold you tightly with



As long as we have memories, yesterday remains; As long as we have hope, tomorrow awaits;
As long as we have friendships, today is beautiful.

We are pleased to offer our members reading material from our
LENDING LIBRARY!



The profound challenges and trauma of grief often leave us with desperate, unanswered questions, fear and isolation. *Will our children be forgotten? How does one survive this unthinkable trauma? Will I ever be 'normal' again? Why do people stop speaking to them?* It is during this time that many of us seek answers, comfort and guidance in books authored by those who have experienced the death of a child. We Are Not Alone.

Through the generous donations of our members, TCF has acquired an inventory of books that are now available for you to borrow for a 3-month period. Books will be mailed directly to your home and will include a postage-paid envelope for the return.

If you have books you would like to donate, please contact us and we will make arrangements for pick up.
A label with your child's name will be placed on the inner cover of the book.

Just So You Know

I can't stop grieving just because you believe it is
time for me to move on.

I can't stop hurting just because you don't understand
the piercing pain in my heart.

I cannot stop my tears from flowing just because they
make you feel uncomfortable.

My heart is not suddenly mended
Just because you believe



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/communityrewards
- 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 **\$37.35** during the 3rd quarter!
2021 YTD = \$117.60*

~ **Thank you for participating**

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 and 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.

A new opportunity to support The Compassionate Friends,

Go to smile.amazon.com

amazon smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support the Portland Chapter of The Compassionate Friends every time you shop, at no cost to you.

AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases.

- ⇒ To shop at AmazonSmile go to smile.amazon.com on your web browser or activate AmazonSmile on your Amazon Shopping app on your iOS or Android phone.
- ⇒ Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials
- ⇒ Below the blank search bar choose "Supporting" & link to The Compassionate Friends Portland Chapter
- ⇒ Bookmarking this site will make it easier to return & start shopping at AmazonSmile. Always check for the AmazonSmile logo to ensure you're activated for AmazonSmile.

**You can use your existing account on Amazon.com & AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, & other account settings remain the same.*

Thank you for supporting

Communicating with My Child

By Kitty Reeve, TCF, Marin County & San Francisco, CA



Eighteen months ago, I dedicated a bench to Philip. It's in a space Philip would like, out in the natural world, with abundant wildlife and wonderful views across hills and sea.

I go there often to spend time alone with my beloved son. I sit on the bench, look at the vistas, and remember our family as it used to be. I talk to Philip. I make him promises. I ask for this guidance. I muse on what his life would be like now. I tell him how deeply I love him, how missing him gets harder with each passing year. I tell him about his brothers, about his sister-in-law and his little nephew, both of whom he never met. I tell him how important he is to us. I tell him that we will never forget him, that though our lives are five years past his death, we still think of him all the time and want him with us. I tell him that I am having a terribly hard time accepting that he has died, and that I am doing the best I can.

I have no idea if I am communicating with a Philip who has survived death or with myself, who hopes he has. Sometimes I think I feel an impatient nudge, a sort of, "Get on with it, Mom, it's not what you think" message. Sometimes I feel his arms around me in compassionate understanding. Sometimes I don't feel any response at all. I am grateful for these private times with my child.

Whether he lives on in some other sphere, and how I hope he does,! or whether he resides only in our deepest hearts, there is an honoring of him in these conversations, a recognition of his existence and its importance, that matters very much to me.

I believe that we all need to find our individual ways of keeping the channels to our children open. My conversations with Philip may seem odd to some people, but they are right for me. I encourage you to honor your own private ways of communicating with your beautiful child, whatever they are. If you are

The Keepers

You make friends because you have things in common.

We are friends because of our children. The older ones, the younger ones, the ones who never even had a chance to breathe.

They are our reason for being ... Our heartbeat, our life's blood.

Whether we have lots of memories or

only a few, we are joined by an unbreakable bond.

We are the ones left behind, to remember and carry the torch for those we remember so lovingly.

We are there for ourselves and each other

Because we understand the pain of loss.



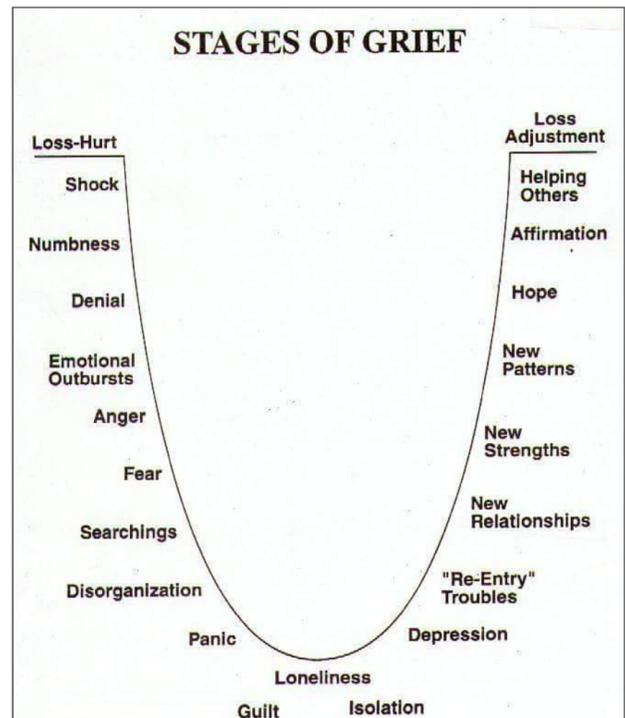
"The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same—nor should you be the same nor would you want to."

THE DEATH OF THE YOUNG



People ask: “Why do children or young people die, when they have lived so little?” This crude measure of yours is time, but life is not measured in time. This is just the same as to say, “Why is this saying, this poem, this picture, this piece of music so short, why was it broken off and not drawn out to the size of the longest speech or piece of music, the largest picture?” As the measure of length is inapplicable to the meaning (or greatness) of productions of wisdom or poetry, so even more evidently — it is inapplicable to life. How do you know what inner growth this soul accomplished in its short span, and what influence it had on others?

- from *Spiritual Life Cannot be Measured* by Tolstoy



Child loss is not an event, it is an *indescribable* journey of Survival

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

www.compassionatefriends.org

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.

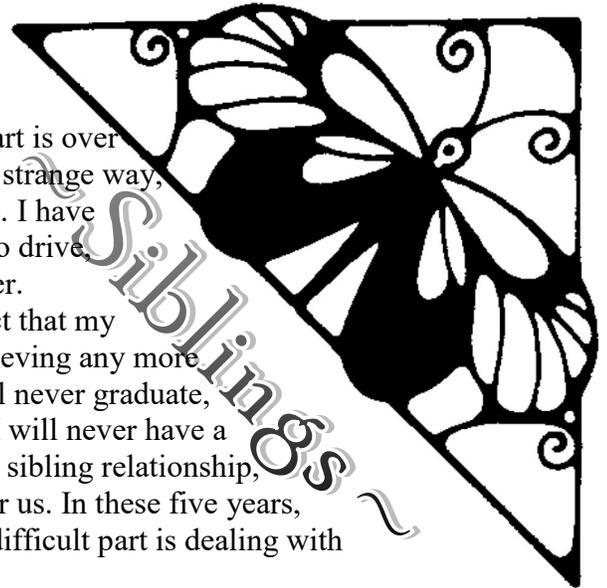
First-Time Chatter Orientation ~ Parents/Grandparents/Siblings ~ Loss to Substance Related Causes ~ Bereaved More Than Two Years ~ No Surviving Children ~ Pregnancy/Infant Loss

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 of a Stepchild ~ Loss of a Grandchild ~ Sibs (for bereaved siblings) ~ Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a 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 ~ Be-

My First Five Years as an Only Child



I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I have aged 30 years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I have accomplished the many things of a typical young adult; learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career.

Every one of my accomplishments has been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone, and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I have learned to accept that he is not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changing to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I am angry about all the things that we have missed and all the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I have been forced to grow up too fast. I have been forced into a new outlook on life. I have felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. Maybe I am a better person because of what I have been through. Five years ago I never thought I would survive, but I am still here dealing with it every day. I



SIBS—Don't be surprised at extremely strong feelings of rage and anger, guilt and regret. Also, there will be times of longing for that brother or sister which are so intense you think you can't stand it—but, somehow, you will stand it. You may have a profound sense of being alone because no one understands what you're going through. If you can, try to find someone outside of your family to talk to, someone who will listen. If you think it's necessary, don't be embarrassed about seeking professional counseling. Acceptance takes time, but finding it is a big part of grief work. Your life will not return to the way it once was—there will be a "new normal". Don't expect others to understand what you're going through because they can't. They're in an awkward position of unintentional ignorance about death and grief. What you can expect is that people will either say "dumb things" that will hurt you or make you mad, or they will say absolutely nothing. That's why . . . It's important for you to know that you're not alone. There are others like you who do understand your pain, your anger, your sense of helplessness. Reach out.

I would like my parent to know ...
That I'm okay and would like to talk
to them about my brother or sister
whenever they feel like it.
That I hurt inside too & loved my
brother/sister.
That my love for my sibling will never
go away.
How special my parents are and how
proud I am of their love.
It's alright if they want to talk to me.
I will listen and be sad with them.
That they are not at fault.
That it's okay to cry together and that

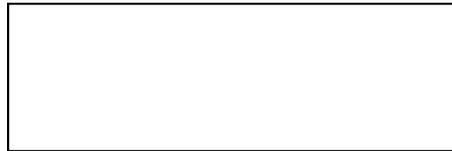
On your birthday ... I wrote the date this morning, paused and felt the room grow cold. It always does when I remember all of it—down to the upturned earth. This time the chill does not leave so easily. It

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



JANUARY—FEBRUARY—MARCH
2022



If you wish to make a tax-deductible LOVE GIFT donation, fill in the information below, send with a check for any amount to
Portland TCF, PO Box 3065 Portland, OR 97208-0102
OR, you may submit your love gift and photo online at <http://www.portlandtcf.org>

Month you would like it printed in newsletter: _____ Donation Amount: _____ Anonymously? YES
NO

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: ___/___/___ Date of Death: ___/___/___

Your name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Email: _____ Zip: _____

Please make your check payable to TCF Portland or charge: VISA _____ Master Card _____ AMEX _____

Name as it appears on the card: _____ CVC# (on back of card) _____

Special Message (please include how you would like your message to be signed): _____

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our Portland TCF!