



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of Green Bay

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter by and for Bereaved Parents

Nov/Dec 2010

## Our Mission Statement:

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families who have experienced the death of a child. The primary purpose is to assist them in the positive resolution of the grief experience upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health. The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved families. The object is to help those in their communities to be supportive, including family, friends, employers, co-workers and professionals.

From Donna Wilkinson, Chapter Leader

It has been said that coping with the death of a child is the biggest burden any parent could possibly bear. While it is extremely sad to lose a parent, sibling or spouse, the death of a child violates the natural order of things. We expect to outlive our parents and even the death of a sibling or spouse does not affect us in quite the same way. This is a list developed by professionals who work with bereaved parents. One of the most important recommendations for parents coping with the death of a child is to seek out a support group, because coping with the death of children is not something that most people can handle on their own. I am sad about the reasons that bring us together but I am thankful that we have a group of "compassionate friends" who gather each month to care for and support one another. Please take the best possible care of yourselves and let us know how we can be helpful. We need not walk alone.

### from **Surviving The Death Of A Child** by Lisa Fritscher

#### Join a Support Group

A grief support group is essential. You may feel like you are the only person in the world who has ever lost a child. You may suddenly feel cut off and isolated from those around you. Your friends and relatives are likely unsure what to say or how to comfort you. Joining a support group will put you in contact with others who truly understand what you are facing.

The realization that other parents have lived through the situation and found ways of coping with the death of a child can make you feel less hopeless. You will find sympathetic parents who are willing to listen and allow you to grieve without judgment.

#### Consider Professional Counseling

You will need to work through the process of grieving. While many people handle their grief by suppressing it, this is not a healthy way of coping. You need to acknowledge and work through your feelings. However, those feelings may not surface easily. A trained professional with experience in grief counseling can help you identify and work through your feelings. If you are coping with the death of a child, do not be ashamed or afraid to reach out for professional help. *(Continued on next page)*



#### The Green Bay Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.  
at First United Methodist Church, 501 Howe Street, Green Bay.  
*(Enter the parking lot off Monroe at Doty)*

#### For further information contact:

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## Monthly Support Group

Thursday, November 18, 2010, 7 p.m.

Video: "Handling the Holidays," by Darcie Sims. Sharing afterwards.

Thursday, December 16, 2010 7 p.m.

Informal sharing: "Ask a Basket" Write a question on a card to discuss regarding grief and loss and/or dealing with the holidays. Sharing afterwards.

*Note: If the Green Bay Public Schools are closed for the day, or have early release, due to inclement weather, the TCF meeting will be cancelled that evening.*



*Continued from front page*

### **Take Each Day in Manageable Slices**

Do not try to answer the unanswerable question “how will I live through this?” Instead, focus on getting through small chunks of time. In the first days, you may need to measure time hour by hour or even minute by minute. Each minute that you live through is a success. Even when the grief and pain seem overwhelming, time does continue to pass. As a particularly bad wave of grief subsides, look at the clock. Congratulate and reward yourself for making it through that period. Assign yourself small, manageable tasks. Paying a bill and spending an hour with a friend are successes. Make a small to-do list and reward yourself for accomplishing each task. Do not punish yourself for not completing your entire list.

### **Listen to Your Body**

You are likely to have extreme difficulty sleeping and eating normally. However, your body will tell you what it needs. If you are tired, take a nap. If you are hungry, eat something, even if it is not the healthiest choice. Give yourself permission to do the things you need to do. Your body is working through extreme stress, so its needs will be different than normal.

### **Stay Healthy**

While your body will tell you what it needs, helping it along is important. Try to eat regularly even if you do not feel hungry. Grazing on light snacks throughout the day may be easier than dealing with large, heavy meals. Drink plenty of water. Stay away from drugs or alcohol, which will ultimately make you feel worse. Stay on any normal medications that you take, but let your doctor know what has happened. Your medications may need to be adjusted. Be sparing with any over-the-counter medications that you take. They are likely to affect you differently at this time.

Try to get a bit of exercise every day. Even a short walk around the block can clear your head and give you strength to continue. This is not the time to try to set a record in the gym, but light exercise will help keep you healthy and help your body adjust to the stress.

### **Accept Your Feelings**

Your feelings may come randomly, in waves. You may feel okay one minute, devastated the next and furious the moment after that. This is normal and expected. You will likely feel out of it, as if everything is happening around you and not to you. You may experience sensory distortion. This is all a normal part of the grieving process. Grief does not occur in a straight

line, and the grief process lasts for many years. You may feel much better, and then experience a setback. Accept the feelings as they come and do not judge yourself.

### **Avoid Major Decisions**

You should never make any major decisions for at least a year following major trauma. When coping with the death of a child, you may start to wonder if there are things you can do to make yourself feel better. Avoid the urge to do anything drastic. Selling your house, leaving your job or moving to another state will not help. You may want to do one or more of those things later, after you have worked through your grief. For now, however, maintain the status quo. Major changes are stressful and adding more stress to your life is counterproductive to the healing process. Allow yourself the chance to heal.

### **Reach Out to Your Partner**

Historically, the belief has been that a marriage cannot survive coping with the death of a child, but according to [CompassionateFriends.org](http://CompassionateFriends.org), there is no reason that this must be so. Grief can actually bring a couple closer together if they embrace each other’s pain. Grief can magnify pre-existing problems in a relationship, so if you have difficulties, consider visiting a marriage counselor. Otherwise, simply reach out to one another, accept the differences in your grief processes and work together toward healing.

### **Create Memorial Rituals**

It is a myth that it is possible to “get over” a death. The best that families can achieve is getting through the process. One of the most difficult aspects to deal with is the reality that the person will never again be part of family life.

Creating rituals to acknowledge the deceased child, therefore, can assist in this transition. Find ways to keep the child’s essence alive. Giving back is a way that many people find helps in coping with the death of a child. Organize a scholarship fund in the child’s name. Make a donation to a cause that the child favored. Provide support to others who are just beginning their journey of grief. Whatever you do, your contribution will help you to find a new sense of purpose while keeping your child’s memory alive.

Coping with the death of a child is an incredibly difficult task. You must face life at your own pace. Reach out to family and friends, join a support group and reinvest in your family. Whenever you feel ready, you can start looking for ways to honor the child’s memory. Do not let anyone force you to move at any speed other than your own. Taking the time and space to work through your feelings is critical to finding purpose in your life. You can do it, even in chunks of one minute at a time.



## ***Ten Tips for Surviving the Difficult Holidays after Your Child Dies***

Patrica Loder, Executive National Director of **The Compassionate Friends** submitted these ideas as a way to help families whose child has died.

1. Plan ahead. Realize you will not be able to do everything with everyone. Decide what is truly important to you and your family.
2. Don't be afraid to ask friends for help. Tasks which may normally take a little effort can feel overwhelming, whether it's fixing a meal, cleaning the house, or putting up decorations.
3. No one expects you to string rows and rows of lights just to prove you have the holiday spirit. If you don't feel up to past efforts, you may simply want to place an electric powered candle in your window in memory of your child.
4. Just because you've hosted gatherings in the past doesn't mean you're obligated to this year. Others will understand.
5. After a child dies, old traditions are often left behind and new ones that incorporate the child who died can take their place. Honor the memory of your child in unique ways that have meaning to you.
6. Surviving children should be included in your plans. They too mourn their sibling, but need a normalcy the holidays can provide.
7. If you don't get everything done that you plan, be easy on yourself. Grief is tough work and you should never feel guilty for not getting everything done.
8. If you must shop for others, find a time when the stores are not extremely busy, like early morning. Order through the internet or ask others to shop for you.
9. Participating in a memorial service, such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting, the second Sunday in December, can be very meaningful.
10. Remember that the fearful anticipation of an approaching holiday is usually worse than the day itself.

"Many people believe that they can escape the holidays by leaving home on a vacation," adds Mrs. Loder. "This rarely helps because grief can never be left behind and it is important to have the support of relatives and friends. Talking with others who have also had a child die, can help those facing grief to understand they are not alone. Others have survived the holidays and they will too."

## **SPOTLIGHT BOOK**

### **Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul, by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen**

(Recently added to the Green Bay TCF Resource Library)  
By Carol Wautlet, Resource Coordinator

Another insightful book from the "Chicken Soup" collection, with heartfelt stories of the struggles grief brings to the families, friends and loved ones that remain. Stories of grief and loss filled with poignant memories for some, heartbreaking goodbyes for others, and the visions of hope many feel for the future of their lives. Reading this book was like sitting in the comfort of many wise friends, who share their struggles through a variety of grief experiences. This book is also a great resource for those who would like to know how to help loved ones with their grief. While not all stories relate to those who have lost children, many in this collection remind us of the powerful messages we learn through loss of a loved one. This book's stories are arranged in seven chapters including Final Gifts, The Power of Support, Coping and Healing, Those We Will Miss, Special Moments, Insights and Lessons, and Living Again; all areas that we who lose children will certainly relate to. Contains short stories with easy reading, great for the cold months ahead, I would strongly recommend this book for all who are grieving.



## Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting During Holiday Season Remembers All Children Who Have Died



Excitement has been building as the fourteenth Worldwide Candle Lighting on Sunday, December 12, 2010 approaches. The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 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. 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.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting 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.

In 2009, information was submitted to TCF's national website on services in 15 countries outside the United States. In total, we received nearly 530 services. TCF has been joined in recent years by chapters of several organizations including MISS, MADD, Parents of Murdered Children, SIDS Network, Gilda's Club, and BPUSA and services were held in all 50 states plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. There is no way to know how many hundreds of additional services were held in the U.S. and around the world without the information being given to us.

The Compassionate Friends and allied organizations were joined in 2009 by local bereavement groups, churches, funeral homes, hospitals, hospices, children's gardens, schools, cemeteries, and community centers. Services have ranged in size from just a few people to nearly a thousand.

Here in the United States, publicity about the event is widespread, being featured over the years in Dear Abby, Annie's Mailbox, Ann Landers column, Parade Magazine, Guideposts magazine, and literally hundreds of U.S. newspapers, dozens of television stations, and numerous websites and hundreds of personal blogs. Information on the Worldwide Candle Lighting and planned memorial candle lighting services (of which we are advised) is posted on TCF's national website every year as the event nears.

**The Green Bay Chapter invites you to attend the Candle Lighting to be held at the First United Methodist Church, 501 Howe St., Green Bay on Sunday, December 12, at 7 p.m. For more information or directions, please call 920-391-0734 or 920-437-9252.**

Tears can be a gentle and loving way of ministering to yourself.  
Tears should be honored as tender drops of remembrance.

– Lon Nungesser



# Remembering Our Children

During the two months that each newsletter covers, we include your child's birthday and the anniversary of your child's death – if we know those dates. Based upon TCF National policy, we will not print the year of your child's birth or death.

## BIRTHDAYS

**Ryan Patrick Bergevin** 11/16  
(son of Randy Bergevin)

**Ryan Rockstroh** 11/16  
(son of Molly Rockstroh)

**Jillian Faymonville** 11/17  
(daughter of Louise Faymonville)

**Dane Cole** 11/18  
(son of Don & Karol Cole)

**Craig St. John** 11/21  
(son of Debra St. John)

**Amber Mastey** 11/25  
(daughter of Brett & Amanda Mastey)

**Jimmy Wanner Jr.** 11/25  
(son of Pam & Keith Blondeim)

**David Jacob Schlinz** 12/02  
(son of Dan & Brenda Schlinz)

**Carsten Arps** 12/03  
(son of Kenton & Gwendolyn Arps)

**Emmitt Arps** 12/03  
(son of Kenton & Gwendolyn Arps)

**Sheri Lynn Klemme** 12/07  
(daughter of Tom & Bev Van Hemelryk)

**Brian Kofler** 12/13  
(son of Wendy Kofler)

**Travis Stelzer** 12/13  
(son of Don & Pam Stelzer)

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Karen Mary Schley** 11/01  
(daughter of Jon & Ann Schley)

**Joseph Chase Gillis** 11/06  
(son of Charlotte Champeau)

**Cody Green** 11/06  
(son of Dan and Gwen Green)

**Jason Banaszynski** 11/06  
(son of Donna Baranczyk)

**Leslie Blasing** 11/13  
(daughter of Jeanne Donart)

**Joseph Adams** 11/18  
(son of Cheryl Skenadore)

**Nicole Kowalkowski** 12/01  
(daughter of Sharon & Roman Kowalkowski)

**Jacob Peters** 12/01  
(son of Jerry & Natalie Peters)

**Paul Stone** 12/01  
(son of Joan Stone)

**Kerri Kirsch** 12/04  
(daughter of Joyce Howell)

**Carsten Arps** 12/04  
(son of Kenton & Gwendolyn Arps)

**Sheri Lynn Klemme** 12/06  
(daughter of Tom & Bev Van Hemelryk)

**Chloe Spice** 12/06  
(daughter of Tricia & Jason Spice)

**Emmitt Arps** 12/08  
(son of Kenton & Gwendolyn Arps)

**Jeremiah Rosenberg** 12/11  
(son of JoAnn & Alan Rosenberg)

**Adam Lee Schultz** 12/15  
(son of Stan & Deb Schultz)

**Kyle Larson** 12/20  
(son of Lance & Janis Larson)

**Ryan Jozwiak** 12/30  
(son of Lenee & Eddie Jozwiak)

## HELP UNITED WAY AND TCF:

Do you know you can help United Way and TCF at the same time? Most businesses conduct an annual United Way Campaign at the end of the year. You can complete a 2010 pledge form with your gift. Then below Step 3 on the form you can designate "The Compassionate Friends of Green Bay Chapter" as the designated agency and the amount of your gift you want our chapter to receive. It is a win-win, as you participate in your employer's United Way campaign and our local Chapter receives your gift. Thank you.

**Calvary Bible Church**, 1450 Oakridge Rd, Neenah, WI 54956, is offering a special session called "**Surviving the Holidays**" on November 20, 2010. This workshop helps people prepare for a most difficult time of the year when grieving. For more information contact Debbie Smoll, Facilitator at 920-725-3896 or 920-841-3906. Or visit them on the web at: [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

### OTHER TCF CONTACT INFORMATION

**The Door County Chapter** meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month at the Door County Memorial Hospital in Sturgeon Bay. Call 1-800-589-2669 (voicemail).

**The Fox Valley Chapter of TCF** meets at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month in Neenah at Faith United Methodist Church, 1025 Tullar Road. Call Deb Schultz at 920-725-6340 for information.

**Oneida, WI**, has a new chapter that was recently chartered. They meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month from 6:30pm at Parish Hall – 2937 Freedom Road, Oneida, WI. Contact Jean Williquette at 920-469-4135 for more information.

To contact the **National Organization: The Compassionate Friends, Inc.**, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696. Phone Toll-free: 877-969-0010 Web site: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)



### *Remembering your child's Birthday*

Please feel free to bring a treat to our monthly support group to honor your child. Sign up at a previous meeting, or by emailing us at: [jkrings04@yahoo.com](mailto:jkrings04@yahoo.com)

### Help support the work of our Local Chapter

#### with a year-end tax-deductable gift

*The Compassionate Friends of Green Bay depends on the voluntary contributions of those who themselves have been helped by TCF, as well as those who believe in our mission. Please consider supporting TCF-Green Bay in its work of providing support and resources for families who have experienced the death of a child.*

- \$15 for pamphlets and handouts for newly bereaved
- \$25 for office supplies and postage
- \$50 to help defray the cost of the bi-monthly printing and distribution of this newsletter
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS** of Green Bay  
P.O. Box 211  
Green Bay, WI 54305

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

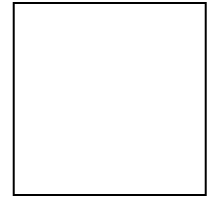
In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

*TCF is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible.*



The  
**COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

of Green Bay  
PO Box 211  
Green Bay, WI 54305



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support group  
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**Thursday,**  
**November 18**  
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off Monroe at Doty.

**We need not walk alone!**

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**Someone**

**Someone who gave your life meaning has died,  
someone who brought you joy,  
Someone who gave you love,  
perhaps even someone who gave you life, is gone.  
No matter how much you may have prepared yourself,  
you were not quite prepared.  
No matter how many words you may have shared,  
there were things that you did not get to say.  
No matter how much pain that you may have endured already,  
you are being called upon to endure more.  
Someone who has been a part of your days on earth,  
no longer walks the earth with you.  
Life is not the same,  
and it hurts.**



If you have access to a computer, please check out our website at: [www.tcfgreenbay.org](http://www.tcfgreenbay.org)