



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

December, 2009 Newsletter

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## Upcoming Events

December 13th - Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church  
December 17th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church  
January 21st - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

## OUR TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Any of these members may be contacted to talk to you about your loss:

CHAPTER LEADER	LARAINÉ ANDERSON	351-7653
INFANT LOSS	COLLEEN & ART MANNON	535-9868
TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS	BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON	573-2743
LEUKEMIA	JANE & STEVE GABRIEL	282-1924
TEEN / YOUNG ADULT LOSS	BARB REYNOLDS	599-0772
SUICIDE	LARITA ARCHIBALD	596-2575
DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS	STEWART & LETA LEVETT	531-5488
SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT	RAYE WILSON	(303) 814-9478



## Let Us Include Your Child In Our Slide Show Memorial

We would love to include your child in our Memorial Slide Show.  
Share a picture or two, write a few lines of dedication and we'll put a  
slide together for you that will be added honoring our children on this special day.

Our memorial service is held in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church,  
downtown on the corner of Kiowa and Weber.

See Page 2 in this newsletter for more information.



## Welcome!

*To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly welcome you to The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region.*

*We are other parents who have experienced the death of a child at any age and offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings and activities throughout the year.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

TCF National Office  
P.O. Box 3656  
Oak Brook, IL 60522  
630-990-0010 or toll free 877-969-0010  
EMAIL: [nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)  
WEBSITES: National - [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
Colorado Springs - [www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings](http://www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings)

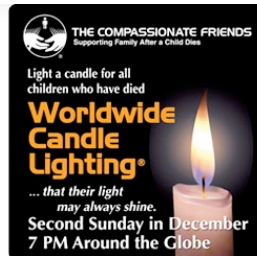


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## TCF CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL



Time is running out for you to submit your photos and dedications for our annual TCF Candlelight Memorial on December 13th.

Once again we request that you contact us to have your child's slide included in our memorial. Slides from previous years may be used again this year or you may submit new photos. Please limit your photos to (3) three and your dedication should be short so everything will be viewable on the slide. Please remember, the better the photo you submit, the better your dedication will look.

**Prior years' submissions will be read as a dedication if we don't hear back from you.**

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS NOW, DECEMBER 9th, 2009**

Submissions can be emailed to [Stewart@Archangelgifts.com](mailto:Stewart@Archangelgifts.com)

or send to

Stewart Levett

160 El Dorado Lane

Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

Your Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name As You'd Like it to Appear \_\_\_\_\_ Cause of Death (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Memorial Date \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Pictures Included \_\_\_\_\_

Dedication \_\_\_\_\_

Please create my slide with information and pictures provided. ☐

Please use last year's slide. ☐ Please return pictures when finished ☐

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Would you like to help us during our Candle Lighting Service?

Do you have a favorite cookie or dessert you'd like to share with others after our program?

No need to contact us, if you can, please bring something to share so that we'll have plenty to go around without worrying whether we'll run out.

~THANK YOU~



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## Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Age at Death</u>
<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Robbie Rickman	Dec 1	21 years
Dec 25	Auto accident	Jean Rickman
Abraham Daniel Boukhari	Dec 2	18 years
Apr 4	Auto accident	David & Deborah Woodrow
Dwayne Stoppel	Dec 3	45 years
Nov 8		Pearl Stoppel
Derek Matthew Chandler	Dec 4	14 years
Jul 29	Hit by truck while riding ATV	Billy & Cherie Chandler
Steven Ellis Erickson	Dec 5	19 years
Oct 28	Auto accident	Jaque Baldwin
Konrad Ferrer	Dec 7	16 years
Nov 27	Auto accident	Maria Hymes
Nicole Maria Kelley	Dec 8	4 years
Aug 28	Anesthesia complications	John & Lois Kelley
John Walther	Dec 8	31 years
Oct 1		Joseph Walther
Zachary Nathaniel James McClary	Dec 9	17 years
Sep 21	Drunk driver	Gloria & James Olsen
Matthew Stockwell	Dec 11	25 years
May 15	Rare disease	Mark & Sally Stockwell
Scotty Strader	Dec 11	24 years
Oct 28	Auto accident	Kathrine Strader
Kristen Amanda Teran	Dec 12	23 years
Dec 28	Suicide	Donna Loughridge
Bradly Garrard	Dec 12	18 years
Aug 1	Unknown	Sally Garrard
Kristopher Lohrmeyer	Dec 13	17 years
Jul 16	Murdered	Dan and Lori Lohrmeyer
Paul Anthony Fischer	Dec 14	32 years
Jan 6	Auto accident	Stephanie Newcomb
Noelle Pearl	Dec 15	17 years
Feb 13	Auto accident	Michelle Fleming
Chris Reiter	Dec 18	28 years
Dec 27	Auto accident	Sharon Reiter
Nathaniel Hughes	Dec 19	18 years
Aug 21	Homicide	Jim Hughes
Timothy Patrick Shea	Dec 22	21 years
Mar 31	Suicide	Joe & Paula Shea



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## Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Age at Death</u>
<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Nicolas Jay Broughton	Dec 23	18 years
May 30	Auto accident	Rose Broughton
Katie Kennedy	Dec 23	15 years
Sep 10	Cancer	Van & Kathy Kennedy
Trevor "T.J." Franks	Dec 24	17 years
Oct 24	Auto accident	Penny Franks
Davey Christopher Hoffman	Dec 24	18 years
Sep 25		Elaine Hoffman
Sheri Cavin	Dec 27	21 years
Oct 9	Auto accident	Susan & Alan Cavin
Anthony Anselmo	Dec 28	22 years
Dec 21	Accidental fall	Vicki & Frank Anselmo
Megan Lane	Dec 28	18 years
Jan 27	Auto accident	Sandra Gail Lane
Chelsey Ann Kear	Dec 29	15 years
Aug 5	Suicide	Tami Kear

### Meet Our Steering Committee - Laraine Anderson, Chapter Leader

Hello and Welcome,

My name is Laraine and I am the leader of the Pikes Peak Chapter of this wonderful support group; The Compassionate Friends.



I am the mother of three sons; Joel, Bryan and Michael. They reside in New York along with their Dad. In April of 2004, my middle

Bryan (Age 27) was diagnosed with cancer. He was engaged and to married in August 2004. I suggested to Bryan that he postpone the wedding until after his treatments of chemo and radiation were completed. He would have no part of that, he was determined to continue on with his life as usual. I flew out to New York frequently to visit with him and my other two sons. In hindsight it was a good thing that Bryan decided to go ahead with the wedding because little did I know that this would be the last time we would all be together as a family. Tragically, only six weeks after the wedding, October 4, 2004 my youngest son, Michael (Age 20) was killed in a motorcycle accident. Our lives were forever changed.

After my return from New York in late November I had no support systems and my life was in turmoil. A chaplain from the hospital I was employed for referred me to "The Compassionate Friends". It saved my life. My first experience with TCF was that of attending the Candle Light ceremony that is held the second Sunday in December. It was so touching and I knew that this was where I belonged; being with other bereaved parents who knew my pain and could tell me that I wasn't going crazy but that I was in deep grief and it just feels crazy. Through them I have found compassion, comfort and the strength to go on. I met many parents further along in their grief

who told me that there will be glimpses of light and joy through this journey. I didn't believe them.

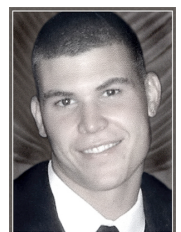
Now five years later, although I am a grieving parent, I now understand what my Compassionate Friends were saying. "There is a way to go on". I was told that in time the pain would soften and that I would think more of Michael's life and be thankful for the time I had with him. That proved to be so true.

In these past five years I have gained insight and strength and can now share that with other grieving parents. I hope to help others as I have been helped, especially parents who are newer to their loss than myself. I encourage you to reach out for help. We're only a phone call away.

Laraine Anderson  
Mom to Angel; Michael Edward Anderson  
OCT 20, 1983 ~ OCT 4, 2004  
719-351-7653 [lasan56@yahoo.com](mailto:lasan56@yahoo.com)

P.S. I'm happy to report that my son Bryan is clean of cancer and in spite of the overwhelming odds, he is now a proud daddy of a 2 year old girl. Life can continue to be good.

 **Laraine**



Michael Anderson



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## Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

<u>Child's Name</u> <u>Age at Death</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause of Death</u> <u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Mitchell Lynn Faires 39 years	Apr 8 Dec 2	Sudden illness Sammie White
Eric Sutton Skinner 19 years	Oct 9 Dec 4	Clinical depression David & Gail Skinner
Mia Allyson Gardiner 16 years	Aug 22 Dec 4	Car accident Peri Gardiner
Josh Huston 23 years	May 27 Dec 5	Heart failure Rodney & Michelle Moreno
Renee Lee Seiberlich 1 year	Jun 6 Dec 5	Reyes Syndrome Joe & Leda Seiberlich
Marc Darby 12 years	Mar 25 Dec 12	Respiratory failure - complications Lori & Steve Darby
Joseph Gentry Richardson 1 year	Apr 6 Dec 13	Infection after liver transplant Jack & Miriam Gentry
Ember Maria Arthur 30 years	Feb 16 Dec 17	Collision Jeanette Newville
Anthony Anselmo 22 years	Dec 28 Dec 21	Accidental fall Vicki & Frank Anselmo
Patrick Niedringhaus 18 years	May 5 Dec 22	Avalanche victim Leah & Dave Niedringhaus
Tyler Glicker 19 years	Feb 8 Dec 22	Car accident Ginger Jones
Robbie Rickman 21 years	Dec 1 Dec 25	Auto accident Jean Rickman
Chris Reiter 28 years	Dec 18 Dec 27	Car accident Sharon Reiter
Kristen Amanda Teran 23 years	Dec 12 Dec 28	Suicide Donna Loughridge
Brian Jensen 28 years	Oct 26 Dec 29	Suicide Deborah Jensen
Mary Hope Burton 7 years	Aug 27 Dec 30	Perforated gastric ulcer Jim & Betty Burton
Julian King 21 years	Mar 18 Dec 31	Murdered Leonie Cramer
Matthew Flint 26 years	Jun 14 Dec 31	Suicide Cathy Flint



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## OUR MEETINGS

Our support group meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are open to the parents, grandparents and older siblings of your loved one. We meet at the **First Baptist Church** downtown at 317 E. Kiowa. We understand your pain; won't you let us help you through your grief? Next meetings will be December 17th and January 21st, 2010.

It is often difficult to attend your first meeting, but those who do find an atmosphere of support from other parents who understand a parent's grief. Nothing is asked of you; there are no fees; you do not have to speak a word if you do not care to. If you are more comfortable bringing a friend or relative along with you, please do.

Many find these meetings help them to heal; and together we learn to live with our loss. We learn that *we need not walk alone*.

## 'Twas the Night Before Christmas" ~ For Bereaved Parents ~

'Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days,  
That I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.  
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,  
In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.

As others were making their holiday plans,  
My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.  
I had lost my dear child a few years before,  
And I knew what my holiday had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,  
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

The sight that I saw took my breath away,  
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.  
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.  
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,  
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,  
That my child was still near me and that I was loved.  
The message they brought was my holiday gift,  
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view,  
One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -  
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,  
To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed I carried the thought,  
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -  
That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,  
Our children are with us - they're not really dead.

Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,  
A message of hope - a message so dear.  
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,  
"To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"

-By Faye McCord - TCF, Jackson, MS



## LIGHT A CANDLE

And I will light a candle for you.  
To shatter all the darkness and bless the times we knew.

Like a beacon in the night.  
The flame will burn bright  
and guide us on our way.

Oh, today I light a candle for you.

The seasons come and go,  
And I'm weary of the change.

I keep moving on,  
you know it's not the same.

And when I'm walking all alone,  
Do you hear me call your name?

Do you hear me sing the songs we used to sing?

You filled my life with wonder,  
Touched me with surprise,

I always saw that something special deep within your eyes.  
And through the good times and the bad,

We carried on with pride.

I hold onto the love and life we knew.

~Paul Alexander - TCF Atlanta





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## Love Gift Donations

*Our chapter exists entirely through your donations which are tax deductible. Love Gifts enable us to continue our outreach to bereaved parents through our many chapter activities. A Love Gift is money donated to the chapter in memory of your child who has died. If you feel a Love Gift is an appropriate way to honor the memory of your child, please consider a donation, large or small. Please fill out the form located in this newsletter and mail it to the address listed. All pictures submitted will be returned unless you specify for us to keep them and place them on our Child Remembered board displayed at monthly meetings.*

### **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**\$50 or more** - Newsletter Sponsor. May include a full page for printing. Please remember to send your page "Copy Ready" as you would like to see it printed in the newsletter.

**\$0 to \$50** - A picture, if available, and dedication to be listed in the newsletter.

**These items must be received by the 10th of the month preceding the issue in which you would like them to appear. Love Gift donations should be sent directly to our treasurer, Frank Schager whose address is listed on the Love Gift Donation Form.**



Tell us what you want. Is there something specific that you'd like to see? Perhaps more stories or articles on healing? Recommendations for books or poems written by other TCF members?

Do you have a poem or a prayer, story or picture that you would like to share? We also welcome your contributions to our newsletter whether original or something you may have read. If submitting something you've read or know is copyrighted material, you must obtain written permission from the author prior to us going to publication.

Please address any submissions to:

Stew Levett  
160 El Dorado Lane  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Or write to: [Stewart@Archangelgifts.com](mailto:Stewart@Archangelgifts.com)

Submissions need to be received by the 10th of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Thank you.

## LOVE GIFT DONATION

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Anniversary Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dedication \_\_\_\_\_

Picture Enclosed: YES ☐ NO ☐

Mail to:  
Frank Schager  
2235 McArthur Ave.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

## Angel Eyes: Giving Comfort, Providing Hope

Our group offers bereavement services for parents, families, friends and caregivers who have been affected by the sudden unexpected loss of an infant or toddler. This group offers you a comfortable place to heal and learn how to live with your loss. Nothing is asked of you; you do not have to speak if you choose not to.

People who have received bereavement services report that it is very helpful for them to have people to talk to that can understand the grief of losing an infant or young child. This group is a safe place where you can talk about both your grief and the precious memories you have of your child. Each month we will begin with a particular topic, talk about how you might be affected and have time for general sharing.

The group is led by the ANGEL EYES social worker. Their mission is to help families and others cope with the sudden, unexpected death of an infant or toddler throughout the state by providing a range of bereavement services. For additional help and information: **Angel Eyes 1-888-285-7437**

Web site: [www.angeleyes.org](http://www.angeleyes.org)

**Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the Month**

**Location:** Colorado Springs Penrose Library, 20 N. Cascade Ave  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

There is no cost and parking is free at the meters after 6:00 p.m.



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## CHRISTMAS PARENTS

The Mom and Dad traveled in the same vehicle but they were in different places. The Dad concentrated on the street ahead as never before and the Mom was grateful the side window provided a place to turn her head and stare at nothing. Only a few feet apart their worlds were not in the same universe and the distance was measured in infinite hopeless heartbreak. The wall between them was created by the absence of someone very special. On this ride there was no animosity, no resentment, no emotion, mostly there was just an empty void where life had previously prospered.

A trip to a picturesque park in the quaint little town decorated in Christmas cheer held no joy for the joyless. It was their duty to view a tree. This tree would bare the name of their child who had died too soon. Neither parent wanted to go. Both parents thought it was their obligation to go. Mom and Dad walked next to each other but not together. There was an impenetrable tapestry of confusing sadness that had seemingly been forever hung between them.

The sidewalk led the way between the rows of Christmas trees that were decorated with the standard fare of ornaments and lights. Trees from the civics club, the scouts, local businesses, worthy charities, grade school classes were all passed as eyes looked for but hoped would not find the tree that had the name. To find this tree, to find this name, would be another confirmation of the finality that imprisoned their hearts in this seemingly eternal cage of gloom and grief. There appeared to be no escape and none was sought. There was nowhere else to go.

This little tree was spectacular in its life. Here it was bearing their sons name on a homemade ornament of paper and plastic. It steals the air from the lungs of Dad and he is brought to his knees by its simple declaration. The bench was close and one last effort placed his tired body on it near the end.

Mom had spotted the name of her beloved little boy among the hundreds of others and immediately straightened its placement against the wind. Her loving hands gently moved this small token to its proper place on this beautiful little evergreen. The sobs and the weeping occurred so often that stifling the tears had become routine. Short sighs accompanied by her shoulders rising and falling would let the casual observers move past as they bowed their heads towards the ground lest eye contact be made with this silent saddest lady for fear her misery proves contagious.

The little bird first landed on the bench back next to Dad. Squinting thorough the bloodshot eyes that rested on tear raw cheeks he glanced at this little curiosity. Wondering if his little boys Mom saw it but afraid that movement might scare it away he moved just his eyes. Dad saw Mom with her hands to her face. Fingers covering her mouth covered in tears flowing in quiet testimony to her love. The little feathery angel was so close, so fearless, so hopping happy with life. Our little buddy visited for a lifetime calculated in seconds. In a blur it was at the other end of the bench so it looked straight at Dad. Moving its little head but always seeming to stare right at him, right into him. How could one not smile, how could one not think for just a moment that maybe, just maybe. Then the tiny one moved and flew away as quickly as it arrived. Dad glanced at Mom and for a moment the look of life and wonderment had replaced the one of helpless hopelessness. Our feathered friend was not done. To the top of the tree he perched right next to the homemade angel decoration, then to the branch, to his branch, next to his name and the miracle was nearly complete.

We know it was just a coincidence, we know it was just a bird, just sitting on a branch of a tree, but when it flew away and grabbed on to one last limb of the giant trees overhead it was joined in a final flight from our sight with tens, then hundreds of other little birds flying against the sky. The bereaved parents noticed the small white snowflakes that began to parachute to earth. They saw the children playing nearby. They heard the Christmas music being played in the park. They felt the biting cold wintry air. They smiled. The little bird and his pals were locked in their hearts and they knew this memory would last until they were one again. Mom and Dad had come alone but left together.

By Pat O'Donnell - TCF Livonia, Michigan







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## Santa's Secret Wish

On Christmas Eve, a young boy with light in his eyes  
Looked deep into Santa's, to Santa's surprise  
And said as he sat on Santa's broad knee,  
"I want your secret. Tell it to me."

He leaned up and whispered in Santa's good ear  
"How do you do it, year after year?"

"I want to know how, as you travel about,  
Giving gifts here and there, you never run out.  
How is it, Dear Santa, that in your pack of toys  
You have plenty for all of the world's girls and boys?  
Stays so full, never empties, as you make your way  
From rooftop to rooftop, to homes large and small,  
From nation to nation, reaching them all?"

And Santa smiled kindly and said to the boy,  
"Don't ask me hard questions. Don't you want a toy?"  
But the child shook his head, and Santa could see  
That he needed the answer. "Now listen to me,"  
He told that small boy with the light in his eyes,  
"My secret will make you sadder and wise."

"The truth is that my sack is magic.  
Inside It holds millions of toys for my Christmas Eve ride.  
But although I do visit each girl and each boy  
I don't always leave them a gaily wrapped toy.  
Some homes are hungry, some homes are sad,  
Some homes are desperate, some homes are bad.  
Some homes are broken, and the children there grieve.  
Those homes I visit, but what should I leave?"

"My sleigh is filled with the happiest stuff,  
But for homes where despair lives toys aren't enough.  
So I tiptoe in, kiss each girl and boy,  
And I pray with them that they'll be given the joy  
Of the spirit of Christmas, the spirit that lives  
In the heart of the dear child who gets not, but gives."



"If only God hears me and answers my prayer,  
When I visit next year, what I will find there  
Are homes filled with peace, and with giving, and love  
And boys and girls gifted with light from above.

It's a very hard task, my smart little brother,  
To give toys to some, and to give prayers to others.  
But the prayers are the best gifts, the best gifts indeed,  
For God has a way of meeting each need.

"That's part of the answer. The rest, my dear youth,  
Is that my sack is magic. And that is the truth.

In my sack I carry on Christmas Eve day  
More love than a Santa could e'er give away.

The sack never empties of love, or of joys  
`Cause inside it are prayers, and hope.  
Not just toys. The more that I give, the fuller it seems,  
Because giving is my way of fulfilling dreams.

"And do you know something? You've got a sack, too.  
It's as magic as mine, and it's inside of you.

It never gets empty, it's full from the start.  
It's the center of lights, and love. It's your heart.  
And if on this Christmas you want to help me,  
Don't be so concerned with the gifts `neath your tree.  
Open that sack called your heart, and share  
Your joy, your friendship, your wealth, your care."

The light in the small boy's eyes was glowing.

"Thanks for your secret. I've got to be going."

"Wait, little boy," Said Santa, "don't go.  
Will you share? Will you help? Will you use what you know?"  
And just for a moment the small boy stood still,  
Touched his heart with his small hand and whispered, "I will."

By Betty Werth



The Compassionate Friends  
Pikes Peak Chapter  
P.O. Box 26239  
Colorado Springs, CO 80936



### *The Compassionate Friends Credo*

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends.