



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Sioux Falls Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November 2014

Upcoming meeting: November 4, 2014

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:15 with the exception of December.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
3801 E. 26th Street
Sioux Falls, SD

There is no religious affiliation.

www.compassionatefriendsofsiouxfalls.org

The Compassionate Friends is a support group for those who have experienced the death of a child at any age, for any reason.



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Sioux Falls Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

*If you are no longer interested in receiving this newsletter,
please contact us at:
rstoecker53@gmail.com*

The Compassionate Friends
Sioux Falls SD Area Chapter
2804 South Kingswood Way
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

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Q. & A.



Dr. Watson-Miller

Dr. Watson-Miller is a Clinical Psychologist who lost her own son while in Graduate School in 1997. She graduated from the University of South Dakota in 2002 and has worked in both the private and public sectors. She is on the faculty of USD Sanford School of Medicine where she teaches psychodynamic psychotherapy and provides supervision to psychiatry residents as they learn therapeutic techniques. She works from her own private practice on evenings and weekends.

Dr. Watson-Miller lost her son in a tragic automobile accident in 1997. The memories of her son standing in the bleachers as she graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Criminal Justice and Psychology in 1995 compelled her to honor his memory by completing her education and allowing him to live through her. In her journey through grief, she has gained unique insights into not just coping, but thriving through adversity. She was gifted through her life experience by the support of her graduate program, her faith, and encouragement from others. She states, "Without adversity, we do not know how strong we really are. We have an obligation to share the gifts we have been given with others—to help them learn how to honor others through self-care and, by extension, others."

If you would like Dr. Watson-Miller to respond to your questions through this format, please email them to tcfsiouxfalls@yahoo.com. The questions will be forwarded to Dr. Watson-Miller without identifying information and will be used in future columns.

QUESTION: My teenage son took his own life, I can not forgive myself for not being able to stop him. The guilt and pain is destroying me.

ANSWER: The loss of a child normally does leave parents feeling guilty for what they have done and/or what they have failed to do. When a child dies by suicide, it would be surprising to see a parent who did not feel responsible.

The recent suicide of Robin Williams is one poignant example. I'm not certain whether his parents are still living, but his suicide complicates the grief process for his surviving family members. One of the things suicide does is leaves others wondering what they could have done to prevent this tragedy.

It's important to remember that most suicides are not made when one feels they can adequately manage whatever is driving them to consider this an option. Whatever the stressor is, it has overwhelmed their ability to cope. Add depression into this and it is a recipe for disaster. Such was the case when Robin Williams could not cope with Parkinson's Disease and his imitations that threatened his identity. Add depression onto the loss of a sense of identity, and what else is there?

The primary risk factor for suicide is hopelessness, which presents itself in varying degrees. The deeper the hopelessness, the higher the risk for suicide. When people become depressed, they also become hopeless. In this sense, they did not kill themselves. Their illness killed them. Because of their hopelessness, they could see no other options.

Perhaps understanding that it was his illness that killed him, you will be able to forgive yourself for not understanding it. I would recommend you seek professional help with your own hopelessness. I am sorry for your loss.

With compassion always, Dr. Watson-Miller

DISCLAIMER: The responses published in the newsletter in no way suggest that there is a therapeutic relationship between the individual who submitted the question and Dr. Watson-Miller. The responses are written for the purpose of providing general suggestions to the recipients of this newsletter.

As part of remembering our children, we will have a table set up for you to bring pictures and anything you wish to share about your child during the month of your child's birthday.

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The Compassionate Friends

National Office: 877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org



The Gift of Love



Please send in love gifts by the 5th of the month so that they may be included in the following month's newsletter.

Your donation is greatly appreciated.

In Memory of: _____

Love Gift Amount: _____

Submitted by: _____

Address: _____

Send your love gift to:

Joyce Buseman, TCF Treasurer
1041 Lincoln St.
Centerville, SD 57014

Love Gifts:



From Brian & Melody Hohn

In loving memory of

Ryan Hohn



From Jack & Karen Huber

In loving memory of

Nicholas Huber



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.

Midcontinent Helps Sioux Falls Chapter

Our local chapter of The Compassionate Friends will be able to reach more grieving families, thanks to a generous donation from Midcontinent Communications Foundation. The regional telecommunications leader annually accepts applications from non-profit organizations in need of financial help. TCF was chosen and we gratefully accepted Midcontinent’s assistance.

“We know there are so many more people in our area who could benefit from the help we provide,” said Ruth Stoecker, TCF Regional Coordinator. “We want to be notified as soon as possible when a child passes because the early stages of grieving are so excruciating. Physicians, nurses, social workers, and law enforcement all deal with bereaved families so we need to educate them about Compassionate Friends. Our goal is to always provide a safe, confidential gathering of people who understand the loss of a child, people you can count on for support.”

The funds will be used to send representatives to leadership conferences and to develop and distribute comprehensive marketing materials.

“We are so pleased that Midcontinent decided to help us,” says Stoecker. “Their benevolence helps us provide more resources to people who are broken and vulnerable so they can eventually find hope and healing.”

HONORARY ASSOCIATES OF COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Sponsors are considered Honorary Associates of our organization and are recognized at the level of their donation. We would like to offer our sincere and grateful appreciation to the following supporters:

DIAMOND (\$500)	GOLD (\$150)	SILVER (\$100)	BRONZE (\$50)
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Sisson Printing		Minnehaha Funeral Home	
		Hartquist Funeral Home	
		Caroline Christopher	
		Dr. Richard Howard	

Special thanks to:

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—hosting our monthly meetings

MILLER FUNERAL HOME—providing cookies for our meetings

AVERA MCKENNAN HOSPITAL AND UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER—donating the printing of our newsletters

The October meeting of TCF of Sioux Falls met on October 7, 2014, with 21 members in attendance. The group split into two smaller groups & discussed questions regarding issues frequently encountered by grieving parents. We celebrated four birthdays this month: Nicholas Huber, D'Artagan James "DJ" Lambertz-Morrison, William "Billy" Shoewe, & Ashlyn Johana Lee. Remember on your child's birth month to bring pictures & items that represent them to share with the group. You can also bring their favorite treat to share after the meeting.

Bereaved Families Join in the 18th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting

The death of a child is devastating and it's important to the family that the child always be remembered. That's why members of the Sioux Falls Chapter of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) will participate in an annual worldwide event designed to honor the memories of all children, regardless of age, who have died. The chapter is joining Sunday, December 14, with hundreds of organized memorial services around the world for The Compassionate Friends 18th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, an event now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting in the world.

The local candle lighting will be part of a special service held at 6:15pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 3801 E 26th St, Sioux Falls, SD and will feature a PowerPoint presentation, special music and speaker, and refreshments. Annually, tens of thousands of families, united in loss, light candles for one hour during the Worldwide Candle Lighting, held the second Sunday in December. Candles are first lit at 7 p.m., local time, just west of the International Date Line. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next, creating a 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.

If you wish, you may bring your favorite Christmas treat to share after the service. Please join us for this meaningful event.

Send us a photo of your child along with his/her **name**, to be included in a slideshow presentation at the annual Candle-Lighting Ceremony on December 14, 2014.

1. Mail to: Brenda Reisch
23379 434th Ave.
Howard, SD 57349

OR

2. Email in jpg format with *2014 Slideshow* in the *Subject* line to

Brenda.reisch@yahoo.com

If your child's picture has been included in previous slideshow presentations, it is not necessary to resubmit a picture.



You Know You're Making Progress When

- You can remember your child with a smile
- You realize the painful comments others make are made in ignorance
- You can reach out to help someone else
- You stop dreading holidays
- You can sit through a church service without crying
- You can concentrate on something besides your child
- You can find something to thank God for
- You can be alone in your house without it bothering you
- You can talk about what happened to your child without falling apart
- You no longer feel you have to go to the cemetery every day or every week
- You can tolerate the sound of a baby crying
- You don't have to turn off the radio when his or her favorite music comes on
- You can find something to laugh about
- You can drive by the hospital or that intersection without screaming
- You no longer feel exhausted all the time
- You can appreciate a sunset, the smell of newly-mowed grass, the pattern on a butterfly's wings

Judy Osgood

TCF, Carmel/Indianapolis, IN

(This is a Sibling Story) It's a Family Affair

When a child dies, grief is a family affair. It hits mom, dad, and siblings with equal despair. Mom cries and cannot get out of bed. Dad holds in emotions and leaves much unsaid. Sister and brother simply cannot understand why death came and dealt this kind of hand. No one acts as they should and nothing is the same. The family wants to draw together but seems to only share pain. Someone must be responsible when a child dies. Each family member thinks in some way it's them, and cries.

But no one is responsible for things we cannot control. So reach out to each other and keep the family whole.

Don't let the differences in how each grieve change the love in your family or its belief. Be strong when you can and weak when you must, and love each other with kindness and trust. So treat the family with love and you will survive. For we who have been there and made it through together can say that holding on to each other makes love last forever.

*Jackie Roxen
TCF, Broward, FL*

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives meant the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

Henry Nouwen

WHY WE STILL GO TO TCF

“Are you still involved with that group? Aren’t you over it yet? Why do you go?” These are questions I often hear now that it has been more than seven years since Mark died. I suspect you hear them too. There are easy answers. But not everyone understands, unless you have been there. Here are ten I can think of:

Because we never want the world to forget our child, so what we do we do in his or her name.

Because when we reach out to help someone else, we also help ourselves.

Because someone was there for us when we needed it most; now the best way to say “thank you” is to pass it on by being there for others.

Because it is the one thing we do that can bring something positive out of tragedy.

Because we have found in TCF better friends and closer bonds than we ever thought possible. Here we can cry and hug people even if we don’t know their last name or what they do for a living. And it doesn’t matter.

Because few people are qualified to walk up to a newly bereaved family and say, “I know how you feel.”

And because we can, we must.

Because sometimes we need to talk, too, and to remember and share. We are further along than many around us, but we never forget.

Because many of us believe that one day we will meet our child or brother or sister again, and he or she will ask, “So what did you do with your life after I left?” And we will have an answer.

Because our presence might help newly bereaved families understand that they will survive and even laugh again.

Because we love cold coffee, cookies, and hard metal chairs.

Richard Edler

TCF South Bay/L.A. CA Chapter

Our Children Remembered—November

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Parents
Todd David Brander	2-Nov	26-Jun	Jamice & Ken Brander
Ryan Scott Hohn	3-Nov	15-Aug	Brian & Melody Hohn
Brielle Ciara Gonzalez	4-Nov	2-Apr	Welter and Crystal Gonzalez
Chad Michael Plueger	5-Nov	15-Jan	Darrell & Madona Plueger
Courtney Rae Rothschadl	6-Nov	28-Apr	Craig Rothschadl
Alex Clark Rolfing	9-Nov	9-Nov	Rex & Margie Rolfing
Tanner Joseph Bainbridge	11-Nov	29-Oct	Brent & Lisa Bainbridge
Gregory Paul Feller	13-Nov	5-Feb	Ted & Pat Feller
Liam Samuel Duncan	13-Nov	17-Sep	Aaron & Samantha Duncan
Jason Alan Thornberry	17-Nov	3-Oct	Steve & Gloria Thornberry
Jessica DelaTorre	18-Nov	9-Apr	Dawn Semmler
Jeanine Lynn Smith	19-Nov	26-Feb	Duane & Vernice Verhey
Christian Hetland	21-Nov	23-Nov	Randy & Donna Hetland
Neil Simon Birkeland	25-Nov	6-Aug	Janet (Birkeland) Dirks & Ron Birkeland
Josie Dilly	28-Nov	6-Nov	Nicole and Stacy Dilly
Monique Carlson	29-Nov	22-Sep	Jim Carlson
Val Red Bird	14-Feb	1-Nov	Shawna Suing
Lyndsey Dayle Wehrkamp	17-May	1-Nov	Evangel Wehrkamp
			Ann Lynn Graham - grandmother
Amy Jean Ellingson	20-Aug	9-Nov	Al & Nancy Ellingson
Mandi Gilliland	15-Jul	10-Nov	Ron & Sandy Gilliland
Bret Alan Moe	20-Jun	11-Nov	Lolly & Gary McCormick (step-father)
Steve Macy	13-Feb	12-Nov	Lenette and the late Ralph Macy
Brad Nicholson	18-Jul	12-Nov	Layne & Anita Nicholson
Larry Zoellner	2-Jun	14-Nov	Gene & Marlene Zoellner
Ashlyn Johanna Lee	21-Oct	15-Nov	Kirk & Michelle Lee
Tyler Easton	8-Oct	15-Nov	Rick & Brenda Easton
Andrew Paul Nester	14-Sep	16-Nov	Paul & Kris Nester
Karelyn Colleen Mathison	11-Oct	16-Nov	John & Molly Mathison
Wyatt Ammon	19-Oct	18-Nov	Greg & Jeannie Ammon
Tyler Newville	5-Sep	20-Nov	Renee & Tim Newville
James William Edwards	12-Feb	20-Nov	Joann & Ralph Redenius (step-father)
Jessica Cassandra Haffer	2-Oct	23-Nov	Jeralyn & Keith Haffer
Erik Lee Schmidt	1-Jul	25-Nov	Bob & Melanie Schmidt
Ian Matthew Mastel	24-Feb	25-Nov	Patrick & Peggy Mastel
Alex O'Hara	10-Dec	26-Nov	Jeff & Jean O'Hara
Josie Thompson	18-Apr	26-Nov	Jeri Lynn (Thompson) Howe & Chris Thompson
Jason Jon Smith	8-Apr	28-Nov	Alger & Marilyn Smith
Brandon James Gannun	4-May	30-Nov	Angie (Gannun) & Rich Hubbling (step-father)