



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

## December 2014

Candlelighting Service: December 14, 2014

Next Regular Meeting: January 6, 2015

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

Westminster Presbyterian Church

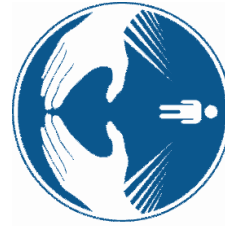
3801 E. 26th Street

Sioux Falls, SD

*There is no religious affiliation.*

[www.compassionatefriendsofsiouxfalls.org](http://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.



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
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](mailto:rstoecker53@gmail.com)*

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

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
SIOUX FALLS, SD  
PERMIT #7225

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# 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](mailto:tcfsiouxfalls@yahoo.com). The questions will be forwarded to Dr. Watson-Miller without identifying information and will be used in future columns.

**QUESTION:** How can we manage discussions at our Compassionate Friends meetings when some parents desperately want to talk about communicating with their children who have passed while others find that topic uncomfortable, maybe even forbidden?

**ANSWER:** It is sometimes very difficult to find that balance. Finding the ability to respect each individual's way of coping with their grief is really the key here. We don't have to agree with someone else's beliefs, but giving them a place to honor their child without judging them shows respect of another's individual way of coping. What is really important in a group such as Compassionate Friends is to find a way to honor each other's journey, which is what each of you is there for.

One way of dealing with this issue if it has become problematic for your group, thereby risking the cohesiveness of the group, is to discuss the issue directly and do some basic problem solving. One example would be to split the group into smaller groups for part of the meeting – those that believe it is possible to communicate with a lost loved one and a group for those that find that topic uncomfortable. Then introduce a general topic for full group discussion.

Another way of handling these differences is to ask more questions about what communicating with their lost children means to them. It is likely this is a source of comfort for them and all could share ways in which they find comfort in their moments of grief.

If there is no apparent solutions, outside referrals are always appropriate – whether to a spiritual advisor, priest, etc., who can explore this with individuals. One caution: An issue such as this can split a group permanently. The easiest way to avoid this is to remind everyone of what they have in common – the loss of a child. And that is the purpose of Compassionate Friends.

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.

TCF Leaders for Sioux Falls:

Ruth Stoecker 605-201-1426

rstoecker53@gmail.com

Peggy Mastel 605-351-8823

mpastel@sio.midco.net

Kristin Seruyange 605-610-9432

kristin.tcf@gmail.com

### **The Compassionate Friends**

National Office: 877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

The November meeting of TCF of Sioux Falls met on November 4, 2014, with 21 members in attendance. The group split into three smaller groups & discussed remembering our children and finding meaning during the holiday season. We celebrated two birthdays this month: Zev Luna Audrey Leal & Christian Helland. Re-member 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.



### *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 Dorothy Inskoop



In loving memory of

**Phillip Inskoop**

### **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.

## Lights of Love

Can you see our candles  
 Burning in the night?  
 Lights of love we send you  
 Rays of purest white

Oh, angels gone before us  
 Who taught us perfect love  
 This night the world lights candles  
 That you may see them from above

Children we remember  
 Though missing from our sight  
 In honor and remembrance  
 We light candles in the night

Tonight the globe is lit by love  
 Of those who know great sorrow,  
 But as we remember our yesterdays  
 Let's light one candle for tomorrow

All across the big blue marble  
 Spinning out in space  
 Can you see the candles burning  
 From this human place?

We will not forget,  
 And every year in deep December  
 On Earth we will light candles  
 As.....we remember

*Jacqueline Brown  
 TCF Peace Valley, PA*

## 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:

<b>DIAMOND (\$500)</b>	<b>GOLD (\$150)</b>	<b>SILVER (\$100)</b>	<b>BRONZE (\$50)</b>
First Premier Bank	Soil Technologies, Inc.	George Boom Funeral Home	Knudson & Buseman Insur- ance
	Heritage Funeral Home	Dindot-Klusman Funeral Home	Shaffer Memorials
	Miller Funeral Home	Catholic Family Services	
<b>PLATINUM (\$250)</b>		Family Memorials by Gibson	
Diamond Mowers, Inc.		Weiland Funeral Chapel	
DE & TS (Josh Fiedler)		Key Real Estate—Jim Carlson	
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—donating the printing of our newsletters



### **Bereaved Families Join in the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 lighted in the next, creating a 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.

#### **Meeting Note:**

Please note there will be no regular monthly meeting of the Compassionate Friends of Sioux Falls for the month of December. We will instead meet only for the candlelighting ceremony on December 14 at 6:15 p.m. We will resume our regular monthly meetings in January.

We hope to see all of you there in December as we seek to honor and remember our children during this holiday season.

## Only December

Feelings heavy,  
tears and tears.  
Will the darkness last?  
Or is it –  
only December?

Hadn't past months  
brought peace and hope?  
Where is the strength  
of October –  
and November?

Lights, carols, ornaments on trees,  
cards from friends,  
happy times in seasons past.  
We remember.  
We remember.

Will January bring  
light at last?  
Will we be stronger then,  
for making it through  
this December?

When people ask  
how I'm doing I say,  
Well . . . you know . . .  
it's December.

Genesee Bourdeau Gentry  
*from Stars in the Deepest Night- After the Death  
of a Child*

## The Holidays Are Coming!

"The Holidays are coming! The Holidays are coming!" Most bereaved parents make that observation with the same sense of fear and dread that Chicken Little had when he announced, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" We view Christmas or Hanukkah differently than the rest of the world. In our minds they become great trials to be endured. In my opinion, this trial is tougher than birthdays or death anniversaries. This is the time when love abounds. The family (and extended family) all gather together, coming from near and far, to share in this love. The only trouble with this happy scene is that our child is missing. He or she has traveled too far from us to come for the holidays! We can't buy gifts for a photograph or hug and kiss a memory. The emptiness that this creates in us cannot be filled, no matter how many relatives gather by our hearth. To add to the pain, most well-meaning friends and relatives feel that the best way to handle the problem is to pretend that it doesn't exist. They never mention the one person that is on the minds and in the hearts of everyone. We found out early on that it is not possible to keep the "presence" of our child out of a family gathering. Trying to do so makes everyone uncomfortable and causes us as parents to feel disloyal.

The first Christmas after our son died, we did it "their" way. Never again! Now we make sure that he is very much a part of our holiday. For starters, we decided once again to hang all three stockings. We don't fill them, but just seeing them all hanging together is right for us. The tree was very important to Blake. Every year he took the responsibility of stringing the lights for us. Now it is important to us to see that Blake has a tree. We have a very special one, about 3 feet tall, that we weight heavily at the bottom. We decorate it with weather-proof ornaments and place it at his grave. We leave the tree there until spring so it can mark the gravesite when the snows are deep. We also have a love-ly candle that we burn on special days. This is our way of including our missing son in the family circle. But most important, we talk about him. We don't do it obsessively, but we don't hesitate to recall memories of him as often as we recall those of other children in the family. Because we talk of him in an easy and natural manner, the rest of the family has taken our cue. They now bring up his name naturally. It is all so much more comfortable than the way we tried to handle it that first year.

Another couple in our chapter had a wonderful idea for the first holiday after their daughter died. Their greatest fear was that no one would mention her, so they compiled an album of her pictures and casually left it out on the coffee table. It wasn't long before people were looking through it, recalling favorite memories of her, and the ice was broken.

There must be so many other ways that you can make your child a part of your holiday—ways that seem right and comfortable for you. You may choose to keep your thoughts private rather than share them with others. But the most important thing to remember is that the choice is yours. Do what makes you comfortable, not what others think should make you comfortable. If you follow the dictates of your heart and that gives you comfort, those around you will see that it is so and follow your lead.

Marge Frankenberg  
*TCF Arlington Heights, IL*  
*In loving memory of my son, Blake*

### **Just Flow with the Season and Take Care of Yourself**

We're well into November and it's almost time to take the "January pill". After Tricia died I decided I'd invent a pill you could take the week before Thanksgiving and when you came to, it would be January! I'm still working on the invention. In the meantime, I know many of you are already dreading the approaching holidays.

The true spirit and meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas are not necessarily exemplified by some of our "traditions". You are re-evaluating many aspects of your life so let this also apply to the coming holidays. You will not always feel as you do now. You will find joy in holiday activities, but maybe not in all the things you once thought so very important.

Flow with the season and with your sadness, knowing strength will come as you work with what you can do without overtaxing yourself. Resolve to be as generous with your energy as you can and as selfish as you have to be to protect the emerging person you will become as a result of your loss. This person can be truly beautiful and loving because of what you have learned through grief.

You will miss your child; no magic potion can wipe the pain away. Enjoy what you can—you deserve some pleasure. And may some measure of peace overtake you before this year ends.

*Elizabeth B. Estes  
TCF Augusta, GA  
In Memory of Tricia*

### **Holiday Tips**

Anticipation of the holidays without your loved one is often harder than the actual holiday season. The first few years are usually the most difficult, but even many years later, the pain and sadness surface during this season. As you experience those normal emotions of remembrance of times shared, you might wish to skip the season completely. While others are celebrating, you might feel there is no joy in celebrating.

It can be challenging to get through the holiday season when one is heartbroken from the death of a loved one. This is a time to honor and remember our loved ones. It is also a time to remember our own needs, as we seek meaning and gratitude in our new life going forward. During this time, remember to be patient with yourself and be realistic of your expectations. As you grieve, make every effort to soften that mental picture of how things "ought" to be. As you celebrate the holiday season, listen to your heart and be careful not to overextend yourself.

Here are a few suggestions to help you as you begin to blend old holiday traditions with new traditions:

- Purchase or make a new holiday ornament or trinket. Place the new ornament or trinket next to your loved one's favorite one. Place this on your holiday tree or a special place in your home.
- If you usually decorate the tree in the living room, still decorate the tree, but maybe place it in the den instead.
- If you had a special dinner on Christmas Day, maybe have the special dinner on Christmas Eve instead, with a special place setting at the table in memory of your loved one.
- If you usually shopped together to purchase gifts for each other, purchase a gift in memory of your loved one and give it to someone else.
- Choose a favorite activity that your loved one enjoyed, i.e., sports, baking, etc. Select one day during the holiday season that you will do this activity, even if this is an activity that you never participated in before.
- Get creative as you find your own unique ways to show tribute to your loved one and gratitude for your own life, the memories created, and the lessons learned.

An activity that I always suggest is to do something that you have never done before, but maybe always wanted to do. Choose an activity that will force you to step outside of your comfort zone when doing so. This will not only help you with beginning new traditions, but will boost your confidence and belief in yourself as you find meaning and gratitude in your new life.

Dora Carpenter, certified grief coach, certified life coach, and founder of The ANIYA Group Life Coaching Center, is known for challenging you to move from grief to gratitude and motivating you to do so. She has worked in the death care industry for over 14 years and has appeared as a guest on podcasts, radio, and television.

Want to learn more? Visit Dora Carpenter and other experts at Creating Champions for Life Global Academy at <http://ceflglobalacademy.com>

## Our Children Remembered—December

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Parents
Jade Joseph Thie	1-Dec	1-Mar	Toby Thie & Tami Raabe
Dalton Bruns	3-Dec	5-Dec	Bob & Mentra Bruns
Taylor K. Haug	4-Dec	24-Jun	Wendi & Kyle Haug
SSG Robb L Rolflng	4-Dec	30-Jun	Rex & Margie Rolflng
Justin Ryan Larson	6-Dec	17-Jun	Greg & Terrie Larson
Jenny Lee Sundermann	8-Dec	15-Apr	Lisa & Tedd Sundermann
Aaron Steven Hanson	9-Dec	30-Aug	Dawn Hanson & Steve Hanson
Alex O'Hara	10-Dec	26-Nov	Jeff & Jean O'Hara
Karl Wayne Longenecker	11-Dec	31-Oct	Diane DeVito
Carrie Christine Nelson	13-Dec	20-May	Mike & Nan Karr Kautenberg
Brandi Wahl Lueders	14-Dec	23-Sep	Lynn & Starr Cheeseman
Alicia Erin Moriarty	14-Dec	18-May	Mike & Kay Moriarty
Carl DerHagopian	16-Dec	24-Mar	Carl & Mary DerHagopian
Michael Harders	16-Dec	12-Jun	Rebecca Watson-Miller
Matthew Scott Brodland	17-Dec	30-Jan	Julian and JoAnn Brodland
Cara Jean Paul	17-Dec	6-Jan	Kathy & Mike Victor (step-dad)
Britany Khrystyne Nolz	18-Dec	10-Jan	Janet Bainbridge
Marcus Joseph Peterson	18-Dec	24-Sep	Julie Forster Raap & Michael Peterson
Johan Johnson	19-Dec	5-May	Dan & Gayle Johnson
Brent Allen Jacobson	19-Dec	16-Aug	Martyn & Beverly Jacobson
Jacob Michael Hayes	24-Dec	9-May	DeVern & Michelle Berkland
Brett Hodges	25-Dec	10-Mar	Joyce Hodges
Denise Gail (Faber) Meyers	28-Dec	5-Mar	Gloria & Thomas Faber
Phillip Inskoop	28-Dec	31-Aug	Dorothy Inskoop
Amanda Kaye Jensen	30-Dec	14-Jul	Monica & Jimmy Jensen
Natalie Joan Preschke	31-Dec	3-Jan	Jeanette & Gerard Van Beck
Kelly Swier	28-Feb	3-Dec	Gene & Shirley Jones
Jaden Ross Heil	18-Jun	4-Dec	Ruth & Kim Stoecker (step-father)
Jim Allen Van Liere	17-Feb	6-Dec	Jeanette & Adrian Van Liere
Amanda (Mandy) Dawn Yung Wallenburg	27-Feb	6-Dec	Lu & Gary DeVries (step-father)
			John & Dori Wallenburg (step-mother)
Debbie Lynn Westphal	2-Jan	8-Dec	Vern & Marty Westphal
Sammuel Richard Gronrud	11-Jan	8-Dec	Jim & Teresa Gronrud
Justin Henry Maass	26-May	9-Dec	Brenda & Lynn Maass
John Rosebrock	26-Aug	9-Dec	Norma Robinson
Kevin Wayne Anderson	11-Jan	9-Dec	Kenneth & Pearl Anderson
Kathryn Felbaunn	19-May	12-Dec	Gene & Gail Felbaum
Devin Robert Wosje	14-Mar	12-Dec	Dawn Wosje
William "Billy" Joseph Schoewe	19-Oct	13-Dec	Bruce & Jeanette Schoewe
Beth Huffman	1-Jul	14-Dec	Jeanette & Leonard Huffman
Jenica Bohlen	3-Jun	15-Dec	Earl & Helen Bohlen
Marvin Phillip Luke	1-Jan	19-Dec	Joseph & Karen Luke
Lisa Tusha Nilsen	28-Feb	19-Dec	Lorraine & Marlin (deceased) Tusha
Lisa Bonyngge	9-Jul	23-Dec	Marys & Brad Bonyngge
Taylor Brooks Hansen	7-Jun	23-Dec	Kerrie Hansen
Wayne R Dullerud	23-Jun	26-Dec	Rose Dullerud
Ryan Poss	28-Apr	27-Dec	Jim & Darla Poss
David James Wood	1-Jan	28-Dec	David & Patty Wood
Tabor A Larsen	30-Aug	28-Dec	Monica Larsen
Michael W. Miller	14-Oct	29-Dec	Gary & Julie Miller
Cynthia Marie (Thomas) Schultz	18-Jan	30-Dec	Walt & Myriam Thomas
Michael James Stevens	28-May	30-Dec	Cheryl Stevens-Pool
Don Monger	6-Jun	30-Dec	Larry & Joyce Monger
Christian Holm	7-May	31-Dec	Kevin & Billie Holm