



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

January 2015

Upcoming 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

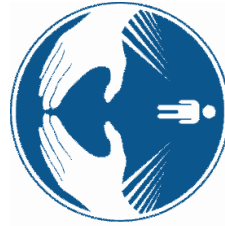
3801 E. 26th Street

Sioux Falls, SD

There is no religious affiliation.

www.compassionatefriendsofsiouxfalls.org

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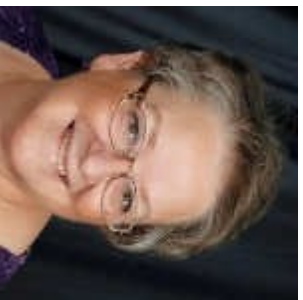
*If you are no longer interested in receiving this newsletter,
please contact us at:
rstoecker53@gmail.com*

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: Parents of children who died by suicide seem to be so much more broken, in even more pain than other parents. Is that the case? Should they be given special considerations?

ANSWER: A child’s suicide seems to carry with it many more issues than grieving the loss of a child. Most parents, regardless of the nature of the death of their child, may still have a sense of personal responsibility. After all, it is our duty to protect our children and, when our child predeceases us, there is an inherent sense of having failed at our parental duty.

However, when a child dies by suicide, parents are likely to experience a higher level of guilt than parents who have lost a child by other means. They may have known their child was suffering from depression and failed to recognize the level of hopelessness the child was suffering. They may have had pressures in their own lives (such as work, etc.), that prevented them from attending to their child to the degree they felt they should have.

Depression being what it is, does not allow the suffering person to recognize that others are available to them and may not share just how profound their suffering is, assuming they realize it. There are always the “what ifs,” that go with the death of any child, with the difference being that parents of children who suicide have more history to look at and think about all the times they did not take their child seriously, or listen just close enough.

Suicide always leaves an emotional hangover with the survivors. With a child, and the assumption of parental responsibility, there is the internal trauma as well as the additional trauma of being parents stigmatized by society because of their inability to prevent it. It complicates the grief process so much more.

Although it seems so trivial somehow to say it, even mental health professionals cannot predict nor prevent suicide. If we could, there would be many fewer suicides than we have. If a child suicide happens, mental health professionals can still help the survivors and I would hope they would seek out that help – for themselves and their other children. Honoring the family by showing compassion, respect, and understanding through listening is given to all parents who have lost children. Encouraging them to seek professional help is also a must in the case of child suicide.

With Compassion Always,

Dr. Watson-Miller, Ph.D.

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

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The Compassionate Friends

National Office: 877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

The 2014 Candlelighting Ceremony was held on December 14. Thank you to all of you who were able to be there, and we hope that it was a special time of remembrance for you during the holiday season. If you have any suggestions for our ceremony next year, please speak to one of the group leaders. For those of you who were unable to be there, we hope to see you at an upcoming monthly meeting. Blessings and hope to all of you.

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.



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

SNOW

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again—even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

*Denise Falzon
TCF Lake Area, MI*

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:

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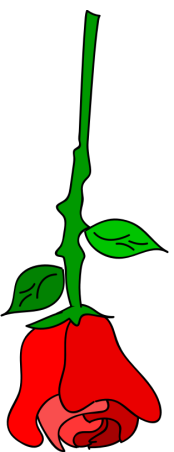
Special thanks to:

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—hosting our monthly meetings

MILLER FUNERAL HOME—providing cookies for our meetings

AVERA—donating the printing of our newsletters

January Love Gifts



From Joan and John Gadbois



In loving memory of



Jaden Ross Heil

From Joyce and the late Howard



Hodges

In loving memory of



Brett Hodges

From Kevin Hohn



In loving memory of



Christian Hohn

From Norman and Evelyn Ykema



In loving memory of



Noreen Moss

From Kevin Hohn



In loving memory of



Clara Ortman

From Steve and Sara Reinsch



In loving memory of



TJ Reinsch

From Grandma Nonny



In loving memory of



Jared Brooke Winter

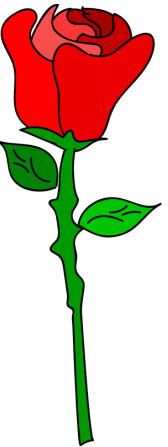
From Norman and Evelyn Ykema



In loving memory of



Norwyn Ykema



Just for Today for Bereaved Parents

Just for today I will try to live through the next 24 hours
and not expect to get over my child's death,
but instead learn to live with it, just one day at a time.
Just for today I will remember my child's life, not just her
death,
and bask in the comfort of all those treasured days
and moments we shared.
Just for today I will forgive all the family and friends
who didn't help or comfort me the way I needed them to.
They truly did not know how.
Just for today I will smile no matter how much I hurt on
the inside,
for maybe if I smile a little,
my heart will soften and I will begin to heal.
Just for today I will reach out to comfort a relative or
friend of my child,
for they are hurting too,
and perhaps we can help each other.
Just for today I will free myself from my self-inflicted
burden of guilt,
for deep in my heart I know if there was anything in this
world
I could of done to save my child from death,
I would of done it.

Just for today I will honor my child's memory
by doing something with another child
because I know that would make my own child proud.
Just for today I will offer my hand in friendship
to another bereaved parent
for I do know how they feel.
Just for today when my heart feels like breaking,
I will stop and remember that grief is the price we pay for
loving
and the only reason I hurt is because
I had the privilege of loving so much.
Just for today I will not compare myself with others.
I am fortunate to be who I am
and have had my child for as long as I did.
Just for today I will allow myself to be happy,
for I know that I am not deserting her 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

The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves: we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears. The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories...sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX*

For the New Year

Where there is pain,

Let there be softening

Where there is bitterness,

Let there be acceptance

Where there is silence,

Let there be communication

Where there is loneliness,

Let there be friendships

Where there is despair,

Let there be hope.

Ruth Eisenman

TCF Louisville, KY

Resolutions

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

Have a happier New Year!

Pat Akery

TCF, Medford, OR

Our Children Remembered—January

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Parents
Marvin Phillip Luke	1-Jan	19-Dec	Joseph & Karen Luke
David James Wood	1-Jan	28-Dec	David & Patty Wood
Phillip Sorensen	2-Jan	26-Jul	Terry & Cleo Sorensen
Debbie Lynn Westphal	2-Jan	8-Dec	Vern & Mary Westphal
Brady R Crawford	5-Jan	13-Oct	Mary & Leon Fredrichs (step-father) Bob Crawford
Rebecca (Becca) Rae Reese	6-Jan	30-Jul	Kristen Reese
David D Olson	10-Jan	27-Feb	Doug and Joyce Olson
Ryan Matson	11-Jan	13-Jul	Barb Matson
Samuel Richard Gronud	11-Jan	8-Dec	Jim & Teresa Gronud
Kevin Wayne Anderson	11-Jan	9-Dec	Kenneth & Pearl Anderson
Luke Alan Melius	12-Jan	26-Jan	Rick & Katie Melius
Charlotte Luna Hadrick	12-Jan	8-Feb	Robert & Peggy Carmichael (grandparents)
Kevin William Koenig	15-Jan	29-May	Sandy & Jack Koenig
Tyler Jon Kendle	16-Jan	12-Oct	Todd & Maria Kendle
Kevin James Sehr	17-Jan	8-Feb	Tom & Rita Sehr
Cynthia Marie (Thomas) Schultz	18-Jan	30-Dec	Walt & Myriam Thomas
Jeraine D. Pullman	18-Jan	4-Jun	Joe & Margie Pullman
Robert Daniel Ritbe	21-Jan	28-Sep	Pat & Patty Ritbe
Clara Mae Ortman	21-Jan	12-May	Chris & Missy Ortman
Troy Matthew Quail	22-Jan	25-Apr	Ordell & Shirley Quail
Brad Everhard	23-Jan	6-Jul	Marilyn & Frank Everhard
Scott James Krier	23-Jan	7-Aug	Ron & Beverly Krier
Joslin Kayana Winkowitsch	23-Jan	14-Sep	Jo & Darwin Winkowitsch
Christian James McKeown	23-Jan	18-Jun	Landon & Elena McKeown
Isaaya Ayala	23-Jan	15-Jul	Amber Snustad
Robbie Jacobson	25-Jan	14-May	Karla and Bob Jacobson
Deborah S. Lounsbery Fueston	25-Jan	27-Oct	Robert & Mary Lounsbery
Rochelle Deutsch	25-Jan	3-Jan	Sharon Deutsch
Natalie Joan Pieschke	3-Dec	3-Jan	Jeanette & Gerard Van Beek
David A. Runyan	22-Sep	4-Jan	Lurlene Runyan
David McCaleb	4-Jun	6-Jan	Dodi & Russ Bartunek
Cara Jean Paul	17-Dec	6-Jan	Kathy & Mike Victor (step-dad)
Cheryl Stiegelmeier	29-Jun	6-Jan	Darlene Dinger
Brittany Kirstystyne Nolz	18-Dec	6-Jan	Janet Bainbridge
Adam Dale McBride	14-Jun	11-Jan	Glen & Karen McBride
Chad Michael Plueger	5-Nov	15-Jan	Darrell & Madona Plueger
Rich Bohlen	8-Jul	17-Jan	Earl & Helen Bohlen
Mark D. Runyan	12-Oct	17-Jan	Lurlene Runyan
Brad Deutsch	18-Jun	20-Jan	Sharon Deutsch
Landon Paul Wulf	23-Aug	21-Jan	Amie & Myra Wulf
Erin Marie Geary	6-Apr	21-Jan	John & Juanita O'Gorman
Craig DeJongh	30-Sep	26-Jan	Norma & Norman DeJongh
Zachary Heidebrecht	3-Jun	26-Jan	Jeff & Jill Heidebrecht
Lindsay Christina May	2-Feb	27-Jan	Kathy & Scott Janke
Mathew Scott Brodland	17-Dec	30-Jan	Charlie May (deceased) Julian and JoAnn Brodland