



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

## February 2015

Upcoming Meeting: February 3, 2015

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

Westminster Presbyterian Church

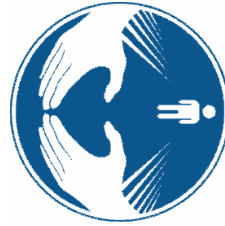
3801 E. 26th Street

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.



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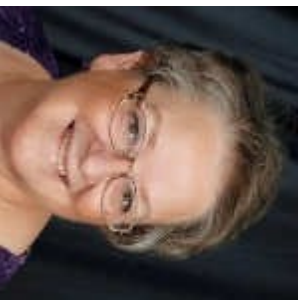
*If you are no longer interested in receiving this newsletter,  
please contact us at:  
rstoecker53@gmail.com*

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

**QUESTION:** Many grieving parents develop rituals after the child’s death such as visiting the grave on a certain day each week or keeping a candle lit near the child’s photo. When are rituals healthy and when can rituals be an unhealthy aspect of grieving?

**ANSWER:** There are a number of things that one can use to distinguish healthy from unhealthy rituals. The nature, time from the loss, and the survivor’s level of functioning are all useful in discerning healthy from unhealthy rituals.

One example of the nature of the ritual might involve the expense involved to engage in the ritual. For example, it might be considered more healthy to have a headstone made and placed on the grave rather than having a statue of the lost loved one made for one’s yard.

In your question, you suggest going to the cemetery weekly. This might be considered healthy soon after the loss. However, if going once a week becomes a requirement to relieve feelings such as guilt it may become an obsession for the individual. The ritual may literally emotionally replace the lost loved one. It is useful to examine the purpose of the ritual rather than the ritual itself.

When the ritual itself begins to interfere with normal activities of daily living, it is said to interfere with one’s level of functioning. If someone cannot go to work, or remains socially isolated, or loses interest in pleasurable activities, this would indicate that the ritual itself has become problematic rather than the loss of the loved one.

Other areas are also good to look at. For example, does the ritual elicit healing or does it promote deeper depression or feelings of guilt. Is the ritual simply a way to avoid healing from the loss, keeping people “stuck” in their grief?

The simplest way to think about this is that anything in the extreme makes people ill. If you are concerned about yourself or someone else engaging in behaviors for too long, or at great expense, or at the expense of their daily functioning, they may benefit from consulting with a mental health professional to help them assess the situation.

With compassion always,

Rebecca J. 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:

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### **The Compassionate Friends**

National Office: 877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

The January meeting of the Compassionate Friends of Sioux Falls was held on January 6, 2015. Ten members braved the cold and wind and we discussed the good and hard things about this holiday season and our hopes for the new year. We hope more people are able to join us for the upcoming February meeting.

### **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

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## Ritual

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A gaze thru blurry window  
When did it start to rain?  
Then realize it's just the eyes  
They're crying once again

A ritual of comfort  
A numbing of the mind  
A cleansing of the tortured soul  
A knowing eye made blind

Emptiness is mighty  
Deep within begins the ache  
Intense, this pain that surely  
Will cause a heart to break

Thus begins the healing process  
Of this I know so well  
Without you, I fall victim to  
This mindless cast of spell

Shoulders gently tremble  
A moaning soft and low  
Arms tightly wrapped about one-  
self  
Body rocking to and fro

*Donna Gerritor  
TCF Pasco County, FL  
In Memory of Rob*

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## 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>	Fiberglass Repair
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		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

## February Love Gifts

From Judy and Roger Dearthuff



In loving memory of

**Cole Dearthuff**

From Art and Carol Ehde



In loving memory of

Fellow Compassionate Friend

**Tom Faber**



From Art and Carol Ehde

In loving memory of

**Jamie Fox**

From Art and Carol Ehde



In loving memory of

**Pam Lais**

From Ron and Janet Bainbridge



In loving memory of

**Brittany Chrystyne Nolz**

From Carol O'Neal



In loving memory of

**Ryan O'Neal**

From Shirley & the late Ordell Quail



In loving memory of

**Troy Matthew Quail**

From Jo Trankle



In loving memory of

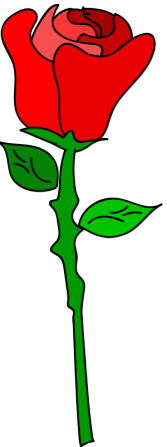
**Troy J.A. Trankle**

From Lorraine Tusha



In loving memory of

**Lisa Tusha-Nilsen**



## Valentine's Day 2012

This day  
set aside  
to celebrate love.  
Just another time  
to feel the loss  
the emptiness  
every day  
you being gone.

The hollow place  
that is now.  
A part of me  
an inner scar  
crafted  
by the death of  
my child.

*Melissa Anne Schroeter  
TCF Rockland County, NY  
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### **Sioux Falls Candle Lighting Touches Many**

More than 100 grieving family members and friends attended TCF 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Candle Lighting ceremony held during the evening of December 14<sup>th</sup> at the organization's monthly meeting facility, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Sioux Falls.

This year's program once again included the amazing voices of *Angellic*, a group of women from the Sioux Falls area who use their musical gifts to help us memorialize our children in song. Also for a second year, one of our grieving parents, Susanne Harmon, sang "Precious Child", a powerful song of longing and love as we listened in the darkened church, holding our flickering candles.

Because music communicates so many emotions to us, the program this year included a brave, talented father, Kirk Lee, who played guitar and sang, "Gone Too Soon" in memory of his beloved daughter. We were also blessed with bagpipers playing "Amazing Grace" and "Going Home" in honor of their young friend and fellow piper, Ian Mastel.

Grief is such a complicated process of accepting the loss of a loved one. In an attempt to recognize the facets of each type of loss, one of our grieving mothers, Peggy Mastel, wrote and delivered "Five Candles", a tribute which can be seen on the following page.

Timed to coincide with the wave of candle lightings around the world, we passed the light from person to person, and when all our candles were burning, we passed the microphone and honored each child we have lost by saying their names.

One of our mothers, Julie Forster, had worked tirelessly through the fall to find something that we could give each family as they left the service, a beautiful reminder that our children are not forgotten during this difficult holiday. She found hand-made stained glass angel ornaments made by a regional artisan. We were able to order the angels in time and each family was able to personalize and take an ornament home.

"We want our candle lighting ceremony to give our grieving families some comfort during this season of sadness," said Ruth Stoecker, regional director of TCF Sioux Falls chapter. "We will never forget our children, ever!"

## Treasured

What I love most is  
Waking to the dew of  
The grass upon my boots

What I love most is  
Smelling the end of  
The day upon  
My shirt, holding  
My child

What I love most is  
Something I don't see  
Everyday or smell or  
Touch

What I do love most is  
The memories of those  
Moments if only buried in  
My dreams

*Scott Newport*

*Royal Oak, MI*

## Five Candles

We light this candle **in memory of the babies** who left us with empty arms, but who live forever in our hearts. We remember the thrill of hearing the doctor tell us you were on the way and the excitement of spreading the news. We chose your name, we dreamed of first smiles, first steps, the first birthday. Your time with us was only a flash of light ... and then you were gone. With every beat of my heart, my baby, you are loved.

We light this candle **in memory of the grandchildren** who hugged their way into our hearts, then left us in an alien universe where grandparents have to bury a beloved child. We treasured your handprints on the walls and exclaimed over artwork and report cards as if we'd never seen such talent, maybe even genius. The years you added to our lives have been erased by your death. We shall not rest easy again, child, until our arms surround you.

We light this candle **in memory of the brothers and sisters** we lost, and the safe, secure family that disintegrated when you died. Nothing will ever be the same. You were supposed to show me how to grow up and how to burp the alphabet. You could be such a pest and take my things, yet you were always my best friend. You were supposed to side with me when Mom and Dad go crazy with rules. I am so much more than lonely without you. I remember you with love and sadness.

We light this candle **in memory of the little girls, the young ladies, the women, the daughters** we have lost. You added so much joy to our lives with your open heart and sense of wonder. We wanted it all for you; success and strong relationships, big dreams and dancing with butterflies. We can't see the kind, compassionate, caring woman you would have become so we created that image in our hearts and hold it close. We mourn you, darling daughters, we love you.

We light this candle **in memory of our sons** who are not here to hold us up today. Always in a hurry, our sons roared into our lives and captured our love. So you have to forgive our belief that it can't be true, you can't be dead. Our handsome little boys grew into more handsome young men loving computers, cars, and all-things-pizza. I wish you could see the hole in my heart that you left, my son. With every breath I take, I love you, my son, forever.

## Our Children Remembered—February

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Parents
Lindsay Christina May	2-Feb	27-Jan	Kathy & Scott Janke Charlie May (deceased)
James William Edwards	12-Feb	20-Nov	Joann & Ralph Redenius (step-father)
Collin Paul Plucker	12-Feb	1-Aug	Rita F. & Larry D. Plucker
Bradley Joe Odens	12-Feb	9-Apr	Richard & Carolyn Odens
Shane Pew	12-Feb	26-Apr	Jeff Pew (deceased) & Susan Pew
Steve Macy	13-Feb	12-Nov	Lenette & the late Ralph Macy
Norwyn Ykema	14-Feb	21-Apr	Evelyn & Norman Ykema
Val Red Bird	14-Feb	1-Nov	Shawna Suing
Jim Allen Van Liere	17-Feb	6-Dec	Jeanette & Adrian Van Liere
Joel Alan Neugebauer	17-Feb	29-Sep	Leon & Carol (step-mom) Neugebauer
Cole Dearduff	18-Feb	6-Apr	Judy & Roger Dearduff
Jamie Boetel	20-Feb	9-Apr	Shari & Garry Boetel
Holly Rotert	21-Feb	19-Oct	Bob & Carmen Rotert
Lynn Marie Weis	22-Feb	17-Mar	Frank & Donna Mae Weis
Ian Mathew Mastel	24-Feb	25-Nov	Patrick & Peggy Mastel
Amanda (Mandy) Dawn Yung Wallenburg	27-Feb	6-Dec	Lu & Gary DeVries (step-father) John & Dori Wallenburg (step-mother)
Levi James Tieszen	27-Feb	25-Oct	James & Deb Tieszen
Lisa Tusha Nilsen	28-Feb	19-Dec	Lorraine & the late Martin Tusha
Kelly Swier	28-Feb	3-Dec	Gene & Shirley Jones
Kevin Kerl	29-Feb	14-Mar	Dr. & Mrs. H. E. Kerl
Perry Carl Mikkelsen	11-Jun	2-Feb	Van & Shirley Mikkelsen
Robert Lowell Scott	3-Sep	3-Feb	Robert & Michelle Scott
Brandon Michael Brink	15-Dec	4-Feb	Bryan & Paula Brink
Sydney Anne Jones	22-Mar	4-Feb	Troy & Mary Jones
Denton Nicholas Haber	23-Jul	4-Feb	Donald & Doris Haber
Jay Pliska	18-Jun	5-Feb	Ruth & Garry Pliska
Gregory Paul Feller	13-Nov	5-Feb	Ted & Pat Feller
Chelsea Ann Vilhauer	8-Oct	7-Feb	Darla & Glen Vilhauer
Kevin James Sehr	17-Jan	8-Feb	Tom & Rita Sehr
Charlotte Luna Hadrick	12-Jan	8-Feb	Robert & Peggy Carmichael (grandparents)
Jodi Klusmann	21-Jul	9-Feb	Delphi & Joel Klusmann
John M. Ellsbury	30-Aug	12-Feb	Michael M. & Susan H. Ellsbury
Valencia Shepherd	18-Aug	12-Feb	Cashimaria Stroud
Allen J. Blom	19-Aug	15-Feb	Arte & Clazina Blom
Brienne Nicole Dykstra	9-May	21-Feb	Gordon & Julie Dykstra
Jeff Harms	20-Jun	25-Feb	Joyce & Doug Harms
Jeanine Lynn Smith	19-Nov	26-Feb	Duane & Vernice Verhey
Jacob Ryan Lidell	11-Jul	26-Feb	Dick & Sharon Wilson - grandparents
David D Olson	10-Jan	27-Feb	Doug & Joyce Olson
Karen Marie Fratzke	7-Mar	29-Feb	Gary & Alice Parks