



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

September 2015

Upcoming Meeting: September 1, 2015

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

Westminster Presbyterian Church

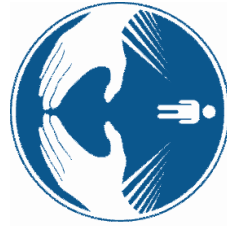
3801 E. 26th Street

Sioux Falls, SD

There is no religious affiliation.

www.compassionatefriendsofsiouxfalls.com

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 friends are telling me that I am in the denial stage, what does that mean? It's not like I don't know this happened, I just can't accept it. What will happen when I get through this STAGE?

ANSWER: Elizabeth Kubler-Ross theorized that there are five stages of grief. The first stage is called denial. Most likely, your friends are probably telling you that you have not yet reached a full awareness of the loss you have suffered. This stage helps protect you from being overwhelmed with the loss of your child. Additionally, it has been my experience that people stay in this stage on some level for at least the first year. That is because when you approach the first anniversary of your child's death, you have some history to look back on and realize how much your life has changed.

Please do not feel that your friends are being critical of you. They are probably speaking from their own lived experience. They cannot possibly tell you all that you will experience as you address the multiple secondary losses. Their experience and your experience may be entirely different. Rather, I hope that what they are telling you is that they care about you and understand how difficult this is. It is good to have friends who understand the pain you will experience.

Once you have reached a deeper understanding of what you have lost, Kubler-Ross' theory suggests that you will go through the anger stage. This is a normal part of the grief process where you become angry at all of the losses you have experienced and will continue to face as you work through the loss of your child.

In all, Kubler-Ross' original theory included five stages of grief. This is not to suggest that you will go through one and then the other. You may actually experience more than one stage at a time and, in any order. Kubler-Ross' theory is meant to inform you about some of the things you will probably experience. However, it is difficult to truly comprehend what the stages mean until you have faced them and worked through them. Each person's grief process is uniquely his/her own so these concepts will mean something different to each person. However, there are underlying themes that you will have in common and that is what Kubler-Ross meant when identifying the stages of grief.

Finally, you may find that you re-experience the various stages of grief multiple times. For example, just when you think you have found acceptance, something may arise that will surprise you and you'll have another issue to work through using the same stages. Grief is not a one-time healing process. The good part of this is that you gain wisdom with each experience – something you can share with another.

With compassion always,

Rebecca J. Watson-Miller, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist

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

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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:

Tami Meeker
48424 Beaver Valley Rd
Valley Springs, SD 57068

The August meeting was attended by 14 members. It was a night of memories. As one member put it, "Shaking that tree sure resulted in some great fruit," meaning that many precious memories were shared. We worked on a questionnaire that contained seven introduction statements and required our personal reflections to complete. Many compelling and beautiful thoughts were expressed. We will be sharing these in future newsletters. We honored Jason Rollings's August birthday and heard touching stories from his twin brother, James.

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.

Make Plans for December Candlelighting

Please make plans to attend the December Candlelighting service which will take place on Sunday, December 13 at 6:15 PM. We look forward to gathering together and remembering our loved ones in the holiday season.

PLEASE NOTE: We will be having a special brainstorming session to plan the candlelighting program on OCTOBER 13 at 7:00PM at Westminster Presbyterian. Please make plans to come as we would love to have your input regarding the program.

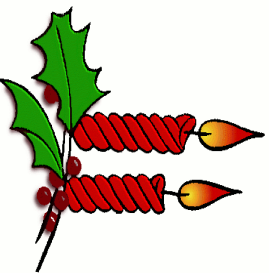


To have your child included in this year's Candlelighting Ceremony slideshow on December 13, 2015, please send us a photo of your child along with his or her name.

Email to: rstoecker53@gmail.com

(Please use .jpg format and put "2015 Slideshow" in the subject line.)

***If your child has been included in previous slideshows, he or she will automatically be included this year.



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)	Fiberglass Repair
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		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

September Love Gifts

From Sandy & Gary Butterfield



In loving memory of

Chad Butterfield

From Evelyn & Norman Ykema



In loving memory of

Noreen Moss



September and a New School Year

To most people school means:

The kids out from under foot, caps on.

Buying a new lunch box, new clothes and the usual school supplies.

Fixing breakfast and trying to get it eaten.

Getting to a school bus on time.

What does school mean to a mother who has lost a child?

Watching other children filled with excitement.

A little boy who should be in kindergarten.

A brother who must go off to school by himself.

A teacher who must reach out to a class, when her little one won't be in school this year.

A mother sending two children off, when there should be three.

Many tears, behind smiling faces!

Patsy Hedges

TCF Frederick, MD

On Pain and Healing...

In pain management used for patients with chronic pain, it is taught not to tighten around the pain but to relax and allow the pain to be present. The idea is that when pain is resisted, it intensifies. When we breath deeply and acknowledge the presence of pain, it has room to move and can dissipate more readily. Pain is there to tell us something, to warn us of possible danger.

This is as true for emotional, spiritual and mental pain as it is for physical pain. When pain speaks, we need to listen. All it takes is paying attention to our pain so that when it comes we remember to breathe and get soft. We don't want to fight with our pain. We want to learn from it.

Time does not heal. But healing does take time. Give yourself the gift of time. To become whole means that as we open to the pain, we open to the loss. We break open and, as a consequence, we get bigger and include more of life. We include what would have been "lost" to us if our hearts and minds had closed against the pain, we include what would have been lost if we had not taken the time to heal. As singer/songwriter Carly Simon tells us: "There's more room in a broken heart."

From the chapter, "Time Does Not Heal All Wounds," of the book, "Good Grief," by Deborah Morris Corryell

Why We Should Talk About Our Children Who Have Passed

It was dark, cold day in October. At least that's how it felt from my son's dimly lit hospital room. In my mind, I imagine it raining outside, the fog lining the windows and obscuring our view of college dorm rooms, sidewalks, the arboretum across the street. I don't remember many of the details of the day. I just remember holding my son's hand, weeping as I set by his hospital crib, watching the clock, praying and hoping for answers, and sitting with his doctors as we discussed the end of Charlie's life. His lungs were tired, and he was ready to go.

I've laid awake replaying those conversations, and replaying what happened only hours after, when a hand knocked loudly on our door in the parents' sleep room, and a nurse's voice told me to come quickly. I ran to his side only in time to be seated in a rubbery hospital recliner and have my son disconnected from his oxygen support and placed in my arms. His heart gave out. He was done, and my wish was to hold him when it was time.

Before the death of my son, I didn't want to think about death. I didn't want to talk about it. As a mom, talking to other parents who had a child that died made me nervous, as if I could "catch" the bug, and something tragic would happen to my child.

I am not that person anymore. I have changed, and I have seen things from shoes that I never wanted to be in. No one wants to be in the shoes of the parent whose child died.

Standing on this side, I can't think of anything more important than to talk about them. To say their names.

Charlie.

To talk about his favorite things. To talk about his personality. To smile and laugh and remember and never let his memory die. To talk about the impact he left, and how the echo of his life is still resounding in the hearts and lives he touched.

His legacy is just beginning, and if I have anything to do with it, it will only grow from here.

There is something so important and so healing for myself and other parents who have lost children to be able to share that child's story. To be able to laugh at funny memories. To be able to mourn with another. To be able to celebrate and remember and value a little life that has gone too soon.

A few months ago, I met another mother much older than myself. Her son was born still years ago. I asked her his name, and found out days later that it was the first time in 35 years that anyone had asked her that question.

This is not okay.

We need to talk about these children. We need to brave the pain and talk about them for the sake of the parents and for the sake of that child's memory.

This is not the natural order and we know that. Parents should not have to live on as their children die. Parents should not plan funerals or buy tiny urns or headstones for their child. Parents should not. But of all the should-nots, there is one thing that is a must-do: talking about that child.

For those who have no option but to walk through the pain, I want to give you freedom today. Freedom to talk. Freedom to share. Freedom to laugh and cry and remember and mourn and love that child openly, even in death.

You have freedom to say their name, even if you never had a chance to say it to them while there was breath in their lungs.

Say their name.

Tell their story. Cry. Laugh. Celebrate. Hope.

Let's move past the stigma. Though in the past it may have been taboo to talk about a child who died, let's move on. Let's move on for the children who deserve to be remembered. And let's move on for the parents who deserve a chance to tell their story.

For those who can be a friend and a listening ear, please do that today. Mention that child's name. Send a note and let that parent know you are remembering. Sit down for coffee and relive special memories with them. We are all in this together. Brave the pain together. Remember together. Celebrate together.

Let's do this together.

Lexi Behrnt is a communications director, a writer, and a mom to two sweet boys—Lincoln, here with her, and Charlie, who passed away in October 2014. You can read more of Lexi's writing at scribbliesandcrumbs.com or follow her on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/lexi.behrnt). [This post originally appeared on www.scribbliesandcrumbs.com.]

Frost

On a cold winter's day,
Frost etches a beautiful artistry
On every thing it touches, every blade of grass
It glitters and sparkles, and for moments
Like frost, our children were only here for a brief moment
But, while they were here
Whether it was moments in the womb
Days, months or many years
They etched their beautiful artistry of love
On our hearts and lives and all of those
They touched.

Unlike frost, what they etched is forever,
It is something that we can cherish and hold onto always.
We stand here tonight lighting a candle to remember children we will never forget.
Their light, their spirits, their artistry lives on and like the flame of the candle gives warmth on a cold winter's night
And light in the darkness
The love our children gave us still remains.
It keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief blow.
It lights our way through the darkness and loneliness
That we feel,
And it gives us hope!

*Julie Short
2007 Southeastern TCF
Candle Lighting Ceremony
In Memory of Kyria*

AFTER ELEVEN YEARS

It has been 11 and 1/2 years since my daughter Brittany died as a result of injuries as a passenger in an auto accident. December 28th, 2003. She was flown to a hospital and was placed in the PICU. Our family lived there until her brain stem died. It was January 10th, 2004...She was only 15.

After 11 years I don't go into her room and hold her stuffed toys and smell her clothes.... We have moved and all of her things were boxed up and some were given to friends and family members. I do have a room in our new house that houses her bed, stuffed animals, stuffed toys and memories.

After eleven years I don't go to the cemetery and sit for hours, now I go to decorate and clean.....

After Eleven years I don't cry myself to sleep anymore

After eleven years I know my baby is in a beautiful place where she can ride horses all day and let the warm wind flow through her beautiful long hair

After eleven years I smile when I find a special note or picture she had drawn

After Eleven years I sit in the darkness of night and watch the stars and know the one that is twinkling is her

After eleven years her sisters and brother have all grown and married and have children of their own

After eleven years her nieces and nephews have pictures of her in their rooms, guardian angels and special things that she once wore or had.

After eleven years I miss her more than I did the day before, but I've found a special place to keep her close, in my heart.

*In Loving Memory of my daughter Brittany Khrystyne Nolz
Mom (Janet Bainbridge)
TCF Sioux Falls, SD*

Our Children Remembered—September

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Parents
Robert Lowell Scott	3-Sep	3-Feb	Robert & Michelle Scott
Tyler Newville	5-Sep	20-Nov	Renee & Tim Newville
Donald Stoltenberg	8-Sep	14-Sep	Delmar & Sharon Stoltenberg
Scott Allen Luke	9-Sep	23-Jul	Joseph & Karen Luke
John D. Stange	11-Sep	15-Aug	Doug & Lisa Stange
Andrew Paul Nester	14-Sep	16-Nov	Paul & Kris Nester
Zev Luna Audrey Leal	15-Sep	3-Mar	Lois Johanson (grand-mother)
Samantha Dawn Larson	16-Sep	7-Apr	Marcy & Dale Larson
Beverly Osterman	16-Sep	7-May	Artine Mustar
Casey Steven Braun	16-Sep	21-Apr	Laurie J Braun
Mark A. Chapman	17-Sep	18-Sep	Marilyn Chapman
Adam Michael Smith	17-Sep	15-Aug	Tim & Judy Smith
Jordan Ross Momen	21-Sep	20-Jul	Roger and Cheryl Momen
David A. Runyan	22-Sep	4-Jan	Lurlene Runyan
Angela Joy Post	25-Sep	2-Jun	Warren & Fonda Post
William Brooks Nichol	26-Sep	27-May	Cleo & Gloria Nichol
Cathryn Slinden	29-Sep	6-Jun	Harold & Doris Slinden
Craig DeLough	30-Sep	26-Jan	Norma & Norman DeLough
Owen Raymond Schuelke	30-Sep	30-Oct	Brian & Maggie Schuelke
Aecho Bryanna Holmes	13-Aug	1-Sep	Terri & Toby Lang & David & Jodi Holmes
Dylan Duane Fischer	20-Mar	4-Sep	Doyle & Kathryn Fischer
Scott Peter Nelson	5-Apr	9-Sep	Brenda Parisien
Tanner Becker	18-Apr	10-Sep	Mark & Julie Becker
Eric Walter Kondratuk	24-Jul	13-Sep	Michael & Laura Kondratuk
Joslin Kayana Winkowitsch	23-Jan	14-Sep	Jo & Darwin Winkowitsch
Chad Michael Holm	30-Aug	14-Sep	Cindy & Mike Holm
Alexia Dee Deffenbaugh	21-Jul	14-Sep	Dawnette Deffenbaugh
Cassie Mandeville	29-Aug	14-Sep	Holly Wheeler
Liam Samuel Duncan	13-Nov	17-Sep	Wanda Williamson (grandmother)
Kelly Kuper	12-Jul	19-Sep	Aaron & Samantha Duncan
Gene Van De Stroet	29-Jul	20-Sep	Mary & Wayne Kuper
Monique Carlson	29-Nov	22-Sep	Alice & Case Van De Stroet
Brandi Wahl Lueders	14-Dec	23-Sep	Jim Carlson
Darla Van Nieuwenhuizen	8-Mar	24-Sep	Lynn & Starr Cheeseman
Marcus Joseph Peterson	18-Dec	24-Sep	Lorraine & Don Van Nieuwenhuizen
Toby Colwes	7-Apr	25-Sep	Julie Forster Raap & Michael Peterson
Travis Kenyon	26-Jul	26-Sep	Sarah Colwes
Stacy Laekey	22-Mar	26-Sep	Peggy Naessig
Chad Butterfield	3-Aug	27-Sep	Kandy & Gene Sieverding
Ashleigh Christine Mauseth	10-Mar	28-Sep	Gary & Sandy Butterfield
Robert Daniel Ritbe	21-Jan	28-Sep	Keith & Lisa Mauseth
Brian VanWagner, Jr	20-Jul	29-Sep	Pat & Patty Ritbe
Joel Alan Neugebauer	17-Feb	29-Sep	Brian & Deb VanWagner, Sr. Leon & Carol (step-mom) Neugebauer