



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

2010

## Southwest Florida Chapter Newsletter

“The mission of The Compassionate Friends’ is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.”

### A note from David’s mother, Anne, regarding the “State of our Chapter”

Do you remember the goals we set for our chapter in late 2009? We embarked upon a mission to reach into the community and let our presence be known. Our primary goal was to make it easier and quicker for families to find us because: *they need not walk alone!* We knew they were “out there” and just did not know we were here. While it causes all of pain to learn of and meet a new family, we all know the gift waiting for them is us. “Our chapter is growing” is a direct testament to our chapter members efforts in reaching the goals we set for our community. It’s taking families much less time to find us, exactly what we wanted. Just last week I received three calls from new families and all were referred to us. One from Lee Memorial hospital, one from Naples Community hospital, and one from a therapist in town. The week before last I received a call from a family that found us on the web site, and I know Ozzie received a call from National to refer a family, another testament to the health of our team. They tried my phone but, as you may remember, my mailbox was full! It takes a team to build what we have built in Southwest Florida and I cannot say enough in regards to how thankful and proud I am to be associated with this gracious, loving, and supportive group. As the year has unfolded a new goal became more apparent and our focus turned to creating a sibling support group. The need has presented itself and once again, our members have been sensitive to the needs of our community. I am so excited to report that our sibling support group kick off meeting will take place this year. We have two committed members to leading the group and I just “happened” by another four people that see the need and have extended their time and talent to helping. We still are in need of more help; we especially need a newsletter editor. While it was my pleasures to have produced the newsletter for a few years we need help in this area. Please explore your time and talent and consider helping. We need you and the rewards are plentiful, trust me, there’s nothing more therapeutic than paving the way for the bereaved. Finally, Teresa Mitchell, our treasurer and RSVP coordinator for the candle lighting event has moved from Naples. I know you will join me in wishing her and her family a bitter sweet farewell. We will miss her and thank her for all the hard work and dedication to our chapter for so many years.

#### To Our New Members



Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

#### To Our Members Who are Further Down the Grief Road’



We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF veterans to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!

**YOU NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

## Save these event dates on your calendars!

The Compassionate Friends of Southwest Florida has a Facebook Group. We invite you to join.

For more information: This is the link to our page: <http://www.facebook.com/?tid=1628221350166&sk=messages#!/group.php?gid=150243931099&ref=ts>

You will need to log into Facebook to join the group. You will also need a Facebook account (they are free). Our hope is that you will be able to connect to someone to help you in your grief journey. Remember "We Need Not Walk Alone". <http://www.facebook.com>

**October 28<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM: NOPE VIGIL:** This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual community wide event. The location in Naples



is yet to be determined. I will keep you updated once I know you are coming. Many lives have been tragically destroyed or lost to substance abuse and the disease of addiction. Too often, this disease is perceived as deserved and shameful, leaving families and friends to grieve in silence or an addict struggling to recover, alone. The NOPE Vigil strives to raise awareness and open the doors to recovery by eliminating the prejudice that has followed the disease of addiction; a disease that shows no prejudice to any walk of life or background.

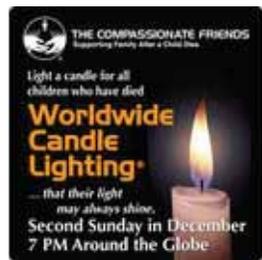
With the removal of shame comes the hope for survival. Acceptance of the disease can be humbling to the soul, and, in turn, empowering to those in need, to seek help. The coordinators of this event are requesting some information regarding attendance. Please either register with me or you may visit the NOPE web site and register with them. I will be there and am hoping you will join me to show our support.

**November 2nd 6:00 - 9:00: Signs: From our children** This will be a safe place to share our experiences. I am



gathering the story tellers. Are you one? Do you want to be one? This will be an exceptional event with all our time dedicated to sharing the signs and visits we've experienced with our children. The event is truly a work in progress and is unfolding daily. We are exploring several locations to hold the event, based on the response. If you interested in sharing your story or just coming please e-mail: [iagree2b@comcast.net](mailto:iagree2b@comcast.net) or call 287-5968.

**December 12, 2010: The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting** held annually at St. John the



Evangelist: Courtyard and Ballroom, 625 111th Ave. North Naples. The invitations with all the information regarding this years events and RSVP contact will be mailed out on or about November 17th. We will be asking the siblings to arrive about 1/2 hour early to prepare for our *Sibling Support Kick-Off Meeting*. As always the pot luck will begin at 5:00 and the ceremony at 7:00. We have already been meeting and preparing for this years event. We could always use more help. To get involved please e-mail or call Anne: [iagree2b@comcast.net](mailto:iagree2b@comcast.net) or 287-5968.

## Create a Permanent Memorial! Compassionate Friends Unveils "Create a Memorial Website" Program

When you ask bereaved parents their greatest fear, you're likely to hear that they're afraid their child will be forgotten.

That fear can now be put to rest through The Compassionate Friends new "Create a Memorial Web site" program. In partnership with online memorial leader Legacy.com., the new Compassionate Friends program allows you to easily create an online memorial web site so that your child, sibling, or grandchild will always be remembered. A portion of the proceeds from the memorial web site you create will also

go to support The Compassionate Friends and its many national programs designed to aid families going through the natural grieving process following the death of a child.

There is a 14 day free trial period and 25% discount off the first year's sponsorship. To learn more and to take advantage of these offers, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and under "Resources" click on "Create a Memorial Web site." Memorial web sites make a great gift anytime!

Have you written a poem or have something you'd like to share in a newsletter? Please submit it to [iagree2b@comcast.net](mailto:iagree2b@comcast.net).

## Who is invited to a Compassionate Friends Meeting?

### If I go to a meeting, will I have to talk?

No one is required to talk at any meeting. We understand how difficult that can be when our grief is so fresh. We do ask that you listen, however.

### My child was an adult and didn't live at home. Can I still go to a meeting?

Chapter meetings are open to all families who have experienced the death of a child, at any age, from any cause. Regardless of age, we in TCF believe our children will always be thought of as just that.... our children.

### Is there a charge to attend?

There is never a charge to attend a TCF meeting. Our chapters rely on voluntary donations from members, friends and the community at large.

### What happens at a meeting?

Some meetings are simply introducing ourselves and sharing our thoughts and feelings. At other times, chapters have short programs before the sharing time. The programs may include a brief guest speaker, viewing a video tape, or listening to an audio tape.

### Can I bring a friend with me?

Of course, you can bring a friend, but we ask that they, as well as all members, respect each other's privacy. It is important for us to be able to share freely within our group and be sure confidences will be respected.

### My partner says they won't come with me. Can I come alone?

Yes. We all grieve differently & they may not be ready to take part just yet...or ever. Likewise, many parents attend without their partners.

### My child died from AIDS. Will I still be welcome?

Yes. All families who have experienced the death of a child at any age, from any cause, are welcome.

### Religion doesn't matter to me anymore. Can people at a meeting accept that?

I think you will find TCF members are very tolerant of any views. After the death of a child, many priorities, as well as values, change. TCF has no religious affiliation. Chapters meetings are held in a wide variety of locations depending upon what is available in our communities.

### I have baby-sitting problems. Would it be all right to bring my child with me?

While we understand the difficulties of finding child care, we must ask that any children attending with you be old enough to understand the meeting discussions and not be upset by them. Some chapters have sibling groups for children sixteen or older; check with your local chapter about this.

### Do I need a reservation before I come to a meeting?

No reservations are needed. Just come whenever you feel up to it.

### My child died several years ago, and I postponed my grief work. Now it's catching up with me. Is it too late to come now?

We all grieve differently. Many parents don't feel the need of a support group until years after the death of a child. It's all right to come whenever you are ready, whether it's soon after your child's death, months later or years later

*Also, consider bringing a picture of your child(ren) for our picture board. You are welcome to leave it knowing we will be remembering at every meeting.*

Anne's suggestion: Consider trying Compassionate Friends three times in your life.

**NEW SUBSCRIPTION - RENEWAL - CHANGE FORM - DONATIONS**

If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time...everyone within The Compassionate Friends Organization wants to say .... We are sorry you have the need for this publication but we are glad you found us and we hope our newsletter will be helpful on your journey. Someone may have lovingly sent you the newsletter...and if so and you find it helpful, please complete the data sheet and return it so that we may add you to our newsletter database for future mailings. This is to insure that all the information we have is correct and complete. This is for internal use only.

Please print *clearly*, filling in all applicable blanks/boxes:

YourName: \_\_\_\_\_

MailingAddress: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIPCode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(includingareacode) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer to receive the newsletter by (check one): \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (provide e-mail address above)

Child'sFullName: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Child'sBirthDate: \_\_\_\_\_ Child'sDeathDate: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of Child's Death (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Child's relationship to you (e.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild) \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of all surviving siblings living with you: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about The Compassionate Friends? Please circle one: (1) Friends (2) Family (3) Hospital (4) Church (5) School (6) Funeral Homes (7) Internet (8) Newspaper (9) Employers (Human Resources) (10) Other

Note: The information you have given above will be confidential (used for internal purposes only) unless you answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions:

1. Do you want your child's name to appear in the newsletter's "We Remember You" section of birth and death dates? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

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Voluntary donations are TCF Southwest Florida's only source of income. The Compassionate Friends needs to be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

Yes, I want to help with TCF outreach...a donation is enclosed in Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Requested by: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to apply my donation toward the following outreach: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ newsletter (2) \_\_\_\_\_ birthday/angel date cards (3) \_\_\_\_\_ newly-bereaved packets (4) \_\_\_\_\_ annual candlelight remembrance service (5) \_\_\_\_\_ general expenses

Make Checks Payable to: The Compassionate Friends Southwest Florida Chapter

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Anne Arbelaez, 680 Woodshire Lane H-9, Naples, FL 34105

**"It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens, but it's never gone." ~ Rose Kennedy**

The Compassionate Friends Newsletter  
c/o Anne Arbelaez (Rinaldi-Nonamaker)  
680 Woodshire Lane H-9  
Naples, Florida 34108

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Southwest Florida Compassionate Friends Chapter meets every first & third Wednesday monthly.  
**UPCOMING WEDNESDAY MEETING DATES:**

**October 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> / November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> / December 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>**

We meet at the YMCA, 5450 YMCA Rd, Naples, FL 34109

Welcome and Sharing Begins @ 7:30 PM

**TCF Newsletter is Now Green**

Beginning with the next issue of our chapter newsletter, we are distributing it only by e-mail – unless you specifically request a hard copy be mailed to you. If you did not receive this copy by e-mail and would like to, please send your e-mail address to [iagree2b@comcast.net](mailto:iagree2b@comcast.net). We'll add you to our e-mail distribution list

**Loving Listeners:**

For those times when you need to speak to someone who will listen with understanding and who can offer hope and support from their own process of healing in grief please call us:

Kathy Parker (Daughter) 649-5153 Ozzie and Marcia Santos (Multiple and All Children) 431-5250

Teresa Walker (Son) 353-3215 Anne Rinaldi-Nonamaker (Only Child/Substance Abuse) 287-5968

Compassionate Friends National Web Address: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) *Welcome* our new Regional Coordinators:

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