To those who are receiving our newsletter for the first time, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you have many friends. We who have received love and compassion from others during our time of deep sorrow now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help.

You are not alone in your grief.

Volume XXX November 2017 Number 9

Dear Compassionate Friends,

How very softly you tiptoed into my world
Almost silently.
Only a moment you stayed.
But what an imprint your footsteps have left upon our hearts.

Thanks,
D Ferguson

In memory of Anna Katherine Webb –November 83-March 84

I am a letter writer from a family of letter writers. Even with the convenience and expediency of email and text messaging, I still like to sit down with pretty stationery and craft a handwritten note, finished off with the perfect stamp on the envelope. This month we received from Compassionate Friend, Steve Dobbins, a letter he wrote to his son, Jeremy who died in 1998. Consider an excerpt from an article by Alexandra Kennedy:

“Writing a letter is a powerful way to reconnect with a loved one after he or she has died. Here are some sample questions you might ask yourself as you write:

- What experiences have I been through since my loved one’s death?
- What do I miss?
- What do I regret?
- What issues in our relationship remain unresolved?
- What do I appreciate?
- What have I learned about myself, my loved one, and my relationship?
- What do I want to carry on?”

Whether you share your letter with others, keep it in a file or special box, or burn it, writing is a good way to examine our thoughts and feelings that may be too difficult or too private to share aloud. Writing a letter to a beloved child is another way to honor them and to process your grief.

Sincerely,
Jerry & Carol Webb
A Letter to My “Forever 19-year-old” Son

The 20th anniversary of your death will be here soon. So hard to believe that I’m saying that. It seems like just yesterday... I haven’t written you because I thought that you were looking down on us and knew everything. But from the stories I’ve heard about Heaven, everything is beautiful and there are no sorrows. If there are no sorrows, how could you know what has happened since you’ve been gone.

We’ve lost both of your grandmothers and Pa. Nana died a year after you and Pa a short time later. Maw Maw died six years ago. All three had cancer. Paw Paw is 87 and still lives in Dubuque. Mom and I go up to visit him every other weekend. Not doing the greatest but guess that’s to be expected at 87. We lost your cousin MJ about 10 years ago in an accident at his work. He had just turned 40.

Mom and I have now been married for almost 41 years. She’s more beautiful today than the day we first met. She also has the patience of a saint to put up with me this long.

We moved into town a few years after you left. Glad to be out of Mercer County for lots of reasons.

Your brother has a great job that he enjoys (especially his paychecks). Hasn’t found the right girl yet, but keeps trying... and trying...and trying. He lives about two miles from us with his 125 pound lapdog. He has his own house, a few cars and trucks, a boat, a motorcycle, a couple of four-wheelers, and lots of friends.

He has also lost too many people that were close to him. Jimmy died in an accident a year after you, and then Mole and Adam a couple years after that in a motorcycle accident.

He attended Blackhawk College after graduation and was 20 feet away from a young man whose girlfriend broke up with him and he put a shotgun to his head and killed himself.

Your “baby” sister is 33 now, married and has four children. three beautiful girls, 12, 5 and almost 1, and an 11 year old boy who is a constant reminder of you. He has the same drive for sports, and being the best, just like you did. He plays football, baseball and basketball, and is a star at all of them...just like you were. I have found myself calling him Jeremy or Punk, when he makes a good play. Unfortunately, for him, he has your attitude, and his mouth gets him in trouble at school and home. Just like you, he is very intelligent but doesn’t like to study or read.

I was at a baseball tournament last summer and one of your friends, “Lef,” came up to me and said as long as we have Marcus John, we’ll always have you. Said he throws like you (pitches and plays third base), runs like you, and bats like you.

Speaking of friends, your best friend Chris is now a police officer. Can you believe it? Sure has come a long way since the days when the two of you used to go “bus hunting.”

Your cousin Megan called us about six years ago to tell us she was expecting, and it was going to be a boy. She wanted to know if it was OK to name him Jeremy, in honor of you. Quite a tribute.

The “love-of-your-life” finally married about six or seven years ago and has a child of her own. She always contacts us on your birthday and your anniversary. She never forgets. We are so glad that she found someone to be happy with, and so grateful that you got to know what the Continued on Page 10
Letter — Continued from Page 3

love of a good woman was before leaving us.

Well, my beautiful son, I’ll close for now. Your mom and I think of you daily and still love you with our whole hearts. You were a precious gift from God that we had to give back way too early. Our faith tells us that you are happy in your Heavenly home and that someday we will be together again.

At one time I was told that someday I would be able to look back and smile when I thought of you, and although I’ve had a few of those days, most of the time it still brings tears. Tears for regrets, tears I would be able to look back and smile at one time I was told that someday I would be able to look back and smile at one time I was told that someday I would be able to look back and smile. It is very natural to feel you may never enjoy the Holidays again. They will certainly never be the same as they were. However, in time, most people are able to find meaning again in the traditions as a new form of the Holiday Spirit grows inside of them.

Love Gifts

As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from the newsletter, they often wish to make a Love Gift to help with the work of our chapter. This is a meaningful way to remember a beloved child.

Thanks to Jan Hamdorf, in memory of her son, Kelly, on the tenth anniversary.

Donations and Love Gifts are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to newly bereaved families. Some of the love gifts are used for materials to share with first time attendees at our meetings or to purchase books for our library. Our thanks to the many families who provide love gifts so that the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue.

If you would like to send a donation or love gift, please send it or to our chapter leader, Doug Scott, c/o Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265. Checks can be made out to The Compassionate Friends. Your gifts are tax deductible.

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Hope for the Thanksgiving Holiday

The holidays can be an especially difficult time of year for those who are grieving. When everyone around you seems happy and full of holiday cheer, you may want to just skip the holidays all together. The sights, sounds and smells of the holiday season can be overwhelming and the period of time leading up to the holidays can actually be worse than the day itself. Before Thanksgiving Day, think about what might be tough and plan ahead, for example the “empty chair,” should you keep it in place or remove it from the table all together? Should the oldest child or another family member sit there now? Should you set a place in honor of your loved one? There’s no right or wrong answer, do what’s best for you and your family.

Be realistic... Don’t over schedule, you know yourself better than anyone. Set realistic goals and always have more than one plan. By having multiple plans – plan A, B and C – you can quickly move to the next plan if the previous one isn’t working or becomes too difficult.

It’s important to remember that you don’t have to do things the way you’ve always done them. It may be a good time to start some new traditions,” this doesn’t mean you’re going to lose the old traditions; you can always go back to them or incorporate them again when you’re ready.

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents and would like to share it.

If you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, send us your new address.

If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, send his/her/their name and address.

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

Please contact:
Jerry and Carol Webb
CarolynPwebb@gmail.com

Mission Statement
The mission of The Compassionate Friends Quad City Area Chapter is when a child dies at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Vision Statement
The vision statement of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Contact the Editors

About TCF...

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Founded in England in 1969, the first U.S. chapter was organized in 1972. Since then, 635 chapters have been established. The current Quad City Chapter was formed in 1987.

TCF National Office
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696
Toll Free (877)969-0010
TCF National Web site — www.compassionatefriends.org
http://www.quadcitytcf.org

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

Please contact:
Jerry and Carol Webb
CarolynPwebb@gmail.com
### The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

**Monthly Meeting, Thursday, November 16, 2017, at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline**  
Please call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) for information and directions.  
**The next meeting is held on December 6, 2017 — Annual Candle Lighting Memorial Service at the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</th>
<th>Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at 563.260.3626 for directions or information, or contact them at <a href="mailto:linmac67@machlink.com">linmac67@machlink.com</a>.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rick's House of Hope</td>
<td>This is a community resource for children and adolescents dealing with grief. There is no fee for services. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. The group for 14 year olds and older meets Sunday from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 North West Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806. For more information, contact Meagan Moller, Program Manager, at <a href="mailto:MollerM@verafrenchmhc.org">MollerM@verafrenchmhc.org</a> or go to <a href="http://www.rhoh.org">www.rhoh.org</a>. The 24 hour contact number is 563.383.1900.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARE</td>
<td>A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Adler Room #1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at 309.373.2568, or <a href="mailto:chalyn@shareqc.com">chalyn@shareqc.com</a> or <a href="http://www.shareqc.com">www.shareqc.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Loving Listeners | If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):  
♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com  
♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoartb3@mchsi.com  
♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotamil.com  
Doug, Rosemary, and Judy are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don’t feel alone. |

### TCF Online Support Community
TCF’s national website offers “virtual chapters” through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click “Online Support” in the “Resources” column.

### TCF’s Grief Related Webinars
Held monthly, the webinars are on various grief topics with well-known experts in the field. To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month’s webinar), go to [http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx). Webinars are being archived in TCF’s Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.

### TCF National Magazine
*We Need Not Walk Alone* is available to read online without charge. Go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and review the options at the top of the page.  
**TCF e-Newsletter** is also available from the National Office — to subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter link.

### Grief Materials
Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than the Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief-related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you’re looking for — or they’ll be able to tell you where to find it. Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at 402.553.1200 or visit their website at [www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org). When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.

### Amazon.com
When making a purchase from Amazon.com, enter through the link on the home page of TCF national website and a portion of the purchase price is donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases made at Amazon.com.

### Previous Newsletter Editions
**Looking** for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to [www.bethany-qc.org](http://www.bethany-qc.org) for copies of the last several years of The Quad City Chapter of TCF-QC Chapter Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.

### Alive Alone
A newsletter for bereaved parents whose only or all children are deceased. A self-help network and publication to promote healing and communication can be reached at [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org) or [alivealone@bright.net](mailto:alivealone@bright.net).

### Bereaved Parents’ Magazine

### Our Newsletter
Published one to three times per year, when there is content to make a balanced issue. It usually contains 30 pages of personal stories and updates, poetry, subsequent birth announcements, and any new topical articles and information. Currently it is being distributed electronically (PDF), but a printout is available to anyone without email access. To request a sample copy, please email Jean Kollantai, [climb@climb-support.org](mailto:climb@climb-support.org).
Getting Through the “Giving Thanks”:
Four Thanksgiving Tips for Those Who May Be Feeling Anything but Thankful

Thanksgiving.
Normally a time of festivity, feasting and “fat pants,” your Thanksgiving may instead be filled with dread, gloom or outright sadness if you are coping with the loss of a loved one. Rather than celebratory, you may be feeling like:
**You have nothing to be thankful for.**
**Celebrating is pointless.**
**Going through the motions for the sake of the kids, the parents, the distant relatives you see only once a year and/or the world at large.**
**Forgetting the whole thing and staying in bed with Heath Bar Crunch ice cream (my flavor of choice).**
I understand all of these feelings and I would not blame anyone dealing with loss for having any one or all of them. However, attempting to “hide” from a holiday does not make the holiday go away. In fact attempting to “hide” from this or any holiday can actually make things worse. Whether you choose to acknowledge it or not, the holiday is still going to happen — and if you have chosen against being proactive, you just may wind up morosely sitting alone with your Heath Bar Crunch, dwelling on the fact that you are without your loved one...still.
The lesson? “Creative avoidance” changes nothing. Taking control over your approach to Thanksgiving (and the holidays that follow) can help brighten your outlook and bring you a measure of peace.
Following are four tips to help you not just get through Thanksgiving Day, but maybe — just maybe — even enjoy it as well:
1. Whether you are celebrating Thanksgiving in your home and you are the chef or you are going elsewhere and are expected to bring a dish, prepare something that was your loved one’s favorite or perhaps a dish that they used to make themselves. For example, you know that green bean casserole with the fried onion topping that has a jillion calories, no particular redeeming nutritional value and is sinfully delightfully delicious? This is the dish that my late husband made every year and to this day, regardless of whatever else is on the table at Thanksgiving, the green bean casserole is on the table as well. You will be surprised at how much comfort something as simple as a favorite dish or dessert will bring to you.
2. Just about every family enjoys the tradition of going around the table and letting everyone share that for which they are thankful. You can switch this up a bit and share a funny story about your loved one. Finish by lifting a glass and proposing a toast with their favorite drink. Remember, it is OK to smile and it is OK to laugh; even if smiling and laughing is through tears.
3. If celebrating with longstanding family traditions is just too painful right now, do not be afraid to make changes. For instance, if Thanksgiving is always at your house, let someone else host this year at their home. Another alternative to consider might be going to a favorite restaurant that serves Thanksgiving dinner. My mother, my daughter and I did this on the first Thanksgiving after Mike died. Because we had broken from tradition for that particular “first holiday,” we were able to more peacefully enjoy both the day and one another. Or you might choose to go way outside of tradition by taking a mini-vacation. There is nothing wrong with doing something...
Continued page 7

For the Newly Bereaved

In the early minutes, days, weeks, months and even years of grief, we find ourselves in an all consuming grief and pain beyond description. We find it difficult to carry on our everyday lives or to think of little except our children’s death. Even our once wonderfully happy memories, shared with our children while they lived, now bring us pain for a time.

Bereaved parents do not “get over” the death of our children nor “snap out of it” as the outside world seems to think we can and should. The death of our children is not an illness or a disease from which we recover. It is a life altering change with which we must learn to live.

With the death of our children we are forced to do the “impossible”; build a new life and discover a “new normal” for ourselves and our families in a world that no longer includes our beloved children. It is important for newly bereaved parents to know that they will experience a wide and often frightening variety of intense feelings after the death of our children.

It is also important for newly bereaved parents to understand and know that all of the feelings you experience are very natural and normal under the circumstances. Equally important for you to know and believe is that as much as you cannot possibly believe it, you will not always feel this powerful and all consuming grief.

But right now you must follow the instincts of your soul and allow your bodies and hearts to grieve. The grief resulting from your child’s death cannot be skirted over, around or under. You must go through it in order to come out on the other side.

Be gentle and patient with yourself and your family. Allow yourself to cry, to grieve, and to retell your children’s story as often as needed and for as long as you need to.

Eventually, you will smile and find joy again. You will never forget your child; he or she will be with you in your heart and memories for as long as you live.

Carole Brody Fleet
Open Arms for Empty Hearts

Getting...continued from page 6
different and perhaps even beginning new traditions of your own

4. There is a huge difference between “celebrating” and “observing.” As opposed to celebrating with a lot of people around or otherwise putting yourself in a situation where you feel that you have to paste a smile on your face in order to be social, there is nothing wrong with quietly observing Thanksgiving (or any holiday for that matter) in whatever way that you wish. This might include attending a church service on the day and making yourself a lovely dinner at home or volunteering at a local shelter or soup kitchen.

Above all else remember this: Though it may not feel like it right this minute, you do have reasons to be thankful. Stop and take a moment to think about that for which you are thankful — your health, your family, your loved ones, your home and whatever else you treasure in and about your life. Most of all, embrace and remember that you had the love of a wonderful person — whomever that person is — whose legacies of love and memories will be with you always.

Carole Brody Fleet