

Our History

- May 1968—two young boys, *Kenneth Lawley* and *Billy Henderson* died within days of one another at the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital in England. Joe and Iris Lawley reached out to Bill and Joan Henderson sending flowers and simply signing the card, Kenneth's parents." An invitation to tea followed. A young hospital chaplain, Rev. Simon Stephens, recognized the special support these families were able to give to each other and felt certain they could help others.
- January 28, 1969—the first *Society of The Compassionate Friends* meeting was held.
- In 1972 Paula and Arnold Shamres, with the help of Rev. Stephens, established the first Compassionate Friends chapter in North America.
- January, 1977 the first Canadian chapter was founded in Winnipeg, MB, by *Joan and Bob Martin* after the death of their nine-year-old son, *Benjamin*.
- The Compassionate Friends have numerous contacts in approximately 30 countries on five continents with a network of over 1500 chapters.
- TCF MEDICINE HAT. In the spring of 1984, *Rev. Richard Worden* and *Jean Rogers* laid the groundwork to form a local chapter. On April 30, 1984, a meeting was held with additional founding members, *Art and Wilma Radcliff*, *Doreen Lyon* and *Mike and Marge Bennett*.



The Compassionate Friends...

has adopted the butterfly as one of its symbols ~ a symbol of HOPE to us that our children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom ~ a comforting thought to many.

*"We Need Not Walk Alone,
We Are
The Compassionate Friends!"*

*Supporting Family
After the Death of a Child*

Medicine Hat Chapter

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403 528 9481

Chapter Coordinator: Donna Rodin

Mailing Address

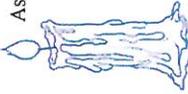
#4 - 69 Campbell Cr. S.E.
Medicine Hat, T1B 1J7

Friends Meet

Second Thursday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.
CREEKSIDE CENTRE

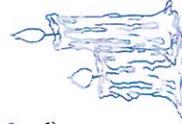
#1 Dunmore Rd. S.E.
Medicine Hat, AB

Light a Candle on January 28th
"International Compassionate Friends Day"



As declared by Rev. Simon Stephens (Founder)

"Candlelight Memorial Service"
Held annually in conjunction with the
TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting
2nd Sunday in December @ 7:00 p.m.



TCF Canada National Office
1 866 823 0141
NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net

*When a
child dies...*



*Medicine Hat
Chapter*



*"Grief becomes a tolerable and creative
experience, only when love
enables it to be shared with
someone who truly understands."
Rev. Simon Stephens (Founder TCF)*



"We were thrown into grief so fast that we didn't know what hit us. We didn't know how to act...we were like zombies just wandering around trying to hold it together. Later on, we tried to figure out how we were supposed to act. How could we know even what to expect? We'd never been through this before. We never even imagined it before."

A bereaved father

The death of one's child is unnatural and complex and cannot be likened to any other loss. In our lives we must all learn to deal with the death of friends and family, as well as our own mortality. Few of us, however, know the overwhelming devastation that comes with the death of a child. We expect our children to outlive us to be a continuation of our own lives.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is an international self-help, non-profit organization, offering friendship, understanding, grief education and *HOPE* for the future to all bereaved parents.

OUR PURPOSE is to aid in the positive reconciliation of grief and foster the physical and emotional health of bereaved parents and their surviving children. Our objective is to help those in their community, including family, friends, co-workers, employers and professionals, to be supportive.

MEMBERSHIP is open to all bereaved parents, adult siblings and grandparents. There are no membership fees—the price of membership is the death of a child, which makes our membership the most expensive in the world. TCF has no religious affiliation.

FUNDING: The Compassionate Friends is supported by voluntary, tax-deductible donations and community fundraising.

Providing the Best Support

"I wish I had known what to say. I mean a whole month went by before I could even get up my nerve to call her. I tried to think of what I'd be feeling if something happened to one of my children, but it was too horrible to even imagine. But, I wish I'd gone to see her sooner. I just couldn't."

Neighbour of a bereaved parent.

Supporting someone whose child has died is difficult for anyone to contemplate. The loss is so enormous that we have few words of comfort to offer. Though you won't be able to change the way a grieving parent feels by what you say or do, you will add immeasurable comfort to their lives by simply being there.

Does the Child's Age Make A Difference?

"The age of a child at the time of death doesn't seem to matter; the searing pain and inconsolable agony seem to be the same. However, complications in the bereavement can occur as the result of developmental issues relevant at the time of death."

Excerpt lovingly lifted from...

How to Survive the Loss of a Child
Catherine M Sanders Ph.D.

Resources & Outreach Programs

- Monthly Sharing Meetings
- TCF Newsletter
- Lending Library
- Brochures
- Initial Contact Packages
- Telephone Friends
- Presentations—Grief Education
- Candle Light Memorial Service
- Balloon Release & Program



Do's and Don'ts



- There are no magic words to take away the pain. "I'm So Sorry" is really all that can be said. Cliches, or trying to state something positive about the death, will minimize the situation and will not be helpful.
- Be available to listen, run errands, help with other children, make a meal, or whatever else seems necessary at the time.
- Bereaved parents are thinking of nothing else but their dead child. Talking about superficial things seems to minimize their loss. Any attempt to distract the griever by talking of trivia may result in resentment on their part.
- Be a nonjudgmental listener. If the bereaved parent cries, don't try to change the subject or encourage them not to cry. Tears are healing.
- Don't be shocked by their anger or judge it. Anger is a natural response to the frustration and helplessness the griever are feeling.
- As grief continues through months (or even years) don't leave the bereaved or discontinue your support. Their suffering will be long and agonizing. Your presence, in whatever capacity, will be a solid support for them as they move toward resolution.
- Remember the child's birthday, or anniversary of death with a card, a phone call or a visit. Let the parent know that you remember too.

**"Together
We Can Make It!"**