



In the United States, it is expected that nearly 150,000 infants, children, teenagers, and young adults will die this year. In addition, more than 25,000 families can be expected to face a stillbirth and more than 900,000 an early pregnancy loss. A child's death at any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, a family can turn to The Compassionate Friends self-help bereavement organization for the emotional support needed during the long grief journey that lies ahead.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause. There is no religious affiliation and no individual membership fees or dues are charged. All bereaved family members are welcome. Founded in England in 1969, TCF was established in the United States in 1972, with 501(c)(3) not-for-profit incorporation in 1978, under which provision the organization's nearly 600 local chapters also operate. TCF operates as separate entities in at least 30 countries around the world.

Mission

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.

Organization

- f TCF has a 13-member national volunteer board of directors consisting of bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents.
- f In the approximately 30 years following its incorporation, TCF has grown from 40 chapters to 600, with locations in all 50 states plus Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. All chapter leaders are volunteers and are bereaved parents or siblings, as are the 39 regional coordinators who serve as liaisons between chapters and the national organization.
- f TCF's National Office is located in Oak Brook, Illinois. The executive director is supported by six and a half staff members.

Role of Local Chapters

- f Regular meetings of local chapters provide a caring environment in which bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents can work through their grief with the help of others who have "been there." Monthly, more than 15,000 attend chapter meetings.
- f Outreach is provided to more than 200,000 bereaved families and professionals each month through chapter newsletters, websites, phone calls, letters, and personal visits.
- f Educational information on grief following the death of a child and the work of TCF is provided to the community through publicity, speaking engagements, and the distribution of materials.

Examples of Services Provided by the National Organization

- f *We Need Not Walk Alone*, TCF's award-winning quarterly national magazine is published for bereaved families, as well as professionals and chapter leadership, addressing grief issues from a variety of sources and viewpoints.
- f TCF's award-winning website (www.compassionatefriends.org), where information and resources can be viewed, also provides an Online Support Community (OSC). A monthly e-newsletter is sent to persons interested in TCF activities.
- f The National Office provided information in 2007 in response to nearly 53,000 contacts made by bereaved parents, professionals, family, friends, and chapters. These were received via e-mail, phone, and mail.
- f Assistance is provided to existing chapters, as well as those persons seeking to form a new chapter.
- f Three Chapter Leadership Training Programs are conducted each year at locations throughout the country.
- f The National Office coordinates national public awareness, as well as national fundraising.
- f Among activities sponsored annually by the national organization are the National Conference, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, and the "Walk to Remember."
- f The Compassionate Employer Recognition program honors companies practicing compassion to newly bereaved employees following the death of a child.
- f TCF National has created and publishes 31 bereavement brochures on most aspects of grief following the death of a child.

Funding

- f Although local chapters pay annual fees to the national organization, all contributions from individual members are voluntary. There are no individual dues or fees of any kind.
- f TCF's 2008 budget is \$1,110,700, with more than 80 percent allocated for services to chapters and the public. Administrative and fundraising costs comprise less than 20 percent of the organization's total operating budget.
- f TCF income is derived from individual member donations, chapter fees and donations, sale of resource materials, conference and Walk to Remember proceeds, and the business and philanthropic communities. **All contributions are tax-deductible.**
- f TCF Foundation, Inc. has been established to assist in the long-term economic stability of The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

For further information, contact The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

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