



# *The Compassionate Friends*

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

## *How Your Donation Is Making A Difference*

*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.*

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 more than 650 local Chapters also operate. TCF operates as separate entities in at least 30 countries around the world.

### *Organization*

- In the 39 years following its incorporation, TCF/USA has grown from 40 Chapters to nearly 700, with locations in all 50 states plus Washington D.C., Guam, and Puerto Rico. All Chapter leaders are volunteers and are bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, as are the 55 Regional Coordinators who serve as liaisons between Chapters and the national organization.
- The Compassionate Friends has a 13-member national volunteer Board of Directors consisting of bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents.
- The Compassionate Friends National Office is located in Oak Brook, Illinois. The Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer work in partnership, and are supported by six full-time and two part-time staff members.

### *Examples of Services Provided by the National Organization*

- In 2015, the National Office communicated with more than 670,000 bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents, other family members, friends, professionals, and Chapters.
- TCF's national website ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)), where information and resources can be viewed, also provides Spanish language support. In 2015, the website was visited almost one million times with the largest day more than 17,000 on the day of the Worldwide Candle Lighting.
- TCF's National Facebook Page communicates every day with its more than 250,000 members and continues to grow daily. TCF also has a Twitter presence.
- The TCF National Office publishes more than 40 bereavement brochures (in English and Spanish) on most aspects of grief following the death of a child.
- TCF operates an Online Support Community chat program on its national website with rooms open every day to its members. Rooms are available covering many topics related to the death of a child.
- We Need Not Walk Alone, TCF's national magazine is published two times a year for bereaved families, as well as professionals and Chapter leadership, addressing grief issues from a variety of sources and viewpoints. The

magazine is available in printed form and is now offered free to online subscribers.

- A free monthly e-newsletter is sent to more than 24,000 people.
- Assistance is provided to existing Chapters, as well as those persons seeking to form a new Chapter.
- Chapter Leadership Training Programs are conducted each year at locations throughout the country, including TCF's National Conference.
- The National Office coordinates national public awareness, as well as national fundraising.
- Among activities sponsored annually by the national organization are the National Conference, the Worldwide Candle Lighting®, and the Walk to Remember®.

## *How Do We Do It?*

- TCF's 2016 budget is over \$1 million, with 85 percent allocated for services to Chapters and the public. Administrative and fundraising costs comprise 15 percent of the organization's total operating budget.
- TCF income is derived from individual member donations, Chapter fees and donations, sale of resource materials, National Conference and Walk to Remember proceeds, and the business and philanthropic communities. TCF has been awarded The Independent Charities Seal of Excellence for being able to certify, document, and demonstrate on an annual basis that it meets the highest standards of public accountability, program effectiveness, and cost effectiveness. Only 2,000 of the 1 million charities operating in the United States today have been awarded this Seal. All contributions to The Compassionate Friends are tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated.
- TCF Foundation, Inc. has been established to assist in the long-term economic stability of The Compassionate Friends, Inc. It accepts major gifts of \$5,000 or more and the larger the endowment fund's balance, the larger the distribution each year to The Compassionate Friends, Inc. All contributions to The Compassionate Friends Foundation are tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated.
- Local Chapters pay an annual membership fee to the national organization. All contributions from individual members are voluntary. There are no individual dues or fees of any kind. Income from Chapters are only 10% of TCF's annual budget.

## *Role of Local Chapters*

- 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 16,000 people attend Chapter meetings.
- Outreach is provided to more than 350,000 bereaved family members and professionals each month through Chapter newsletters, websites, Facebook Pages, special programs including regional conferences, walks to remember, phone calls, letters, e-mails, and personal visits.
- 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.

For further information, contact The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

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