



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

The Compassionate Friends is a unique organization that no one wants to join. There are no membership fees — the price of membership is the death of a child, which makes our organization the most expensive membership in the world.

WHEN A CHILD DIES

The Compassionate Friends, an international, non-profit, non-denominational, self-help organization, offering friendship, understanding, grief education and **HOPE** for the future to all families who have experienced the death of a child at any age, from any cause.

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE is to aid in the positive reconciliation of grief and foster the physical and emotional health of parents and their surviving children.

OUR SECONDARY PURPOSE is to provide information and education about the grief of bereaved parents and their surviving children. The objective is to help those in their community, including family, friends, co-workers, employers and professionals to be supportive.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT was developed at the founding of The Compassionate Friends and it continues to be followed by TCF Chapters throughout the world. The first meeting of The Compassionate Friends took place in Coventry, England on January 28th, 1969. The first chapter in Canada was established in Winnipeg, Manitoba, January 1977. There are approximately 50 Canadian chapters with an additional 45 contact members from Victoria, BC to St. John's Newfoundland, including the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. TCF is now in approximately 30 countries with a network of over 1000 chapters.

The Compassionate Friends of Canada

The Compassionate Friends/Les Amis Compasitissants of/du Canada was formed November 2, 1986 in Winnipeg, MB. In 1991, shared office space with the Winnipeg Chapter became the National Office.

In 2001, major changes developed when it became necessary for the National Office to update it's mandate and attain its own identity. **August 8, 2001**, *The Compassionate Friends of Canada* became incorporated, followed by the publication of an in-house National Newsletter and a renewed focus of meeting the needs of Canadian Chapters.

To recover from the death of a child may take a lifetime but the most crucial period of the grieving process is the first several years. Unfortunately, support of friends and extended family is usually relatively short term when compared to the needs of a bereaved parent. The Compassionate Friends provides the much needed "mutual support and understanding" for those bereaved parents and their surviving children.

Grief is not a condition that can be "treated." It is a healing process that takes a long time — much longer than most people would expect, and requires on-going support, understanding and friendship from those who have "been there". The Compassionate Friends offers all of these, but most of all, they offer **HOPE** — hope that recovery **IS** possible.

The Compassionate Friends is an organization formed by and for parents whose children have died. The Compassionate Friends is the **ONLY** organization that specifically deals with the death of a child at any age, from any cause, at any time. Therefore, mental health workers, counsellors, and those of the teaching and helping professions often refer their clients to The Compassionate Friends.

As awareness increased among professionals and the general population, more and more parents

are coming to TCF for help. This increased need for services is overwhelming and we, in turn require an appropriate level of financial assistance to provide what only TCF can provide. The support, understanding, friendship and a nurturing that cannot be found in a pill bottle, alcohol or hospital ward. Our success helps to alleviate the strain on the health care system.

Local chapters provide monthly sharing meetings, telephone friends, some provide newsletters and hold an annual Candlelight Memorial Service. Most chapters have a library of resource books, audio tapes and videos beneficial to parents and professionals alike. Many chapters also have brochures which are distributed within their communities.



When a parent truly understands and acknowledges their loss, the healing process can begin. We are here to journey alongside the newly bereaved until they can make their own choice to reinvest in life once again. All this we do in memory of our children who were—still are—and **ALWAYS** will be a part of who we are — what we are — and what we do —
Today,
Tomorrow
and
FOREVER!

*Ken Pinch
Past President TCF/Canada*