



TCF CANADA - VOICES

APRIL 2026 Issue

SPRING: WHEN HOPE AND GRIEF WALK TOGETHER

Spring arrives with the quiet promise of renewal. Snow melts, the days stretch longer, and the first brave signs of spring push their way through the earth. For many people, it is a season of optimism and fresh beginnings.

For bereaved parents, however, the changing season can bring mixed emotions. As the world awakens around us, we may find ourselves carrying both the warmth of memory and the ache of absence. The laughter of children in parks, the celebrations of spring holidays, and the simple beauty of new life can stir both love and longing for the child who is no longer here

At **The Compassionate Friends of Canada**, we understand that grief does not follow the seasons. Yet the rhythms of nature often remind us that life continues to move forward, even as our hearts hold tightly to the past. In this community, we honour that truth: our children are forever part of us, and the love we carry for them continues to shape our lives.

Spring can also be a gentle invitation—not to “move on,” but to keep moving forward, step by step. Sometimes that means sharing memories with another parent who understands. Sometimes it means simply allowing ourselves to feel whatever this season brings.

In this issue of *TCF Canada Voices*, you will find stories of remembrance, connection, and support from across the country. Each one reflects the strength of families who continue to walk this difficult path together.

As April unfolds, may we find small moments of light along the way—and may we remember that none of us has to walk this journey alone.

Thank you for being part of this compassionate community, where love, remembrance, and understanding walk beside every grieving family.

PLEASE JOIN US – YOU CAN HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The **2026 Annual General Meeting of TCF Canada** will be held on **Saturday, June 6th** at **12 noon Eastern** time.

In addition to being a requirement of Revenue Canada, the AGM is an opportunity to learn about the various initiatives undertaken by the National Board and to contribute to the future direction of our organization.

We need a minimum of five (5) chapter representatives for a quorum so please register your attendance with the Board Secretary (secretary@tcfcanada.net) to receive the meeting link.

This will be a year of change as both TCF Canada President Andy Bond and Chapter Development Director Eileen Bond will be stepping down from their positions.

Additional volunteers are always welcome, so if you would like to support the national mission of The Compassionate Friends of Canada, please contact the National Office (nationaloffice@tcfcanada.net).

June 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	
28	29	29				



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Barbara Noseworthy – TCF Burin Peninsula Chapter, NL



Barb remembers her daughter Johanna as determined, stubborn and independent. To her friends, Johanna was the glue that held them together.

Johanna had already begun building a life she loved. At just 18 years old, she had completed her hairstyling course, moved away from home, and started working as what she liked to call a hair designer. She was talented and passionate about her work. Johanna once told her mother that making someone else feel happy made her happy.

Her dream was to one day open her own spa. In Johanna's memory, Barb later helped create a small park in their community called **Johanna's Day Spa**—a children's playground that carries her name forward and reflects Johanna's dream of creating a place that would bring happiness to others.

It's not hard to see where that spirit began. Barb is someone who quietly brings comfort and care to the people around her, and through her kindness she has helped many grieving parents feel less alone.

On July 2, 2005, Johanna and Barb's mother-in-law left home early in the morning to travel to St. John's. They never arrived, and Barb and Reuben's family lost two deeply loved members of their family that day.

In the years following Johanna's death, Barb had never heard of The Compassionate Friends (TCF). What she did know was that she needed to be with other parents who understood the indescribable pain of losing a child. Barb and her husband, Reuben, began driving three and a half hours to meet with other bereaved couples who had recently lost children. Eventually the travel became too exhausting, but Barb still knew how important it was to remain connected with other grieving parents.

In the fall of 2005, Barb began reaching out locally and about 30 parents gathered in a church hall. They didn't yet have a name for their group—they were simply mothers and fathers trying to find a way through their loss together. Several of those couples continued to support one another and remain friends to this day. Around 2015, Barb began receiving calls from parents newly walking this heartbreaking path who hoped meetings might begin again. By then Barb had learned about TCF and saw an opportunity to create something more lasting for bereaved parents in her community.

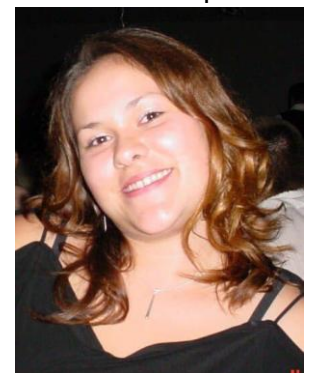
In 2016, eleven years into her own grief journey, Barb established the TCF Burin Peninsula Chapter. Her intention was simply to help build a strong support group and then step away—but ten years later, she is still there. With her thoughtful leadership, Barb continues to host both in-person and virtual meetings, creating a welcoming space for parents from many communities.

Today Barb serves as Chapter Leader and, since 2023, as a member of the national Board of Directors for **TCF Canada**. Through her involvement with TCF, she has formed lasting friendships with bereaved parents across the country.

Barb reflects that just as children often connect their parents through school activities and sports, Johanna continues to connect her with people even now.

"Johanna has pushed me out of my comfort zone," Barb shares. "I've experienced so much because of it."

Surviving the loss of a child is a lifelong journey. The support that TCF provides does not remove the grief, but it helps make the path a little less lonely. Through her compassion and steady commitment, Barb continues to walk alongside other bereaved parents so that no one has to walk this path alone.



Johanna Amy Lilian Noseworthy
Daughter of Barbara & Reuben Noseworthy
September 15, 1986 – July 2, 2005

WORDS THAT HELPED ME by Tina Flamond

Over the years, I've come across many words that have helped me navigate grief after the loss of my son, Terik. Sometimes they appear in books, sometimes in conversations, and sometimes unexpectedly in something as simple as a quote shared by another bereaved parent.

One that has stayed with me is:

“Some things cannot be fixed; they can only be carried.” — Megan Devine



When I first read these words, something inside me relaxed. So much of grief can feel like a problem we're supposed to solve or "get over." But the truth is, the loss of a child isn't something that can be fixed.

Instead, we learn to carry it alongside the love we still hold for our children.

Perhaps these words might bring a small moment of understanding to someone else on this journey.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

In addition to being a primary point of contact for grieving parents looking for support, the mission of TCF Canada is to help chapters support those parents. To that end, we offer various resources through the website, including referrals, facilitator training, Facebook groups, information leaflets, and virtual circles.

The Board of TCF Canada would like to know what resources or services your chapter needs to establish and/or maintain an active group in your community.

Please send your suggestions to NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net or share them on the Chapter Leadership Facebook group. We may not be able to grant all of your wishes, but they will certainly help us in planning future initiatives.

SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

TCF Canada can be found on social media. Our various platforms can be found by using the search terms provided or clicking on the links below.

The National website contains, links to chapters, newsletter archives, contact information, video resources, recommended reading lists and much more.

Search - tcfcanada.net

[The Compassionate Friends of Canada – Formed by and for parents whose children have passed](#)

Our Facebook groups are private and can only be viewed by members who have answered the membership questions. The main group has over 1,600 members

Search – The Compassionate Friends of Canada (main group for parents) or

[The Compassionate Friends of Canada | Facebook](#)

Search – TCF Canada Men in Grief or [TCF Canada Men in Grief | Facebook](#)

Search - TCF Canada Leadership (for Chapter Leaders) or [TCF Canada Leadership | Facebook](#)

Search – TCF Canada Sibling Support or [TCF Canada Sibling Support | Facebook](#)

We can also be found on Instagram, which can be accessible to anyone who chooses to follow the page.

Search – [compassionatefriendscanada https://www.instagram.com/thecompassionatefriendscanada/#](https://www.instagram.com/thecompassionatefriendscanada/#)

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

TCF Canada chapters hold both in-person and virtual meetings. Individuals can participate in virtual meetings from any location. To attend contact the meeting organizer by email to request the access link.

When

Every Tues, 1:00pm Central Time

Winnipeg, MB

1st Tues, Monthly, 7:30pm Pacific Time

Vancouver, BC

1st Thurs, Monthly, 7:00pm Eastern Time

Ottawa, ON

2nd Mon, Monthly, 7:00pm Eastern Time

Waterloo, ON

3rd Wed, Monthly, 6:30pm Central Time

Winnipeg, MB

Last Wed, Monthly, 5:30pm Eastern Time

Burin Peninsula, NL

Contact Information

mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org

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ottawa@tcfcanada.net

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mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org

burinpeninsula@tcfcanada.net

TCF-CANADA CHAPTER ANNUAL REPORTS 2025-2026

To maintain the accuracy and completeness of the organization's records, Chapter Leaders are required to complete the TCF Canada Chapter Annual Reports each year. The requested information includes details about the chapter leadership team and contact information for the chapter. This data is utilized by the National Office and published on the National Website, enabling parents seeking support—via phone, email, or online—to easily access assistance.

For the 2025–2026 reporting period, individualized Annual Chapter Reports have been distributed by email to streamline the process. These forms are pre-populated with some chapter information and should require only a brief review and update before submission. If you have not already done so, please verify and amend the details as necessary, then click submit to complete the process.

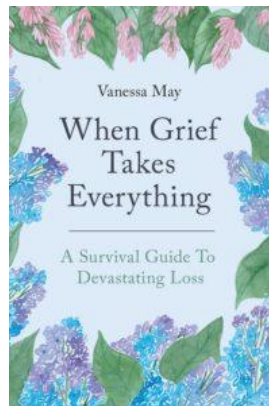
If your chapter would like a PDF version that can be filled out manually and returned by mail, please contact TCF Vice President Karen Destun at vicepresident@tcfcanada.net to request the PDF form.

Gentle reminder, if your number is listed as a contact number, please try to answer calls as you never know when a parent may be in need of a person to talk to.

RESOURCE PICK

WHEN GRIEF TAKES EVERYTHING by Vanessa May

Two years after losing her beloved son, Vanessa May lost her husband and father in the same three-week period during the Covid pandemic. In this book, she charts her quest to make sense of what has happened to her, as well as sharing the stories of six other inspirational women who have experienced loss. Finally, she offers guidance, tools and resources drawn from her experience as a holistic grief coach and educator.



When Grief Takes Everything is a book for anyone who has experienced great loss: the mother who buried her child, the widow who lost her future, and all those others who find themselves unwillingly walking the path of grief.

“When Grief Takes Everything” is a raw, profound and deeply compassionate guide for those navigating unimaginable loss. Vanessa’s personal journey and hard-won wisdom offer both solace and strength to anyone wondering how to survive the unthinkable. Theresa Cheung, ITV’s This Morning regular and Sunday Times bestselling author.

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Upcoming Powell River Retreat

We are pleased to share that The Powell River Compassionate Friends Society is inviting you to join us for our **3rd Annual Nurturing Our Souls Retreat for Bereaved Parents**, taking place **October 1–4, 2026**. We would be grateful for your help in sharing this invitation with those who may benefit.

This year's theme: **PEACE-ing It Together – Finding Our Strength When We Have No Choice.**

Our planning team is working with great care to create a four-day retreat offering rest, reflection, and gentle connection. The program will blend community and shared experience with opportunities for finding peace and remembering personal strength. Together, we will explore resources for healing and tenderly tending to grief. Our hope is that each participant leaves feeling both lighter and stronger.

Thanks to a generous donation, we are excited to offer the retreat at a subsidized rate, making it accessible to all. If you know someone in your chapter who may be experiencing financial difficulty and could benefit from attending, please let them know that bursaries are available. Anyone whose budget may not cover the full cost is encouraged to reach out to us at nurturingoursoulsretreat@gmail.com

Location - Set at the Bethlehem Retreat Centre on the peaceful shores of Westwood Lake in Nanaimo, provides a calm and supportive setting. <https://bethlehemcentre.com>

Registration opens in March. Attendance is limited to 40 participants, and in the past two years, the retreat has filled within weeks, so we encourage early registration.

Volunteers - We are also in the early stages of planning and are seeking volunteers and helpers. If you are interested in supporting the retreat in this way, your contribution would be deeply appreciated.

Thank you for helping us make this retreat a meaningful and supportive experience for all who attend. We look forward to connecting with you.

For questions, please email nurturingoursoulsretreat@gmail.com or call toll free: **1-855 961-1115**



We look forward to sharing this time together in October 2026.

Warmly,
Your Planning Team

Zella Knutson
Retreat Director
The Powell River Compassionate Friends Society

Marion Prochnau
Flow Manager
Chapter Leader, Lower Sunshine Coast

CHAPTER LEADERS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

A **Facilitator Training** session is planned for **Saturday, April 18th, 2026**, via Zoom starting at **12:00 noon Eastern time**. The session covers the basics of conducting a Sharing Circle and is open to both new and experienced leaders to learn and to contribute.

There is no charge to participate, and the handbook is available as a pdf document. If you or any of your chapter's members would like to attend the training session, please contact NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net to register.

Please join other TCF Leaders from across the country for the **Chapter Chat** scheduled for **Saturday April 25, 2026**, starting at **11:00 am Eastern time**. This is a time to discuss issues, share ideas and meet with others. If you would like to participate, please email Karen vicepresident@tcfcanada.net to register.

CARRYING TWO DAUGHTERS IN MY HEART

“Grief has taught me that love does not end. I carry both of my daughters with me, every day.” by Connie Schram

There are moments in life that divide time into *before* and *after*. For me, those moments came with the loss of my two daughters, Amy and Jolene.

Amy died November 19, 2015, from suicide at the age of 36. She was a creative and kind soul who felt things deeply. Amy had a natural artistic spirit and found ways to express herself through creativity. Whether it was through making things, sharing ideas, or simply seeing the world a little differently, she had a way of bringing imagination and warmth into the spaces around her.

Amy also had a generous heart. She was compassionate toward others, especially those who were hurting or struggling. Perhaps because she knew what it felt like herself, she often showed kindness and understanding to people who needed it most. At the same time, Amy faced difficult battles with addiction and mental health challenges. Those struggles were part of her journey, but they never defined the love she shared with the people around her. She was, and will always be, my daughter—someone deeply loved and forever missed.



Less than five years later, on January 18, 2020, my second daughter Jolene died from neuroendocrine cervical cancer at the age of 37. Jolene’s personality was very different from her sister’s. She was ambitious, witty, and driven. Jolene had a quick mind and a sharp sense of humour that could brighten a room. She loved conversation, laughter, and the feeling of moving forward toward the goals she set for herself.

Jolene approached life with determination. When she set her mind on something, she pursued it wholeheartedly. She had the kind of energy that inspired others and the ability to make people feel included and encouraged. Even during difficult times, her strength and spirit shone through.

Losing one child is something no parent ever imagines. Losing two is a grief words cannot capture. When Amy died, I began learning how to live with a broken heart. When Jolene died 50 months later, the weight of that grief deepened in ways I could never have expected.

Amy and Jolene were different in many ways, yet they shared something beautiful —they were both strong women who touched the lives of the people around them. They were both mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, and individuals whose lives mattered deeply.

Grief does not disappear with time. Instead, it becomes something you learn to carry. Some days it sits quietly beside you, while on other days it returns with a sudden wave of memory and longing. A song, a photograph, or a small everyday moment can suddenly bring them vividly back into my thoughts.

Over time I have come to understand that love does not end with death. Amy and Jolene are still part of my life through the memories I hold, the stories I tell, and the ways they shaped the person I am today. Losing my daughters has also connected me with other bereaved parents who understand this loss. In those shared spaces, there is a deep compassion and understanding that requires no explanation - we recognize each other through the love we continue to carry.

Amy and Jolene will always be my daughters. Their lives mattered. Their love remains woven into my life. And every day, in ways both quiet and profound, I carry them forward in my heart.



**“Grief does not follow the seasons.
Even as spring arrives, the love and absence we carry for our children remain.”**

As the seasons begin to change, many grieving parents find that the arrival of spring brings both memories and tender emotions. Sometimes, these feelings can arrive quietly and unexpectedly, catching us off guard during an ordinary day.

With Easter approaching, signs of spring begin to appear all around us. The days slowly grow longer, the air softens, and the natural world begins its quiet return to life. For many people, this season is associated with renewal, celebration, and new beginnings.

For parents who have lost a child, however, the arrival of spring can bring complicated emotions. While the world outside seems to be waking up again, grief does not follow the seasons. The absence of our child remains constant, and holidays or family traditions can sometimes make that absence feel even more noticeable.

You may find yourself remembering past spring celebrations—children searching for hidden eggs, family meals, laughter, and the simple joy of being together. Those memories can bring warmth, but they can also carry a deep ache for what has changed. At times, even joyful moments around you may feel layered with both love and longing.

If this season feels particularly tender, here are a few gentle ways some parents choose to navigate this time of year:

- 1. Honour memories in a small way** - Some parents find comfort in simple gestures, such as placing flowers in a meaningful place, setting aside a quiet moment to remember their child, or acknowledging the day in a way that feels personal.
- 2. Give yourself permission to do less** - Spring holidays can come with expectations. It is okay to step back from traditions that feel too heavy or to celebrate in a quieter way.
- 3. Notice the small signs of spring** - A blooming flower, birds returning, or a warm breeze can serve as quiet reminders that life continues to move forward, even when grief is part of the journey.

There is no right or wrong way to move through this season. Each parent finds their own path through the changing seasons of grief. If Easter or the arrival of spring brings mixed emotions, know that you are not alone. Within the Compassionate Friends community, many understand the way love and loss can exist side by side.

And sometimes, even in the midst of grief, a small moment of spring can gently remind us that love, like the seasons, continues in ways we may not always expect. And in those quiet moments, may you find gentle reminders that your child’s love remains with you always.

**“Grief shifts like the seasons, arriving in waves both gentle and strong.
In the quiet of spring, we may begin to notice small moments of light.
Love does not leave—it walks beside us, steady and enduring.
With each step, we honour the ones we carry in our hearts.
Together, we move forward, never truly alone.”**

CONTACT US

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Karen Destun (Waterloo, ON) – Vice-President
Donna Rodin (Medicine Hat, AB) – Past
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Diana Cadigan (St. John's, NL) – Treasurer
Connie Schram (Waterloo, ON) – Secretary
Eileen Bond (Ottawa, ON) – Chapter
Development

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Larry Cadman (Ottawa, ON) – Webmaster
Barb Noseworthy (Burin Peninsula, NL)
Tina Flamond (Calgary, AB)



LOOKING AHEAD, WALKING TOGETHER

As we come to the close of this April issue of **TCF Canada VOICES**, we are reminded once again that grief is never something we carry alone. In these pages we have heard a mother's heartfelt remembrance of two beloved daughters, learned about a healing retreat in British Columbia, discovered helpful resources, and celebrated the dedication of one of our chapter leaders.

Each story reflects the same truth: compassion and connection help light the path through grief.

The Compassionate Friends of Canada exists because of the generosity and commitment of volunteers—parents, siblings, and grandparents who have chosen to reach out and support others after experiencing unimaginable loss. From local chapter leaders to those working quietly behind the scenes, this community continues to grow through shared care and understanding.

Looking Ahead to June - Members are warmly invited to join us for the **TCF Canada Annual General Meeting in June**. The AGM is more than a formal gathering—it is an opportunity to reflect on the work we have done together, to hear about the direction of the organization, and to ensure that the voices of bereaved families across Canada continue to guide our work.

“The Compassionate Friends is built on one simple truth: when grieving families walk together, none of us has to walk alone.”

Considering Board Service - Our organization is always strengthened when members step forward to help shape its future. If you have ever considered becoming more involved, we encourage you to think about serving as a board member.

Board service is a meaningful way to give back, share your experience, and help support programs that reach grieving families across the country. If you are interested in learning more, please consider reaching out before the AGM.

Thank you for being part of this compassionate community. Together, we remember our children and support one another.