



The Compassionate Friends of Canada

When A Child Dies...

National Newsletter – Fall 2022

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Transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.

Reverend Simon Stephens, Founder, TCF.

Welcome to the Fall edition of the national newsletter! Our objective continues to be to provide news, information, and items of interest to connect members from coast to coast, and to provide guidance to leaders in organizing events and activities. If you have any material that you would like to contribute, or suggestions for topics that you would like to see included, please e-mail the National Office.

Plus ça change...

In “normal times”, September often feels like turning the page on a New Year as we return to the familiar routines of work and school, refreshed after a summer break. However, after some 30 months of pandemic living, with many Covid-19 protocols remaining or being reinstated in anticipation of another wave, the calendar may appear to have stalled.

For those on a grief journey, the change of seasons can feel like just another weary step along a seemingly endless path. Whether you look forward to new opportunities with the turn of the calendar, or still feel challenged by an uncertain future, take courage in knowing that together, we have passed one more milestone along the way.

A Special “Thank You”

As parent volunteers, we all hope that we are able to help others on their grief journey. However, it is not often that we receive such a strong endorsement as that expressed by one grateful mother in an e-mail to the National Office. After moving to another city, she reconnected with a virtual support group led by Marcheta Tanner and Allie Turnock of TCF Winnipeg. She writes *“I just want to recognize a couple of women who I feel go too unnoticed. I had a son die almost 2 years ago and these two women were there for me then, as they were for so many of us, week after week, tear after tear, emotional rollercoaster after the last. I’ve had the opportunity to try out another group since moving, and I now see what a gem these two are. I took a break from TCF and needed to return because my grief was still overwhelming, I asked for the Zoom link and there they were, still at it, supporting those whose lives have been shattered.”*

It is very gratifying when our TCF community receives such positive feedback, and we would like to add our grateful thanks to Marcheta and Allie for their continued dedication.

Although this article mentions two specific individuals, we know that there are many others throughout our TCF family who are quietly supporting those in need. On behalf of our grieving parent members, please accept our heartfelt “Thank You”, and know that, even if the words are not spoken, you and your work are greatly appreciated.

Virtual Support Sessions: As the previous item illustrates, the availability of support on-line can be a lifeline for those who are unable to attend in-person events. Virtual sessions are not limited to a geographic area, or even a time zone. They allow many members to participate in on-line or hybrid in-person / on-line sharing circles, especially if they are not comfortable or not able to attend an in-person meeting.

If your chapter offers on-line support and would welcome visitors from out-of-town or out-of-time, please advise the National Office and we will refer any enquiries to you. Please note that, although we are not currently planning to post a list on the website, the availability of on-line sessions from coast to coast would be a major step forward in support for grieving parents.

Facilitator Training: The next session will be held via Zoom on **Saturday, October 15th** starting at 12 noon Eastern time for 75 - 90 minutes, including time for questions and discussion. We invite both new and experienced facilitators to attend, contribute, and share in the learning process. To register, please contact the National Office.

We are planning future sessions approx. every 4 months, i.e. February, June, and October.

Donations: We gratefully acknowledge donations made directly to our Treasurer and through the *Canada Helps* link on our website. This month, we send a big "Thank You" for recent donations from two individuals.

Recommended Reading: New chapters often ask for suggestions for books, articles, or other materials that would be helpful to newly bereaved parents. We are considering posting on the national website a list of items that our members found have helped them on their grief journey. If you would like to make a recommendation, please forward your name, the title, the author's name, and a brief summary of the content to the National Office. If there are sufficient responses, we will create a section under the *Resources* tab which can be updated from time to time as new recommendations are received.

Worldwide Candle Lighting – Sunday, December 11th, 2022: We are just moving into Fall, but it is not too early to begin planning for the Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration on the second Sunday in December. With Covid-19 restrictions in recent years, chapters have held either outdoor or limited indoor gatherings to suit local conditions, especially the weather. While many chapters have developed their own programs over several years, those planning their first celebration can find a simple program on the national website (select *Resources* -> *Articles*).

Publishing a notice of the event in your local newspaper or through social media can be an excellent way to reach out to grieving parents in your community. If you are planning a virtual celebration, perhaps over Zoom, please consider opening it to others outside your area or time zone who may not otherwise be able to participate. If you wish, we can list your event on the website under *Chapters* -> *Events*.

Some Reminders: A quick recap of resources available through the TCF Canada website.

Facebook Groups: Our largest TCF Canada community is the *Parents* closed Facebook group, which currently has over 1,170 members across the country sharing stories and offering support. We also offer smaller closed groups for *Siblings* and for *Men in Grief*. To join any of these groups, click on *About Us* -> *Facebook Links*.

Resources for Chapter Leaders: The website includes a link to the *TCF Canada Leadership* closed Facebook group, and the *Resources* tab includes an area for Chapter Leaders with various forms and reference articles. Please contact the National Office for the password to access this area.

Grief Information Leaflets: The updated leaflets are available under the *Resources* tab on the national website as pdf documents for download at no charge. Please consider making copies available at your Sharing Circles.

The Final Word: If you have any chapter news to share, would like to promote a chapter event on the national website, support Board activities, or offer any other comments or suggestions, please contact the National Office.

Closing Thought: The death of Queen Elizabeth II and the transition to a new monarch will lead to many changes within Canada and around the world, but they will not disrupt our lives as much as did the death of our children.