



TCF CANADA - VOICES

2025 Fall Issue

Welcome to the Fall edition of the TCF- Canada National Newsletter, **VOICES**, presented by two of the newest members of the TCF Board of Directors, Tina Flamond from Calgary, AB, and Connie Schram from Waterloo, ON.

We are honoured to continue the newsletter's journey, serving as a bridge for member voices and helping to comfort, support, and connect our community.

We invite you to contribute ideas, articles, and news items that would be of interest to the Canadian TCF community.

Each issue will feature regular segments such as Volunteer Spotlight, Chapter Happenings, and a recommendation on a Grief Resource.

To share any ideas and suggestions for future issues please contact us via email.

Connie Schram -
cschram@hotmail.ca

Tina Flamond -
tflamondtcf@gmail.com

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

(Submitted by Karen Destun)
The Compassionate Friends Chapter in **Waterloo Region, Ontario** held a Parent Connection Picnic at the end of July. An invitation to parents and families who have connected with our chapter over the years went out back in the spring. Knowing that it is often difficult to get a group of people together over the summer, we were pleased to have a small group gather for a lovely late afternoon picnic.

It was a very relaxing atmosphere, where everyone seemed



comfortable to chat about many things through our hours together. The heatwave in SW Ontario brought the temperature with humidex to over 40C, but our picnic spot provided shade and a fabulous breeze adding to our comfort. We hope that this may be the beginning of more connections made outside of our monthly sharing circles.



(Each month we hope to highlight a chapter event. Please submit suggestions for future articles to Tina or Connie)



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

In recognition of their long service and dedication to the TCF organization, we are pleased to feature Andy (TCF President) and Eileen Bond (Chapter Development) in our first Volunteer Spotlight article.



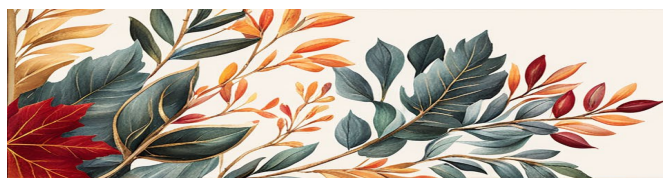
We are honoured to share the story of Eileen and Andy Bond, co-founders and former leaders of the Ottawa Chapter of The Compassionate Friends of Canada. They serve in honour of their son Kevin, who passed away in 1994 at the age of 20. After Kevin's passing, Eileen and Andy contacted The Compassionate Friends (TCF) in Winnipeg and found their communications supportive during the initial weeks and months following their loss. They established the Ottawa Chapter after attending a TCF Conference in Kelowna, BC, in 1998.

In 2012, Eileen and Andy were awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medals for their inspiring dedication and work with the TCF Ottawa chapter. In 2015, they joined the TCF Canada National Board to continue supporting TCF Canada's efforts to expand peer support nationwide. Their efforts have brought comfort to many families in need.

Andy currently holds the position of TCF President and Eileen is responsible for Chapter Development. Along with their board responsibilities, they run the training sessions for anyone wanting to become a group facilitator. Andy has also been doing double duty acting as Secretary and putting together this quarterly newsletter, which he has now been able to pass along to others.

Our heartfelt thanks and admiration go to Andy and Eileen for their unwavering leadership and long service with The Compassionate Friends organization. We are truly grateful for all you have done and continue to do.

(If you know a TCF member who has demonstrated leadership, compassion and the desire to help others please let us know for inclusion in our next issue)



**We Appreciate Our
Volunteers**

Fall 2025 VOICES

“Transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.”

~ Rev. Simon Stephens, TCF Founder

TCF/USA - NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 48th Annual TCF/USA National Conference took place in Bellevue, Washington, from July 11–13, drawing participation from across the United States and Canada. Several Canadian members attended, representing chapters from communities nationwide.



Over the weekend, attendees took part in more than 100 workshops and sharing sessions, many modeled after local chapter meetings. The program also featured keynote speakers and moving musical performances, highlighted during Friday's luncheon and Saturday evening's Candle Lighting Dinner. On Sunday, the gathering concluded with the *Walk to Remember* through beautiful downtown Bellevue.

Participants included parents, grandparents, and siblings, each wearing name tags with their names, hometowns, and the names of their loved ones. Many also wore large photo buttons, honoring their children in a touching and visible way.

Workshops covered a wide range of topics, reflecting the many stages and expressions of grief. Sessions included *Five Facets of Healing Grief*, *Getting a Grip on Grief*, *Memorial Tattoos*, *The Impact of Guilt and Regret*, *Shifting Family Dynamics*, *Secular Support*, *Struggling to Reclaim My Faith*, *Finding Hope After a Substance-Related Loss*, *Sibling Loss*, *Loss of a Child with Special Needs*, *Grandparent Grief*, *Somatic Breathwork Reset*, *Men in Grief*, *From Griever to Leader*, *PTSD: There are Ways to Help*, *Stigmatized Loss*, *Ten Things to Decrease Anxiety After a Loss*, *Exploring Grief Rituals*, *Wisdom From Seasoned Grievers*, and *Finding a New Purpose in Life*, among many others.

Those who attended described the conference as meaningful and deeply supportive, offering both practical guidance and heartfelt connection with others who understand.

Looking ahead, the **49th Annual TCF/USA National Conference** will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, from July 3–5, 2026. More details will be shared in the new year.



During the Candle Lighting Dinner, a memorial slideshow paid tribute to TCF volunteers who passed away over the past year. Among those remembered was Paulette Cadman, Ottawa Chapter Co-Leader and Group Facilitator, honored for her compassion and unwavering dedication in supporting TCF families.

GRIEF RESOURCE PICK

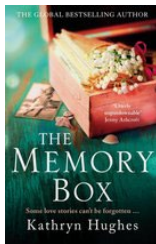
The Memory Box

A book about grief by Joanna Rowland.

A beautiful way to support grieving children or grieving parents reading to them.

With gentle illustrations and heartfelt language, this book opens conversations about memory, loss, and love.

📖 Available through most online bookstores.



(Please send us recommendations for books, podcasts or anything that has helped you

NEW CHAPTER

The TCF Board, Chapter Leaders and Members across Canada warmly welcome a new chapter in Ontario **TCF – Brantford**.

Their first meeting was held June 12th, 2025.

Chapter Leader **Karen Guse** serves in honour of her daughter Sarah and her son Matthew.

Contact Information

TCF Brantford
2nd Thursday of each month
@ The Stedman Hospice

For More Information
Email: Brantford@TCFCanada.net
Phone/Text: 519-820-8665

LEGS ARE GETTING STRONGER ...

(Taken from TCF Canada Facebook page with permission by the author Neal Covant, Benji's Dad)

Over the past nearly 11-months, I've used MANY analogies to try and describe what our grieving and pain is like. The truth is, what I've written and described throughout will resonate with some, not all. While many who are reading my writings have been faced with an unbearable and devastating loss, we genuinely grieve like snowflakes...no two are the same.

For me, I feel my legs getting stronger. What do I mean by this? Enter my newest analogy. This journey, and specifically our grieving, is like walking/jogging /running. Many people who make a decision to get healthy will take to walking. At first, the walk is slow and short. We don't have stamina, strength and motivation for anything more than that. But...if we stick to it and force ourselves out every day, we start to see differences. At first, we walk just as slow but make it a little further. Then we walk a bit faster and get to our destination a bit quicker. It's then when we see what's possible. And eventually, in time and with an unthinkable amount of strength and drive, we accomplish milestones that we never imagined possible. We go on a run. We clock kilometres. We hit personal bests. Our legs are stronger.

I'm nowhere close to a run...yet. I'm at an 'on and off' gentle jog. But 11-months ago, I wasn't even walking. What's my motivation? It's my kids. It's Brookie, it's Bray Bray, and it's you, baby boy. My kids are what forces me to put on my running shoes and get out onto the pavement. My babies give me purpose. And for this, I am not only grateful...I am lucky.

I love you my gorgeous boy. More than anything in this world, I love you. One day, baby, I'll go for a run. And you'll be with right there with me.



WORDS THAT HELPED ME



The “Permission Slip”

In grief, even the smallest choices can feel enormous. That’s why I love this simple tool: a self-written permission slip. It sounds silly but it can be powerful!

Write yourself one thing you’re allowed to do today, without guilt. A few examples:

- “I give myself permission to not answer the phone.”
- “I give myself permission to feel joy or smile even if only for a moment.”
- “I give myself permission to cry at work / cancel plans / eat cereal for dinner.”

You are doing the impossible. You deserve kindness especially from yourself.

(We invite submissions regarding words or actions that may have offered encouragement or support. You may also share experiences about what you would have appreciated others doing in similar situations.)

ABOUT THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF CANADA:

The Compassionate Friends is an international, non-profit, peer support organization, offering friendship, understanding, grief education and HOPE for the future to all families who are grieving 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.

The Secret of TCF’s success is simple. As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

The Vision of The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Chapter Chat (TCF Leadership) – Saturday September 13th @ 12:00 Eastern
Info can be found on the Leadership Facebook Page or contact the National Office by email nationaloffice@tcfcanda.net or call 1-866-823-0141

Group Facilitator Training – Saturday September 20th
Info can be found on the Leadership Facebook Page or contact the National Office by email nationaloffice@tcfcanda.net or call 1-866-823-0141

Worldwide TCF Candle Lighting – Sunday December 14th
Details will be made available from individual chapters as we get closer to the date.

“When a parent truly understands and acknowledges their loss, the healing process can begin. We are here to journey along side 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!”***

*Written by Ken Pinch – Past President TCF Canada
In memory of his 8-year-old son, Christopher Pinch*

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

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

When		Contact Information
Every Tues, 1:00pm Central Time	Winnipeg, MB	mtanner@hsc.mb.ca
1st Tues, Monthly, 7:30pm Pacific Time	Vancouver, BC	northshore@tcfcanda.net
1st Thurs, Monthly, 7:00pm Eastern Time	Ottawa, ON	ottawa@tcfcanda.net
2nd Mon, Monthly, 7:00pm Eastern Time	Waterloo, ON	waterlooregion@tcfcanda.net
3rd Wed, Monthly, 6:30pm Central Time	Winnipeg, MB	mtanner@hsc.mb.ca
Last Wed, Monthly, 5:30pm Eastern Time	Burin Peninsula, NL	burinpeninsula@tcfcanda.net

“Grief is not a disorder, a disease, or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love.” – Earl Grollman

CONTACT US

The Compassionate Friends of Canada
c/o 31 Maplehill Way
Ottawa ON, Canada
K2C 3H1

E-mail: nationaloffice@tcfcanada.net

Website: www.tcfcanada.net

Toll-free line: 1-866-823-0141

Newsletter Suggestions

cschram@hotmail.ca

tflamondtcf@gmail.com

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

Andy Bond (Ottawa, ON) – President

Donna Rodin (Medicine Hat, AB) – Past President / Facebook Host

Karen Destun (Waterloo, ON) – Vice-President

Diana Cadigan (St. John's, NL) – Treasurer

Eileen Bond (Ottawa, ON) – Chapter Development

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Larry Cadman (Ottawa, ON) – Webmaster

Barb Noseworthy (Burin Peninsula, NL)

Connie Schram (Waterloo, ON)

Tina Flamond (Calgary, AB)



AUTUMN

As the greens of summer transform into autumn's gold, the world pauses, inviting reflections on the passage of time. This season reminds us of grief's journey—honouring losses while finding strength in life's ever-changing rhythms. The falling leaves symbolize life's cycles of endings and renewal, urging us to release what no longer serves us and cherish our memories. In Chinese medicine and mysticism, autumn is the season of grief, where facing sadness mirrors the resilience of trees against winter's harshness.

Autumn's shorter days and cooler temperatures often foster introspection, intensifying feelings of loss. Holidays like Thanksgiving and Halloween can evoke memories, making loved ones' absence more pronounced. However, this season also invites us to connect deeply with our grief and honour our emotions without judgment. It's important to acknowledge your feelings and give yourself the time you need.

Navigating grief in autumn can be transformative. Consider honouring your memories with meaningful rituals, seek solace in nature, lean on your support system, practice self-compassion, and consider new traditions if old ones are too painful. While autumn may seem like a season of endings, it also holds the promises of renewal.

Trust the process, be gentle with yourself, and remember that, just as the seasons change, you will find your way forward. Your willingness to honor your feelings is truly courageous. You are not alone in your journey. Sharing memories or stories with others can foster connection and mutual support. Autumn serves as a gentle reminder that healing is always possible.

