



More than 200,000 infants, children, teenagers, and young adults will die this year. Nearly 27,000 families will face a stillbirth and 900,000 an early pregnancy loss. A child's death at any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, a family can turn to The Compassionate Friends for the emotional support needed during the long grief journey ahead.

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 nearly 600 local chapters also operate. TCF operates as separate entities in nearly 30 countries around the world.

Mission

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Organization

- TCF has a 13-member national volunteer board of directors consisting of bereaved parents and siblings.
- In the 27 years following its incorporation, TCF has grown from 40 chapters to nearly 600, with locations in all 50 states plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. All chapter leaders are volunteers and are bereaved parents or siblings, as are the 37 regional coordinators who serve as liaisons between chapters and the national organization.
- TCF's National Office is located in Oak Brook, Illinois. The executive director is supported by five full-time staff members.

Role of Local Chapters

- Local chapters' regular meetings provide a caring environment in which bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings can work through their grief with the help of others who have "been there." Monthly, more than 15,000 attend chapter meetings.
- Outreach is provided to more than 200,000 bereaved families and professionals each month through chapter newsletters, websites, phone calls, letters, and personal visits.
- Educational information on parental and sibling grief and the work of TCF is provided to the community through publicity, speaking engagements, and the distribution of materials.

Services Provided by the National Organization

- ***We Need Not Walk Alone***, TCF's award-winning magazine, is published quarterly for bereaved families and professionals and addresses grief issues from a variety of sources and viewpoints. It also includes information for chapter leadership.
- TCF's award-winning website (www.compassionatefriends.org), where information and resources can be viewed, also provides scheduled chats and organizational updates. A monthly e-newsletter is sent to persons interested in TCF activities.
- Nearly 64,000 telephone calls, letters and e-mails were received in the National Office in 2004 from professionals and bereaved family members seeking help with grief following the death of a child. Each was answered individually.
- Assistance is provided to existing chapters, as well as those persons seeking to form a new chapter.
- Three Chapter Leadership Training Programs are conducted each year at locations throughout the country.
- The national organization directs national public relations and coordinates national fundraising.
- Among activities sponsored annually by the national organization are the National Conference, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, and the "Walk to Remember."
- The Compassionate Employer Recognition program recognizes companies practicing compassion to newly bereaved employees.
- Creation and publication of 29 bereavement brochures on most aspects of grief following the death of a child.

Funding

- Although local chapters pay annual fees to the national organization, all contributions from individual members are voluntary. There are no individual dues or fees of any kind.
- TCF's 2005 budget is \$674,450, with more than 75 percent allocated for services to chapters and the public. Administrative and fundraising costs comprise less than 25 percent of the organization's total operating budget.
- TCF income is derived from individual member donations, chapter fees and donations, sale of resource materials, conference proceeds, and the business and philanthropic communities. **All contributions are tax-deductible.**
- TCF Foundation, Inc. has been established to assist in the long-term economic stability of The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

For further information, contact The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

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