



The Compassionate Friends of Canada

When A Child Dies....

National Newsletter - May 2017

National Office

The Compassionate Friends of Canada
#4 - 69 Campbell Crescent SE
Medicine Hat, Alberta T1B 1J7
Toll Free: 1-866-823-0141
(403) 487-1802
E-mail: nationaloffice@tcfcanada.net
Website: www.tcfcanada.net

National Executive:

Donna Rodin (Medicine Hat, AB) - President
Susan Doyle Lawrence (Victoria, BC) -
Vice-President and International Liaison
Cathy Sosnowsky (Vancouver, BC) - Secretary
Kathy Brooks - (Victoria, BC) Treasurer
Eileen and Andy Bond (Ottawa, ON) -
Chapter Development Committee
Directors-at-Large
Barbara Kachur (Saskatoon, SK)
Gary Kachur (Saskatoon, SK)
Judy Dowd (Campbell River, BC)

Transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.

- Reverend Simon Stephens, Founder, TCF

We'll go with pleasure before business again this month, starting with the introduction of our newest Chapter of TCF Canada

The Compassionate Friends Perth, Ontario, Chapter

My name is Cindy Whyte and I lost my youngest child Michael at the age of 22 in August 2009. It was the most devastating event of my life. My world was changed forever and suddenly I belonged to a club no parent wants to belong to. My workplace offered a support program which unfortunately only lasted for six weeks then you were cut off. I then tried private counselling, which helped me but was very expensive so only went when I could afford to go which was off and on for five years. Over the past several years I have had many colleagues, neighbors and friends lose a child. The toll to our community was great. Last fall I saw a great need for support for parents like me so I searched the internet and came across The Compassionate Friends. They sounded like a group I would like to belong to so I started investigating forming a chapter. I e-mailed the National Office and they put me in touch with Eileen and Andy Bond from the Ottawa Chapter, which is about an hour from where I live. They were a wonderful support to our group and instrumental in helping us get our Chapter up and running. I needed two others to help facilitate our group so I contacted two Moms I knew who had also lost their sons—Colleen Rogers, who lost Ben at 18, in 2011, and Penny Ryan, who lost Dylan at 21, also in 2011. Together we shared ideas and some tears. Our bond as bereaved Mothers formed quickly and we all felt the need to do this in the name of helping others and in memory of our sons.

Free space was provided by my local Township of Tay Valley at the Community Hall. Our first meeting took place March 13, 2017, with nine members attending. It was a success and members were truly appreciative of somewhere to go to talk about their loss. Our meetings are scheduled on the second Monday of every month from 7-9 p.m. We currently have 14 members and some of the newly bereaved felt that a month was too long between meetings. We have therefore set up a coffee group with the newer members for two weeks after our regular meeting. We take turns at each other's homes to meet. After our third meeting, on May 8, you can sense the bonding, and members are finding it a little easier to share their



journey. Our local radio station, Lake 88, makes an announcement every month about our group with meeting dates and times. We have also put posters in local doctors' offices, hospitals and the Mental Health Center. Our Advisory Board consists of a local physician who specializes in PTSD, a grief counsellor and a reiki therapist; we hope they will act as speakers for future meetings.

Many thanks to The Compassionate Friends for giving us the opportunity to be a part of such a wonderful organization. Our hope for offering a safe and supportive environment for bereaved parents to come and talk about their children and their journey through grief has become a reality. We have many ideas for the future of this Chapter, and as we grow we can be proud that we are not only helping others but helping ourselves, in the name of our sons, Michael, Ben and Dylan. Always loved, and forever in our hearts.

National Gathering, August 25-27

You spoke and we listened. People told us that they would like to have a hands-on workshop at the August Gathering, so Director Cathy Sosnowsky spoke with Jan Bryant, her co-leader of the North Shore (Vancouver, BC) Chapter, and here is the result:

Memory Quilt Squares

Make a 12" x 12" square in memory of your child. This can be used as part of a pillow or larger quilt or framed by itself. Using transfer paper we will copy a picture of your child onto white fabric. Bring along fabric or clothing of your child to fuse onto this block. Bring buttons, badges or other items that can be sewn or fused on. Bring your stories and share why the pictures and other items you chose reflect the essence of your child.



Jan Bryant

Jan is a certified Counsellor and Educator and a bereaved parent who has been an active leader in TCF for over 20 years. Jan is also a quilter who has taught a workshop on making memory quilts at a quilt store and led workshops with parents in TCF North Shore to help them make quilt squares in memory of their children. She put the TCF North Shore memory quilt together.



To Share or Not to Share...

Once your Chapter has held a few Sharing Circles, there is often a natural desire to maintain open communication among the group members. However, Chapter Leaders should recognize that there are times when openness should be tempered with caution. One such situation is the inadvertent sharing of personal e-mail addresses and other contact details through Chapter mail-outs.

When sending out multi-address e-mails, we strongly recommend that you use the BCC: (Blind Carbon Copy) function and not the CC: (Carbon Copy) or direct listing in the TO: line. That is, send the message to yourself as the TO: addressee with all others hidden on the BCC line. If there is a need for a reply, ask the recipient(s) to reply to your address.

There are two main reasons for and benefits in doing this. The first is that you are protecting the privacy of your group members by not showing their e-mail addresses. Unless they have given their explicit consent to share, protection of privacy is a requirement of various provincial and federal legislation and it is also a TCF principle. Of course, parents are completely free to share or exchange their contact details with each other should they wish. The point is that it is their decision to do so.

The second benefit is that it prevents others from hi-jacking your mailing list for other, non-TCF purposes. It also ensures that you as Chapter Leader are the primary channel for parent communications and that they will only receive TCF-appropriate messages. We are aware of situations where over-enthusiastic parents have tried to use the list to promote other events and fund-raisers or even to take over the Sharing Circle agenda.

Part of our role as Chapter Development is to offer advice and support, and to share the experiences of other Chapters. We hope that you find the above points helpful when sending out group messages.

Eileen and Andy Bond
TCF Ottawa

Election of Directors, TCF Canada:

There being no further nominations from the member chapters, the following slate of Directors will be declared elected by acclamation at the Annual Business Meeting on June 10, 2017: Donna Rodin, Susan Doyle Lawrence, Judy Dowd, Eileen Bond, Andy Bond, Barbara Kachur, Gary Kachur, Cathy Sosnowsky and Kathy Brooks.



**Please join us in Medicine Hat, AB
for our National Gathering
August 25 - 27, 2017
Medicine Hat Lodge - 1051 Ross Glen Dr SE**

**Registration now open
www.tcfcanda.net**