



The Compassionate Friends of Canada

When A Child Dies....

National Newsletter – Spring 2022

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Transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.

Reverend Simon Stephens, Founder, TCF.

Welcome to the Spring edition of our now quarterly 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 NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net. And if you would like to assist with compiling and editing the newsletter, we would also love to hear from you!

Are We There Yet?

The groundhogs were ambivalent, but the signs are there. As the calendar marches on, the days gradually lengthen, and milder days appear more frequently. Omicron seems to be in retreat, and the light of spring awaits at the end of the long tunnel of winter.

But the last time we felt such optimism, a new Covid variant surged, and shutdowns, capacity limits, vaccines, and masking restricted our activities. Our spirits sank as the end of the tunnel receded.

As bereaved parents, we experience many highs and lows on our grief journey. Two steps forward, one step back has become the new normal. Despite the setbacks, we hold on to the hope that we are still moving forward, although at a much slower pace than we would like.

This resilience will serve us well as we face the remaining challenges of the pandemic and eventually return to a more social lifestyle, albeit different in many ways from that we previously knew.

As we begin the third year of the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Board would like to acknowledge and thank our Chapter Leaders from coast to coast for their dedication to supporting grieving parents under these unique and challenging circumstances. We can only hope that this “once-in-a-century” phenomenon will live up to its name better than the “100-year” floods and fires that now happen almost annually.

Are we there yet? Not quite, but this time the way ahead seems brighter!

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 TCF Portage La Prairie (MB), TCF Montreal (QC), TCF Perth (ON), and from three individuals.

World-wide Candle Lighting: The 25th anniversary of this international event took place on Sunday, December 12th, 2021, under COVID restrictions. Marsha Bergen of TCF Oceanside (BC) hosted an outdoor event.



Following poetry readings, candles were lit and placed by each child's picture while quiet music played in the background. Mulled wine and clove tea served from a camp stove warmed everyone's spirits before leaving.



Debbie Janisch and Alice Collier of TCF Cranbrook (BC) delivered 22 handcrafted Christmas ornaments and TCF candles to their members. The group then participated in Alan Pederson's presentation via Zoom.

If you would like to share details of your chapter events, or to suggest ideas to others, we invite you to post a brief note on the TCF Canada Leadership Facebook page.

Check-in Calls: Over the past few weeks, Board members have been reaching out by phone and e-mail for a personal check-in with Chapter Leaders. Calls so far have provided interesting updates and useful feedback. If you have not yet provided your comments, please standby for a quick check-in call.

Annual Reports: Our main source of chapter information is the Chapter Annual Report which is due in January. Please take a few minutes to complete and submit the form as we greatly appreciate receiving them in a timely manner. A copy of the form is attached; it is also downloadable from the Chapter Leader's area of the website.

Grief Information Leaflets: Since the "refreshed" leaflets were made available on the national website, over 330 copies were downloaded in January alone. This is very encouraging as it confirms our belief that there is a hidden need for such resources, but also saddening to think of the number of grieving parents looking for support.

Resources for Chapter Leaders: The RESOURCES tab on the national website also includes an area for Chapter Leaders with various forms and reference articles, and a link to the Chapter Leaders Facebook group. Please contact the National Office for the password to access this area.

Facebook Groups: Most TCF members are aware of our *Parents* closed Facebook group, which currently has over 1,000 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* on our website.

Sibling Peer Support: In Canada, support groups for bereaved siblings are presently provided through established chapters in addition to the main parent circles. TCF Canada Board member Adam Farrell is investigating how we could provide stand-alone sibling support in addition to the *Siblings* closed Facebook group and monthly virtual sharing circle. If you have any suggestions or would like to participate in the on-line activities, please contact Adam through the National Office.

Facilitator Training: Andy and Eileen Bond conducted the most recent training session on Saturday, February 19th, via Zoom. Eight experienced and fledgling facilitators attended, including two who are planning to start new chapters. If you have any questions about facilitating a sharing circle or would like to attend the next session which will likely take place around mid-May, please contact NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net.

Mark Your Calendar: 2022 Annual General Meeting (via Zoom) – Saturday, June 4th - 12 noon EST. If you would like to support our mission as a member of the Board, please contact the National Office.