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For Immediate Release

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Only 16 Percent of Bereaved Parents Divorce, New Survey Reveals

Oak Brook, IL, October 12, 2006—Flying in the face of the conventional belief that couples who experience the death of a child are virtually destined to divorce, a survey released today finds that divorces among bereaved parents are far lower than that of the general public, and dramatically lower than is often portrayed by professionals, the media, and even those within the bereavement community.

The survey shows a divorce rate of only 16 percent among bereaved parents, far below the 50 percent divorce rate usually cited for couples in general within the United States. Conducted earlier this year under direction of The Compassionate Friends, the nation's largest self-help bereavement organization for families that have experienced the death of a child, the survey confirmed the general findings of a 1999 study, also for The Compassionate Friends, that showed an even lower 12 percent divorce rate among bereaved parents.

“This survey proves once and for all that the 70, 80, even 90 percent divorce rate so often quoted in the media, by professionals, and even the bereavement community is completely wrong,” says Patricia Loder, executive director of The Compassionate Friends.

“While the death of one's child definitely places stress on a marriage, we believe the divorce rate is so low because of the commitment parents have to survive their tragedy as a shared experience,” says Mrs. Loder, who herself received a warning about the high divorce rate from a hospital nurse nearly 16 years ago, following a car crash. “First I was told my children had died. Then I was told my marriage would die. There are no words that can describe how that warning compounded the grief I already felt.

“It is now imperative that those of us within the bereavement community dispute this fictionalized 70 to 90 percent divorce rate whenever it surfaces,” she says. “This myth must be laid to rest.”

The survey, taken in April-May of 2006, has a margin of error of +/-4.3%. A detailed summary of the study is available at www.compassionatefriends.org, by clicking on “When a Child Dies—2006 Survey Summary.” The survey was given to 400 bereaved parents, 200 men and 200 women, from across the United States in all age brackets.

Besides the divorce rate, the survey also examined how bereaved parents rated the support provided them by their employer following the death of the employee's child. The survey also delved into awareness and usage by bereaved parents of various organizations and types of support available following the death of their child.

For more information about the survey or the location of chapters, call toll-free 877-969-0010 or visit the national website at www.compassionatefriends.org.

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