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For Immediate Release

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United by the Death of a Child, Families from Dozens of Countries Await Worldwide Candle Lighting

Oak Brook, IL—Love does not end with death. Families that have had a child die understand that. And with that understanding, hundreds of thousands of people, united by grief, are awaiting The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting Sunday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m. local time.

Held annually the second Sunday in December, the Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe who light candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are then lit in the next, creating a virtual 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.

“The Worldwide Candle Lighting allows grieving families to know that their children have not been and never will be forgotten, whether that child died 60 years ago or yesterday,” said Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends, Patricia Loder. “This event surpasses all artificial, religious, and cultural boundaries, allowing us to mourn as one when death robs the world of its most valuable resource.

“Members of our nearly 600 U.S. chapters, and other bereavement groups, will be observing this day through hundreds of formal candle lightings. In addition, there will be thousands of smaller candle lightings in homes as family and friends gather in quiet remembrance. We invite everyone to join in this moving tribute to remember all children who have left us too soon.”

In its sixth year, The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting has grown from a small Internet observance, to one that nearly blankets the globe. On the Internet, the national Web site will host extended chat room hours and a message board for families to share their thoughts on that day. The Compassionate Friends Web site last year posted messages from bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents from more than a dozen countries, with some messages in foreign languages.

Started in 1968 in England, The Compassionate Friends has its largest national organization in the United States, continuously adding chapters since the first was established in Florida in 1972. Earlier this year The Compassionate Friends established a chapter in Russia, increasing the estimated countries with a Compassionate Friends presence to 29 worldwide.

Information about the national organization and locations of its chapters nationwide is available by calling toll free 877-969-0010 or by visiting the TCF Web site at www.compassionatefriends.org.

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