



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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For Immediate Release

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Hundreds of Services Planned

Worldwide Candle Lighting Unites Bereaved Families

Oak Brook IL—(November 25, 2008) When a child has died, the holidays are an extremely difficult time for the family. While others are enjoying celebrations and holiday good cheer, bereaved families find themselves simply trying to figure out how they can survive what used to be, for many, such a special time of the year.

Bereaved families now have one special day when they can join together to remember all children around the world who have died, regardless of age or cause of death. The second Sunday in December is The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. More than 500 formal services planned for December 14 are expected to be listed on The Compassionate Friends national website with hundreds more planned for that day. Dozens of countries will be hosting services around the globe.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is sponsored by The Compassionate Friends, the world's largest self-help bereavement organization. It is officially held the second Sunday in December at 7 p.m. local time for one hour creating a 24-hour wave of light around the earth, although observances are held throughout the day.

"The Worldwide Candle Lighting has reached a stage in its life where it's growing at an extraordinary rate as more and more people become aware of the day," says Patricia Loder, executive director of The Compassionate Friends, which has more than 600 chapters blanketing the country, providing hope for bereaved families that have lost a child. The observance is now believed to be the world's largest mass candle lighting which including tens of thousands, unable to attend a service, who are lighting candles at 7 p.m. wherever they may be with friends and family.

Persons interested in participating in the Worldwide Candle Lighting, but who may not be able to attend an organized event have two additional alternatives this year. They can join in the Online Support Community (chats) on The Compassionate Friends national website. They can also join in a virtual candle lighting being held at 7 p.m. PST in Second Life, an online virtual community with more than 6 million members.

Chapters of many other national bereavement organizations are expected to be participating in this year's event including Twinless Twins, MADD, MISS, SHARE, Parents of Murdered Children, and BPUSA. U.S. services are also being sponsored by smaller bereavement groups, churches, hospices, hospitals, and funeral homes, as well as many individuals.

In addition to planned activities, bereaved family members, relatives and friends are also invited to post a memorial message December 14 in a Remembrance Book on TCF's national website. Last year several thousand messages were received in 24 hours from persons throughout the United States, as well as 35 countries abroad.

For more information including the location of services both in the U.S. and around the world, visit www.compassionatefriends.org, or call 877-969-0010.

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