



National Office  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

### **For Immediate Release**

FROM: Wayne Loder  
Public Awareness Coordinator  
The Compassionate Friends  
(Toll free) 866-964-4000  
E-mail: wayneloder@aol.com

## ***Ten Thousand Names to be Carried as Grieving Families Prepare for 'Walk to Remember' Children***

Oak Brook, IL (May 22, 2007)—Memorial Day is an appropriate time to remember and honor the lives of all children who have died, says Patricia Loder, Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends. “Every day, millions of people in the United States carry the pain of future dreams lost as we grieve the death of a child within our families. Our upcoming Walk to Remember provides us the opportunity to honor the memories of all of these children.”

The Compassionate Friends (TCF), a nonprofit self-help bereavement support organization with nearly 600 chapters in the United States, expects the names of 10,000 children to be carried during its annual Walk to Remember, to be held in Oklahoma City on July 22, the final day of the 30th annual Compassionate Friends National Conference.

“This Walk is very symbolic because, while our children cannot be physically with us, we will always carry them in our hearts,” says Mrs. Loder, who is a twice bereaved parent and also a bereaved sibling.

The Walk to Remember is expected to draw up to 1400 persons including most present for the national conference, as well as many from Oklahoma City and surrounding areas who are registering just to participate in the two-mile event. Last year the names of more than 9,000 children were carried by volunteers and participants during the Walk. This year’s figure is expected to top 10,000. Those who wish to have a child’s name carried during the Walk may do so by visiting The Compassionate Friends Walk to Remember website at [www.tcfwalktoremember.org](http://www.tcfwalktoremember.org) and clicking on the appropriate link. The Walk is also a fundraiser for the national organization and many local chapters around the country.

“This is our eighth Walk to Remember and we are constantly amazed at how many people participate in some way,” observes Mrs. Loder. “Not only do people attend the Walk in our national conference host city, but concurrent walks are held by many chapters around the country. This is in addition to the thousands of names submitted to the National Office to be carried.” Others can participate by creating a simple no-charge website in remembrance of a child through the 'Friends Asking Friends' fundraising program at the Walk to Remember website.

Every year 1,000 to 1,500 persons attend The Compassionate Friends National Conference, which features more than 100 workshops for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. Keynote speakers this year include: Elizabeth Edwards, bereaved parent and wife of presidential candidate John Edwards; Bill Hancock whose son died in the 2001 crash of a plane carrying members and staff of the Oklahoma State basketball team; Simon Stephens, Founder of The Compassionate Friends; and Bud Welch whose daughter died in the 1995 terrorist bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City.

A pre-conference Professional Outreach Day will be held Thursday, July 19 for all professionals who care for individuals at the scene, at the hospital, during the funeral process, and provide support for bereaved families after the death of a child. CEUs will be available.

Anyone wishing more information about the conference or to locate a local TCF chapter may log onto The Compassionate Friends national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) or call the National Office toll-free at 877-969-0010.

The Compassionate Friends/USA has chapters in every state, plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. Worldwide, TCF has a national presence in an estimated 29 countries.

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