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The Compassionate Friends

Conference Nears for Bereaved Parents, Families

The road traveled following the death of a child is often lonely for parents and families. The Compassionate Friends 25th National Conference July 5-7th in Salt Lake City is designed to make that road just a little easier.

Bereaved families from every state, and many other countries, are expected to make the trek to learn coping skills and to spend the weekend with others who have also experienced the tragic death of a child.

“This is truly a homecoming for those who have suffered the ultimate loss,” says Patricia Loder, Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends and a bereaved parent and sibling. “We expect as many as 1500 people who will come together to celebrate and remember the life of a child who died too soon.”

The Compassionate Friends is the world’s largest self-help bereavement support organization, with nearly 600 chapters in the United States. It has a national presence in 26 countries around the world.

The conference, being held at The Grand America Hotel, will feature 84 workshops aimed at bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and other family members. In addition, there will be special activities including the third “Walk to Remember,” hospitality and reflection rooms, sharing sessions, memory boards, plus an ice cream social for the siblings.

Featured speakers include: Harriet Schiff, author of “The Bereaved Parent”; Richard Paul Evans, author of “The Christmas Box”; and Melody Beattie, author of “Lessons of Love.”

“There is something about being at a conference with other bereaved parents that gives you a feeling of comfort, that you are not alone in your grief,” says conference co-chairperson Teresa Perry. “It gives you hope and envelopes you in a blanket of understanding, compassion, and the strength to go on.”

In conjunction with the conference, a “Professional’s Day” will be held Wednesday, July 3rd. It will be aimed at psychiatrists, psychologists, medical doctors, nurses, social workers, firemen, paramedics, clergy and all who work with bereaved families.

For more information on the conference and registration, visit the TCF National Web site at www.compassionatefriends.org or call 801-298-5087.

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