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Families Remember Children Who Died; Plan for Summer Conference in Boston

As many as 1500 parents, siblings, grandparents, and relatives, coping with the death of a child, are making plans now to remember them and learn about the many faces of grief by attending the 28th national conference of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) July 1-3 in Boston.

“The loss of a child is a devastating experience which happens to thousands of families every year,” says TCF Executive Director and Conference Chair Patricia Loder, a twice bereaved parent. “Our upcoming conference is designed to provide a way for bereaved family members to connect with others who are walking a similar path. This will be a nurturing atmosphere of acceptance, validation, and understanding.”

The Compassionate Friends is the world’s largest self-help bereavement support organization, with nearly 600 chapters in the United States including all 50 states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico. TCF also has a national presence in an estimated 29 countries around the world.

Keynote speakers at the conference include Grace Corrigan, mother of “Teacher in Space” Christa McAuliffe who died in the 1986 *Challenger* explosion, and Darcie Sims, internationally known grief educator and author.

As well as a number of other activities, including a complete sibling program, there will be more than 100 bereavement workshops covering an extensive variety of topics related to the death of a child and the journey that follows.

An annual highlight of the conference will be the sixth “Walk to Remember,” Sunday, July 3 when more than a thousand attending the conference, and from the surrounding area, will walk up to two miles carrying the names of thousands of children who have died, but are not forgotten. Anyone who wishes to have a child remembered during the Walk may submit the child’s name online at www.tcfwalktoremember.org and volunteers will carry those names submitted on special memorial walk pages.

In conjunction with the conference, a Professionals Day seminar will be held Thursday, June 30 for nurses, physicians, social workers, counselors, emergency personnel, funeral directors, law enforcement officers, clergy, educators, and all who care for individuals or are interested in providing support for bereaved families after the death of a child. Continuing Education Units will be available for many professions. The public is invited to register.

For more information, or to register for the conference, the Walk to Remember, or Professionals Day, visit The Compassionate Friends national website at www.compassionatefriends.org or call the National Office toll-free at 877-969-0010.

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