



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

For Immediate Release

May 25, 2005

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

‘Walk to Remember’ to Unite Families Living with Loss of a Child

Oak Brook, IL—Memorial Day is an appropriate time to remember those children who are mourned, but never forgotten by their families, says Patricia Loder, Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends. “Whether the child who died was an adult, teen, youngster, or died at or before birth, millions of families in the United States carry the pain that comes with the death of future dreams.”

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) self-help bereavement support organization, with nearly 600 chapters in the United States, plans to remember these children during its annual ‘Walk to Remember,’ this year being held in Boston, Sunday, July 3, the final day of the 28th annual Compassionate Friends National Conference July 1-3.

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

The “Walk to Remember” is expected to draw up to 1400 persons including those present for the conference, as well as many from Boston and surrounding areas who are coming just to participate in the two-mile event.

“This is our sixth ‘Walk to Remember’ and we are constantly amazed at how many people participate in some way,” observes Mrs. Loder. “Even those who are not able to come to Boston can provide us the names of their children and volunteers will carry them during the Walk.”

Last year the names of an estimated 8,000 children who had died were carried 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 and clicking on the top link.

Every year 1,000 to 1,500 persons attend The Compassionate Friends national conference, which this year features more than 100 workshops for parents and siblings. Among keynote speakers will be Grace Corrigan, mother of Christa McAuliffe, “Teacher in Space” who died in the 1986 space shuttle *Challenger* disaster. Darcie Sims, popular grief author, speaker, and educator will also keynote.

A pre-conference Professionals Day will be held Thursday, June 30 for nurses, physicians, social workers, counselors, emergency personnel, funeral directors, police officers, clergy, and 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 interested in learning more about the conference, or locating a local TCF chapter, may log onto The Compassionate Friends national website at 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 DC, Puerto Rico, and the Cayman Islands. Worldwide, TCF has a national presence in an estimated 29 countries.

###