



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

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

## **For Immediate Release**

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FROM: Wayne Loder  
Public Awareness Coordinator  
The Compassionate Friends  
(Toll-free) 877-969-0010  
E-mail: wayne@compassionatefriends.org

### **Eight Tips to Help Families Survive the Holidays After a Child Has Died**

Oak Brook, IL—"Time heals all wounds" is a tired and worn cliché that isn't always true, according to The Compassionate Friends, a national self-help bereavement organization. When the wound is a child who has died, the best support to help a bereaved family survive the holidays may simply be that of friends and relatives who care.

"So often friends and relatives stay away from grieving families, uncertain how they can help at this time of the year," says Patricia Loder, Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends, herself a twice bereaved parent, and a bereaved sibling. Here are eight ways those close to a family can provide support, she says:

- Recognize the holidays have changed for them—don't pretend they haven't.
- Offer to help with holiday shopping and gift wrapping.
- Invite the family for dinner instead of expecting them to host.
- Respect the family's privacy—don't press for a commitment just to get them involved and out of the house.
- Coordinate activities with surviving siblings (don't let them be forgotten during this important time of the year).
- Be open to the idea that the family may want to end old traditions that have suddenly become painful for them. Suggest and be open to new traditions that incorporate the child who died.
- Reminisce—the number one fear of bereaved parents is that their child will be forgotten. Give them the opportunity to talk about their child and join them in sharing remembrances of better times.
- Above all, don't avoid grieving parents, siblings, and grandparents—it's not contagious.

The Compassionate Friends is sponsoring the 15<sup>th</sup> Worldwide Candle Lighting December 11 and there will be hundreds of services across the United States and abroad where bereaved families can join together to remember and memorialize those children who have died too soon. For more information on services in your area, visit

[http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News\\_Events/Worldwide\\_Candle\\_Lighting.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Worldwide_Candle_Lighting.aspx). As the nation's largest self-help bereavement organization, The Compassionate Friends has more than 630 chapters including locations in every state plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. To learn more about The Compassionate Friends and how to help families after a child has died, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) or call 877-969-00100. The Compassionate Friends is also on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TCFUSA](http://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA).

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