



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

## The Compassionate Friends Timeline: 1968—2011

1968	Reverend Simon Stephens became assistant chaplain at Warwickshire Hospital in Coventry, England.
May 1968	Kenneth Lawley, 11, was struck by a car while riding his bike and was taken to Warwickshire Hospital. While offering comfort to Kenneth's parents, Joe and Iris Lawley, Reverend Stephens mentioned another boy in the same hospital, Billy Henderson, who was dying of an illness.
May 23, 1968	Kenneth Lawley died followed by Billy Henderson a few days later.
May 1968	The Lawleys sent flowers to the Hendersons following Billy's death. At the encouragement of Reverend Stephens, the families met and became friends, as well as a source of support for one another. Reverend Stephens suggested they include other bereaved parents, and the Rattigan family was invited to join.
January 28, 1969	The first meeting of "The Society of Compassionate Friends" was held in Warwickshire Hospital with Reverend Stephens, Betty Rattigan, Joe and Iris Lawley, and Bill and Joan Henderson in attendance.
October 1970	Gabrielle Shamres and her mother, Paula, were involved in an auto/train accident in Florida and 10-year-old "Gabi" was killed.
May 1971	Paula and Arnold Shamres read an article in <i>TIME</i> magazine about the British Society of Compassionate Friends and contacted Reverend Stephens.
November 1971	Reverend Stephens visited with Paula and Arnold in Florida to discuss developing Compassionate Friends groups in the United States. Simon appeared on the <i>Today Show</i> resulting in 18,000 letters forwarded to the Shamres.
Spring 1972	Reverend Stephens' book, <i>Death Comes Home</i> , was published.
Fall 1972	The first "branch" of The Compassionate Friends in the U.S. was developed and met in south Florida under the direction of the Paula and Arnold Shamres.
1972-1977	Approximately 40 branches developed throughout the U.S., primarily in Florida and the Midwest.  Reverend Don Balster and his wife, Marian, read <i>Death Comes Home</i> after their son Mark died in 1973. They contacted Reverend Stephens and asked for help with starting a branch in Hinsdale, Illinois.
July 1977	The <i>Phil Donahue</i> program featured Harriet Schiff, author of <i>The Bereaved Parent</i> . Chicago area TCF members were invited to be in the audience. There was overwhelming response to two shows filmed. A few months later, the first national newsletter was printed. Within a year, 126 new branches, now called chapters, were formed.
April 1978	TCF was incorporated in Illinois. The first national conference was held in Hinsdale, Illinois. Bylaws were adopted, a national board of directors was formed, and the first officers were elected.

June 1978	The TCF national office was established in Oak Brook, Illinois, and staffed by volunteers.
July 1978	The <i>Phil Donahue</i> programs with Harriet Schiff were rerun, generating hundreds of calls to the new national office. Once again, interest in developing chapters surged throughout the country.
1980	The first executive director, volunteer Art Peterson, wrote "The Seven Principles of The Compassionate Friends."
1982	Five brochures were printed and a chapter leaders' manual developed.
1984 - 1996	Due to the rapid growth of TCF, the board decided that a full-time paid executive director was needed. Therese Goodrich was hired in January 1984, and served until her retirement in July 1992. Susan Salisbury-Richards was hired in 1992 and remained in the ED position until her resignation in 1995. Diana Cunningham served as interim director from December 1995 to July 1996, when she was named by the board as executive director. The first issue of the <i>Sibling Newsletter</i> was published in the summer of 1990.
1995	First TCF national website created and launched by Glen Heavilin.
July 1996	Karen Snapp was elected as board president—first sibling to hold that office.
December 1996	TCF was awarded a grant of \$100,000 (the largest ever for TCF) from the Project on Death in America to develop a Chapter Leadership Training Program (CLTP).
March 1997	TCF national website revamped and moved to current <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> address.
July 1997	The second TCF International Gathering was held in Philadelphia (the first International Gathering was held in England in 1994).
November 1997	A CLTP was presented in Merrillville, Indiana—the first in a series of 14 programs.
December 14, 1997	The first TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting was held, marking start of annual event.
March 1998	The Strategic Plan was revised and adopted, outlining goals for TCF through 2000.
June 1998	The sibling newsletter, <i>S.T.A.G.E.S.</i> , and the national newsletter were combined into a national magazine, <i>We Need Not Walk Alone</i> by Wayne and Pat Loder.
September 1998	Resolution 193 was formally adopted by the United States Senate, designating Sunday, December 13, 1998, as National Children's Memorial Day in conjunction with the Worldwide Candle Lighting.
December 11, 1998	President Clinton formally signed the National Children's Memorial Day proclamation in recognition of the 1998 Worldwide Candle Lighting.
December 13, 1998	Worldwide Candle Lighting was joined by National Children's Memorial Day.
June 25, 1999	Results of <i>When a Child Dies</i> , national bereavement survey for TCF, were announced, showing magnitude of job facing the organization.
June 11, 2000	TCF Foundation was established.
July 2, 2000	The first TCF memorial "Walk to Remember" was held.
September 2000	Diana Cunningham resigned as executive director. Patricia Loder was named interim executive director.

November 2000	The Strategic Plan was revised and adopted outlining goals for TCF which have since been reviewed, updated, and revised on a regular basis.
March 2001	Patricia Loder was named executive director.
May 18, 2001	CLTPs were reinstated on a continuing basis by the Board.
January 2002	The "Legacy of Love" TCF Foundation campaign was launched.
July 2003	TCF Foundation reached \$1 million goal in contributions.
December 8, 2004	First monthly national TCF e-newsletter was distributed.
2006	First TCF Walk to Remember Friends Asking Friends® fundraising program launched.
October 12, 2006	Results of second "When a Child Dies" national survey were announced.
January 1, 2007	Second TCF Foundation "Legacy of Love" campaign was launched.
July 22, 2007	Foundation "Legacy of Love" campaign was successfully completed pushing the endowment fund to over \$2 million.
March 2008	TCF approved by Google to receive an Ad Grant worth up to \$120,000 per year providing in-kind ads about TCF in response to various search terms having to do with the death of a child.
July 2008	Board of Directors adopts TCF Logo Tagline: "Supporting Family After a Child Dies"
August 2008	TCF national website redesign unveiled.
December 2008	Redesigned TCF e-newsletter surpassed 10,000 subscribers.
January 28, 2009	TCF celebrated 40 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of founding of organization in England.
June 2009	Better Business Bureau recognized TCF as Accredited Charity.
June 2009	TCF National established Facebook Page; first step into social media.
July 2009	Spanish language section added to national website.
December 11, 2009	Compassionate Friends wins \$25,000 award from Chase Community Giving after finishing in top 100 voting from among 500,000 eligible non-profits.
December, 2010	TCF teamed up with Rabbit Hole movie to create custom Facebook application for uploading original inspirational messages, poems, artwork, and videos.
December 12, 2010	Fourteenth TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting held with more than 530 services in 16 countries submitted to national website. Hundreds more believed held.
January, 2011	TCF established Spanish language Facebook Page.
February 20, 2011	TCF/USA Facebook Page surpassed 20,000 Facebook Page Fans.

### TCF National Conferences and International Gatherings

1978	Hinsdale, IL	1997	Philadelphia, PA
1979	Indianapolis, IN	1997	Philadelphia, PA
1980	Kansas City, MO	1997	(2nd International Gathering)
1981	Baltimore, MD	1998	Nashville, TN
1982	Portland, OR	1999	Portland, OR
1983	Oak Brook, IL	2000	Chicago, IL
1984	Providence, RI	2001	Arlington, VA
1985	Buffalo, NY	2002	Salt Lake City, UT
1986	Omaha, NE	2002	Sydney, Australia (3rd International Gathering)
1987	Tulsa, OK		
1988	Columbus, OH	2003	Atlanta, GA
1989	Tampa, FL	2004	Hollywood, CA
1990	Philadelphia, PA	2005	Boston, MA
1991	New Orleans, LA	2005	Vancouver, BC, Canada (4th International Gathering)
1992	Charlotte, NC		
1993	Chicago, IL	2006	Dearborn, MI
1994	Seattle, WA	2007	Oklahoma City, OK
1994	Birmingham, England (1st International Gathering)	2008	Nashville, TN
1995	Houston, TX	2009	Portland, OR
1996	Long Beach, CA	2010	Arlington, VA

**2011 Minneapolis-St. Paul MN**

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**Facebook: The Compassionate Friends/USA; Los Amigos Compasivos/USA**