



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

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## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Families Mourning Children Plan for Compassionate Friends Summer National Conference and Walk to Remember**

Oak Brook, IL—More than 1200 family members grieving the death of a child are expected in Minneapolis, Minnesota July 15-17, 2011 for The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 34th National Conference. The event culminates Sunday morning with TCF's 12th Walk to Remember®, where names of thousands of children from across the country will be carried by family members and volunteers.

“The death of a child is probably the most traumatic experience most families will ever face,” says Patricia Loder, executive director of The Compassionate Friends who herself is a twice bereaved parent, as well as a bereaved sibling. “This conference will be a safe-haven for those going through the grieving process and they will be able to spend time with others who are walking the same path.”

Keynote speakers for the conference, the largest of its kind in the United States, are all bereaved parents: David Morrell, author of the poignant *Fireflies* but perhaps best known as the creator of Rambo (adapted to the big screen with Sylvester Stallone); Carol Kearns well-known psychologist who studied under Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and has written the book *Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare*; Mary Rondeau Westra who recently published her memoir *After the Murder of My Son*; and Mitch Carmody, author of *Letters to My Son* and a staff writer for *Living With Loss* magazine.

With the theme “Shining Stars – Guiding Hope,” the conference will feature more than 100 workshops for parents, siblings, grandparents, and those who care about them. There will be a complete sibling program, numerous sharing sessions, a memorial candle lighting, a complete book store, Reflection Room, Butterfly Boutique, and much more including the Sunday morning Walk to Remember where up to 1400 are expected to walk the two miles in remembrance of children who have died.

Registration for the event can be made online, with early registration discounts ending June 10. The conference will be held at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel Minneapolis South and special conference rates are currently available.

The Compassionate Friends is the nation's largest self-help bereavement organization with more than 625 chapters including locations in every state plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. To learn more about The Compassionate Friends, the national conference, and the Walk to Remember, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) or call 877-969-00100. The Compassionate Friends is also on Facebook at The Compassionate Friends/USA.

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