



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS GREATER OMAHA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

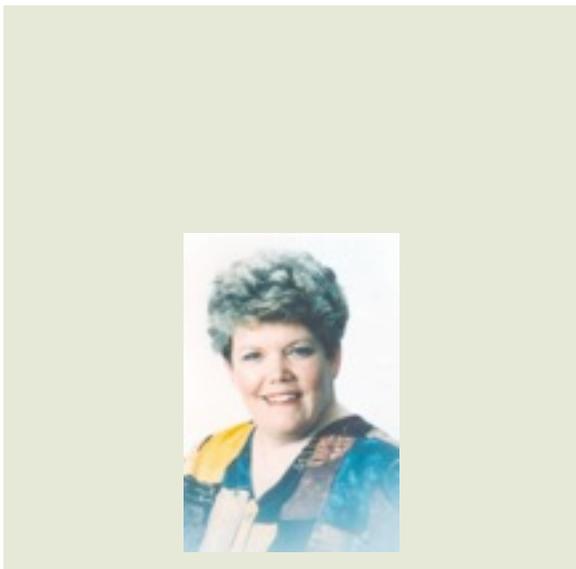
The Greater Omaha Chapter to host Nebraska Regional Conference, April 1-2, 2011

The Compassionate Friends was established based upon seven principles. The principles are reviewed and minor wording changes have been made from time to time, but they continue to stand the test of time.

1. TCF offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents.
2. TCF believes that bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents can help each other toward a positive resolution of grief.
3. TCF reaches out across society's barriers to all bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents.
4. TCF understands that every member has individual needs and rights.
5. TCF reaches out to the bereaved primarily through our community of local chapters.
6. TCF chapters belong to their members.
7. TCF chapters are coordinated nationally to extend help to each other, and to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents everywhere.

Darcie Sims

Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS is a bereaved parent and child, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She is the author of *Why Are the Casseroles Always Tuna?*, *Footsteps Through the Valley*, *Touchstones* and *If I Could Just See Hope*. She co-authored *A Place For Me: A Healing Journey for Grieving Kids*, *Footsteps Through Grief*, *The Other Side of Grief* and *Finding Your Way*.



Through Grief with her daughter, Alicia Sims Franklin. She also wrote and produced the videos *Handling the Holidays* and *What Color is Dead: Death From A Child's View* as

well as authored numerous chapters in professional books and textbooks. Darcie is featured in the award-winning video series "Good Grief" produced by Iowa Public Television and has been featured in several other videos as well.

She is an internationally recognized speaker and was Coping Editor for *Bereavement* magazine for 15 years. She is now an editor for *Grief Digest*. She served on the national board of directors for **The Compassionate Friends**, the national board of directors for the **Association of Death Education and Counseling** and the board of trustees for the **National Catholic Ministry to the Bereaved**. Darcie received **The Compassionate Friends Professional Award** in 1999. She co-chaired the 1991, 1996 and 2005 **World Gathering on Bereavement**, and keynoted at all 4 **World Gatherings**.

Darcie is president and co-founder of **GRIEF, Inc.** a grief consulting business and the Director of the **American Grief Academy** in Seattle, Washington. She is a Diplomate in the **American Psychotherapy Association**, a Certified Diplomate in Clinical Hypnotherapy and is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *The World Who's Who of Women* and *The International Who's Who of Professional and Business Women*.

Visit her website at www.GriefInc.com.



John Stanley

John Stanley has been the Pastor of the John C. Robinson Memorial Presbyterian Church since February, 2002. Concurrent with being Pastor of Robinson Presbyterian, he is Chaplain of McLean Funeral Directors, and Minister—Visitation of First Presbyterian Church (Gastonia).

Following the death of their 16 year-old daughter, John and Rose Stanley co-founded the Gastonia Chapter of the Compassionate Friends, a support group for families who have suffered the death of a child. John served a four year term on the National Board of Directors of TCF, and he and Rose have been North and South Carolina Chapter Regional Coordinators. He has presented workshops on parental bereavement at ten national conferences, and in 2007 was the key note speaker for a conference for parents with no surviving children in Scottsdale, Arizona. He regularly presents programs for continuing education credits for members of the North Carolina Funeral Directors Association. He is a member of the North Carolina Chaplains Association.

Active and involved in community life, John was Chairman of the Board of Directors, Gaston Chamber of Commerce, and he served as Interim President/CEO, which put him in charge of day-today operations of the Gaston Chamber, from November 1, 2005 – March, 2006. He has also been involved with the United Way, and he served as President of Gastonia East Rotary Club in 1994. He is a Paul Harris Fellow. In 2004 he was named Citizen of the Year by the Gastonia Civitan

Club, and in 2001 he received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE).

He is Past Master of Gastonia Masonic Lodge, Past President of Gaston County Shrine Club, a member of the Gastonia York Rite Bodies, and a 32nd degree KCCH, Charlotte Scottish Rite. In 1997, he served as Potentate (Chief Executive Officer) of Oasis Shriners, Charlotte. Presently he serves as Chaplain of Oasis Shriners.

A second career pastor, John was Director of Commercial Marketing, Public Service Company of NC, a natural gas distribution company. Immediately prior to responding to God's call to full time ministry, he was Director of External/Community Relations of PSNC Energy, a SCANA Company, a successor to Public Service Company.

He has served on the Strategic Planning Team of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina and has served on its Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) Policy Committee. He also moderated the January, 2004 Meeting of the Presbytery.

John and his wife Rose, reside in Gastonia, NC.



The Birdhouse Project

When Kris Munsch lost his sixteen-year-old son in 2004, he had no idea how to move beyond his grief. Fast forward five years, and Munsch, a doctoral student in the University of Kansas' School of Education and industrial arts teacher for Bonner Springs High School, would tell you that everything changed when he decided to do something positive with his feelings of loss. In May of 2009, Munsch approached English teacher and KU alumnus Jeff Fouquet to ask him to collaborate on a project-based healing book titled "The Birdhouse Project".



Neither could have imagined where they would be less than one year later. After passing multiple drafts back and forth and spending entire afternoons at a local coffee shop finalizing the concept, writing, and packaging of their work, the two find themselves developing a series of books while simultaneously juggling an ever-expanding schedule of presentations and collecting research from the fields of grief and school counseling to support their theories.

"The Birdhouse Project" book comes to packaged with pre-cut, pre-drilled pieces of a birdhouse. In the first book, readers are encouraged to rebuild their own lives by learning about Munsch's struggles and eventual success after the loss of his son. Using words, art, or pictures to capture their feelings, readers are empowered to express their grief and map some clear direction for moving forward.

The second book in the series, which will help teenagers cope with the loss of hope or direction, will be released soon. More information available at thebirdhouseproject.com.

Mitch Carmody



Mitch Carmody is the author of "Letters To My Son, a journey through grief" which has been sold worldwide. Mitch is currently a staff writer with "Living with Loss Magazine" and has published many articles for a variety of national grief periodicals, newsletters, and internet sites as well as appearing in many radio and television interviews. He is an accomplished artist and creator of the innovative *20 Faces of Grief* and the S.T.A.I.R.S model of grief staging. Mitch is also the prognosticator of *Proactive Grieving*, a paradigm shift in grief recovery.

Mitch is a recognized keynote speaker and a highly regarded workshop presenter with a wide variety of compelling workshops. He writes and speaks from the heart and touches many lives with his compassionate message and affable manner. In his workshop "Whispers of Love" he has brought hope to countless thousands who believe their loved one on some level has survived death.

His remarkable workshop "The Faces of Grief" he breaks down current myths in the bereavement process, and embraces a unique, more humanistic approach in recovering from loss which he has coined as "Proactive Grieving turning loss to legacy". Also a gifted portrait artist he has created powerful images in pencil that he uses in this workshop to illustrate the many emotions involved in grieving the loss of a loved one. He also creates custom memorial portraits in pencil for the bereaved in this country and around the world.

Mitch lost his father to heart disease when he was only 15 years old. At 21 he lost his older brother from progressive degenerative cerebral palsy. Days after celebrating he and his twin sister's 29th birthday, she and her two boys were killed in an automobile accident. Less than a year later his son Kelly was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor. They fought hard with all they could to save their son's life with modern medicine, holistic medicine, faith, prayers for almost two years. He and his wife sold their home and all they owned and moved to Mexico where their son experienced a miracle healing. They soon discovered a healing is not always a cure and their son died December 1st 1987. Since that time Mitch has dedicated his life to serving the bereaved in any way he can.

For the conference I will present Whispers of love, a PowerPoint presentation with the history of signs of every kind, and anecdotal evidence (stories & photos) to support that. I will emphasize what I call "soul speak" which supports not only after death communication from spirit, but prior to death communication (signs, omens, portents), during death communication (NDE's & seeing, speaking to relatives or angels while dying) and of course the plethora of ways spirit communicates after physical death.

Secondly I will speak about Proactive Grieving, taking charge of your grief journey and finding creative ways to heal. This includes our identifying our spiritual connection, seeking help from within, recognizing the reality of the paranormal experience as a valuable tool to our survival. To know we can survive a significant loss, with the understanding that life continues on... on both sides of the equation.

Alan Pedersen

Alan Pedersen is a nationally known singer/songwriter/recording artist. As a bereaved father to Ashley who died in an automobile accident in August of 2001, Alan has turned his musical, writing, and performing talents toward helping others dealing with the loss of a child. He has recorded 3 successful CD's of original songs about the grief journey and plays/speaks at more than 100 events each year throughout the United States. Alan weaves gentle humor around his deeply moving songs in his live performances and has become a highly sought after workshop presenter and keynote speaker on grief and loss. Alan founded EverAshley Music in 2003 and

recently became a partner in Grief and Beyond, a Roseville, California based company offering support to families who have lost a child. In 2010 Alan will play 120+concerts spread across 48 states as part of The Angels Across the USA Tour which will travel to many rural and small towns in support of grief organizations helping bereaved families.



Denise Howard is the founder and President of the Sean Sullivan Project, a non-profit grief support group in Roseville, California. Denise is a bereaved mom to Sean who was killed in an automobile accident in September of 2004. She became a Certified Grief Specialist in 2008 and has facilitated group and individual grief counseling sessions since 2006. In 2009 she co-founded Grief and Beyond with Alan Pedersen as a multi-faceted support organization specializing in helping families who have lost a child. Denise is the Executive Director of The Angels Across the USA Tour and will travel with Alan throughout 2010.

Workshop Titles

The Healing Power of Ritual	Spirituality Panel
Grief and Marriage	Infant Loss
Death of a Teenager	Murder
Suicide Workshop	Sudden Accidental Death Panel
For Parents who are now Childless	How Do Men Grieve
Commitment to Survival	Faces of Grief
Moving on-What does the other side of grief look like?	Stress Reduction
Finding Hope in the midst of despairand more

Chapters in Surrounding States

NEBRASKA

Chadron
Columbus
Fairbury
Fremont
Hastings
Lexington
McCook
Norfolk
North Platte
Omaha
O'Neill
Scottsbluff
Sidney

IOWA

Algona
Burlington
Cedar Falls
Charter Oak
Dubuque
Iowa City
Marshalltown
Mason City
Muscatine
Nevada
Sioux City
Waverly
West Des Moines

KANSAS

Salina
Lawrence
Topeka
Wichita

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls

For more locations see
www.compassionatefriends.org