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## **For Immediate Release**

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# **Fourteen Hundred Bereaved Parents, Family Members, and Professionals to Meet for Conference in Boston July 1-3**

When a child dies, the world is turned upside down for the family, never to be quite the same. An anticipated 1400 bereaved parents, family members, and professionals will gather in Boston July 1-3 seeking friendship, understanding, and hope after the death of a child, whether days, months, or years have since passed.

The 28th National Conference of The Compassionate Friends, the world's largest self-help bereavement organization, will feature workshops, noted speakers, a pre-conference Professionals Day, and the sixth annual two-mile Walk to Remember.

"This conference will bring together families from virtually every state who have experienced the tragic loss of a child," said conference chair and TCF Executive Director Pat Loder. "We meet to provide workshops and activities that can help bereaved families learn how to cope with their loss whether it happened recently or years ago. This is also an opportunity for professionals to grow in their knowledge of how best to help families that are grieving the death of a child."

Grace Corrigan, mother of Christa McAuliffe, "teacher in space" who died in the 1986 space shuttle Challenger explosion will speak Friday to hundreds in attendance. Darcie Sims, noted grief educator, author, and speaker will also keynote during the conference.

A pre-conference Professionals Day Thursday, June 30 is aimed at nurses, physicians, social workers, counselors, emergency personnel, police officers, clergy, firefighters, medical examiners, and other professionals who have contact with family members whether initially or later in their bereavement. Continuing education units are available for many who attend.

The three day conference, held at the Boston Marriott Copley Hotel, features more than 100 workshops covering a wide range of topics related to grief following the death of a child. There is also a complete program for bereaved siblings ages nine and older. On-site registration is available for the conference, Professionals Day, and the Walk to Remember.

The final day of the conference will include a two-mile Walk to Remember with 1300 persons expected to participate, carrying the names of approximately 10,000 children who have died.

The Compassionate Friends has nearly 600 chapters in the United States, with locations in every state, as well as Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. The organization has a national presence in an estimated 29 countries around the world.

For more information on the conference or The Compassionate Friends, call the National Office toll-free at 877-969-0010 or visit the TCF national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). Every month the 33-year-old U.S. organization provides outreach to more than 200,000 bereaved families and professionals through chapter meetings, newsletters, websites, phone calls, letters, personal visits, and on-line chats.

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