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For Immediate Release

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Thousands Who Grieve Loss of Children Await Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting

Oak Brook, IL—Tens of thousands of people, united by grief, are preparing for The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on Sunday, December 9. The Compassionate Friends is an international self-help support group for families following the death of a child of any age from any cause.

Held the second Sunday in December, The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting is an annual event where persons around the globe light candles for one hour to honor children who have died. The candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, starting in New Zealand. As candles burn down in each time zone, they are then lit in the next. This creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.

“While this is a global event, the loss of thousands of lives in September’s attack makes this event a symbol of unity for all around the world who grieve the loss of a child of any age, for any reason,” says TCF executive director Patricia Loder. “This surpasses all political boundaries as we expect hundreds of thousands will participate in countries around the globe.

“Here, throughout the United States, this candle lighting starts at the local level as members of our nearly 600 TCF chapters observe this day, whether alone, with friends, or in an organized candle lighting ceremony. We invite all people to join in this moving tribute, realizing they are not alone and that their child, sibling or grandchild is remembered during the difficult holiday season.”

With the theme “...*that their light may always shine,*” the event, conceived and nurtured by TCF USA, is now in its 5th year, with each observance larger than the last. On the Internet, the national TCF Web site will host extended chat room hours and a message board for families to share their experiences throughout the day and post tributes. Last year memorial messages were received by email from Australia, the Bahamas, Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, South Africa and Switzerland, some in foreign languages, as well as from all over the United States. Web visits for the Candle Lighting week quadrupled last year compared to the same period in 1999.

The Compassionate Friends is located in 26 countries worldwide. Started in 1968 in England, The Compassionate Friends jumped across the Atlantic to the United States four years later and incorporated in 1978.

Information about the national organization and locations of its chapters nationwide is available by calling toll free 877-969-0010 or by visiting the TCF Web site at www.compassionatefriends.org.



...that their
light may
always shine.

Light a candle in honor of all children who have died.

**Sunday, December 9, 2001
7 PM Around the Globe**

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