

The Compassionate Friends

Strategic Plan 2017



*The
Compassionate
Friends*

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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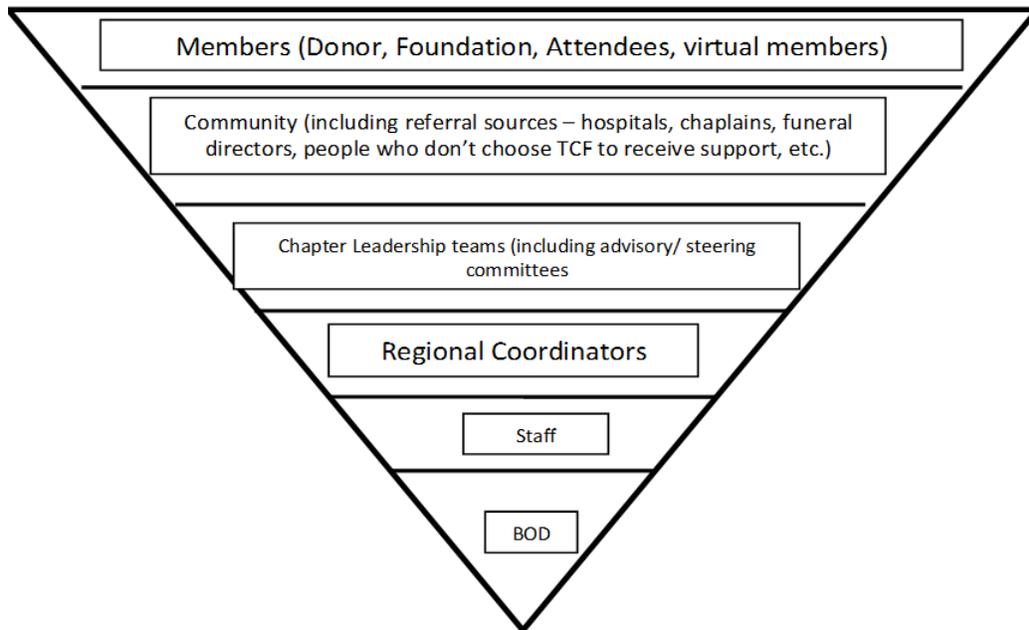
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Overview

This Strategic Plan was developed with the input and direction with representatives of all stakeholder groups of The Compassionate Friends. Stakeholders are defined below:



The Strategic Plan is a management tool. Its main purpose is to provide focus and to ensure that The Compassionate Friends, as an organization, is working toward the same goals, to assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. In short, strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. (Adapted from John M. Bryson, *Strategic Planning in Public and Nonprofit Organizations*)

The plan serves a roadmap for the actions of the organization and will be used as a guide in the development of detailed action plans by the Executive Director for board approval and funding.

This plan will be formally reviewed and updated annually.



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Mission

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family (adopted 2-25-2012).

Vision Statement

The vision statement of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Guiding Principles

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 and virtual chapters, secondarily by website, social media and conferences.
6. TCF Chapters belong to their members.
7. TCF is coordinated nationally in its support to its chapters, bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents.



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Diversity

TCF is committed to embracing diversity at all levels of the organization. We will develop programs that enable us to become pro-active in our approach to serving parents, grandparents and siblings grieving the loss of children of any age regardless of the cause of death. TCF programs extend throughout all sectors of our society. We define individual diversity in broad terms to mean: age, sex, race, creed, culture, color, and sexual orientation. We further define diversity in group terms to mean geographic location, socioeconomic level and different causes of death.



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Strategic Initiatives

Chapter Services

The National Office shall ensure that every TCF Chapter will be provided with the tools to successfully build, maintain and sustain their organization. These include but are not limited to:

1. Training

Provide easily accessible and affordable high quality opportunities for Chapter management training through on-site regional events and online courses. Expand, continually update and improve every aspect of our training to offer more in depth information in areas such as basic grief education, diversity, facilitating meetings, creating an advisory board, fundraising, public awareness and outreach and recruiting volunteers.

2. Resources

Provide creative resources to Chapter leadership. Be a clearinghouse for the most current information related to grief, effective handouts for group discussions, books, videos and articles on grief and the loss of a child, sibling or grandchild. Continually provide the most current materials to Chapter leadership teams. Utilize current and emerging technologies to support the mission and vision of TCF.

3. Public Awareness and Outreach

Build a public awareness and outreach program with materials useful to chapters that have an added emphasis on engaging siblings and grandparents. Use technology to enhance our efforts via webinars, online support community website, and social media. Focus on each significant partnership created, news coverage or article published either at the national, regional or local level.

4. Fundraising

Expand our fundraising efforts to create new opportunities for members and community stakeholders to support and sustain TCF on a local and regional level. Continue annual fundraising drive and national events which will allow TCF Chapters the opportunity to raise significant funds for themselves and participate in a large scale event. Support local fundraising by providing tools to local chapters to aid in their development of creative ways to build and sustain their local funding.



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5. Regional Coordinator Program

Strengthen and expand the Regional Coordinator program to accommodate emerging advances in technology. RC's continue to serve as a line of communication and support between our national office and chapters. RC's will assist the national office and support Chapters through training and by maintaining regular contact with each Chapter by a variety of methods including but not limited to: telephone, email, personal visits, and by leveraging technology to ensure that all Chapters have support. RC's will also communicate regularly with the National Office and Executive staff.

6. Conferences

Support and encourage conferences on Regional and National levels to bring together leadership and members from all levels of the organization. Additionally, host a National Conference each year that will focus on offering hope, comfort, information and inspiration for our volunteers and leaders. While our National Conference should certainly be self-sustaining, it will be judged on its ability to offer hope to our members, inspire and further educate our leaders, and effectively shine a light on TCF as a national non-profit organization supporting families in grief.

7. TCF Chapter Growth

There are a significant number of communities that are currently not served by a TCF Chapter. There are many people who might be more completely served by a format that incorporates technology and is more responsive to specialized needs. TCF supports engagement through continually striving to identify underserved areas and developing a strategy of outreach and public awareness.

8. Volunteer Base

There are many members of TCF who are not aware of opportunities to volunteer to support the ongoing mission of TCF. Additionally, there are many members who have skills that could be vital to the sustainability and growth of TCF whose talents are untapped. It is imperative that we work to find ways to communicate and educate about volunteer opportunities and expand our inclusion of a more diverse definition of volunteer opportunities and contributions.

9. Quality Assurance

Establish and maintain measurable quality assurance standards throughout the organization.



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FUNDRAISING/DEVELOPMENT

Goal: To ensure the financial stability of the organization by the diversification of our funding sources, including expanding our outreach to non-bereaved prospective donors. This will be accomplished in the following ways:

- Expand our fundraising efforts to create new opportunities for members and community stakeholders to support and sustain TCF on a national and regional level.
- Continue annual fundraising drive and national events which will allow TCF Chapters the opportunity to raise significant funds for themselves and participate in a large scale event.
- Support local fundraising by providing tools to local chapters to aid in their development of creative ways to build and sustain their local funding.
- Seek opportunities to expand the Foundation's financial base with the goal of building a sustainable future for TCF.



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PUBLIC RELATIONS/OUTREACH/MARKETING

Goal: To share the story and history of TCF at the national and local levels to encourage greater interest, participation and financial support.

- Build a public awareness and outreach program with materials that can be used on the local and national level that have an added emphasis on engaging siblings and grandparents.
- Use technology to enhance our efforts via our Online Support Community, website and social media.
- Focus on each significant partnership created, news coverage or article published either at the national, regional or local level.
- Increase national awareness and understanding of the mission and services offered by TCF
- There are many members of TCF who are not aware of opportunities to volunteer to support the ongoing mission of TCF. Additionally, there are many members who have skills that could be vital to the sustainability and growth of TCF whose talents are untapped.
- It is imperative that we work to find ways to communicate and educate about volunteer opportunities and expand our inclusion of a more diverse definition of volunteer opportunities and contributions.

1. Use the Annual National Conference as a vehicle for outreach.



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The Process:

Beginning in July of 2016, the entire Board of Directors convened to perform a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis

- Internal strengths;
- Internal weaknesses;
- Opportunities in the external environment;
- Threats in the external environment.

After the SWOT Analysis, a committee consisting of the following individuals continued developing the Strategic Plan, culminating in the document that is being presented to the Board of Directors for review in July 2017:

Committee Members

Allie Franklin, Chair

Glen Lord

Debbie Dullabaun

Rick Yoti

Eric Simas

Art Estrella

Brian Janes

Debbie Rambis

Staff

Alan Pedersen

Lisa Corrao

A Survey Monkey was prepared to get the feedback of all stakeholders. The summary results of this survey are attached to this Strategic plan as exhibit A.

The summary results aided the ED and Strategic Plan Committee as they developed the strategic initiatives that will serve as a guide for all Action plans for The Compassionate Friends.



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Appendix A - Summary Results of this Survey

Survey Information

TCF opened a survey monkey link on our public website, all closed Facebook pages and our leadership pages. We sent email information about the survey prior to the opening of the survey, on the day the survey opened, in the middle of the period and 24 hours prior to the close of the survey period. Emails with links went to chapter leaders, co-leaders, newsletter editors, webmasters, national board members present and past, regional coordinators, and staff) and 3 messages encouraging response to the survey (this includes the message with the original survey).

We had 1724 responses. This represents a 293% increase in the number of responses received in the previous Strategic Plan survey. The number of responses received is an astonishingly high number of responses to any survey. See attached Survey Monkey results for detailed statistics of the responses to each question on the survey.



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