



# How Your Donation Is Making A Difference

*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.*

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization, offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause. There is no religious affiliation, and no individual membership fees or dues are charged. All bereaved family members are welcome. Founded in England in 1969, TCF was established in the United States in 1972, with 501(c)(3) not-for-profit incorporation in 1978, under which provision the organization's nearly 600 local Chapters also operate. TCF operates as separate entities in at least 30 countries around the world.

## Organization

- In the 40 years since its incorporation, TCF/USA has grown from 40 Chapters to nearly 600, with locations in all 50 states plus Washington D.C., Guam, Saipan, and Puerto Rico. More than 4,000 volunteers who are bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents serve as Regional Coordinators, Chapter Leaders, meeting facilitators, Newsletter Editors, workshop presenters, and National Conference coordinators. An additional 300 volunteers moderate and support our growing online presence which includes our public Facebook page, 25 private Facebook groups and our online support chat rooms.
- The Compassionate Friends has a 13-member national volunteer Board of Directors consisting of bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents who are elected for one or two three-year terms by the general membership.
- The Compassionate Friends National Office is located in Oak Brook, Illinois. Our paid staff includes the Executive Director who works in partnership with the board and is supported by six full-time and two part-time staff members.

## Examples of Services Provided by the National Organization

- In 2016, more than one million families accessed one or more of our services. In addition, our resources are regularly accessed by grief professionals, social service departments, academic institutions, hospitals, hospice, religious entities and other grief organizations. The TCF National Office publishes more than 40 bereavement brochures (in English and Spanish) on most aspects of grief following the death of a child.
- TCF's national website ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)) has more than 100,000 visitors each month and provides resources and information. In addition, TCF's National Facebook Page communicates with more than 275,000 followers and continues to grow.
- TCF offers an Online Support Community with chat rooms open every day, as well as 25 private Facebook groups covering many topics related to the death of a child.

- TCF's flagship magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*, is published and distributed digitally. It features articles from top grief professionals as well as individual stories of hope and healing, and provides the latest in grief related information. In addition, a monthly e-newsletter is sent to more than 45,000 people.

## ***How Do We Do It?***

- TCF's 2017 budget is over \$3 million, with 85 percent allocated for services to Chapters and the public. Administrative and fundraising costs comprise only 15 percent of the organization's total operating budget.
- TCF has been awarded The Independent Charities Seal of Excellence for being able to certify, document, and demonstrate on an annual basis that it meets the highest standards of public accountability, program effectiveness, and cost effectiveness. Only 2,000 of the one million charities operating in the United States today have been awarded this Seal. All contributions to The Compassionate Friends are tax-deductible.

## ***Role of Local Chapters***

- Each month more than 20,000 grieving family members attend meetings at our nearly 600 local Chapters. Monthly meetings provide a caring environment where the bereaved can work through their grief with the help of others who have "been there."
- Chapters are organized and facilitated by local members trained by the national organization. In addition to monthly meetings, Chapters provide community outreach and education, publish local newsletters, websites, Facebook Pages, and offer special programs.

## ***Signature Events***

- *National Conference* — In 2017 TCF hosted its 40<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference in Orlando, Florida with record attendance of over 1,400 people. This three-day healing event rotates to a different city each year. In an environment that encourages parents to talk about their missing children and bond with a community of similarly grieving families, the conference also provides more than 100 workshops, special programs, ceremonies, and some of the top speakers on grief and loss.
- *Walk to Remember* — Started 17 years ago on the final day of our National Conference, more than 1,000 parents, grandparents and siblings carrying pictures, banners and signs with the names of their lost children participate in our Annual Walk to Remember. At the same time, hundreds of our Chapters host an annual walk in their local communities.
- *Worldwide Candle Lighting* — On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in December every year, The Compassionate Friends hosts the largest continuous lighting of candles in the world. Started in 1997 to commemorate the first Children's National Memorial Day, TCF initiated the Worldwide Candle Lighting. What began as a few gatherings throughout the United States has grown into a worldwide commemoration featuring thousands of events around the world. At 7 PM local time, candles are lighted in each time zone creating a virtual ring of light around the globe.

*It is our hope that ... "everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped."*

For further information, contact The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

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