

# MAY and JUNE 2013



Seattle-King County Chapter P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166 206-24

206-241-1139

## Moving Through The Grief of Losing A Child

I was a woman like many others - focused on my five children and family, living a quiet life on Bainbridge Island in the state of Washington. And then, in August 2004, our lives changed. That night, eight teenagers piled into an SUV and took a midnight joyride. My 16-year-old twin daughter, Sarah, was killed.

The thought of losing a child--if "losing" is the correct verb--had never crossed my mind. Tragedies, as such, were something that happened to someone else, something you read about in the paper or heard from a neighbor. Nothing could have prepared me for the deep pain...but nothing could have prepared me for the peace that now permeates my mind and heart.

The shock sets in; everything moves in slow motion as if time comes to a halt, and time has halted.

An acquaintance delivers a candle on day six with a card inscribed, "Place this candle in your kitchen. Each night while you prepare the family meal, know that the shimmering of the candle-light reflects the child who now lives within you." A lovely thought. Eight years later, I still light a candle on my kitchen windowsill. My child lives within me now.

The days turn to weeks. Friends surround you, keeping you busy, your mind occupied. Absorb their kindness. Accept their help. Eliminate expectations. Learn to be gentle with yourself. Give yourself space. Make room for quiet. Always remember that grief is personal, as is death. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve.

Seek out therapy. You may be ready. Share your story and connect with others. Surround yourself with those who will listen, not necessarily those who will offer advice. For it is when others listen that we can sort out our thoughts and settle our mind.

Your inner strength seeks you out, sometimes sooner in the process, sometimes later. That strength moves you forward--tiny steps in this process.

Let the memories fill your mind. Let yourself laugh again. Smile. Sing out when a favorite song you shared plays on the radio. Let your heart awaken to the joys memories bring.

Pay attention to the synchronicity and patterns in your life. Pay attention to your intuition. And pray. It doesn't matter what you believe. Just ask, notice, and respond. Faith, hope and love all intersect. Maybe things will begin to make a little sense, just maybe.

Look to your children who live. Note their resilience and strength during this epic period of trauma. Let their sense of life and hope inspire you.

When the pain returns, and it will, allow yourself to go to the depths of that pain. Cry. I promise, you will be okay when you resurface.

And as you move towards years four and five, you will learn that yes, life has been a living nightmare, and it is okay to admit that. Realize that as the years pass, you will learn to weave your loss into your daily life. Accepting the loss of a loved one is to release, but not erase. To hold. But not to hold the pain.

As year five turns towards eight, my hope is that you can slowly wrap yourself around the idea that you can celebrate life and celebrate death. Death and gratitude can go hand-in-hand. Just possibly, it is those who have passed before us who are our greatest teachers. Remember always that you never walk alone because the life of someone who passes lives on in the love you shared.

~Caroline Flohr

Provided by, and reprinted with the kind permission of, Caroline Flohr, author of Heaven's Child

And when we have remembered every-thing, we grow afraid of what we may forget. A face, a voice, a smile? A birthday? An anniversary? No need to fear forgetting, because the heart remembers always.



## **The Compassionate Friends**

Seattle-King County Chapter



The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a *non-profit mutual assistance, self-help* organization offering *friendship, understanding, and hope* to bereaved parents and families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause is welcome. Our meetings provide an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they go through the grieving process. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, but to support bereaved parents, grandparents and adult siblings in the positive resolution of the grief feelings and issues that revolve around the death of their loved one and support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

#### TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words that will help you in your grief work. Try to attend three times before deciding if TCF is right for you.

#### TO OUR MEMBERS WHO ARE FURTHER DOWN THE "GRIEF ROAD"

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF 'veterans' to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

#### **INFORMATION REGARDING OUR MEETINGS**

PLEASE come to a meeting. We are here to discuss whatever is on your mind. This is YOUR group and we are here for each other. You do not have to talk at meetings. We welcome your participation in our group, but it is not a requirement. Coming to listen to the other members is okay, too. Our meetings are open to parents, grandparents, adult siblings, or other adult family members.

#### **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

This group belongs to you and cannot survive without assistance. Areas of help needed are refreshments, setting up before a meeting, being a phone friend for those who may be having a particularly difficult day, help with the newsletter, send thank-you notes, become a facilitator, volunteer to help with Chapter activities or serve on the steering committee.

Part of getting better, is being there to assist others, too, through this journey.

If you'd like to help, please contact us.

Chapter Co-Leaders: Mike McLeod: 206-369-7366 and Marge Tomlinson: tcfmarge@aol.com







## **KEEPING IN TOUCH**







Seattle-King County Chapter *Phone*: 206-241-1139 (TCF Line)

Seattle-King County Chapter Mailing Address: P. O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166-0896

Seattle-King County Chapter Website: www.tcfseattle.org

Seattle-King County Chapter Facebook: The Compassionate Friends, Seattle King County Chapter

Phone Support: Having a rough moment? Need someone to talk to? Call Robyn at 360-259-8006 ▼

Western Washington Regional Coordinator: Jacqueline Russell 360-457-7395

TCF National Office Phone: 877-969-0010

TCF National Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3696 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

TCF National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org (website has link to Facebook)

▼ TCF Online Support - Please visit the National website to get the session schedule for the following groups:

♥ Parents / Grandparents

♥ Pregnancy / Infant Loss

♥ Survivors of Suicide

♥ Siblings

♥ No Surviving Children

♥ Men Only

## TCF National Magazine 'We Need Not Walk Alone' Available Free Online!

To sign up for a free electronic version of TCF's **We Need Not Walk Alone** magazine, go to TCF's national website at <a href="https://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a> and click on "Sign up for National Publications" at the top of the Home (or any inside) page. Fill out the information and when each issue of the magazine is published, the National Office will send you a special link so you can be among the first to read its great content. It can be read online or downloaded to your computer for personal use. When you sign up for We Need Not Walk Alone, you also have the opportunity to sign up to receive the monthly national enewsletter which provides information about what is currently happening within the organization.

## Our Chapter's Sharing Group Location:



~2nd Wednesday evening of each month~

Our 2013 Meetings:

May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13, December 11

6:30pm - 8:30pm

St. Francis Hospital 34515 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. So. Federal Way, WA 98003



Ask at the information desk in the main lobby for directions to the meeting room.



#### Books on Grief Available

We have quite a large selection of grief books at our monthly meetings. We invite you to look over the books from our library. We hope you can find something that may help you and your family. If you have a book you would like to donate and share with other bereaved parents, please bring it with you to the meeting.

#### **Birthday Table**

In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers – anything you'd like to bring to share. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth and for us to become better acquainted.



## Our Annual Retreat in Seabeck, WA ~ May 31 - June 2, 2013

For over thirty years bereaved parents have been crossing the wooden bridge into the quiet serenity of Seabeck Conference Center. The majestic Olympic Mountains rise to the west, scenic

Hood Canal lies between you and the Olympics and wooded hills slope up from the beach which set this place apart from being just another conference center.

Our retreat is just that...a *retreat*. We leave behind the busyness of our everyday lives and enter a relaxed and safe haven to work on our grief and bond with other bereaved parents. The retreat is a place where we share our thoughts,

feelings, and precious memories of our children. The weekend includes workshops, sharing groups, a reflection room, burden basket, crafts, Children's Memorial Garden and a candlelighting ceremony on Saturday night.

The retreat is low-key and there is no pressure to attend every scheduled session. The weekend is yours to use however you need to take care of yourself. If it's time for an activity and you want to take a nap or take a walk, do it. Do what YOU need to do.



Some people choose to not participate in sessions and yet do a lot of grief work because they have the opportunity to be in a safe and supportive setting that allows them the time and space to work on their grief away from the distractions of a busy daily life. It's a nurturing environment and you are with people who understand what you are going through.

Our TCF chapter works with WICS - Widowed Information and Consultation Services – to plan the retreat. We share the main speaker and workshops, but TCF and WICS have separate sharing groups, memorial ceremonies and housing.

Together, TCF and WICS provide a children's program for those who want to bring their children (ages 5-17). The children's group has their own program with their own activities and ceremonies. All three groups share the dining room at meal time, but each group has designated tables, so each is

with their own group. (For information about the Children's Program, contact WICS at 206-241-5650.)

About 60 bereaved parents from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia attend our retreat. At Seabeck you will find bereaved parents with caring hearts who can relate to you and your grief.

Please join us at our Seabeck Retreat this year!! For more info call 206-241-1139 or email: tcfmarge@aol.com.

## MEN AND GRIEF





#### WHY MEN GRIEVE DIFFERENTLY THAN WOMEN

Current scientific research on the brain indicates that men are functionally different from women. These distinctions account for many of the differences between how men and women process information and the feelings that they have. Coping with grief and loss are no exception. While men and women experience the same grief, they will likely process and express it in very different ways.

#### THINGS MEN SHOULD KEEP IN MIND WHEN GRIEVING

Because many of society's stereotypes of how a grieving person should behave are based on the way women grieve, there are some things that men should keep in mind.

- You will grieve in your own way.
- There is no how-to guide for how you should grieve.
- Your grief process will be influenced by who you are, how you were raised, and your life experiences.
- You may not want to talk about it as often as those around you. You may use action instead of talking to work through your feelings.
- Working side by side may be an easier way to process grief than to communicate face to face.
- You may prefer to do your healing on your own and through your own inner strength.
- You may prefer to take on the role of caretaker of those around you in order to help you process your own grief. It takes strength and courage to experience and express grief.
- Grief is a process that will make you stronger. All people have a combination of both 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics that will influence their style of mourning.

#### ATTEMPTS TO AVOID GRIEF

While society may be changing, the lingering mentally that 'big boys don't cry' leads many men to try to avoid the

grief process all together. They may fear that showing their grief will make them look weak. There are some common ways that men attempt to cover up their feelings of grief:

• Silence • Anger

ActionSecrecy

Addiction

#### SUPPORT GROUPS

For many men it helps to talk with other men about their grief. This may be in a support group setting or in some type of community work group. Sometimes an activity that provides a common goal will help men to open to those around them.

#### LEARNING TO OPEN UP

Many men have been conditioned by society to keep their feelings hidden. The fact that, after a loss, it is more likely that a community will acknowledge a woman's loss than a man's reinforces the sense that they should keep their emotions inside. Men who learn to open up and share their grief will have many benefits to their emotional and physical health, as well as for their relationships and marriage. They will also feel more energy and happiness.

#### WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT

What is most important is that each person finds a safe way to express their grief. While some may be most comfortable in a support group setting, others may be more comfortable working through their grief on their own, or with the help of educational books or websites. Some use music, art or writing as tools to help them grieve. Some rely on ceremonies or rituals to bring them comfort. As time goes by, the methods used to cope with grief may vary.

[Reprinted with permission from Grief Watch www.griefwatch.com]

## MOTHER'S DAY

Mary Wildman, TCF, Moro, IL



As I write this, I am very much aware that Mother's Day is coming soon. That will be a doubly difficult day in countless homes. For all the thousands of mothers who will be glowing with a radiant kind of pride and happiness on that day, there will also be those of you whose hearts are aching for that phone call that will

never come, that special visit, that one Mother's Day card that will not arrive. For us, the reading and re-reading of that one last card -"Mom, you are the greatest and I love you" – will have to last a lifetime.

How does a mother face a lifetime of silence on "her" day? Ask those of us who have "been there" already, and we will tell you of lonely Mother's Day visits to spring-green cemeteries where the sweet, clear notes of a single spring bird, perched nearby, float over our head and seem surely to have been intended as divine comfort for a heart full to breaking. You will hear of yellow roses being sent to a small church – "In memory of ..."- and a cherished story of a kind and sensitive friend who sent a single rose that first Mother's Day, "In remembrance..."

Always we struggle with the eternal question – how does life in fairness exact from us the life of a beloved child in exchange for a clear bird call in a spring-green cemetery, a slender vase of yellow rosebuds or even the kindness and sensitivity of a friend who remembered our loneliness and pain on that day? Where is the fairness and justice of such a barter?

The answer comes back again and again – life does not always bargain fairly. We are surrounded from birth to death by those things which we cannot keep, but which enrich, ennoble, and endow our lives with a foretaste of Heaven because we have been privileged to behold, to experience, to wrap our arms around the joyous and beautiful.

Can we bottle the fragrance of an April morning or the splendor of a winter's sunset and take it home with us to place on our fireplace mantle? Can we grasp and hold the blithesome charm of childhood's laughter? Can we capture with cupped hands the beauty and richness of a rainbow? Can we pluck the glitter of a million stars on a summer night or place in an alabaster box the glow and tenderness of love?

No, we cannot. But to those who have been given the splendor, the blithesome charm, the glory, the glitter, the tenderness and the love of a child who has departed, someday the pain will speak to you of enlightenment, of compassion for others, of deeper sensitivity to the world about you, of a deeper joy for having known a deeper pain. Your child will not have left you completely, as you thought, but rather you will find him in that first clear, sweet bird call, in those yellow rose buds, in giving and receiving and in the tissue-wrapped memories that you hold forever in your heart.  $\P$ 

### The Simple Do's and Don'ts of Compassion

Marian Lambeth, TCF, Tallahassee, FL

I received an email one day that caused me to think about how challenged we are when it comes to communicating condolences to a grieving parent, grandparent or sibling. It doesn't take much to figure out that many of us, having lost a child or not, are often challenged by how to really comfort or assist a grieving person. I have lost my son yet I often feel I can't find the right thing to say or do to comfort another grieving parent.

The email read that people shouldn't say, 'How are you?' but rather ask about a specific area: 'Is your health better?' or 'Are you getting out more?' something particular rather than an open-ended question. I couldn't agree more. I'm of the philosophy, if they asked, they must want to know. The advice continued: don't just offer empty words of encouragement, find out what is really going on in another person's life, and keep track of how he or she is progressing through the struggle. That is some serious advice!

After our son died and during his struggle to live, our friends and family showered us with love and support. There are things though that I will never forget, our friends and Wyatt's friends driving to Shands Hospital to sit with us, paying for hotel rooms, bringing us food, truly supporting us daily. I will never forget, after Wyatt died, a friend came over and said not one word, he walked in the door and held me in a tight hug and wept with me, he hurt for me, for us, for Wyatt. The mother of one of Wyatt's friends, whom I'd never met, stopped by a few weeks after Wyatt's death just to give me a hug, to say she was thinking about us and that she was sorry for all that was lost. Dear friends of ours came to our home for six weeks every night and sat in the dark, loneliness of our childless home. They held us up when we could not stand alone. Another friend calls every week still, to chat, catch up, check on me to tell me she cares.

The things I remember are not so complicated, but what I know is they were actions more than words. I often feel very alone in this journey, but I will never forget their actions held me up when all I wanted was close the door to life. There are some things about the death of a child that even compassion will not heal. The absence will always remain, but there are things that may bring a healing balm, if only briefly.

With this I began to think, what do our Compassionate Friends think, what did they experience that was supportive and helpful, what was painful or even hurtful. What can we share with the people of our community on how to better communicate, better share their heartfelt sympathies, and better help us as we traverse this life without our child or our children.

So we asked, and here are some suggestions and the rationale:

Don't tell me to call you if I need something, because I will not. Make specific offers to help: I am going to the store, what can I pick up for you? Can I take the kids to the park on Saturday afternoon? I will be bringing dinner on Monday for the family does everyone like spaghetti? I'd like to come over and mow the lawn for you. It's a nice day outside, let's go for a walk.

**Don't think time is a miracle.** Stay in touch with the grieving parents just to let them know you haven't forgotten their loss and you have them in your prayers. No one wants to feel their tragedy can be so easily "put to the side" and

forgotten when it is (was) such a doi resence in their own lives.

Don't let the child's death be the only topic of discussion. It's ok and helpful to be uplifting and to include other topics that are happy, and still make it known that you care.

Don't talk "around the hurt" as if it never happened. This loss is a part of the parent's life, it's ok to discuss it in a plain and thoughtful way.

Don't discuss the details of a child's death in front of the parent as if they are not there. The parent is fully aware of their child's death, include them in the conversation, parents can often offer insight.

Don't use clichés that minimize the nature of a child's death. Avoid comments such as, "he shot himself in the head with that dumb answer" when in the presence of a parent who lost a child to a gunshot wound.

**Don't say, "You can try again for another baby"** or "You're young, why don't you have another baby?" Parents are grieving the death of a unique, wonderful and loved child, it is that child they miss and long for. Grieve the loss of their child with them and leave the future to them.

**Don't say "at least" about anything, ever.** At least they didn't suffer ~ maybe, but my child is dead. At least you have your memories ~ yes, but I want my child. At least you have other children ~ yes, but I want the child I lost. It was just her time to go or "It was meant to be" ~ While some believe there is a purpose to every action or maybe a universal plan, others do not.

What seemed to be most compelling of the responses received was the DO list. It is short, but concise:

Do act normal, don't try so hard not to talk about the child as if he or she had never existed. In describing a visit from a person who brought food and visited quite a while, one Compassionate Friend recalled they never once mentioned her child. She expressed how this made her feel by saying her daughter, "was and is a real person, just because she changed addresses doesn't mean we can't talk about her."

**Do share your favorite memory.** Parents often enjoy hearing people share their favorite memory. When those memories are memorialized in writing and the person shares what they loved or appreciated about the child, things that made them laugh or smile, it can be read again later and cherished as memories shared by others.

Do show you care and spend time in fellowship. Grieving parents become very lonely or feel alone in their grieving and the company of others can be comforting or soothing, so don't just bring dinner, but share dinner, or visit and eat leftovers or encourage them to go outside for a walk.

Do offer to clean their house, mow their lawn, take the kids somewhere, babysit or bring dinner. Many of the things people do on autopilot are unimportant or incomprehensible to a parent who is trying to plan a funeral or is in the depths of grieving.

**Do Give Hugs, Real hugs.** They are powerful. One mom said about "real hugs" that people gave her, "it was like I would draw strength from them and I would feel a moment or two of peacefulness or connection that they might not understand my pain but they understood I needed them."



## The Compassionate Friends ~ Walk To Remember

Saturday, July 13th, 2013 10:00AM ~ 1:00PM

## Marymoor Park in Redmond

Sponsored by Eastside TCF in Kirkland, WA

The Eastside chapter's "Walk to Remember" is a two-mile walk open to everyone who wants to join "Hands and Hearts" in remembering our children who have died too soon. It will be a reflective, peaceful Walk at a comfortable pace along a relatively flat path followed by a short remembrance ceremony, live butterfly release and lunch. Please put Saturday, July 13th, on your calendar as one of the "don't miss" events of The Compassionate Friends. Plan to participate with family and friends to make the Walk a huge success.

\*Location: Marymoor Park in Redmond. The two-mile walk is planned on the Park's Connector Trail, which consists of paved asphalt (wheelchair accessible within reason). Our Walk will begin and end at Lot I. There is a shelter to the right of the parking lot. Please look for the Registration Table to check in prior to the walk.

\*Participation: Anyone can participate and be present at the Walk, Remembrance Ceremony, and lunch activities, but the lunch food line will be open only to those who have purchased a lunch ticket (ticket located in your packet which you'll receive at check-in). So please feel free to invite family and friends to join us in this heartfelt ceremony.

\*Remembrance Ceremony and Lunch: After a short Remembrance Ceremony and Live Butterfly Release, lunch will be served from 12:15PM ~ 1:00PM. The \$10.00 lunch fee will include your choice of a deli-sandwich, chips, fruit, dessert and bottled water.

\*Recommended Attire: Dress comfortably (shorts, t-shirt and comfortable walking shoes). A longsleeved white t-shirt with the "Walk to Remember" logo is available for purchase @ \$15.00 each (see registration form for details). We will also be offering a white hooded sweatshirt with the "Walk to Remember" logo @ \$25.00 each. Orders will be available for pick-up at our June monthly meeting and also the day of our walk. T-shirt/Sweatshirt orders are due no later than June 21st, 2013.

\*Times: Check-In 10:00AM ~ 10:30AM

> Remembrance Walk 10:30AM ~ 11:30AM Remembrance Ceremony 12:00PM ~ 12:15PM 12:15PM ~ 1:00PM Lunch

\*Parking: There will be "The Compassionate Friends" signs at the park entrance off of West Lake Sammamish Parkway NE from highway 520. We will be located on the left side. Parking Lot I is about a ½ mile from the entrance. A \$1.00 cash parking fee is required.

\*Registration: Please fill out and return the registration form as soon as possible. You must sign and include the liability statement with your registration form. Each participant must sign this form for our files. We must have this in order for you to participate in the Walk. We also need to have a good idea of how many will be attending so please let us know if you plan to attend.

#### To get your registration packet, contact:

Charlene DePuy:

425-948-6660

scdepuy@comcast.net

OR

Juli Lund:

425-65-1382

julilund@comcast.net



Registration is due by June 28th, 2013.

## ▼ TCF asks for donations in memory of our children who have died. ▼

Our chapter is funded solely through donations; therefore we sincerely appreciate your support. Your generosity helps us send newsletters, purchase brochures and cover the many expenses to help grieving families in our community. All donations are tax deductible. You and your child's name will be noted in the next newsletter. Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation by 50-100%. ♥ Please help us help others by making a LOVE GIFT today. ♥



#### **Love Gift Form**

Love gifts are **tax-deductible donations** made to the Seattle-King County Chapter of TCF in memory of your beloved child, sibling, grandchild or loved one.



Send checks and forms to:

Seattle-King County TCF Love Gifts P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166-0896

Your name:				
Address:			State	Zip
Phone Number (if we have any question	s):			
Amount Enclosed:				
In memory of (name of child):				
Date of Birth:				_
Date of Death:				_
Special Message:				
Send checks	s and forms to:	Seattle-King Cou	inty TCF	



## With Love, We Remember Them...

Love Gifts P.O. Box 66896

Seattle, WA 98166-0896



▼ Thank you to all who make donations to Seattle-King County TCF through United Way and to those who use their workplace Matching Gift programs! ♥

> In Memory of ... KEN

October 1938 – December 2010 **JOHN** 

February 1968 – July 2002 "My two guys. My love forever." From Barbara Jean Pietz In Memory of ... KEVIN

May 1983 – December 2008 From Ken and Jenny Stoner

In Memory of ...
MANDY

February 1976 – January 2008 "Love you, Mandy" From Robyn Rohwedder In Memory of ...
MATTHEW

July 1958 – August 1987 **MONTEY** 

March 1960 – January 2004 "Your mother loves you." From Judith Hitchcock

In Memory of ...
AMBER

From Kevin Williams and family

If you are looking for a tangible way to honor your child, grandchild, or sibling for Memorial Day, please consider making a contribution to Seattle-King County TCF. An envelope has been included with this newsletter for your convenience. All donations are tax deductible and you and your child's name will be noted in the next newsletter.

#### **The Compassionate Friends**

Seattle-King County Chapter P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166-0896



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May & June 2013

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Seabeck Retreat
May 31- June 2, 2013
For more info:
call 206-241-1139 or
email tcfmarge@aol.com

## Mark your calendar and make plans for these upcoming TCF events!

Seattle-King County Chapter of

The Compassionate Friends
invites you to our

ANNUAL RETREAT

SEABECK CONFERENCE CENTER
MAY 31 -JUNE 2, 2013



## "A Place of Peace and Healing"

Look inside this newsletter for the Registration Form and a description of what to expect at the retreat.

~ Space is limited, so don't delay. ~

36th TCF/USA National Conference July 5-7, 2013 Boston, Massachusetts



For information and registration packet: Call the TCF National Office 877-969-0010 or visit: <a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">http://www.compassionatefriends.org</a>