



National Office  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

### For Immediate Release

FROM: Wayne Loder  
Public Awareness Coordinator  
The Compassionate Friends  
(Toll-free) 866-964-4000  
E-mail: wayne@compassionatefriends.org

## Eight Holiday Gifts to Give Bereaved Families After the Death of a Child

Oak Brook, IL, December 6, 2006—When a child has died, the normally festive holiday season can be one of great sadness and pain for the family that finds itself with an empty chair at the dinner table.

“Friends and family so often ask us what they can do to help those mourning the death of a child at the holidays,” says Patricia Loder, a bereaved parent herself and Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends, the nation’s largest self-help bereavement organization. “There are many gifts that cost very little for friends and family to give, but can be very helpful to the bereaved at this time of the year.”

Some of those gifts, says Mrs. Loder, include:

- **The Gift of Remembrance**—When you send a card or talk with the family, remember the child by name. While you might think this would bring pain to the family, there is more pain when it appears the child has been forgotten.
- **The Gift of Understanding**—Realize things will be different this holiday season than before the child died. Tasks which were routinely completed in the past may now go undone.
- **The Gift of Self**—Help the bereaved with some of those “routine” things that need to be done such as shopping and preparing meals. Bring some holiday goodies.
- **The Gift of a Memorial Donation**—Make a donation in remembrance of the child to a favorite charity that the family may find important in their lives.
- **The Gift of Hope**—Make them aware of a local self-help bereavement organization whether it be The Compassionate Friends or another group where the members have gone through a similar loss and are ready to help families that are grieving.
- **The Gift of Kindness**—If there are children in the household, offer to take them shopping for whatever holiday presents they may wish to purchase. The hustle and bustle of the stores with holiday music blaring can be overwhelming to bereaved parents.
- **The Gift of Time**—Offer to drive the family to a remembrance service, whether it be through a Compassionate Friends chapter, another bereavement group, hospital, funeral home, or church. Your presence will show that you truly care.
- **The Gift of Love**—Let them know that, even though the family feels very alone, there are others who care deeply about them and will truly be there to provide support along the way.

The Compassionate Friends has nearly 600 chapters serving all 50 of the United States plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico and offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families following the death of a child. The organization has a presence in an estimated 29 countries around the world. For more information on a local chapter, call The Compassionate Friends toll-free at 877-969-0010 or visit The Compassionate Friends national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).

###