



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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For Immediate Release

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Ten Ways You Can Help a Family During the Holidays After a Child Dies

Oak Brook, IL (December 8, 2008) –When a child has died, friends and relatives often have no idea how to provide support to the family during the stressful holiday season.

Following are 10 ways The Compassionate Friends, the world's largest self-help support organization for bereaved families, suggests for you to help families that are going through the natural grieving process after the death of a child.

- 1) Expect the unexpected. The family has no road map of how to survive the holidays when they are living the nightmare of losing a child. Show patience and understanding.
- 2) Take up a collection to give the family. The unexpected expenses involved with the death of a child may stretch the family budget to the limit during the holidays.
- 3) The family has no doubt had its share of casseroles. Why not offer to provide them a holiday dinner with all the trimmings? You may cook it with love yourself or you can order and then pick one up at many grocery stores for as little as \$50.
- 4) If their home is where everyone would have gathered to celebrate the holidays, ask them if they would mind if you host the get together.
- 5) If there are surviving children, the parents may feel the need to decorate the home as they've done in the past. Offer to help them with this task. If there are no plans to decorate, you may offer them a battery powered or electric candle and suggest that they place it in their window, in memory of the child who died.
- 6) Make a donation in memory of the child to a non-profit organization that has special meaning to the family.
- 7) Offer to assist with holiday shopping.
- 8) Make the family aware of special remembrance services where they might want to participate such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting the second Sunday in December.
- 9) Even if several years have passed since the child died, send the family a card and mention the child by name. If you have it in your possession, enclose a picture or videotape of the child the family may not have seen or possess. This will mean more to the family than you can possibly imagine.
- 10) Don't try to talk the family into doing something they simply don't want to do. Be there with understanding and compassion.

With your help, the holidays may be a little gentler for the family grieving the death of a child.

The Compassionate Friends has more than 600 chapters in the United States with locations in all 50 states plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. At least 30 countries around the world have a Compassionate Friends presence. The organization annually sponsors The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting the second Sunday in December and more than 500 services open to the public blanket the country.

For more information on helping bereaved families or on the Worldwide Candle Lighting, visit www.compassionatefriends.org or call toll-free 877-969-0010.

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