



The Compassionate Friends of Canada

When A Child Dies...

National Newsletter - November/December 2018

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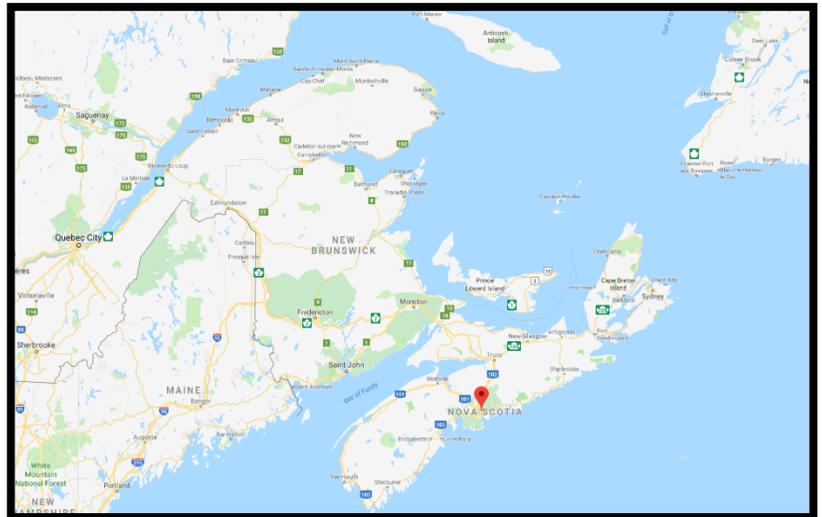
Judy Dowd (Campbell River, BC)

Transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.

- Reverend Simon Stephens, Founder, TCF

Another new Chapter

Even as the days get shorter and the nights seem darker, there are always rays of hope to carry us through. Join us, please, in welcoming our latest bright light, our newest chapter, TCF Dartmouth, NS, led by Heather Baker. Welcome, Dartmouth!



A Simple Candle Lighting Service

We have so many new and emerging Chapters this year that we are running the same article this November as last year:

Is your chapter planning a candle lighting service? If so, let your local newspaper know. I have found that the North Shore News (our community newspaper) is always ready to send a photographer to take a picture of one of us lighting a candle in front of the framed image of our child. The caption in the newspaper gives notice of when our event takes place. Because of this simple publicity, we always have new parents at our ceremony.

Our own chapter newsletter lets regulars and newcomers know that they should bring a framed photo of their deceased child to be displayed and then taken home. In preparation for these photos, we set up a tiered display, made of bricks and boards, covered with large red tablecloths and decorated with poinsettias.

When parents arrive, we invite them to write their child's name on a cardboard star and hang it on a small lighted tree, and to leave their child's photo on one of the red tiers.

After some welcoming words, and the reading of the TCF Credo, we ask parents to introduce themselves in the way we do at regular meetings: "My name is _____. My child _____ died four years ago from a falling accident, at age 18."

Then we light four symbolic candles (before the ceremony begins, the organizer has asked four parents to read a few sentences about the candle's significance, and then to light it.) In the handed-out program, the words that go with the candles are reproduced.

1.**RED CANDLE:** "As I light this red candle, let it symbolize **LOVE**. Love that we had for you our children, a love we still possess and a love which we are willing to share with others."

2.**BLUE CANDLE:** "As I light this blue candle, let it symbolize our **COURAGE**, courage first for taking the risk to be parents, and then our decisive choice to survive after our child or children have died."

3.**GREEN CANDLE:** "As I light this green candle, let it symbolize **GROWTH**, the growth that we have made since our child's death. We are in the process of adjusting to a new life, a new world, and accepting new horizons without our child's presence."

4.**WHITE CANDLE:** "As I light this white candle, let it symbolize **HOPE**, the hope we all have that some day our hearts will again possess joy. That we will once again know peace in our lives as we keep the spirit of our child in our hearts."

After the lighting of the four candles, one of the leaders says the following:

"The light from these four candles symbolizes the paths which we have chosen, the paths of Love, Courage, Growth and Hope. Walk with us, holding our hands, hearts, and spirits as we accept the greatest challenge life has to give. You will be our courage, you will watch us grow, through your love and our love combined, we shall find hope. These candles remind us not only of what we have lost, but also of what we had."

Now people are invited to come up one by one to light a candle for their child (or children). The parent, or parents, lifts the child's photo off the display. One of the leaders hands the participant a tea-light in a glass cup. The other leader lights it as the parent holds it forward. The parent holds the candle and the photo (facing the gathering) and says something like: "This candle is for Jeremy, whom we miss every day." Or, "... who always loved Christmas." Whatever comes to the parent's mind. The leaders have already lit candles for their children and said a few words, thus modelling the shortness of the speech.

Some of us light candles for bereaved parents who could not attend.

Participants are invited to respond in unison reading the “We remember them” line in the prayer below (from the *Gates of Prayer, Reform Judaism Prayer book*). (On printed handout.)

When We Remember Them

At the rising of the sun and at its going down

we remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter

we remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring

we remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer

we remember them.

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn

we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart

we remember them.

When we have joy we crave to share

we remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live;

for they are a part of us as

we remember them.

A musical piece is then played—either a recording or, if you have a guitarist who sings, let him/her lead you in “This Little Light of Mine.” For a piece of recorded music, we usually use Karen Taylor’s “Precious Child.”

Everyone is now invited to partake in coffee, goodies and conversation.

Submitted by Cathy Sosnowsky, Co-leader of TCF North Shore (North Vancouver)

Leaving a Legacy of Love

Dorothy Edith Krimmer, a stalwart member of the Victoria Chapter, passed away September 15, 2018, while in Hospice care. A few years earlier, Dorothy had a sudden, life-threatening health crisis, which prompted her to “put her affairs in order”. This was not simple or straightforward, as Dorothy had outlived her parents, her seven siblings, her husband and both of her children, Winnie and Wayne. What to do?

Dorothy had a long history of giving back to her community through volunteering and mentoring, so it was no surprise that she decided to distribute her estate to charities that she felt would continue to provide community resources far into the future. That would be her lasting legacy of love from Winnie, Wayne, and herself. She had so often commented that it was TCF that “got her through” after her children died, so she arranged with The Victoria Foundation for an annual donation to go to TCF Victoria, in an amount calculated to cover the basic expenses of the December Candle-Lighting Service, an event that she especially looked forward to. Thank you, Dorothy.

From the program for her memorial service:

Say not in grief “She is no more” but live in thankfulness that she was. – Hebrew Proverb

How can others contribute toward the continuation of TCF support for bereaved parents?

1. They can make a donation directly to their local chapter. Just a few dollars slipped into the Donation Box at the end of a sharing meeting or after a candle-lighting service will help to defray the costs of running the chapter. If someone wishes to make a more sizable contribution and would like a tax receipt, but the Chapter is not a Registered Charity, they can make their donation payable to The Compassionate Friends of Canada and send it to the TCF Canada registered office (see side-bar) along with instructions and we can process it for them. There will be no cost to them or the Chapter for this service.
2. Most cities have a United Way or similar service set up for their community. This option offers the convenience of payroll deductions. The Chapter would need to be a Registered Charity and would need to apply to United Way to become a designated recipient.
3. Organizations such as Canada Helps are also structured to receive and distribute charitable donations. Keep in mind that all of these need to cover their administration costs from the donations that they process.
4. Many cities have a local charitable foundation such as The Victoria Foundation that Dorothy used to facilitate ongoing donations from an estate. You choose the recipient(s) and how much you would like them to receive annually. You then make a donation that will cover that amount plus administration costs.
5. Many major corporations (some banks, for example) have a volunteer remuneration program set up to support local charities: individuals or a group from a charitable organization provide a certain number of volunteer hours in the name of the corporation, and at the end of the year the corporation gives a donation to your organization. One of our Chapters does this annually and they receive a cheque for \$500, which they choose to divide between their chapter and TCF Canada. Bonus: no administration costs incurred.
6. Others could do what my husband and I have done, and mention TCF in their will. (In our case, we both specified TCF Canada.) We certainly won't miss the cash when we are gone, and TCF will receive the full amount at no cost to the organization. Just think: if people started to each leave \$1000, over time, that would become quite a tidy sum. Even with low interest rates, that nest egg would support a solid level of service to bereaved parents across the country, far into the future. Let's get it rolling.

--Susan Doyle Lawrence, TCF Victoria, Vice-President TCF Canada

Thank You

This month our thanks go out to the Montreal Chapter, which has supported the National organization year after year, and TCF of Portage Plains, in Portage la Prairie, MB. We never take these donations for granted; every one is appreciated