



# The Compassionate Friends of Canada

## When A Child Dies...

## National Newsletter – Winter 2021

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*Transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.*

**Reverend Simon Stephens, Founder, TCF.**

### Year-end Message from the National Board

December is traditionally a time for celebration – looking forward to family gatherings, celebrations of Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanza, and the promise of lengthening days and a New Year. However, events of the past year have tended to dampen our enthusiasm.

For the last 20 months, the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted our family, social, and workplace routines. During 2021, the discovery of unmarked graves at former First Nations residential schools has caused us to question our history and to challenge the foundations of our society. The changing climate produced extreme heat and wildfires in the summer, and disastrous flooding in the fall. As the full impact of these weather events is revealed, our hearts go out to those who have been affected, while we all begin to worry about how such changes may affect our own lives.

On a broader scale, the economic outlook is causing concern at home, while the international geopolitical scene is as tangled as ever. Adding these uncertainties to the burden of grief can make the future seem even more worrisome.

As bereaved parents, we have experienced an unthinkable tragedy that, with the understanding and support of others, we are overcoming day-by-day. We have learned that “*We Need Not Walk Alone*”. We have shown resilience in taking one day at a time and courage in building hope for the future. This hard-learned ability to accept and adapt to changes beyond our control will allow us to maintain a positive outlook even while events around us appear confusing or even hopeless.

Whether you choose to celebrate or not to celebrate, we wish you the comfort of family and friends during this holiday season, and the strength to face whatever challenges the new year may bring.

***“We Need Not Walk Alone”***

## From the National Office

**World-wide Candle Lighting:** The 25th anniversary of this international event will take place on **Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup>**. As in 2020, due to Covid restrictions, Chapters are deciding between holding a limited in-person celebration and a virtual gathering. Some are planning to meet outdoors, weather permitting. To promote your event, or to help others make a decision, we invite you to post a brief note on the TCF Canada Leadership Facebook page.

**National Newsletter:** For the past several years, we have maintained regular communication with our chapters through a monthly newsletter. Our objective was to provide news, information, and items of interest to connect members from coast to coast and to provide guidance to leaders in organizing events and activities.

Regrettably, earlier this year, our newsletter editor, long-time TCF member Susan Doyle Lawrence, had to step down for medical reasons. We have so far not been able to find a replacement. When the Board needs to distribute important or time-critical information, we send out a Bulletin. However, while this approach is effective, we feel that it lacks the more personal touch of a newsletter. We have therefore decided to revive the newsletter, but on a quarterly basis instead of monthly. This is our first such issue.

If you have any suggestions for topics that you would like to see included, or material that you would like to contribute, please e-mail [NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net](mailto:NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net). And if you would like to assist with compiling and editing the newsletter, we would also love to hear from you!

**Donations:** We gratefully acknowledge donations made directly to our Treasurer and through the *Canada Helps* link on our website. This month, we send a big "Thank You" for recent donations from TCF Kelowna and TCF Ottawa, and from five individuals.

**Check-in Calls:** Once a year, we like to check-in personally with our Chapter Leaders to confirm that their personal contact details are still correct, to answer any questions, or to offer assistance if needed. Board members will be reaching out by phone or e-mail in the new year, so please standby for a quick check-in call.

**Grief Information Leaflets:** The Resource Committee has completed the extensive task of refreshing our grief information leaflets. The updated versions are available to the public as pdf documents through our website [www.TCFCanada.net](http://www.TCFCanada.net) under the RESOURCES tab. Here is the list of titles:

*A Child with Special Needs has Died; Caring for Surviving Children; Grief After a Substance Related Death; Grief After a Long-Term Illness; Grieving the Death of an Adult Child; Grieving the Death of a Stepchild; Grief in the Classroom; How to Help When a Child Dies; Mourning the Death of a Child; Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Newborn Death; My Child Died by Suicide; My Child was Murdered; Seven Principles for Bereaved Parents; Seven Principles for Bereaved Siblings; TCF Sibling Grief - When a Brother or Sister Dies.*

TCF bereaved parents and siblings prepared these leaflets to provide general information only, not to provide detailed advice or treatment. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the National Office.

**Resources for Chapter Leaders:** The RESOURCES tab also includes an area for Chapter Leaders with various forms and reference articles. Please contact the National Office for the password to access this area.

**Annual Reports:** Our main source of chapter information is the Chapter Annual Report which is due in January. Please take a few minutes to complete and submit the form as we greatly appreciate receiving them in a timely manner. The forms are downloadable from the Chapter Leader's area of the website.

**A Final Word of Hope:** From the 2011 movie *"The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel"*:

***"It will all work out well in the end, and if it hasn't worked out, it's not the end"***