



Compassionate Friends ACT & Queanbeyan



OFFERING FRIENDSHIP & SUPPORT

BETWEEN BEREAVED PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS & SIBLINGS

WELCOME TO THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Winter offers a unique blend of comfort and retrospection. The crisp air of winter can provide a refreshing contrast to the heat of summer and the warmth and coziness of a winter's night can be a comforting escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Winter's Breath Robert Longley

Rarely is it subtle
It can cut you like a knife
A rush of pure emotion
That might just change your life

Does it have a message
Beyond just being cold
Will it share its wisdom
For when we have grown old

It's tempting to dismiss it
When its blowing in your face
But maybe there's a purpose
For you being in this place

We tend to see the dark and cold
As somehow linked to death
But life is ever present
In every winter's breath.



Hellebore- The winter rose

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In this edition, you'll find:

- Useful resources, including recommended books, podcasts, and websites to guide and comfort you.
- Reflections about our children, grandchildren, and siblings, keeping their memories alive.
- Information about upcoming events where you can connect with others who understand.

We hope this newsletter provides comfort, inspiration, and a sense of community as we journey through another Canberra winter.

HEARTS REMEMBERED: COLLECTION OF GUIDANCE, REFLECTIONS AND INSPIRATION

Contribution by Sheila

In the end, we are all made of moments we couldn't keep,
hands we didn't hold long enough,
words we didn't say in time,
and love we believed would last forever.
Yet what remains is softer than memory and heavier than pain—
the quiet truth that even in their absence,
they shaped who we became.
~ unknown



Inside this humble dahlia you will see a little ladybeetle- often viewed as spiritual signs or gentle messengers from a lost child.



Contribution by Ann

Wind Phones

I first read about wind phones in the New Yorker magazine a few years ago, about a family calling their deceased son from a wind phone in Arizona and I was struck by how this comforted them and the power of using this to speak to their loved one. There are wind phones situated all over the world.

It was easy for me to visualise a wind phone in Canberra, sheltered by trees way up on some hill overlooking water and landscape. I picture it high up in the National Arboretum, a place I like to go and sit to feel close to the sky and revel in the wonder of the surrounding landscape and feel the spirits of my beautiful son Paul, my dear sisters, my parents and all those others, gone and missed.

I can truly imagine going into the quiet of a phone box away from the wind and the bird calls and picking up an old bakelite phone and dialing Paul's old number and talking to him down that unconnected yet very connected line as if he was not so far away and hear my words carried all through the cosmos or whatever it is and imagine him picking up the phone on the other side. Him listening in the silence and in that silence feeling him so present.

I also recently picked up this book in a street library and have just started reading it - happy to pass on if anyone else is interested. And. If anyone is interested in having a Canberra wind phone installed, please get in touch with me and we can bring this idea to fruition.

A "Wind Phone" (or Kaze no Denwa) is a symbolic, disconnected telephone located in a quiet, peaceful space that allows people to speak to lost loved ones or process their grief, leaving their words to be "carried on the wind".

Links:

- <https://www.mywindphone.com/the-original-phone-of-the-wind>
- <https://www.mywindphone.com/>
- <https://bell-gardia.jp/en/guide/the-phone-of-the-wind/>



Ōtsuchi wind phone in May 2018



Contribution by Tegan

Thoughts and feelings about losing a sibling

Grief and joy living simultaneously, side by side.

How can something so incredibly joyous such as bringing new life into the world also be wrapped in utter heartbreak and grief?

How do you halt time so that the person you absolutely love and adore can keep up and enjoy those moments too?

I am still finding it difficult to find the beauty in the simple things, for me, the simple pleasures still feel tainted with the heart wrenching loss of my little sister. The one that should have outlived me, seeing there is a decade difference between our ages.

I always try to find small ways to bring her close to me such as buying little trinkets for myself or my family that represent her or remind us of her; highland cows, country paraphernalia, namesake items, rabbits as she was born in the year of the rabbit. However it never quite feels enough; our homes are going to be filled with trinkets but all we really want is our homes to be filled with her life and laughter again.

There is a distinct difference between life before and life after her death.

There is something about a sibling that is vastly different to a friend. They are the ones that truly know you, warts and all. I know I will miss and grieve her forever, but my hope is I can begin to find pleasure in the small things in life and keep her memory alive in my children.



RESOURCES

Suggested Podcasts

- [Good Mourning Podcast](#)
- [The Surviving Siblings Podcast](#)
- [Life After Child Loss: A Parent's Grief](#)

Suggested Books / Poems

- [Always a Sibling: The Forgotten Mourner's Guide to Grief](#)
- [A Space in the Heart: A Survival Guide for Grieving Parents](#)
- [How to Carry What Can't Be Fixed](#)

Suggested Websites/ Guides

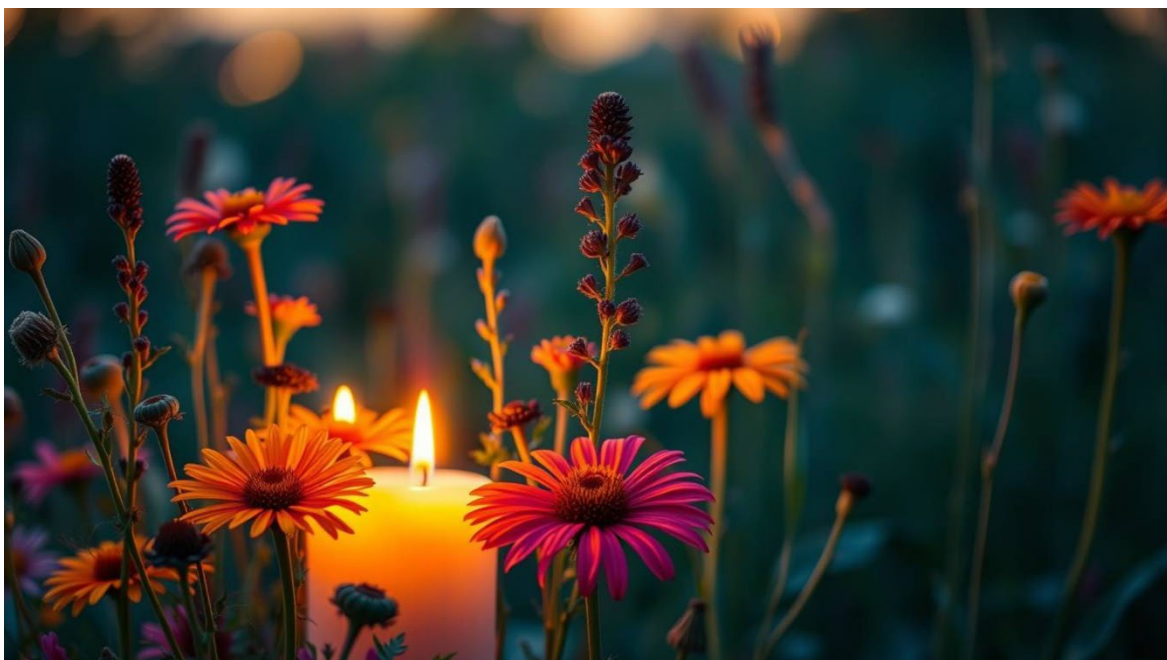
- [When someone dies: A practical Guide for Family and Friends](#)
- [Grief- Be You](#)
- [Relationships Australia: Grief and Loss](#)



CHERISHING MEMORIES: HONOURING OUR DEARLY LOVED CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS

Each month, we honour and remember our children/siblings who are deeply missed. Please take a few moments to hold them in your thoughts and celebrate their lives. Special days and heartfelt messages that say "I care" help us through difficult times. By remembering and celebrating our children, their stories and impact continue to live on.

Date of Death	Child's Name	Age	Parents
01-June-98	Sharyn Phillips	24	Gina's daughter
04-June-90	Marcus Dennys	18	Meg & Chris' son
29-June-00	Millie Hagan	5	Jane & David's daughter
03-Jul-03	Simon Misiak	20	Judith's son
15-Jul-13	Ian Smith	47	Pauline Wilkie's son
20-Jul-89	Chris Wright	22	Maxine Davies' son
27-Jul-23	Ryan Tanaskovic	29	Janelle's son
28-Jul-18	Blake Corney	4	Camille's son
01-Aug-13	Vanessa Burne	25	Pamela's daughter
06-Aug-12	Madeliene Birks	35	Gay & Barry Gallagher's daughter
09-Aug-16	Cara Bisceglie	33	Marissa Welsby's daughter
19-Aug-08	Andrew Gault	30	Christine Fraser's son
27-Aug-07	Rennie John Ramsay	25	Christine Fraser's grandson
31-Aug-04	Danielle Gibbons	27	Janice's daughter
31-Aug-14	Kurt Steel	25	Jayne & Philip's son



LOSS OF A SIBLING

One of the greatest losses is that of a sibling. Life is turned upside down and is never the same once a sibling passes away. Ultimately, our siblings know us like no one else. They know a private version of us, a more intimate self; they influence our growth, development, upbringing and emergence of self and personality.

Characteristics of the Sibling Bond

The relationships we develop with our siblings are debatably some of the longest relationships we'll have in our lives. We usually know them longer than our parents, spouses and children. We witness more memories, life events, milestones and life changes with our siblings than anyone else.

As well as sharing genetics, family stories that are centered around experience with our siblings build a sense of belonging and culture that is inherent to our identity. Depending on the connection we have with our parents, a sibling can offer a "caretaker" role, teaching us how to function in society and someone we look to for guidance throughout childhood and beyond. This can involve modelling their behaviour and learning how to communicate with others and relate to our peers.

As siblings are constants in our lives and undoubtedly shape our character, once no longer here, feelings of insecurity and anxiousness can surface, and we may question who we are as a person and our sense of self without them.

Information gathered from The Compassionate Friends Victoria

Additional Resources:

- [Siblings, Forgotten Mourners](#)
- [Parent Grief/ Sibling Grief: Similarities and Differences](#)
- [Modern Loss](#)



UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sharing meetings are held the second Wednesday of the Month between 6.00pm – 8.00pm at the Red Nose office, 70 MacLaurin Crescent Chifley.

The ‘formal’ part of the meeting will, in general, run from 6pm to 8pm, followed by time to mingle and refreshments until 8.30pm. We invite all participants to bring tea/coffee/milk and a small plate of food to share during the informal part of the meeting.

Please feel free to bring a photograph of your child/sibling to share with the group.

<p>Evening Sharing Meeting – Wednesday 10 June 2026 6.00pm – 8.00pm</p>	<p><i>Sharing Meeting with Catherine and Simon at the Red Nose Office</i> 70 MacLaurin Cres, Chifley. Acceptances to Catherine by Monday 08 June on 0407 924 259</p>
<p>Evening Sharing Meeting – Wednesday 8 July 2026 6.00pm – 8.00pm</p>	<p><i>Sharing Meeting with Sheila at the Red Nose Office</i> 70 MacLaurin Cres, Chifley. Acceptances to Sheila by Monday 06 July on 0411 126 243</p>
<p>Evening Sharing Meeting – Wednesday 12 August 2026 6.00pm – 8.00pm</p>	<p><i>Sharing Meeting with Jayne and Philip at the Red Nose Office</i> 70 MacLaurin Cres, Chifley. Acceptances to Jayne by Monday 10 August on 0419 680 712</p>

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Allan Barden

Is grief comparable to a cold, bleak winter? At least an Australian winter passes to another brighter season and some relief.

Perhaps exercise, an enjoyable book or movie, a holiday or a fine wine can help one alleviate grief for a while, but it is never really overcome.

It’s just one day at a time.



Special Events for 2026

As a committee we seek to offer occasional special events for members throughout the year. We welcome your ideas as to what you would like included and look forward to hearing from you in this regard. Please contact any committee member with your suggestions.

The Compassionate Friends Library

A reminder that we have a sizeable library of books around grief and bereavement for loan to members. We will endeavour to have a small selection of books on display at sharing meetings, but please ask the facilitator if you would like to view the entire collection.

The Compassionate Friends Memory Quilt

Those who have been members of TCF for some years will recall we have a 'memory quilt'. Squares of fabric onto which members have stitched designs and names in memory of their child/sibling. Sewn together these squares made up a sizeable quilt that hung on the wall at our sharing meetings. Anyone wishing to stitch a square in memory of their child/sibling to start a new memory quilt please contact a committee member for further details.

Donations

Unlike other TCF chapters, we no longer have a mandatory annual subscription fee for membership. However, we gratefully welcome any donations, however small. Funds received help to finance the cost of events we offer, and posting anniversary cards. Donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible. Please contact Chris Wronski if you wish to make a donation: chriswron@bigpond.com or call 0414 628 885.

Membership and Contact Details Update:

In order to maintain an up-to-date database, we need your assistance in providing certain information. If any of the below information has changed for you, please provide the relevant details to Jayne at jaynelouisesteel@gmail.com

- **Do you wish to cancel your membership?** (We will assume you wish to remain a member unless advised otherwise) Please inform Jayne if you wish to cancel your membership.
- **Anniversary cards:** Until advised otherwise, or cards are returned, they will continue to be sent. Please advise if you no longer wish to receive an anniversary card.
- **Newsletter:** Newsletters will be sent until advised otherwise. If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter or wish to add or delete your child's name from the anniversary section, please advise.
- **Contact details:** Has your email, telephone or postal address changed? Please provide updated details as soon as possible.
- ***Sharing Your Journey***

We invite you to contribute your reflections, emotions, and personal stories as a bereaved parent, brother, sister, or grandparent. Your experiences, whether expressed in a single line or an entire page, are valued and welcomed in this space. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who shares their voice and helps enrich this publication. All articles/columns in this newsletter are copyright. Opinions expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the writers and not necessarily those of TCCS or the editor. The editor reserves the right to edit any articles.

CONTACTS

Only a phone call away. If you would like to talk with a fellow bereaved parent, please feel free to contact any of the members listed below.

The Compassionate Friends Committee Members

President: Sheila Lynch Sheila.lynch@bigpond.com	Secretary and Librarian: Ann Finlay	
Membership: Jayne Steel Jaynelouise.steel@gmail.com	Treasurer: Chris Wronski	
Non-committee positions Public Officer: Chris Wronski	Editors: Carissa McQueen, Roslyn Moores, Tegan Bennett, Cindy Dean	
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	Sue: 0414 662 511	
Tuggeranong	Sheila: 6294 1731	
Queanbeyan		
TCF email: tcf.actqbn@gmail.com Web: compassionatefriendsact.org		

For support following a suicide contact **Canberra After Suicide Support (CASS)** Tel: 0421 725 180. A self-help group organised by people who have experienced the suicide of someone close. CASS provides bereaved people with information about suicide bereavement and opportunities to meet others. CASS also organises an annual remembrance ceremony for lives lost to suicide.