



# The Compassionate Friends

## Lehigh Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies



**October**

October 2014

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www.compassionatefriends.org  
click on "Online Support" under the "Find Support" tab

### Who We Are

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national nonprofit self-help organization that offers friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings.

### About Our Meetings...

Meetings are held 2nd Monday each month from 7 to 9 pm at Sacred Heart Hospital (2nd Flr. Conference Center), 4th & Chew Sts, Allentown. Free parking deck passes are available at the meeting.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and mature siblings. Younger siblings may benefit from one of the children's bereavement groups listed below. Meetings vary, from sharing, to guest speakers, to special presentations. Separate sharing sessions are offered to new members. Participation in group sharing is confidential and voluntary. Our hope is that being among other bereaved parents you may feel free to talk, cry and share, but it is okay to just come and listen too.

### Meeting and Events Calendar

**October 13** Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

**October 15** TCF Basket Bingo - See page 2 for more information

**November 10** Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

### Meeting Cancellations

All cancellations will be posted on our [facebook page - facebook.com/TCFLehighValley](https://www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley), on our [website homepage & calendar - www.lehighvalleytcf.org](http://www.lehighvalleytcf.org) and on [voicemail 484-891-0823](mailto:484-891-0823). Please refer to these sources for updates on the meetings

### Other Local TCF Chapters Meetings

| Carbon County   | Easton   | Quakertown   |
|---|--|--|
| 1st Wednesday 6:30 - 8:30 pm<br>Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn.<br>501 Delaware Ave. Palmerton<br>610-826-2938<br>Email: pannbiss@aol.com | 2nd Thursday 7 - 9 pm<br>Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,<br>2115 Washington Blvd., Easton<br>610-866-5468<br>Email: szabojanos1@verizon.net | 2nd Tuesday 7:30 - 9 pm<br>St. Lukes Quakertown Hospital<br>1021 Park Ave, Quakertown<br>215-536-0173<br>Email: tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net |

### Local Children's Support Groups

**Ryan's Tree for Grieving Children (ages 5-18)** - [www.slhn.org/ryanstree](http://www.slhn.org/ryanstree)

Sessions are offered at various times throughout the year. Call Krista Malone @ 610-997-7120 for information or register

**Children's General Bereavement Group (ages 5 - 13)**

Jeanette Laube, MA facilitates a children's bereavement group on a as needed basis. Preregistration required. Meeting day, time & place coincide with TCF, LV meetings. Call 610-762-5783 to register or for more information

### TCF Telephone Friends

For those times that you need to connect with someone between meetings, the following bereaved parents are available to listen and share

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Infant Loss ..... Kim Szep..... 610-730-3111                           | Suicide..... John & Maria Szabo..... 610 866-5468 |
| Infant Loss ..... Cathy McDonald... 610 391-1474                       | Addiction..... Nancy Howe..... 484-863-4324       |
| Multiple Children/<br>General Loss..... Betty Thompson... 610 868-0303 | Homicide..... Ginger Renner..... 610-967-5113     |
| Only Child..... Shelly Garst..... 484 241-5396                         |   |

## News, Events & Announcements



### TCF Basket Bingo October 15, 2014

Northampton Community Center  
1601 Laubach Ave, Northampton, PA

Doors open at 5pm, Games start at 7 pm

**Tickets: \$10.00 In Advance, 20.00 @ the Door**

Come join us for a night and try your luck at winning some great Filled Longaberger Baskets, Specials, Chinese Auction & 50/50. Food, beverages & gourmet candy apples available for purchase.

Tickets available at meetings or contact Dawn DeLong @ 610-837-7924



### TCF Joint Chapter Candle Light Remembrance Service December 8, 2014

Sacred Heart Hospital Auditorium 6:45 - 9pm



All members and families, as well as anyone who has lost a child, sibling or grandchild are invited to attend. The service features music, poetry readings, memorial candle lighting, a slideshow of our children, followed by a social.

#### **To have your child's photo included in the slideshow submit the following no later than Oct. 31st**

- ♥ 1-2 individual (not group photo) close up photos (up to 8x10). All photos will be returned at the service
- ♥ Your contact info, child's name, birth & anniversary dates, family members names
- ♥ If you have previously submitted a photo there is no need to submit another unless you would like to change it

#### **Submit by:**

- ♦ **Email:** a photo quality jpeg & info to: kimpogo@msn.com
- ♦ **Mail:** in a stiff mailer to - Kim Szep, 5816 Snowy Orchid Lane, Allentown, PA 18104 or
- ♦ **Make an appointment** by calling Kim @ 610-530-4244

*Please follow the submission instructions carefully and submit all required information prior to the deadline.  
The chapter is not responsible for submissions that are incomplete, late or sent to the wrong address.*

### The 18th Annual TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting December 14, 2014

Worldwide Candle Lighting is a very special and moving event, when bereaved families join together from around the world in memory of all children gone too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 18th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the U.S. in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

**In Our Area:** Lehigh Valley members, Tom & Eva Siebert are hosting their annual Holiday Candle Lighting Social at their home on Dec 14th at 5:30. Everyone welcome! Covered dishes welcome but not necessary, candles provided.

For Directions & to RSVP call Tom and Eva at 610 967-5886

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## To Our New Members

Making the decision to come to your first meeting can be difficult. It can also be difficult to return for a second or third meeting, but we ask that you attend three meetings before deciding whether or not TCF will work for you. We cannot walk your grief journey for you, but we can take your hand and walk beside you if you allow us to. We have no easy answers or quick fixes, but we care, share and understand. Although our members circumstances may be different, we have all "been there"...we are all grieving the loss of a child and therefore we can truly say we understand. You are not alone.

## To Our Seasoned Members

Think back to your first meeting, You were hurt, confused and felt alone in your grief. Remember the comfort you felt when you found you weren't alone and that others that had been where you were and survived. Remember the love and support you felt as fellow members offered on your grief journey. Now you are stronger and may not feel the need to attend meetings for aid and comfort. We need you though. New members need you. They need your encouragement, support and wisdom. If you haven't attended a meeting in awhile please consider coming back to offer hope to those who now feel lost and see no hope.

*"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely help another without helping himself"*

*~Ralph Waldo Emerson*



## The Magic We Find in Fall

Jack Frost - Jason's Dad - TCF South Central, KY

How often do we marvel at nature's beautiful hand as she plays her creative masterpiece across each of earth's precious regions? The wonder of such hue intensity as we watch each leaf turn from one glorious color to another?



I think that autumn has us all so speechless due to the similarities we find between nature and ourselves as bereaved parents. It was just months before that Spring saw the buds and blossoms which nature had produced at the start of life's season - as we did with each of our children. The intensity of summer brought not only growth but maturity as well: infant to toddler to school to graduation. Does our child's life not seem to have been so equally short? Then it is as if a silent alarm went off signaling the need to end one life so that preparations may begin for the whole process to repeat itself once again. Unfortunately, life goes on whether we want it or not. It goes on just as unfairly as it did when our child was alive.

But it is Fall when the vibrant leaves fall to the ground that we see the mirrored symbolism in our lives. Our children were a central part of our family tree and they too have slipped from our grasp. Even though more leaves will appear again and again, NONE ARE THE SAME, as the one which has died before it. Only our Compassionate Friends seem willing to hold the course that our children may not be forgotten. It is Fall when I seem to need my Friends the very most.

***Friendship isn't about whom you have known the longest.***

***Its about who came and never left your side when you needed someone the most.***

*Unknown*

# Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

**Birthday and Anniversary dates can be especially difficult.**

**Please keep the parents, grandparents and siblings of the following children in your thoughts and heart this month**

Please Note: Due to privacy concerns Birthday and Anniversary listings are only published with permission for Parents/Guardians, Siblings and Grandparents. If your child, grandchild or siblings name does not appear or a correction is needed please complete and sign the Update Form on page 11 and mail to the address indicated. Thank You

## October Birthdays

|                          |  |        |
|--------------------------|--|--------|
| Matthew Aungst           | Son of Christopher & Mary Kelly Aungst ; Brother of Alecia & David Aungst Aungst               | Oct 15 |
| Donna Lee Benninger      | Daughter of Betty Thompson   | Oct 24 |
| Michael Brown            | Son of John & Cynthia Coyle; Brother of Josey Brown  | Oct 12 |
| Christopher Cole         | Son of Donald Cole & Theresa Cole; Brother of Lauren Cole                                      | Oct 10 |
| David DeLong             | Son of Gene & Dawn DeLong; Brother of Jamie DeLong; Grandson of David Kaufman                  | Oct 23 |
| Gregory Dooley           | Son of Marc & Shirley Shubert  | Oct 13 |
| Bobby Egner              | Brother of Melissa Nice  | Oct 13 |
| Nicholas Fetchko         | Son of George & Fran Fetchko; Brother of Rebecca Fetchko & Andrew Fetchko                      | Oct 11 |
| Benjamin Fry             | Son of John & Cynthia Chryst; Twin Brother of Jeff Fry Brother of the late Peter & Paul Fry    | Oct 6  |
| Jeanne Hurley            | Daughter of Stephen & Jeannette Viglione; Sister of Robert Wambold, Jr. & Michele Yankow       | Oct 12 |
| Carol Johnson            | Daughter of Laretta Coyne; Sister of Elaine Muretta, Bob, Jim & Dave Johnson                   | Oct 18 |
| David Julio              | Son of Jack & Margaret Julio   | Oct 1  |
| Jonathan Keller          | Son of Dennis & Lori Keller; Brother of Amy Keller   | Oct 25 |
| Randy Krieg              | Grandson of Gloria Perlis  | Oct 15 |
| John Luzenski            | Son of John & Audrey Luzenski; Brother of Judy & Jeffrey Luzenski                              | Oct 6  |
| Cathy Mertz              | Daughter of Franklin & Lucille Reinhard; Sister of Cheryl Ann McCue                            | Oct 28 |
| Russell "Russ" Nicholson | Son of Jim & Lyn Nicholson; Brother of Rachel Nicholson  | Oct 18 |
| Haley Opperman           | Daughter of Eddie & Michele Opperman   | Oct 21 |
| Anthony Parker, Jr       | Son of Melissa Pickett   | Oct 3  |
| Allison Perno            | Daughter of Cathy Perno, Sister of Joseph & anthony Perno                                      | Oct 7  |
| Jeffrey Pettis           | Son of John & Gloria Zucal; Brother of Sherry White  | Oct 16 |
| Deanna Renner            | Daughter of Ginger & The late Merle Renner   | Oct 11 |
| Scott Rothrock           | Son of Larry & Linda Rothrock; Son of Larry & Linda Rothrock; Son of Larry & Linda Rothrock    | Oct 20 |
| Julie Searfoss           | Daughter of Gregory & Sharon Searfoss; Sister of David Searfoss; Granddaughter of Hilda Smoyer | Oct 7  |
| Larry Shunk              | Son of Betty Thompson  | Oct 12 |
| Darryl Shurow            | Son of Lew & Sharon Richards   | Oct 12 |
| Lisa Staub               | Daughter of Mark and Louise Stahley; Granddaughter of William and Patricia Johnson             | Oct 1  |
| Michael Stocker          | Son of Calvin & Kay Stocker; Brother of Megan Fibrick  | Oct 14 |
| Pete Swartwood, III      | Son of Pete Swartwood  | Oct 11 |
| Frank Thiel              | Son of Gregg & Debi Thiel; Brother of Ryan, Greg & Adam Thiel                                  | Oct 28 |
| Darren Whipple           | Brother of Jean Marie Yurkovitch   | Oct 27 |
| Kenneth Zellner          | Son of Kenneth & Barbara Zellner   | Oct 11 |

## October Anniversaries

|                            |  |        |
|----------------------------|--|--------|
| Ryan Balliet               | Son of Bruce & Pat Balliet   | Oct 10 |
| Sergei Beloglazova         | Son of Natasha Beloglazova; Brother of Ulia Doschiavo  | Oct 29 |
| Kevin Blosky               | Son of Jack & Janet Blosky; Grandson of Jack & Nancy Blosky                                  | Oct 4  |
| Michael Brown              | Son of John & Cynthia Coyle; Brother of Josey Brown  | Oct 15 |
| Brian Burke                | Son of Rich & Mary Burke; Brother of Melissa Burke   | Oct 9  |
| Nicholas "Nick" Caldarelli | Son of George & Cheryl Caldarelli  | Oct 11 |
| Anthony Coccia             | Nephew of Jane Coggins   | Oct 3  |
| Jessica Coe                | Daughter of Randy & Diane Coe; Sister of Allison Coe   | Oct 7  |
| Gregory Dooley             | Son of Marc & Shirley Shubert  | Oct 31 |
| Bobby Egner                | Brother of Melissa Nice  | Oct 29 |
| Dean George, Sr            | Son of Delphin & Sylvia George   | Oct 9  |
| Jonathan Hoffstetter       | Son of Richard & Suzanne Hoffstetter; Brother of Diane & Kenneth Hoffstetter                 | Oct 1  |
| David Julo                 | Son of Jack & Margaret Julo  | Oct 16 |
| Jack Kuhns, Jr             | Son of Jack & Cindy Kuhns; Brother of Michelle & Josh Kuhns                                  | Oct 12 |
| Richard Kulik              | Son of Dolores Kulik; Brother of Christina Schantzenbach & Michael Kulik                     | Oct 27 |
| Paul Levine                | Son of Louisa Levine; Brother of Gregory, Mary & Philip Levine                               | Oct 31 |
| Andrea Luecke              | Daughter of Louise Luecke; Sister of Jennae Luecke   | Oct 23 |
| John Luzenski              | Son of John & Audrey Luzenski; Brother of Judy & Jeffrey Luzenski                            | Oct 28 |
| Tina Marko                 | Daughter of Darlene Loncosky   | Oct 9  |
| Tanya Negrete              | Daughter of Judy Negrete; Sister of Melissa & Laura Negrete                                  | Oct 20 |
| Haley Opperman             | Daughter of Eddie & Michele Opperman   | Oct 21 |
| Anthony Parker, Jr         | Son of Melissa Pickett   | Oct 3  |
| Wayne Petzold              | Son of David & Joan Petzold, Sr.; Brother of Amy, Dave & Father of Katie Petzold             | Oct 8  |
| Caleb Putro                | Son of David & Susan Pultro; Brother of David Pultro, Jr                                     | Oct 13 |
| Amanda Rehrig              | Daughter of Gary & Roseanne Rehrig; Sister of Ernie Rehrig                                   | Oct 17 |
| Deanna Renner              | Daughter of Ginger & The late Merle Renner   | Oct 22 |
| Lydia Rice Cobb            | Daughter of Virginia Rice  | Oct 10 |
| Thomas Sensinger           | Son of Ann Sensinger; Brother of Susan Brown   | Oct 9  |
| Philip Smith               | Son of Morgan Smith  | Oct 29 |
| Troy Southgate             | Son of Donald & Susann Southgate; Brother of Martin Southgate                                | Oct 30 |
| David Uecker               | Son of Susan Uecker-Bittner & The Late Phillip C. Uecker; Brother of Amanda Uecker-Miernicki | Oct 3  |
| Shawn Williams             | Son of Terry & Deborah Williams; Brother of Stephen Williams & Stacey Bedics                 | Oct 6  |
| Adam Wolk                  | Son of Michael & Sheila Wolk; Brother of Laura & Sarah Wolk                                  | Oct 22 |

**Please Note:** Due to privacy concerns Birthday and Anniversary listings are only published with permission for parents/guardians, siblings and grandparents. If your child, grandchild or siblings name does not appear above or a correction is needed please complete and sign the Update Form on page 11 and mail to the address indicated.

# Love Gifts

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Our largest monthly expense is the printing and mailing of newsletters to our 400 readers. Your tax deductible Love Gift donations enables the chapter to continue our mission of reaching out to the newly bereaved and providing ongoing support to all our members. Love Gifts are most often given in memory of a child who has died. They may also be given in memory of or in honor of a friend, relative or special person.

To make a love gift donation please use form on page 11

### Contributor

### In Memory of

♥ Laretta Coyne

**Carol Ann Johnson**

*Love you always*

♥ Donald & Susann Southgate

**Troy G. Southgate**

*You are always forever in our hearts. We miss you. Love, Mom, Dad & Marty*

♥ Jack and Nancy Blosky

**Kevin Blosky**

*You are gone but not forgotten. Forever in our hearts*

# Donations and Contributions

### TCF Lehigh Valley Contributors

★ *Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown  
for meeting room and drinks*

★ *Mary Ann Donuts, Allentown  
for meeting snacks*

★ *Giant Food Store Employees, Village West, Allentown  
for United Way Contributions  
In Memory of David Todd Smith*

★ *Aetna Payroll Contributors*

★ *United Way Payroll Contributors*

### TCF Carbon County Contributors

★ *Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn.  
for meeting room*

★ *The Country Harvest, Palmerton  
for meeting snacks*

To contribute through the United Way to The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley, ask your employer for the appropriate form and use the number **12116** in the write-in area.

## Thought For The Day

It is not easy returning to the world of normalcy when yours is so upside down.. It is not easy to stop being ea mother or father to your child that has died. The thought for the day is a word patience: Patience with e yourself who suddenly and powerlessly has been thrown has into this horrid nightmare; Patience with your with your spouse who always seems to be having an up day when you're having a down day; Patience with relatives and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt; and patience with time... for it takes time to adjust and time can move so slowly. PATIENCE.

Rose Moen, TCF Carmel-Indianapolis IN

# Halloween Is Still a Holiday to Remember

By Wayne Loder  
TCF Lakes Area, Michigan

Two Halloweens have now passed since my eight-year-old Stephanie and five-year-old Stephen left us to live with God. Even before the kids were old enough to trick-or-treat, I still recall their delight at the costumes worn by all the neighborhood kids who came to the door. I still remember how thrilled Stephen was to be handing out the candy when he was only one-and-a-half years old. We still have a picture of him holding the plate of goodies. If you look close, you can see where he took a bite out of one of the candy bars with the wrapper on and set it back on the plate.

I can still remember the all too few times I was able to take my children out trick-or-treating. I remember my daughter dressed up as a nurse offering to fix up all those other trick-or-treaters who were obviously hurting with all that fake blood they were wearing. I remember Stephen wearing his great pumpkin outfit. We stuffed it so full of padding that when he fell down not only did he not get hurt, he had to be physically picked up because he was flailing his arms around like a beetle on its back. I can still see Stef holding Stephen's little hand and

patiently leading him up the walkway and helping him hold open his bag so that the candy would find its mark. She always made certain he said thank you for the candy. It usually came out "thank woo."

The first Halloween following their death I remember driving home with tears streaming down my face as I watched the other trick-or-treaters coming up and down the streets. My wife and I fled our home depositing bags of candy for our next door neighbors to hand out for us. Last year we found the courage to stick around and greet the ghosts and goblins who found their way to our door. Funny thing was we felt as dressed up as the trick-or-treaters. We were wearing our happy face masks.

The memories are now starting to fade of the Halloween before our children died. It won't be too long and I'll be leading Christopher our son who is now a year old up those driveways just like I did before. I feel sad that Stef and Steve can't be there but you

know I have a feeling that if I hold out my hand and close my eyes, two little gloved hands will slip into mine and I'll again hear in unison "just one more house Daddy."

# Halloween

By Cheri Gordon,  
TCF, N. Dade/S. Broward, FL

For me, Halloween marks the beginning of the holiday season. This used to mark the start of an emotional decline that ran straight through Valentine's Day.

- ❖ October has Halloween,
- ❖ November has Thanksgiving Day,
- ❖ December has my birthday -- my Cathie's birthday, Christmas, and New Year's Eve,
- ❖ January has New Year's Day (the day the accident happened)
- ❖ And January 13 (the day she died).

So, when Halloween came, I would just as soon have gone to sleep and awake some time in February!

As the children came to the door and called out, "Trick or Treat!" I would cringe because I could never hear Cathie say those words again. That was 'then.' Fifteen years later, I am able to hear those words as I hand out the goodies.

I inwardly thank them for letting me remember when Cathie did go Trick-or-Treating and had so much fun ... and for having those oh-so-very-good memories. Because they are good memories now. And it's all those good memories that keep me going ... even after all these years.



*Right now...  
Take a moment,  
Close your eyes  
and remember the  
smile of your child.*

*Sascha Wagner*

## Victories

TCF, York, PA

How many small victories have you won lately in the work of combating your grief? Have you been able to: Cook any of your child's favorite foods, do something without crying about it for the first time since your child died, enjoy yourself a little and laugh, hear some music or watch a TV show your child liked, go back to a favorite place, or remember with a little less pain?

These victories are small, but as we keep adding to the list of things we can bear to do again, we build an impressive list of victories to be proud of.

These things are beautiful beyond belief:

- ◆ The pleasant weakness that comes after pain,
- ◆ The radiant greenness that comes after rain,
- ◆ The deepened faith that follows after grief,
- ◆ And the awakening to love again.

## Feel

Feel no guilt in laughter,  
 For he knows how much you care.  
 Feel no sorrow in a smile  
 That he's not there to share  
 You cannot grieve forever  
 He would not want you to.  
 He hopes that you would carry on  
 The way you always do.  
 So talk about the good times  
 And the ways you showed you cared,  
 The days you spent together,  
 All the happiness you shared.  
 Let memories surround you,  
 A word someone may say  
 Will suddenly recapture  
 A time, an hour, a day.  
 That brings him back as clearly  
 As though he were still here,  
 And fills you with the feelings  
 That he is ever near.  
 For if you keep those moments,  
 You will never be apart,  
 And he will live forever  
 Locked safe within your heart.

Author Unknown



## Cemetery Visits

Mary Cleckley, TCF Atlanta GA

Are you one of those people who have a need to go to the cemetery often? The non-bereaved frown on that as a rule. Many people feel there is something morbid about those visits; that you're obsessing. Unless you know the pain of losing someone you love better than yourself, you can't understand that need.

Some people need to visit every day; others go now and then; & still others never go back once the funeral is over. There are no rules. If it makes people uncomfortable when you make your cemetery visits, go alone. Don't feel you need to get anybody's permission or approval. Call a friend who won't judge you by the number of miles you travel to and fro.

It is important to understand that how often you go to the cemetery has absolutely nothing to do with the length and depth of your expression of your grief. Do what comforts you, not what pleases others. Your needs should and must come first, especially right now. You won't always require visits this often, and when that happens, don't feel guilty. It means you are progressing. For right now, do what makes you feel better.

## Never Good-bye

By Gwen Brown, TCF, Winnipeg, MB

They tell me I must say Good-bye,  
 That life goes on,  
 That death comes to all,  
 That you're in a better place,  
 But they haven't lost a child.  
 I tell them I must keep you with me.  
 Remember your faults  
 Remember the joy you brought.  
 Because I was, and I am, your Mother.  
 I tell them I will give you life,  
 I'll keep your memory fresh,  
 My life is more full because  
 You live on in me.  
 I am a better person because of you.  
 I shall never say Good-bye  
 until I can Say **Hello**.



## Shared Thoughts on Fear

By Marie Hofmockel , TCF Valley Forge

After losing a child or sibling, we quickly realize that we are very vulnerable to death. Those terrible tragedies that normally happened to other people have now come into our own home.

Before we even get through the stages of shock or denial, we fear losing another family member. Our interest in daily living and ourselves is at a very low ebb. Often the concern for surviving children or family members increases to the point of smothering them. If there are no other children, the concern frequently is transferred to the mate.

As my youngest surviving son once said, "Can I not live because my brother died?" (He was then 16, the age our Doug died in an auto accident.) This helped me to realize that robbing him of the carefree feeling that belongs to teenagers was wrong. I certainly did not want him to worry to the extent I did. As frightened as we are, we have to accept the fact we can not control or protect our children against all dangers. I chose to back off, and just prayed a lot.

The fear of "going crazy" is very common. I had this fear because I was not healing at the same rate as when my siblings and parents died. It would have been helpful had I been going to The Compassionate Friends, and known a bereaved parent's grief is different, and for me much longer and more intense. Even though the fear of suicide and going crazy is very common, I have never known a bereaved parent who attended The Compassionate Friends to do either.

If we share our grief and pain with someone who has been in the same depth of despair, they can sometimes help us to sort out our feelings. The long time bereaved parents and siblings can help us through our bad times, just by letting us know they "were there" and survived. They too had intense exaggerated fears, which eventually left. A certain residue of fear remains with us, but this degree of fear we can live with.

Sharing is probably the one thing that helps us most. It helps us to look at ourselves more objectively, and sometimes realize when we are unduly alarmed. We fear forgetting our child, how they looked, laughed, their voice, and the things they did, we can't bear losing anything

pertaining to our child, but these things we never forget.

Our children are no longer with us to touch and hold, but our love and memories are very much alive. It bothers me terribly when others say, "but you have six other children left". Our love for our child that died can not be transferred to another. Our relationship was between the two of us. Some people say a part of them died with their child. I like to say a part of me is reserved for the memories of Doug. This is its only function. So I need to keep the memories alive to use this part of me.

## Hope

By Marian Roznowski TCF, Pittsburg, PA

Do you know what HOPE is? I recently heard it described as "the desire for something and the expectation of achieving it." That struck home with me, I have been hoping for happiness ever since my son Darren was killed 2 1/2 years ago, and although it has been a long, hard struggle - often two steps forward and three steps backward. I am to the point in my life where I now have the expectation of achieving happiness. Oh, it will be a different kind of happiness, that's for sure. Nothing will ever be the same as it was 2 1/2 years ago. But already I can feel it working within me - it's a deeper, more meaningful happiness. It's a happiness that lasts longer than a moment. It's a good feeling. It's something that people can see in me, and they have told me so. It's something that all of you have helped me with. Maybe it can better be described as peace of mind. I hope it comes into your life too. I'm not saying that I will never have a bad day again; I will, and I still do occasionally. But I'm convinced that happiness can come to all of us if we are willing to work for it. You've all heard the expression that "nothing comes easily". Well, this is no different-even more difficult - but very much worth the effort. After all, if anyone deserves it, WE DO !!

*Hope and fear cannot occupy the same place at the same time.*

*Invite one to stay*

*Mary Angelou*



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# Sibling Page

## The Unique Nature of Sibling Loss

By Tabitha Jayne 2011, posted in Death of a Sibling

I can still remember the call that told me my younger brother was dead. It was from my grandmother. Funnily enough, I'd been contemplating that my grandparents were getting old and that I needed to prepare myself for their deaths. I never expected that I would receive a call from them to tell me that my brother had crashed his car into a lamp post on the way home from a concert and was killed immediately. He was 17; I was 22.

The death of a sibling is strange. Everyone asks how your parents are, but everyone seems to forget about you. It's as if you are not important. Your role is there to provide support to everyone else. Somehow it didn't surprise me when I went looking for information on the internet and found that siblings were known as "the forgotten mourners."

The relationship between siblings is unique. There is no one else in the world that you have such a love-hate relationship with. I know that I would curse my brother harshly but if anyone else did, I would attack them for it. Siblings have a right that no one else has. It means that you can show your worst to them and know that they will still forgive you afterwards and speak to you like nothing was wrong.

Some people attribute this gift to parents too. Yet it is different. As a sibling you are allowed to know hidden activities, beliefs, attitudes and dreams that are never shared with parents. As your sibling grows older, this perspective can be transferred to partners but siblings seem to share the most information.

When you lose a sibling, you also lose your identity. Your sibling has always been part of your life. They have helped define who you are and your role within the family. It leads you to question who you are and what your life purpose is.

If you are younger like myself, you also lose the chance to develop a relationship based on friendship with someone who has known you your whole life. I know that my relationship with my brother was changing as he died. Although he was my younger brother, his wisdom at times made him appear to be my older brother. I was grateful for someone who was looking out for me. And I

was so angry that I would never see him get married, have children or grow did -so I could tease him- about how ugly he was getting.

Your sibling is also your peer, so it leads you to question your own mortality. It also leads you to question why them and not me. In my attempt to make sense of this question, I moved into the realm of helping others affected by loss transform grief, find peace and feel more positive about the future. It was my way of justifying my brother's death.

It's now been over 8 years since my brother died, and I am at peace with it. It's ok that I'll never fight with him again, or hug and make up. It's ok that I'll never know what man he would have grown into. I still think about him every day and I talk to him a lot. I've created a new relationship with him that continues on after death. After all, he is my brother and always will be. Not even death can take that away from me.

## Catching Up

By Melissa Mae Friebe TCF, Minneapolis, MN

When they told me, I understood.  
 I knew you would never return.  
 I never wondered where you went.  
 I still remember.  
 The trees swayed in the blowing breeze.  
 It was a chilly and gray,  
 just what you'd picture for such a day.  
 I gazed around the small gathering,  
 at faces streaked with tears.  
 I was silent as so many cries surrounded me.  
 I felt empty.  
 It was as if I looked in from the outside, seeing the pain,  
 hurt and suffering I was helpless to heal.  
 I knew more than they thought.  
 You weren't gone.  
 You had only run ahead and are now  
 waiting for us...  
 To catch up.

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 365 Drift Rd  
 Palmerton, Pa 18071

The Compassionate Friends, Easton  
 C/O John Szabo  
 1514 Sculac Dr  
 Bethlehem, Pa 18020

### Member Update Form

Please use this form to change or update information or permit publication of child's Birth and Anniversary dates in "Our Children Remembered" (OCR) section.

**Mail this update form to:** Kathleen Collins, 2971 Pheasant Dr., Northampton, PA 18067 **or email updates to:** TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

The following is  Information change or update  Address or Phone change  Permission (check this box to grant OCR publication Newsletter/ Web permission)

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Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent / Guardian Names \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Sibling's & or Grandparents Names (We publish only Parents/Guardians, Grandparents and Sibling names)

If this is a information change ... please indicate what changes need to be made ( i.e. name change, correction, sibling name addition etc...)

# The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us.

Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds and relationships.

We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief,  
but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source for strength;

while some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in a deep depression; while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,

it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together.

We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other grieve as well as to grow.

**We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends**

## Siblings Walking Together

*(Formerly the Sibling Credo)*

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.

Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.

Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.

At other times we need our families to be there.

Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be.

We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.

We are living a life very different from what we envisioned,

and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.

Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows  
as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

## About This Newsletter

**This newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley Chapter with the hope that it will be a helpful resource for you on your grief journey.**

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