



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *Lehigh Valley Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**



September 2014

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#### **TCF Online Support**

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**

**September 8** Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

**October 13** Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

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

## **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. Please refer to these sources for updates on the meetings

## **Other Local TCF Chapters Meetings**

**Carbon County**  
1st Wednesday 6:30 - 8:30 pm  
Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn.  
501 Delaware Ave. Palmerton  
610-826-2938  
Email: pannbiss@aol.com

**Easton**  
2nd Thursday 7 - 9 pm  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,  
2115 Washington Blvd., Easton  
610-866-5468  
Email: szabojanos1@verizon.net

**Quakertown**  
2nd Tuesday 7:30 - 9 pm  
St. Lukes Quakertown Hospital  
1021 Park Ave, Quakertown  
215-536-0173  
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/

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.

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

*~Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## 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.

# Grandparents' Day September 14

By Margaret Gerner, bereaved parent & grandparent, BP/USA, St. Louis MO

*The impetus for a National Grandparents' Day originated with Marian McQuade, a housewife in Fayette County, West Virginia. Her primary motivation was to champion the cause of lonely elderly in nursing homes. She also hoped to persuade grandchildren to tap the wisdom and heritage their grandparents could provide. President Jimmy Carter, in 1978, proclaimed that National Grandparents Day would be celebrated every year on the first Sunday after Labor Day. In 2014, Grandparents Day falls on September 14th.*

In our grief over the death of our child, we may fail to realize that grandparents also grieve, although not in the same way we do. Their grief is two-sided, one for the child who was dear to them, and the other for their own child who is suffering.

Just as parent do, grandparents lose their future. One of their joys is the expectation that through grandchildren they achieve immortality, and their name will be carried on. At the death of their grandchild, that branch of their family tree is cut off. What should have been will not be. In cases of an only child, there will be no future generation. Just as for the parent, the family of the grandparent will never be complete again. They, too, feel the empty place at family gatherings.

We bereaved parents must consider the needs of our parents, and at the same time be open with them about our needs. We can let them know how they can help us, but at the same time, we must be aware that they, too, need help. Mutual sharing of feelings between bereaved parents and grandparents will be helpful to both in the recovery process. The sharing not only of painful feelings but also happy memories of the child can be helpful for both, and it can also create deeper relationships in the family.

# 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

## September Birthdays

Nicholas Allesch	Son of Toni Allesch	Sep 2
Christopher Antler	Grandson of Charles & Charlotte Antler	Sep 14
Neal Balmer, II	Son of Lisa Feist; Step Son of Charles Feist; Brother of Kaitlyn Balmer & Laura Balmer	Sep 5
Todd Belles	Son of Anita Belles	Sep 17
Michael Buss	Son of Bea Bryfogle; Brother of Lindsay & Katelyn Buss	Sep 13
Daniel Catino	Brother of Hunter, Tanner & Joshua Catino	Sep 26
John Counterman, III	Son of Mary Jo Ackerly; Brother of Theresa Legarski	Sep 30
Brian Davis	Son of Stewart & Nancy Davis; Brother of Kristin Hoffman & Sandy Davis	Sep 15
Brian DeLong	Son of Lenny & Linda Fritzinger	Sep 15
Alexandra Dixon	Daughter of Albert & Joan Dixon; Sister of Zack Dixon	Sep 22
Rocky Fraccica	Son of Rocky & Sadie Fraccica	Sep 13
Rita Guerrieri	Daughter of Art & Mary Guerrieri; Sister of Maryrose Guerrieri-Nesbitt	Sep 29
Lisa Hawk	Daughter of Bruce & Mary Hawk; Sister of Bruce Hawk	Sep 4
David Hoagland, Jr	Son of Gypsy Garrett	Sep 24
Jonathan Hoffstetter	Son of Richard & Suzanne Hoffstetter; Brother of Diane & Kenneth Hoffstetter	Sep 22
Julie Howe	Daughter of Timothy & Nancy Howe; Sister of Melanie Howe	Sep 3
Jack Kuhns, Jr	Son of Jack & Cindy Kuhns; Brother of Michelle & Josh Kuhns	Sep 23
Richard Kulik	Son of Dolores Kulik; Brother of Christina Schantzenbach & Michael Kulik	Sep 5
Charles Kunsman, Jr	Son of Charles & Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan, Sandra Kunsman, the late Walter Alfonso & the late David Kunsman	Sep 18
John "Jack" Kushnerick, Jr.	Son of Bernice Kushnerick; Brother of Pat & Jan Kushnerick	Sep 17
Paul Levine	Son of Louisa Levine; Brother of Gregory, Mary & Philip Levine	Sep 28
Alexander Madden	Son of Judith Madden; Brother of Thomas Maher & Jennifer Cenci	Sep 18
Michael Mann	Son of Lee & Shirley Lutz	Sep 26
Anthony "Tony" Mariani, II	Son of Kathleen Collins & the late Anthony E. Mariani; Stepson of Brian Collins; Brother of Matthew Mariani; Grandson of William & Janet Pickett	Sep 13
Carrie Meuret	Daughter of Jennifer Zayas; Sister of Dakota Zayas	Sep 15
Caden Rabenold	Son of Catherine Rabenold; Grandson of Bill & Vicki Rabenold	Sep 16
Harry Rawdon	Son of Margaret Rawdon; Brother of JettaAnn Rawdon	Sep 23
Lydia Rice Cobb	Daughter of Virginia Rice	Sep 27
Anthony Romig	Son of Edward C. Romig, Sr. & Lois Pearsall; Brother of Edward C. Romig, Jr.	Sep 12
Constance Stewart	Daughter of Joanne Stewart; Sister of Keith & Kevin Stewart	Sep 23

## September Birthdays

Sean Virmalo	Son of Udo & Janet L. Virmalo; Brother of Eric, Brett & Katelyn Virmalo	Sep 13
Stephanie Volkert	Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert	Sep 22
Dale Waitkus	Brother of Alice Walbert	Sep 18
Gregory Weiland, Jr	Son of Robin Weiland; Brother of Rozalyn Weiland	Sep 23
Michael Widmer	Son of Steve Widmer & Mary Widmer; Brother of Suzanne Widmer	Sep 1

## September Anniversaries

Aaron Abud	Son of Jose and Susan Abud; Brother of Ariana & Sophia and Susan Abud	Sep 4
Christopher Antler	Grandson of Charles and Charlotte Antler	Sep 14
James Balloch	Grandson of Bill Gerth & Fern Gerth	Sep 4
Todd Belles	Son of Anita Belles	Sep 28
Rachael Brosky	Daughter of Karl Brosky & Jeanette Beilfuss; Sister of Rebekah Brosky-Dorsey & William Brosky	Sep 8
Holly Cavanaugh	Daughter of Beverly Ann Cavanaugh & Bill Cavanaugh; Sister of Bo Cavanaugh	Sep 25
Christopher Cole	Son of Theresa Cole & Donald Cole; Brother of Lauren Cole	Sep 10
Thom Eichlin	Son of Nancy Eichlin	Sep 11
Robert Freudenberger	Son of Nola Freudenberger	Sep 10
Carol Johnson	Daughter of Laoretta Coyne; Sister of Elaine Muretta, Bob, Jim and Dave Johnson	Sep 23
Kimberly Kohl	Daughter of Lyndon and Linda Kohl	Sep 28
Matthew Kolb	Brother of Sarah and Andrew Kolb	Sep 6
Anthony "Tony" Mariani, II	Son of Kathleen Collins & the late Anthony E. Mariani; Stepson of Brian Collins; Brother of Matthew Mariani; Grandson of William and Janet Pickett	Sep 6
Janet Mitchell	Daughter of Inez Housel; Sister of Brian, Tammy, Lisa & Jay Housel	Sep 24
Nicole Reinhart	Daughter of Michael and Pamela Reinhart; Sister of Mikey & Timmy Reinhart	Sep 17
Scott Rothrock	Son of Larry and Linda Rothrock	Sep 18
Jeanmarie Siedlecki-Moyer	Daughter of Joe and Monica Siedlecki; Sister of MaryAnn & Michele Siedlecki and the late Joey Siedlecki	Sep 25
David Todd Smith	Son of David and Kathleen Smith	Sep 17
Jon Sulick	Son of John Sulick; Brother of Aymae Sulick	Sep 15
James "Jimmy" Thompson	Son of the late C. Douglas "Doug" Thompson	Sep 13
Dale Waitkus	Brother of Alice Walbert	Sep 5

***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
♥ Margaret Rawdon	<b>Harry Rawdon</b> <i>15 years and my heart still aches. Love you, Mom</i>
♥ Wayne & Linda Hollabaugh	<i>In honor and memory of those who generously made the commitment to shoulder grieving families in the love of their child or sibling</i>
♥ Kathleen Collins	<b>Anthony E. Mariani, II</b> <i>I will miss you until I take my last breath and we are reunited. Sending all my love to you in remembrance of your earthly birthday and your Angel date. Mom</i>
♥ Lee & Shirley Lutz	<b>Michael D. Mann</b> <i>My precious son, 22 years later on your 45th birthday, the ache in my heart is still very fresh. Love Always Mom &amp; Dad</i>
♥ Tom & Sherry Gallagher	<b>Kelly Gallagher</b> <i>Loving you always (26th Anniversary)</i>
♥ Richard & Suzanne Hoffstetter	<b>Jonathan Paul Hoffstetter</b> <i>Dear Jon, Remembering you on your 38th birthday. We all love and miss you</i>

## 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*
- ★ *Joan Kunsman*

★ *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.

# Brothers Should Be Marching

By Lora Krum, TCF Carbon County, PA

The warmth of a summer evening with the August sun still high in the sky  
As I linger in quietness of our backyard, the emptiness still makes me cry.  
As I walk along, I feel the grassy carpet underneath my feet  
And in the distance I begin to hear that familiar beat.  
Just like I'd heard in previous weeks from across the field down in the small valley below  
There was a group that was working together to learn this season's show.  
There's one senior class trumpet player missing through all of his high school years,  
And now a freshman drummer is missing too, causing me even more tears.

That trumpet player and that drummer used to play right alongside of the others,  
The freshman and the senior who are very special brothers.  
To understand that everyone else must go on with their own life indeed is plain,  
But wondering if they remember them adds to this stabbing pain.

A familiar sight again appears as we've seen many times before,  
My heart first stops, and then sits heavy, upon the vision I now deplore  
The grass now feels abrasive as I stand, frozen, and watch the band approaching,  
My eyes travel up and down that line as I'm filled with grief and longing.  
Comments like 'what a big band,' and 'the single file line seems like it never ends'  
But, Oh, how I wish that line was just a bit longer, including two more friends.  
To see the confidence upon the face of a senior trumpeter marching so strong,  
And the nervousness of the freshman drummer, beginning to feel he belonged.

That trumpet player and that drummer used to play right alongside of the others,  
The freshman and the senior who are very special brothers.  
To understand that everyone else must go on with their own life indeed is plain,  
But wondering if they remember them adds to this stabbing pain.

The drums grow more thunderous as they approach, but my heart beats louder still  
While thinking of their earlier years, with memories I am filled  
Two boys would get excited and we'd race right up the street  
Watching and listening to the band was always quite a treat.  
Of older kids they knew, and songs they heard, and formations they saw we'd talk,  
All the way back home again, as they pranced right down the walks.  
There never seemed to be a question that one day they'd be on that field, too  
And I anticipated the joy of seeing that, and how I wish that it could be true.

That trumpet player and that drummer used to play right alongside of the others,  
The freshman and the senior who are very special brothers.  
To understand that everyone else must go on with their own life indeed is plain.  
But wondering if they remember them adds to this stabbing pain.

# **GUILT** **over the death of a child**

By Dr Stuart Grant from Grief Relief magazine

"Doctor, one of the most awful feelings is guilt."

How often I have heard this refrain from a parent who has lost a child. Guilt can be an overwhelming and crushing burden; but it can be handled if one knows its roots. One feels guilty when one fails to fulfill obligations that he believes he has towards another individual. When it comes to our children, we have many real obligations. However, there are two obligations which are unrealistic, and which may be the root of much of our guilt.

Deep down many people believe that when it comes to their children they must be omniscient and omnipotent. Omniscience implies that one must always know what will happen to one's child. If a problem arises, the parent will know how to resolve it. Therefore, if my child is killed in an automobile accident, I should have known he would be in danger and prevent him from entering the car. If my child died from disease, I should have known how to care for him, or at least, which doctor, treatment or hospital would have cured him. If my child has died by suicide, I should have seen and understood the signs, or known what words to use to instill in him the will to live.

Omnipotence implies that one must always have to power to protect one's child from others or from himself. Omnipotence also implies that I have the power to keep my child alive. If my child dies in a skiing accident, I should have had the presence of mind to stop him from going no matter how much he wanted to go. If my child is murdered, I should have had the power to defend him against the murderer. If my child succumbs to an illness, I should have had the power to cure him or find a cure.

When our children die we feel that we have failed them in our obligation to be omniscient and omnipotent. As a result, we feel overwhelming guilt. What is obvious (except to the grieving parent) is that, as human beings, we are neither omniscient or omnipotent. These attributes must be left to God. We must struggle with being merely mortal. Furthermore, being omniscient and omnipotent would most probably cause us to overprotect our children never allowing them to grow through their own mistakes, never allowing them to grow up.

If the above is true and we understand that our feelings of guilt may be rooted in false obligations of omnipotence and omniscience, why can we not let go of our guilt feelings? Perhaps, because guilt is another link,

another connection to our dead child. To give up the guilt (we may feel) is giving up our connection with our beloved child. From my experience with bereaved parents, giving up the guilt is only giving up some of the pain and some of the hurt. In so doing, we remove an obstacle to loving the child's memory. Guilt hurts. In letting go of guilt we do not lose the memory of our child's death, but rather gain the ability to rejoice in the memories of his life.

## **I Play the Blame Game**

By Beth Wass, TCF Pensacola, FL

I should have  
I could have  
What if I would have  
I play the blame game.

It's my fault  
If I only would have  
I should have known  
play the blame game.

I wasn't even there  
But the guilt I feel overwhelms  
I still feel like it's my fault  
I play the blame game.

If I only said no  
I should have said another day  
I should have asked for a different person  
I play the blame game.

The game I play  
It has no winner  
It's Never Ending  
I play the blame game.

Ifs, onlys, and buts  
Will forever be part of my life  
I can never change what has happened  
I play the blame game

I'll do my best  
To not be a part  
Of destroying what's left  
by letting myself Play the Blame Game.



## The Start of School

The school bells ring, young voices sing,  
and small ones shout with glee.

The autumn air beckons school to start  
And left alone is me.

What makes me feel so down and blue,  
And boggled down with thoughts of you.

I see the school bus passing by and find myself with  
another tear in my eye.

Is it the clothes that we can't buy;  
while others grab the jeans to try?

Or is it the autumn in the air  
That pulls at heartstrings already bare?  
Maybe it's falling leaves and dying grass.  
Bringing reflections like a looking glass.

Whatever the reason that stirs my heart,  
Every year when school must start  
Reminds me how much I miss you.  
Forever Loved - Forever Missed

MOM

Ft. Wayne, IN TCF



are gone forever. We long to bring back the happier days, when September brought excitement of shopping for that special backpack, or lunch box for our child entering a new grade. We remember the feeling of pride that our child was progressing and meeting the high aspiration we had for them.

It is very natural that we connect their growth and development with the school calendar. Many have warm feelings about the relationship their child had with the school system. Particularly if the child was an honor student, involved in sports and school activities, and received much recognition for their accomplishments. While others have had bad experiences, that create a rage at the thought of how their child was mistreated, misplaced, and misunderstood, or was denied participation in a particular program, or was just plain ignored, and received no recognition for their efforts. Regardless of what category our children fell into, the beginning of the school year can stir deep emotions. It is very normal for us to wish we could return to the days when our life was simple, and our biggest decisions were what to pack for their lunches, and which piece of new clothing should they wear on the first day of school, and to share in the excitement as they headed for the bus to meet their friends.

As we experience moments of nostalgia watching other people's children return to school, our fragmented lives may feel additional emptiness. It is very painful when life goes on without our child. This is a season that makes memories very vivid, and brings home the thought that our children did not get the opportunity to complete their life, as we had planned it for them.

Most often it is best to take time to remember, and allow ourselves to hurt. Suppressing emotions does not generate healing. We need a friend who will listen and try to understand (this can be very difficult for a non-bereaved person). Giving and receiving love is very essential to life, and particularly to our healing. Our showing expressions of love to others can help a heavy heart as much as receiving it. We all need one another.

Eventually our pain does soften, and the very memories that brought us pain, can bring smiles and meaning into our lives again. Unfortunately we have to go through the bitter to become better.

## Shared Thoughts on the Return of School Openings

By Marie Hofmockel TCF Valley Forge, PA

Many times seasonal changes can create a mood swing that can bring a set-back in our grief progress. Mental health studies have shown depression to be greater, as we physically and mentally adjust to a new season. We often note a sagging morale that adds stress this time of the year.

September is particularly a hard month for families whose children would have been returning to school. The display of school clothes, books, bags, and buses can cause intense pain by reminding us that our future dreams of that child



### We are on the Web



Visit our **web page** at [www.lehighvalleytcf.org](http://www.lehighvalleytcf.org) for group information, meetings schedule, upcoming events and helpful links.

**Like our facebook page:** [www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley](http://www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley) for quotes, meeting & event reminders, and member forum.

Find us on **Pinterest** under the keyword **The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley Chapter**

# Sibling Page

## Going Back To School After The Death of a Sibling

By Jordan Ely, TCF Albany/Delmar, NY

Going back to school after the death of your brother or sister is a hard thing to go through.

At first there are three groups of people to deal with: People who give you a lot of support, people who don't know what to say, and those who give you weird looks and stay away from you. This lasts for a little while.

After a short time changes with each group occur. Those who did not know what to say start to speak or begin to talk. The group who kept away stop ignoring you. The people who gave you a lot of support slowly return to their own affairs.

After a while everything goes back to normal, and it is over to everyone except you.

This is very difficult to accept and makes you feel all the more alone.

After a long while the shock for you goes away, and it is then that you need the support from your friends, peers, and teachers.

This month is the first anniversary of the death of my brother. Most people will have forgotten, and everything is right with the world. But it is not! Certainly not for my mother and me.

## What About Me

By Traci Morlock,  
Beareved Parents of the USA, St Louis MO

Have you ever felt that, as a surviving brother or sister, we are often forgotten? I have felt this way quite often in the last 6 years. Over time, the feeling becomes less and less. Our parents' grief is so much different from ours. No more or less hurtful than ours, but different. They lost their child. I hope that, in my lifetime, I never have to know how that feels. I know how painful it was when Sean died. I don't want to know the pain of having a child die.

But, oftentimes, we are "the forgotten mourners." I love my brother very much, and miss him just as much. I think that people sometimes forget that we are hurting

also. My parents were offenders of that too. I know they know my sister and I were hurting, but they were so wrapped up in what they were feeling that they didn't have time to worry about what we were feeling. I tried so hard to make my parents well again that I neglected my own grief. Pretty much denied it. We really want to make our families "normal" again.

I have had some awful things said to me over the last 6 years. Two weeks after Sean died, someone said to me, "Well, you do still have a sister." Well, yes, I do still have a sister, but that doesn't lessen the pain of my brother's death, and my sister can't possibly replace my brother. Probably the worst thing anyone has said to me is "Why aren't you over this? Sean has been dead for 6 months." Well it is not something you just "get over" I have learned a lot of things over the years, and if I hadn't been in such a state of shock, maybe I would have had some good responses. When I think back on it, I wish I had. I have decided that, from what I have learned, I need to educate people and make them understand that siblings and friends have the right to grieve too.

As surviving siblings and friends, we also have to realize that we need to find a new "normal." We also need to know that it's okay to feel all of the things that we feel - be it anger, sadness, guilt, or any other emotion. Just know that you're not crazy or wrong to grieve. Know also that it is all right to think and talk about them when you're ready, not when someone else says or thinks you should be ready. Death and grieving are, unfortunately, a part of life.

## “You are so strong”

Empty words

That don't touch the reality that my life has become

Incredible pain

Walking in a fog

Searching for the beloved face

I crave to see

The voice I strain to hear over the noises

of people that have no idea

Of what the world has lost

Charisse Smith, TCF Tyler TX

## Love Gift Form

*Please consider making a Love Gift to support the Compassionate Friends today.  
Your gift will help defray the cost of chapter expenses such as the newsletter mailings, meetings and our outreach to the newly bereaved.  
The Compassionate Friends is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and your donations are fully tax deductible.*

**MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 1ST OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO THE MONTH YOU WISH YOUR GIFT PUBLISHED**

Contributor Name

Mail to:

Address

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER  
P.O. BOX 149  
BATH, PA 18014**

Phone

Email Address

I would like to make a donation ☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of ☐ A Chapter Gift (without memorial or honorarium)

Name of person gift given for

Edition Month desired publication month. Deadline by the 1st of the prior month

**Special Text** - Brief Messages Please. Poems & story submissions are always welcome and should be sent directly to the Newsletter Editor for inclusion in the newsletter.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Lehigh Valley ☐ Carbon County ☐ Easton

*Note: Please mail Carbon County & Easton gifts to the addresses below*

**If your gift is for Lehigh Valley** please designate which of the following your gift is for ( you may circle more than one )

Newsletter Expenses

Postage

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Outreach Program

Special Events

### Mailing Addresses for Carbon County and Easton Chapters

The Compassionate Friends, Carbon County  
C/O Patti Bissell  
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)

Your Name

Signature (required)

Relationship to Child

Email Address

Mailing Address (where your newsletter is to be sent to)

Phone Number

Child's Name

Date of Birth

Date of Death

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.**

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter please contact the newsletter editor  
by phone at 484-891-0823; by email: [TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com](mailto:TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com)  
or by mail sent to TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014

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If you are moving or having your mail held please remember to inform the Newsletter Editor (see information above). If your newsletter is returned to us and we are not notified your name will be removed from the mailing list.

### Newsletter Submissions

Submit articles and poetry to the editor by the first of the proceeding month. Include the author's name & your contact information.

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