



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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TCF Online Support

www.compassionatefriends.org
click on "Online Support" under

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

January 12 Monthly Support Group Meeting

February 9 Monthly Support Group Meeting - Topic Memories from the Heart *see page 2 for more info*

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

1st Wednesday 7:00 - 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.slnh.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...	732-732-3246	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			

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News, Events & Announcements

Recent Events

On December 8th, members and families attended the Joint Chapter Candle Lighting service at Sacred Heart Hospital , Allentown

We also thank the following for their contribution to the Joint Chapter Candle Lighting Service: Sacred Heart Hospital for use of the auditorium and beverages; Mary Ann Donuts for the donuts; Kim Szep for the beautiful slideshow of our children; the Easton Area chapter leaders, John & Maria Szabo for the candles; John Szabo for closing remarks; all our readers and helpers, the event committee who organized and orchestrated the event and everyone who brought the delicious treats to share.

On December 14th, members and families that were able gathered to observe the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting at the home of Tom & Eva Seibert.

Others observed the Candle Lighting with family or friends and honored the lives of children, siblings gone to soon by lighting a candle at 7pm .

Upcoming Meeting February

Memories From the Heart - Please bring a memento, picture or memory of your child to share with the group.



Our Morning Call "Be An Angel" Wish List

- Reduced rate printing services or digital copier for newsletter printing
- Laptop computer with or capable of running MS Office Pro for production of newsletter and presentations
- Monetary Donations or Visa, Staples or Amazon gift cards in any amount to purchase supplies

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



An Image of Grief

By Anita King, TCF Hagerstown, MD

I am a tree, standing alone in the winter. I feel cold, empty, gray and ugly. The winds of grief have ripped away a branch and left me unbalanced - with a great gaping hole. The sap of my inner-most being rushes to the hole to provide a balm for the pain of the open wound. The icy cold rain of my weeping falls through the shaking of my boughs. I continue to sway in the harsh gales of reality, and the keening of the winds are the voice of my heartache.

But under the ground there is life. Each root of love, friendship, care, family and faith is feeding into the trunk, and I know for a certainty that surely spring will come again. The bark of time will cover the rending wound. The scar will always be there, but the drain on my heart will be over. The leaves will burst forth and gently surround the wound with breezes of living memories and promises of life to come. My boughs will be heavy with the wonder of living. Nestled near the scarred trunk secure in the knowledge that God is my refuge and strength, the sweet bird of happiness will sing again.

Cloak of Life

Kathy Robertson, TCF Kansas City, MO
In Memory of Kyra

The cloak of life has many shades.
Some grow brighter, while others fade.
There seems to be no reason or rhyme.
The only answer is the passing of time

We wear the cloak as the years slip away,
Trying the colors of each passing day.
Til finally as time comes to pass,
We realize some colors are not meant to last.

This cloak may start out shiny and bright,
and then one day it begins losing its light.
You study these colors in the mirror of life,
And you know they've been worn
through the struggle and strife.

So you take this cloak and you turn it around
To see where new colors may abound.
Some will stay while others must go,
If you're to give this cloak a new glow.

You cut out the old and sew in the new,
Feeling the memories of life passing through.
You know this cloak has miles to go,
And if it's to serve you, you must cut and sew.

The repairs are a task, a burden at best,
But you know life will change with this new vest.
You take up the cloak and turn towards the light,
Seeing the colors of future now shining bright.

I have been trying to make the best of grief and am just beginning to learn to allow it to make the best of me.

Barbara Lazear Ascher



We are on the Web



Visit our **web page** at www.lehighvalleytcf.org for group information, meetings schedule, upcoming events and helpful links.

Like our facebook page: 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**

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 sibling's 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.

January Birthdays

Brian Burke	Son of Rich and Mary Burke; Brother of Melissa Burke	Jan 3
Rachel Dallas	Daughter of Robert and Linda Dallas; Sister of Sadie Dallas	Jan 21
Sheila DeBoer	Daughter of Barbara DeBoer & the late Henry DeBoer, Sister of Leslie and Cory DeBoer	Jan 29
Wayne Ernst	Son of Julius and Doris Ernst; Brother of David Ernst	Jan 6
Maggie Faber	Daughter of Harry and Carol Faber ; Sister of Heidi and Harry Faber & Randi and Eric Gerencser	Jan 17
David "Dave" Fegley	Son of Dick and Peg Fegley	Jan 23
Araya Francisquini	Daughter of Jamie Francisquini;	Jan 11
Anne Marie Mabus Heater	Daughter of Wayne and Frances Mabus ; Sister of Steven Mabus	Jan 7
Austin Jacobs	Son of Penny Jacobs; Brother of Seth Jacobs	Jan 24
Jamie Laudenslager	Son of Jane Laudenslager; Brother of Jon & Shelly	Jan 23
Ryan Miller	Son of Patti Miller & The late Richard Miller, Jr; Brother of Richard Miller, III	Jan 4
Kelly Owens	Son of Judy Dorward	Jan 24
James Ralls	Son of Tina Ralls; Brother of Timothy & Geoffrey	Jan 2
Allison Reboratti	Daughter of Eduardo and Barbara Reboratti	Jan 25
Joey Russo	Son of Susan Russo; Brother of Jena & Jevin Russo	Jan 1
James "Jimmy" Thompson	Son of Mary A. Thompson & The late Richard Thompson; Brother of Marie,Mark,Patrick & Kathy Thompson	Jan 23
Joshua Wersinger	Son of David and Joanne Wersinger	Jan 19
Avery Williams	Daughter of Joshua and Ashley Williams	Jan 5
Steven Winkler	Son of Ellen Winkler; Brother of Jennifer; Grandson of Arnold Abramowitz	Jan 12
Michael Zalewski	Son of Krzysztof and Jolanta Zalewska; Brother of Monika Baraket	Jan 7
Kevin Blosky	Son of Jack and Janet Blosky; Grandson of Jack and Nancy Blosky	Jan 28
Mark Dilts, Jr	Son of Mark and Joy Dilts; Brother of Beth Dilts	Jan 6
Jesse Gentile	Grandson of Gerry and Doris Rothermel	Jan 28
Andrea Luecke	Daughter of Louise Luecke; Sister of Jennae Luecke	Jan 30
Kelly Owens	Son of Douglas D. Owens	Jan 24
Victoria Volkert	Daughter of Joanne Fimiano	Jan 14

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January Anniversaries

Sean Apgar	Son of Randy Apgar	Jan 22
Ryan Cole	Son of Terry & Michele Cole	Jan 22
Barry Donchez	Son of Edward & Olga Donchez; Brother of Linda Shive & Mike Donchez	Jan 10
Maggie Faber	Daughter of Harry & Carol Faber; Sister of Heidi & Harry Faber & Randi & Eric Gerencser	Jan 17
Brenda Fehr Hatrak	Daughter of David & Eileen Fehr, Sr.; Sister of Barbara R. Burgin & David A. Fehr, Jr.; Granddaughter of Warren & Rose Fehr and Elwood & Mary Mann	Jan 8
Steven Fussner	Son of George & Linda Fussner; Brother of Kathleen Kowker & Jeffrey Fussner	Jan 14
Kevin Garrison	Son of Kathleen Garrison; Brother of Anthony Garrison	Jan 16
Jesse Gentile	Grandson of Gerry & Doris Rothermel	Jan 29
Brett Harris	Son of Chester & Carol Kinsey, Jr.; Brother of Terry & Lisa	Jan 14
Alisha Heilman	Daughter of Joseph & Patricia Heilman; Sister of Tiffany, Rene', Stacie & Kristi	Jan 2
Joshua Kortze	Son of Al & Kim Kortze; Brother of Aubrey & Kim Kortze	Jan 27
Joy Laube	Daughter of Barry & Jeanette Laube	Jan 15
John Leonard, Jr	Son of John & Jule Leonard; Brother of Karen	Jan 6
Beth Anne Mather	Daughter of Peter Mather	Jan 17
James "Jimmy" Mullen, II	Son of Jeanie Mullen	Jan 1
Randy Peischl	Son of Betty Peischl	Jan 29
Anthony Romig	Son of Lois Pearsall & Edward C. Romig, Sr.; Brother of Edward C. Romig, Jr.	Jan 20
Daniel Rostkowski	Son of Shirley May Rostkowski; Brother of Janet Wise & Andrew Rostkowski	Jan 30
Geoffrey Steckel	Son of Dean & Patricia Steckel; Brother of Jennifer & Mark Steckel	Jan 20
Michael Stocker	Son of Calvin & Kay Stocker; Brother of Megan Fibrick	Jan 26
Debra Sweeney	Daughter of Richard & Doris Hosler; Sister of Donna Mallard	Jan 5
Russell Terry	Son of Brian & Amy Erbe; Brother of Shannon	Jan 9
Avery Williams	Daughter of Joshua & Ashley Williams	Jan 6

*I cannot see your face, but my heart holds the sound of your voice
And the soft brightness which is your soul.*

Amy Lowell The Touch of You"

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
♥ Joe & Laura DeVito	Frank Nicholas Mirabile <i>Merry Christmas Frank, We all love you and miss you</i>
♥ Wayne & Linda Hollabaugh	Richard "Rich" Lee Hollabaugh <i>Happy Birthday Dec 20. Always in our hearts. Love, Mom & Dad</i>
♥ Wayne & Linda Hollabaugh	Robert "Bobbie G. Koheler and Robert "Bob" Koehler & Verna Koeler <i>Friends heartfully missed</i>
♥ Julius and Doris Ernst	Wayne S. Ernst <i>In loving memory of our son - Happy Birthday</i>
♥ Linda Stewart	Jennifer & Aaron Schaible <i>Sadly missed by Mom, Mike and children Ryan, Alana & Kaleb</i>
♥ Carol Faber	Maggie Jo Faber <i>Happy Birthday. I love you and miss you. Mom</i>
♥ Judy Dorward	Kelly Shawn Owens <i>A special son, witty, funny, so beloved</i>
♥ Franklin & Lucille Reinhard	Cathy Ann Mertz & Denise Lynn Deiter <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Douglas D. Owens	Kelly Shawn Owens <i>Remembering you always. Love, Dad</i>
♥ Betty Peischl	Randy Lee Peischl <i>All my love</i>
♥ Richard & Suzanne Hoffstetter	Jonathan Paul Hoffstetter <i>Our 24th New Year and Holiday season without you. We all love & missyou</i>
♥ Ellen & Jennifer Winkler	Steven Ryan Winkler <i>We love and miss you so very much</i>
♥ Amy Erbe	Russell Terry <i>I'll never stop missing you. Forever in my heart. Love, Mom</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*

★ *Barbara Clifford*

- ★ *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.

The New Year: A Time of Hope

By Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF Katy, TX

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories ... sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you

move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

New Year's Wishes for Bereaved Parents

By Former TCF President Joe Rousseau

- **To the newly bereaved:** We wish you patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.
- **To the bereaved sibling:** We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.
- **To those who are single parents:** We wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.
- **To those experiencing marital difficulties** after the death of your child: We wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.
- **To those of you who have suffered the death of more than one child:** We wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.
- **To those of you who have experienced the death of your only child or all of your children:** We offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.
- **To those of you who are plagued with guilt:** We wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.
- **To those of you are deeply depressed:** We wish for you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."
- **To all fathers and those of you unable to cry:** We wish you healing tears and the ability to express your grief.
- **To those of you who are exhausted from grieving:** We wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.
- **To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned:** We wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.

A Name for My Pain

June Williams-Muecke
TCF Houston West, TX

I have given a name to my pain -
it's called "Longing."

I long for what was,
and what might have been

I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.

I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.

I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.

I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons too.

I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.
Will they?

Pieces of My Heart

Karly Esther Falcon
TCF, Houston, TX



I kneel beside you,
I tremble,
I can't stop.
The tears pour from my eyes
watering your grave.
The scattered pieces of my heart
pull together one last time
to give me the courage to tell you...
I love you.
I miss you.
I need you.



**There is no death.
Only a change of worlds.**

Chief Seattle, 1855

Beautiful Dream

Robert Willis, TCF Frederick, MD

Eyes open wide
I awake from a beautiful dream
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in
I find myself wanting to scream

Grief so strong
Impossible to explain
Living with a broken heart
Struggling with the pain

Eyes closed tight
I pray for that beautiful dream
A short escape from the painful reality
That makes me want to scream

An Angel's Kiss

Ed Young, TCF Delaware County

I believe I felt an angel
gently kiss my cheek today
While lost in daydreams once again
I saw us both at play.

Breathe as warm as a summer breeze,
moist as morning dew
Was it just a wishful thought,
or a gift from God and you?

Was that hushed sound falling leaves
or a thousand other things
Perhaps it was just the sweet sound
of fluttering Angel's wings.

I felt a fire rekindle,
deep within my heart
A feeling I had not known
since we've been apart.

I felt my pain and sorrow
begin to ease away
As a little sun light broke
through the sky of gray.

I may always wonder,
but I am always grateful too
Because these are the things
that help to get us through.

I may never know what happened,
or just what words to say
Except that in my heart, I believe, my angel,
I felt your kiss today.

Signs and Dreams From Our Children

By Louise Lagerman from Open To Hope website
www.OpenToHope.com

Dreams and signs of our children. Do they really exist? Are dreams and signs a technique our deceased children use to contact us to let us know they are fine and indeed do live on?

I believe with my whole heart they do. I am very fortunate and blessed, because of my Grief Support website, I am privileged to hear about numerous dreams and signs deceased children have shown their parents and grandparents. Although they vary in context they all have the same theme of our deceased children communicating to us that they still exist and one day we will be with them once more. Just like grief has no time table neither do signs or dreams.

They can come at anytime and we should always look and be open to the signs our children are trying to convey to us.

I had a very remarkable dream about my deceased daughter that I would like to reveal to you. The dream filled me with hope and a peace that passes all understanding. I feel it was a visitation dream. I could just sense that my daughter needed to get in touch with me.

I was by the seashore. The ocean brings me such tranquility. The dream centered on one of my favorite seashores, Cape May, New Jersey. I was standing right on the shoreline watching the tide draw closer. It was a brilliant luminous day. I looked towards the sky shielding my eyes from the sun with my hand. Then I observed many thousands of balloons of all different colors. The balloons were very distinctive as I watched them descend from the sky. I knew immediately that the balloons contained messages for people living here on earth from deceased love ones.

I instantaneously recognized I was there to receive a message from my daughter Keren. I even pulled some balloons from the sky, but knew intuitively that they were messages for other people so I let them go and fly gracefully back into the sky. Thousands of magnificent balloons of all different colors filled the picturesque sky.

Finally a green balloon (my daughter's favorite color)

floated right down beside me. I was so excited and thrilled because I knew this balloon was from my deceased daughter. On the string of the balloon there was a note. I remember the words so vividly.

They read:

Mom don't lose heart

I am still with you

I am living in a parallel universe next to yours

*One day you will join me here
and we will all be together again*

I love you

I then noticed two white hand prints on the green balloon, just like children make in grade school, and knew without a doubt they were my daughter's hand prints. I just understood this to be. I woke up completely aware that those were really my daughter's handprints and her message sent to me via dream.

It was my daughter breaking through the dimensions to give her mom a message of hope and love. I sensed it from the beginning of the dream. When I first cast my eyes to the heavens and received her message of hope and love, I realized she wanted me to comprehend that life does go on when our bodies die and we will be with our loved ones again for eternity.

Love never ends. Thanks to my wonderful superb daughter, I now truly believe.

About the Author

*Louise is a mother to three: two sons, Eric and James, and her daughter Keren, who died in 2006 at the age of 23. Louise has worked in health care for many years in the geriatric field. She lives with her husband Steven outside of Houston, Texas. A year ago, she created and opened up Grief Support website and message board with friend and fellow bereaved mother Gladis Alcorta. Grief support now has over 500 members who share and depend on each other for support. Louise can be reached through her website for speaking engagements or writings and of course support on her Grief support site, <http://griefsupport.proboards.com/> Her favorite quote is by Jason Reeves, *In my own way I take you everywhere I go and it feels like Home.**

In this world of change, nothing which comes stays and nothing which goes is lost

Anne Sophie Swetchine

Sibling Page

If I could speak to all the bereaved siblings out there, I'd say:

I know you're frightened and maybe feel anger and guilt, for those are normal feelings at times like these.

I know it isn't fair, but some of life isn't. It's hard to accept that fact, isn't it? I know you may even resent having some special time in your life interfered with by your parent's prolonged grieving. Be patient. There will be better days.

I know you may be sorry you said or did spine things that involved your dead sister or brother. Sibling rivalry is a normal and natural thing. All of us say and do things we wish we hadn't. That's a part of being human. Forgive yourself for being human and try to remember the good times, too.

If you're older, I know you find it difficult to share the pain you're feeling with your parents because you can see they are having a hard time. Your impulse is to protect them-and that includes from your own pain. Sometimes you become the parent and they, the child. Do you realize that if you do too good a job of disguising your grief your parents may misunderstand and think instead you aren't grieving at all? Share some parts, at least, with them if you can. It is better for you and them to release your feelings than to bottle them up and pretend everything is okay.

I know you become discouraged after awhile when you find you aren't able to make your parents "better". It isn't a failure on your part that this is true. Try to accept the fact that it takes much time and grief work before they can be better. They, and you, have lost something very important and it isn't possible for them to put it all behind them and go on as though nothing has changed. All of the crying and unhappiness you are seeing is necessary for them to go through before they can reach the other side of the grief process where it is less painful.

I know you begin to wonder if your dead sibling was your parents' favorite child and if you really matter at all. Oh! You do! Had it been you, or any of your brothers or sisters, it would be the same for this is the way it is when any child dies. It may take some time before your parents can show it in obvious ways, but you are one of the most major reasons they struggle so to regain some equilibrium in their lives. **YOU ARE IMPORTANT!**

I know it may be bothersome if you find your parents are

overly concerned for your safety now. They may tend to overprotect, but you need to understand that they now know that bad things do, indeed, happen to good people and their security is shattered. Just a simple thoughtful act like calling if you're going to be later than expected can really help them at this time and make them less anxious.

Holidays and birthdays will be more painful than fun in the beginning. Try to understand if old traditions are put aside right now and don't demand everything exactly as it used to be. Given time, you and your family will work out just how you want and need to observe special family occasions and there will be enjoyable times in your home again. They just may have to be observed in different ways than before.

I know you need to hear that your family will survive this tragedy. Your parents may need that same assurance. Those of us who have had the necessary time for our adjustments do offer you and your family that assurance. It will never be the same, but you will come to value each other in ways not previously thought of. Now is the time for your family to be pulling together-not apart. A loving family will survive. Try to share and communicate your feelings. If you can't talk with your parents, find somebody who cares and who can listen. It can help all of your family recover in an emotionally healthy way.

IT WILL BE BETTER. Write that down!

Mary Cleckley TCF Atlanta GA

ONE SWEET DAY

by Lynn M. Fischer TCF Valley Forge, PA
age 10 for her sister: Lisa M. Fischer, age 23

I can't wait till that ONE SWEET DAY,
When I see her again.

In the streets of gold and the heavens so, so bright,

I just can't wait till that ONE SWEET DAY.

When I was young, she would take me everywhere,

She would always be there.

Till one day she was there no more,

I just can't wait till that ONE SWEET DAY,

When I see her again.

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 _____

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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 Office Expenses 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

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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