



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



April

April 2015

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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

April 13 Support Group Meeting - Separate Sharing for Men and Women

May 11 Support Group Meeting - General Sharing

Meeting Cancellations

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

Other Local Bereavement Groups & TCF Chapters

TCF Carbon County Chapter - 1st Wednesday 7:00 - 8:30 pm at Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn., 501 Delaware Ave. Palmerton Chapter Leader - Patti Bissell, Contact Phone: 610-826-2938 Contact Email: pannbiss@aol.com

TCF Easton Chapter - 2nd Thursday 7:00 - 9:00 pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd., Easton Chapter Leaders John & Maria Szabo, Contact Phone: 610-866-5468 Contact Email: szabojanos1@verizon.net

TCF Quakertown Chapter - 2nd Tuesday 7:30 - 9:00 pm at St. Lukes Quakertown Hospital; 1021 Park Ave, Quakertown Contact Phone: 215-536-0173, Contact Email: tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net

GRASP (grief recovery after substance passing) 3rd Monday at The First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Crest & Tilghman Sts., Allentown Preregistration required, Contact: Nancy Howe 484-863-4324; 484-788-9440; nancyhowe@ymail.com

Local Children's Support Groups

Ryan's Tree for Grieving Children (ages 5-18) - 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) Meeting day, time & place coincide with TCF, LV Facilitated by Jeanette Laube, MA on a as needed basis. Preregistration required. Call 610-762-5783

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
Only Child.....	Shelly Garst.....484-241-5396	Homicide.....	Ginger Renner.....	610-967-5113

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News, Events & Announcements

April 13 - Monthly Support Group Meeting - Separate Sharing for Men & Women - Men and women often grieve differently. This meeting offers the opportunity for men to speak with men and women to speak to women about their grieving experience



June 13 - TCF Picnic and Memorial Balloon Launch

Families and friends who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling are invited to join as we celebrate and remember the lives of our children. Lunch will begin at 12:00 followed by the Memorial Balloon release. TCF will provide hot dogs, drinks, paper products. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Also provided are helium balloons and markers, with which to write a message to your loved ones. RSVP form & directions are on the last page of this newsletter. To RSVP by phone call Kathy Collins (484)891-0823. Volunteers needed, to lend a hand complete the volunteer area on the RSVP form.

Note: We use environmentally friendly biodegradable materials for our balloon release

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 at TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com or by mail sent to TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014

Are you moving or going on vacation and having your mail held or forwarded? Please remember to inform the Newsletter Editor (see contact information above) of your new address or if your mail is being held or forwarded. Newsletters are mailed bulk mail and the Post Office will not forward or hold bulk mail. It is returned to us at our expense. If your newsletter is returned to us and we are not notified your name will be removed from the mailing list.

Newsletter Submissions

Love Gifts, articles and poetry must be received by the first of the month preceding the desired publication month. Example: To have a submission published in the May newsletter submit by the 1st of April.

Send Love Gifts to the address on the Love Gift form.

Send Poems and Articles (Including the author's name & your contact information) by mail to: TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014 or email to: email: TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

Look for us 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, cancelations and member forum.

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

New Members

Lehigh Valley	Michael & Tracy Wieder - Son - Zachary Wieder
Lehigh Valley	Linda Seyfried - Grandson - Zachary Wieder
Lehigh Valley	Nick & Tina Alisio - Daughter - Megan Elizabeth Alisio
Lehigh Valley	Abby Suarez - Son - Steven Lee Suarez

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

Its' Okay to Grieve

By Patricia Lufty Nevitt TCF, Austin TX

It's Okay to Grieve.

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned.

It's Okay to Cry.

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to level off and continue our cruise along the stream of life.

It's Okay to Heal.

We do not need to prove we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel guilty, for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death.

It's Okay to Laugh.

Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh.

*I can do something marvelous with my grief.
Despite everything...I can still love you and I will still love others.*

Author 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 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.

April Birthdays

Patricia Arey	Daughter of William & Elizabeth Arey; Sister of Elizabeth Ann, Barbara, Rose Marie & Elaine	Apr 18
Hannah Rose Bankos	Daughter of Thomas & Christina Bankos; Sister of Matthew Bankos	Apr 8
Graham Beckhorn	Son of Alice Keyes; Brother of Christopher Beckhorn & Patrick Beckhorn	Apr 20
Nicholas "Nick" Caldarelli	Son of George & Cheryl Caldarelli	Apr 29
Holly Cavanaugh	Daughter of Beverly Ann Cavanaugh & Bill Cavanaugh; Sister of Bo Cavanaugh	Apr 27
Corey Deprill	Son of Chuck & Sue Deprill; Brother of Michael Deprill	Apr 20
Thom Eichlin	Son of Nancy Eichlin	Apr 23
Brett Flexer	Son of Randy & Karen Flexer; Brother of Derrick, Dylan & Karen Flexer	Apr 9
Olivia Jo Grazer	Daughter of Scott & Melissa Grazer; Granddaughter of Stan & Diane; Granddaughter of Louis & Margie McCullen	Apr 7
James "Jimmy" Hotz	Son of James & Elizabeth Hotz	Apr 24
Gavin Krum	Son of David & Lora Krum; Brother of the late Dylan Krum; Grandson of Henry & Shirley Long and Nevin Krum	Apr 9
Noah Krynock	Son of Heidi Hricisin, Brother of Seth & Sierra Hricisin	Apr 6
Michael Kulp	Son of Mike & Tamara Kulp; Brother of Mikell Kulp	Apr 21
Trever Landis	Son of Robin Landis; Brother of Marlea, Dana & Kelsey Landis	Apr 16
Timothy Mihalko	Son of Nancy Mihalko	Apr 12
Frank Mirabile	Son of Joseph & Laura DeVito, Brother of Michael, Joseph & Nicholas	Apr 19
Eliza Parker	Granddaughter of Adele Parker; Daughter of The late Adria Parker	Apr 3
Donna Potkovac-Roth	Daughter of Michael & Annette Potkovac,II; Sister of Michele, Matthew, Mark, John, Denise & the late Michael Potkovac, III	Apr 21
Scott Sargeant	Son of Gary & Phyllis Sargeant; Brother of Gary & Paul	Apr 14
James Waitkus, Jr.	Son of Elizabeth Waitkus; Brother of Alice Walbert & the late Dale A. Waitkus	Apr 5
Zachary Wieder	Son of Michael and Tracy Wieder; Brother of Brandi Hahn; Grandson of Linda Seyfried	Apr 13

April Anniversaries

Marie Albert	Daughter of Kim & Barbara Hunsicker	Apr 6
Mark Bailey	Son of Thomas & Karen Bailey	Apr 8
Elizabeth Brown-Gibson, MD	Daughter of Richard J. & Marilyn Brown; Sister of Margaret Nahrganl & Eric Brown	Apr 2
Cody Cinicola	Son of Larry and Jeanne Cinicola; Brother of Larry Cinicola	Apr 25
Brian Davis	Son of Stewart & Nancy Davis; Brother of Kristin Hoffman & Sandy Davis	Apr 25
Ky DiVittorio	Son of Jan DiVittorio; Brother of Ian DiVittorio	Apr 3
Brett Flexer	Son of Randy & Karen Flexer; Brother of Derrick, Dylan & Karen Flexer;	Apr 23
Olivia Jo Grazer	Daughter of Scott & Melissa Grazer; Granddaughter of Louis & Margie McCullen; Granddaughter of Stan & Diane	Apr 7
David Hoagland, Jr	Son of Gypsy Garrett	Apr 26

Continued on page 5

Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

April Anniversaries

Continued from page 4

Richard "Rich" Hollabaugh	Son of Wayne & Linda Hollabaugh	Apr 10
Lori Hudasky	Daughter of Irene Hudasky	Apr 22
Jamie Laudenslager	Daughter of Jane Laudenslager; Brother of Jon & Shelly	Apr 14
Michael "Mike" Morgan	Son of Raymond & Deborah Vrtis	Apr 19
Angelo Providakis	Son of Michael & Joanne Providakis	Apr 9
Caden Rabenold	Son of Catherine Rabenold; Grandson of Bill & Vicki Rabenold	Apr 27
Julie Searfoss	Daughter of Gregory & Sharon Searfoss; Sister of David Searfoss; Granddaughter of Hilda Smoyer	Apr 25
Andrew Siegfried	Son of Rich & Ruthann Siegfried; Brother of Ben Siegfried	Apr 18
James "Jimmy" Thompson	Son of Mary A. Thompson & The late Richard Thompson; Brother of Marie, Mark, Patrick & Kathy Thompson	Apr 6
Sean Virmalo	Son of Udo & Janet L. Virmalo; Brother of Eric, Brett & Katelyn Virmalo	Apr 28
Richard "Rick" Wetherhold	Son of Franklin & Eleanor Wetherhold; Brother of Michael Wetherhold	Apr 16

Love Gifts

Love Gifts are tax deductible donations to The Compassionate Friends. They are most often given in memory of a child but can also be given in memory of or in honor of a friend, relative or special person. As you may know there are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends or to receive our newsletter and we receive no financial help from the national organization. We rely on donations to help us to defray the costs of chapter expenses, particularly our largest expense which is the printing and mailing the newsletter. All donations are acknowledged in writing and in this newsletter.

To make a tax deductible love gift donation please use form on page 6

We thank the following for their generous donations this month

Contributor	In Memory of
♥ Elizabeth Arey	Patricia Arey <i>Happy Birthday - Love you , miss you - Mother</i>
♥ Lora & Dave Krum	Gavin Krum <i>Happy Birthday, Buddy! Missing you and Dylan always.</i>

Donations and Contributions

TCF Lehigh Valley Contributors

- ★ *Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown for meeting room and refreshments*
- ★ *Mary Ann Donuts, Allentown for meeting snacks*
- ★ *Giant Food Store Employees for 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.

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 YOR GIFT PUBLISHED

Contributor Name _____

Mail to:

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

Address _____

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 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 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...)



Grieving in Pairs

TCF White River Junction, Vt
Newsletter

How many times have people said, "Well, thank God you have each other"? How many times have you felt "each other" to be entirely inadequate at meeting your needs?

Alarming statistics are available telling us of the rocky road parents encounter in their marriage after the death of a child. We sometimes see in ourselves a touchiness or quickness to become irritated that wasn't there before. It always seems that my "bad" day is my wife's "good" day, or the day she wakes up crying was the day I had planned on playing tennis.

Or sometimes, even more difficult, we both have a bad day and find no help from the other in pulling things back together. How can one person hold up another when he is himself down in the mud?

Each person grieves differently. This is a rule that even applies within a family. And the needs of every individual are different. While you may need to talk and talk and talk, your spouse may need some time alone to reflect inwardly.

You have both been through the worst experience of your life. And while at times you can face recovery as a team, sometimes you must develop the patience to be able to wait out certain needs alone or with someone else. Realize that no matter how it is shown, your partner hurts too.

Top 10 Things I have Learned about Grieving as a Couple

By Caroline, Mom to Jack Robinson ~ Sharing, Volume 15/ Mar-Apr 2006

1. Go to grief counseling as a couple if you can. It will help you understand and accept differences in grieving at a time when you both need each other so much.
2. Know that you each have strengths, weaknesses and limitations - chances are these are different for each of you. It sounds obvious, but can be very hard to accept that both of you have suffered a great loss and one of you may not be able to give the other what you need in such a desperate time. Grief takes a lot of energy and you may not always have much to give your partner during this time. Also, you each have different ways of coping and

dealing with your grief - neither of you is wrong - allow the other space to do what they need to do, whatever that is.

3. It is normal to have disagreements over nothing that turn into big blow-out fights.
4. It is normal to get frustrated with each other. Grief requires tremendous patience. Try to be as patient as you can with yourself and your partner.
5. It is normal to take things out on each other. Try to be aware of this and stop yourself from doing this as much as you can.
6. Know that no matter how good your relationship is, or how supportive your partner is, grief can make you miserable, cloud your judgment, and make you feel like you need a divorce.
7. It is usually not a good idea to make any big changes when you are grieving — and this includes leaving your relationship.
8. No matter how alike you are, each of you will have different things that upset and bother you more than other things, and different stages and time frames for your grief. Do your best to understand that you do not have to agree or be feeling the same things at the same time to accept each other's feelings and support each other.
9. No matter how much you love each other, there will be times when you will feel completely alone while grieving the loss of your child. Grief is lonely.
10. Always do your best to have a united front to family, friends and the rest of the world - no matter if you agree or not. Other's judgments have a great potential during this time to pull you apart. You are much stronger as a pair than as two separate individuals. There will be times when it feels like you have no one in the world to support, listen and stand up for you. Try your very hardest to be there for each other as much as you can. NO-ONE else in the world loved your child more than each of you. Therefore, no-one else in the world shares this world of grief the same as the two of you.

*As long as we have memories,
yesterday remains*

*As long as we have hope,
tomorrow awaits*

Renewal

By Pricilla Kenney,
TCF Northshore/Boston Chapter

In the first warm days of springtime
When the winter chill is through,
Each waking thought and closing prayer
Begins and ends with you.

Like the daffodil and crocus
That survive the bitter snow,
My soul is gently lifted
And warmed by sunlight's glow.

It's a time of fresh renewal,
A beginning - not an end, And oh, how much I miss
you My daughter and my friend.

So I'll take the warmth of springtime
And hold it close to me
To help me through the winter storm
Till your face once more I'll see.



My Spring Bouquet

By Marilyn Arvizo,
TCF South Bay/LA, CA

The rain poured so often,
the bulbs I planted
bloomed in profusion.

I cut them all to take to your grave,
leaving my yard as empty of blooms
as your death left our life and hearts.

It was a grand bouquet of flowers
like our lives
when you were here, son.

From the bulbs new flowers
will soon bloom again.
I am sad, but also hopeful...

I know the harsh lessons of nature are true.
Cut like the flower,
I will again bloom too.



Such a Beautiful Day ... Why Am I Crying?

By Mary Ehmann TCF of Valley Forge, PA

This is a question that comes up every spring, particularly from the newly bereaved. It is something we have always looked forward to, before tragedy hit. The cold, bleak winter is finally over. Somehow, we thought that magical time would be the magic that would free us from our pain. Unfortunately, not so!

Perhaps it is because we see this beauty unfolding, and our child is not here to share it. The devastating knowledge that the "magic" of spring didn't change our feelings. The fact that the world seems to go on, just as if nothing had happened, when our world seems to have stopped, seems impossible to comprehend. False expectations. What we tend to forget is that though the seasons change, where we are in our grief cycle, is what controls our feelings.

Just hold on to the fact that spring is a rebirth of what seems dead, as dead as you feel now. It is true, you will never stop missing your son or daughter, however, hold on to the hope and belief that your spring will come again, too. When it does, it will be different Just as the trees and flowers aren't the same, you won't be either. But their beauty is still there, and as you start to come back to life again, you will find different joys in life again. We each run on a different calendar, so no time frame can be put on your spring. Just know that your feelings are perfectly normal. It may seem that you are back at square one, but look back, remember what it really was like at the beginning. I think you will realize there has been progress and there will be more.

Crocuses poke their heads through the crusty snow to let us know the long bleak winter is ending and spring will come again. So too the long bleak winter of your aching breaking heart will come to an end and spring will come again one day. Be Patient, but believe it, your spring will come again.

Author Unknown

As an only child parents and the only child learn to adapt, in the multi-child culture. Family members, friends, school and the community at large assume that an only child is not normal, therefore something must be wrong or at least could be improved.

The years of Kari's life taught us to do the best we could each day. All of her life, we encouraged her to do her best, because it is important to have a deep self-satisfaction of a job well done.

After the sudden auto accident that claimed her life, and in our deepest grief, we received some strength from the values we had seen in her life. I did not feel that I was alone in the world without my only child. I felt as if I did not want to live without my child, not because she was my only child. Perhaps the fact that parents of other children, who have also died and had other surviving children, felt they were not able to live without their precious children either helped us to understand that no child can be replaced.

Again, the community came assuming that you could not survive the death of an only child, just as you could not have normalcy with an only child in life. Many freely gave suggestions ranging from you should move to adoption (had we been younger, I am sure the advice would have been to have another baby) and other well-meaning, misguided issues.

We remembered our numerous encouragements that we had given Kari, we do not live alone in the world: our pain is no greater, we are no different from any parent whose child has died.

There are actually some blessings to not having other children in the household. What little energy you have can be spent on your own grief work and not worrying about what you need to do to help surviving children. They also have the awesome task of helping surviving siblings understand issues of life and death. Not a topic most parents plan on teaching. Without this distraction, parents grieving the death of an only child can spend uninterrupted time toward healing.

The death of an only child does tend to exclude the parents from most family events...This leaves a very "left out" feeling in conversations, knowing they will never get to experience these special times.

Each parent that experiences the death of a child, no matter the age or cause, has not had a choice in the event. It does not matter if we have multiple children or only the one child: we love each one and could not make a choice. We each have a difficult time in learning to live again after the death of our child.

We do heal. We do learn to live again. We are not the same person as we were before, but in time each will find a new normal. Patience to let time and grief to help us heal is the path to knowing we will survive.

Excerpted from an article by Gerry Hall , TCF S. Central Missouri

If you are a mom or dad whose only child has died or have had all your children die, we hope you find comfort the following words from the TCF Aurora, Il. chapter

Remember you still have a child! He or she is no longer with you. He or she is simply in a different place. But you will always be a parent and your child will always be your child. Nothing Can Change That!

Sorrow is not forever...Love Is!

Compassionate Friends National Offers Grief Related Webinar Series

The Compassionate Friends is expanding its outreach to bereaved families by offering a series of free online grief related seminars on various grief topics, presented by well-known experts in the field.

Webinars have included such topics as "Handling Grief Through the Holidays," "Getting Stuck" and "Unstuck," "Caring for Your Health While Grieving", and "Coping with Guilt During Bereavement". These webinars were recorded and are available to view on demand on TCF's national website. www.compassionatefriends.org

The webinars are located under the News & Events tab in the Events section

Dear Friends,

In previous years, as a single adult, I didn't care much for Easter or give it great attention. I regarded it as an overly solemn occasion, and one with less than ample compensation for the lengthy gloom (LENT) that preceded it.

When I became a parent, Easter took on a new meaning. Perhaps through the eyes of children, I began to glimpse the human side of this tradition, which now seems to me as much a celebration of Spring, as a Resurrection of the Spirit. Easter now means new clothes for the children, Easter eggs, spring flowers, family dinners, and an Affirmation of Life renewed, with whatever religious and or secular traditions you observe. It calls for us to step forward from the dark and gloom of winter, into the warm and sunfilled Spring. It calls for us to reflect on the beginning of life, to take renewed pride in our families, to join and to be surrounded by our friends and loved ones. This, of course, is the idealized version of life. It is often not that simple for families who have illness, poverty, separation, or the death of a loved one to deal with.

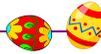
This was the first year I visited the cemetery on Easter Sunday. I felt the need. As on previous occasions, I

crouched and moved among the little grave stones, reading names in silence, feeling saddened by the tender years inscribed. I felt sorry for the little children buried there. I felt my tears mingle with those of the parents who had stood here before me, earlier in the day. My sympathy turned to those parents (and grandparents, to be sure).

Moments later, as I looked around this cemetery, in a larger view, a different view emerged. Amidst the bounty of flowers and palm, amidst the crosses and wreaths, amidst even little Easter baskets, I saw only tender love, dedication, and commitment to the memory of loved ones buried there. Such commitments can only be carried out by parents who know it is important to survive.

These other parents, too, have lost children. Young children, teenage children, and adult children. That does not stop them from coming. That does not stop them from loving. That does not stop them from living. May the Hope of Spring, and the warmth of its sun, brighten your days.

Bob McCullough
TCF Burlington County, NJ



What Does A Parent Do?

Kay Ewing TCF Hopkinsville, KY

What does a parent do with the lonely, helpless feeling,
the feeling deep within the chest as if a weight was set upon the heart
and a knife was turning and turning and turning?

What does a parent do with the hands which can't stop shaking,
the loss of breath when speaking, the overwhelming need to cry?

What does a parent do about the choking feeling in the throat,
the memory that can't keep track of what the tongue is saying?

What does a parent do with the need to hug one certain child,
the longing to say "I Love You" and to hear it said in return?

What does a parent do when all that is left are pictures
and memories of precious moments spent with a child?

What does a parent do when the child has died?

I bear the lonely feeling and push myself through each new day.

The weight upon my heart and the pangs won't go away.

My hands keep on shaking, sometimes better, sometimes not.

My breath still catches when I speak, and I cry an awful lot.

Sometimes my voice just trails off, and I forget what I am saying.

My mind is in another place - with her - or else I'm praying
for one more moment with my child. I'd love to see her soon
somewhere up above the clouds, somewhere beyond the moon.

For now, I look at pictures and think of times gone by.

I say "I Love You" at her grave with teardrops in my eye.

What does a parent do when all that's left is what is past?

Just hope and pray that some glad day I'll be with her at last.

Sibling Page

Dear Mr. Easter Bunny,

*I just had to write today...
To see if you stop in Heaven...
As you hop along your way?*



*You see...a part of me is up there...
That I miss with all my heart...
You see...my sister lost her battle...
With a disease that tore our lives apart.*

*So, I wanted to know if you go there???
And if I could ask a favor of you?
Can you take her a basket to heaven?
Filled with colored eggs and bunnies too?*

*And could you please add a green egg for me?
Mom says green means new life and rest...
For my sister is now resting in heaven...
No more pain and no more tests.*

*And could you also add an orange egg for me?
Orange for the color of a candle's flame,
For my sister's little light will always shine...
Although our lives will never be the same.*

*And could you add an egg so blue?
For blue is the color of a cloudless sky,
And when I see the geese flying over me...
I know its a sign...from her way up high.*

*And we can't forget a yellow egg too.
For yellow is the color of the rising sun,
And my sister's love will shine down on me...
For all my days and nights to come.*

*And we also need a rainbow colored egg...
For the rainbow way up high in the sky,
For Mom says she will always live within me...
And her spirit will never die.*

*And last, but not least, a red egg if you could?
For we all know red means the color of love.
And I love my sister oh so much...
Please send my love to her above.*

*Thank you, Mr. Easter Bunny...
I really appreciate your time today...
And I will say a prayer for you too...
As you hop to Heaven for me on Easter Day.*

*When you take her basket up to Heaven...
Can you please whisper in her ear?
And wish her the happiest Easter from me...
For I miss her more with each passing year.*

by Laura for the Heavenly Lights Children's Memorial

I Want My BROTHER

My life is a mess right now. Everyone wants me to "talk about it", but the only person in the world I want to talk to is my brother.

I want my brother to come wake me up to go get something to eat. I want my brother to throw rocks at my window to let (sneak) him in when he is late. I want my brother to lie to my friends when they call because he is on the other line. I want my brother to play songs for me on his guitar. I want my brother to make me listen to the Misfits whenever I give him a ride. I want my brother to understand how much I love him and how much my heart hurts and how much I feel like dying because I wake up every morning and he doesn't. I want my brother. Period.

Jaime Lynn Terenzi TCF Camden County
For Jimmy 6/2681-8/3/02

TCF Annual Family Picnic & Balloon Launch

Sat. June 13@ 12 Noon (Rain or Shine)
Moore Township Recreation Center
635 English Rd. Bath, PA

You are invited to join us for our annual Covered Dish Picnic and Memorial Balloon Launch.
Hot dogs, drinks & balloons are provided by the chapter.
Please bring your favorite covered dish, lawn chairs & sports equipment
For questions or further information contact Kathy Collins at 484-891-0823

Directions to the park:

From Bethlehem Area - Take Center St./ PA-512 north, to PA-946 (Community Dr) Turn left proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd turn left, continue .04 miles to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion.

From Carbon County Area -Take PA-248 east to PA-512 (Walnut St.) turn left proceed 4 miles to PA-946 (Community Dr) turn left proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd turn left, continue .04 miles. to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion.

From Easton Area - Take PA-248 west to PA-512 (Walnut St.) turn right, proceed 4 miles to PA-946 (Community Dr) turn left proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd turn left continue .04 miles to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion.

From Wind Gap Area -Take PA-512 South to PA-946 (Community Dr) Turn right proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd and turn left, continue .04 to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion

Suggestion: Keep this top portion as a reminder

RSVP by June 1

PLEASE PRINT

Yes, I will attend the picnic Total Attending Adults Children

_____ Covered Dish I will bring

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Chapter(s) you attend _____

Yes, I will volunteer to help with the picnic Set Up Clean Up Other _____

Mail to: The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley
Attn: Kathy Collins
PO Box 149
Bath, PA 18014

