



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



May 2015

Copyright © 2015 The Compassionate Friends, Inc

Volume 29, Issue 5

Mailing Address:

PO Box 149
Bath, PA 18014

Phone:

484-597-0240

Email:

tcflehighvalley@gmail.com

Website

www.lehighvalleytcf.org

Facebook Page

facebook.com/TCFlehighvalley

Pinterest

The Compassionate Friends,
Lehigh Valley

Steering Committee

Brian & Kathleen Collins, Gene
& Dawn DeLong, George
Geiger, Brenda Solderitch,
Sharon Yurick;

Newsletter Editor

Kathleen Collins
TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com
484-891-0823

Treasurer / Newsletter

Mailing Coordinator
Brenda Solderitch

Remembrance

Secretary (Birthday Cards)
Maria Szabo

Acknowledgement

Secretary
Sharon Yurick

Newly Bereaved Packet

George & Pat Geiger

Newly Bereaved Contact

Dawn DeLong
484-597-0240

TCF Regional Coordinators

Ann Walsh & Bobbi Milne
tcfeastrc@yahoo.com

TCF National Headquarters

1(877) 969-0010 (toll-free)
www.compassionatefriends.org

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

- May 11** Support Group Meeting - Mothers Day & General Sharing
- June 8** Monthly Meeting - Topic: Fathers Day & General Sharing
- June 13** TCF Picnic and Memorial Balloon Launch - Information - Page 2 ; RSVP - Page 12

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

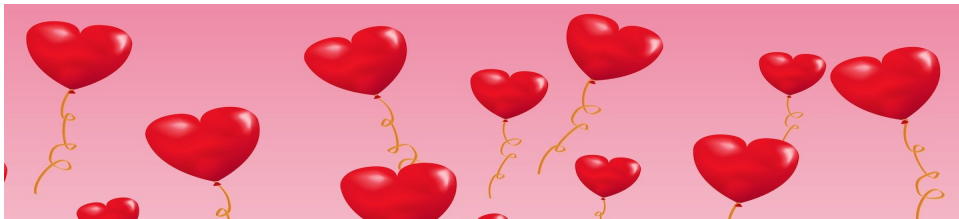
For those times that you need to connect with someone between meetings, the following bereaved parents are available to listen and share

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 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 |

Inside this issue:

Chapter News	2
Article - Can we Skip This Day	3
Children's Birthdays & Anniversaries	4-5
Love Gifts	6
Love Gift Donation Form	7
Article - A Mothers Grief - Grief: Our Act of	8
Poem - Mother's Day	8
Poems- His Eyes, Memorial Day	9
Article - I Forgive	9
Poem - Remembrance	10
Article - Grief Is An Emotion, Not A Disease; Memories of Our Children are Like A Rose; Permission to Backslide; Oh Lord Let Me Be A Potato	10
Sibling Page : Articles - When Living In Grief - Keep Walking; Thoughts for Siblings on Mothers Day; Poem- What I Need	11
RSVP form - Picnic & Balloon Launch	12

News, Events & Announcements



TCF Picnic and Memorial Balloon Launch

June 13, 2014 12 Noon

Moore Township Recreation Center

All 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 noon followed by the Memorial Balloon release and fellowship.

TCF provides hot dogs, drinks, paper products. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Also provided are helium balloons and markers. If you plan to attend please fill out and remit the RSVP form on the last page of the newsletter or call (484) 891-0823

Directions and address of the park can be found above the RSVP form on the last page of this newsletter. Volunteers needed, to lend a hand complete the volunteer area on the RSVP form.

Note: We use environmentally friendly biodegradable materials for our balloon

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

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 Lisa Rigione - Son - Michael Debiase

Lehigh Valley Nancy Kleckner - Daughter - Mardelle Parenti-Blume

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.

Can We Skip This Day? By Joanne Cacciatore TCF Phoenix, AZ

Survival isn't instinctive anymore. Sometimes, after the death of a child, apathy takes over. Coupled with celebration of motherhood in the absence of our child it can be a slap in the face. Here are some helpful ideas for mothers enduring their first, or yet another Mother's Day. T.E.A.R.S.

T - Take care of yourself! Go the extra mile to make yourself as happy as possible. Surround yourself with people who make you feel comfortable in your grief. Exercise is also a great outlet for grief. Sometimes, a hike alone or with your partner is a nice way to spend the day. Take a bubble bath with your favorite music playing in the background. If you have other children, dedicate half the day to Mother's Day celebration with them and the other half alone or with your partner. Some parents will find a visit to the cemetery therapeutic. Cry, cry, cry -- tears have a healing effect, and you have definitely earned these tears.

E - Embrace the memories (if you can) by looking at photographs, watching videos, sharing poetry or listening to songs which remind you of your child. At first it may seem overwhelming (if it is too much, keep it in mind for next year); however, many couples say that those times of sharing bring healing to the family. It is a gentle reminder to the entire family that this child will always be your child.

A - Acknowledge feelings of grief and doubt. You may wonder if you should "celebrate" without your child. It may seem pointless. Give yourself permission to have these feelings and accept them. Prepare for the likelihood that the "day" will be difficult; however, many parents say the days before the actual holiday are much worse than the day itself. If you do have feelings of joy, try not to feel guilty. The grieving process allows room to breathe in between the waves of grief.

R - Routines can be changed! If you typically spend Mother's Day with a large family group, but this year it seems awkward or too painful without your child, excuse yourself from the routine and establish new traditions which are more accommodating to your grief. Sometimes, more intimate and personal gatherings make grieving parents feel more comfortable in sharing their honest feeling about the special event and the death of their child. Consider a gathering with other bereaved parents you may have met through a support group.

S - Seek out ways to memorialize your child. Some ideas: Light a candle at a specific time every year on this special day. Light luminaries in your yard. Create a collage or special album of photographs of your child. Plant a tree or flowers in your child's memory. Buy something that reminds you or your child. Having a specific theme is helpful, like angels, butterflies, Disney characters, or other themes. Reaching out to others on a special day (such as visiting shut-ins or a nursing home, donating time at an animal shelter, or making a donations to TCF, a community pantry, a shelter for battered women and children) honors the memory of you child.

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.

May Birthdays

Evan Albertini	Son of Louis AlBertini, Brother of Christopher AlBertini	May 28
Penny Azar	Son of Michelle M. Azar & the late Diab Azar; Brother of Michelle Weidman and Jean-Pierre Azar	May 28
William Bender	Son of Dean and Sheri Tretter	May 14
Gabriel Benner	Son of Baily Benner; Brother of Calum Benner	May 4
Jacquelyn Birk	Sister of Antoinette, Carolyn, Rebecca, Sarah, Michael & Izzabella McIntosh	May 5
Matthew Breiner	Son of Jim and Lynne Breiner; Brother of Monica Breiner	May 5
Felicia Cook	Daughter of Herbert and Helen Cook	May 28
Heather Duh	Daughter of Ernest and Laurie Duh; Sister of Laurestine "Laurie" Hollie Duh	May 15
Doug Gable	Son of Ronald and Shirley Gable; Brother of Sharon Hornyak	May 26
Mark Gery	Son of William and Catherine Gery; Brother of Kristin	May 22
Jennifer Grider	Daughter of Carl and Joan Grider	May 18
Raymond Haas, Jr.	Brother of Charles Haas & Linda Wronowski	May 27
David Heard	Son of Susan Heard; Brother of Daisy Heard	May 20
Loren Holl	Son of Fern Gerth	May 31
Colleen Kilker	Daughter of Mark and Kathleen Kilker; Sister of Meghan, Bridget and Mark Kilker	May 6
Tara Koshinski	Daughter of Daniel and Mary Koshinski Sr; Granddaughter of Joanne Gordon	May 26
David Kunsman	Son of Charles and Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan, Sandra Kunsman, the late Walter Alfonso & Charles Kunsman, Jr	May 2
Tanya Negrete	Daughter of Judy Negrete; Sister of Melissa & Laura Negrete	May 17
Adria Parker	Daughter of Adele Parker; Sister of Nathan Parker Briana Parker	May 23
Michael Potkovic, III	Son of Michael and Annette Potkovic, Jr.; Brother of Michele Cuvo, Matthew, Mark, John, Denise Potkovic and the late Donna Marie Potkovic-Roth	May 26
Stephen Rendish	Brother of Sheri Wilson	May 6
Dean Schuler	Son of Betty Schuler & the late Lester Schuler	May 22
Jonelle Sisonick	Daughter of Rella Sisonick Daniels; Sister of Anthony and Nicholas Sisonick	May 22
Eric Sisson	Son of Daniel Sisson & Crystal Crout; Brother of Courtney & Logan Crout	May 9
Keith Storat	Son of Richard and Susan Storat; Brother of Todd & Greg	May 18
Steven Suarez	Son of Abby Suarez; Brother of Giovanni Miranda; Grandson of Roger and Gabby Schreck	May 29
Russell Terry	Son of Brian and Amy Erbe, Brother of Shannon	May 8
Meredith Unger	Daughter of Kathleen Paone	May 23
Joseph Visnosky, Jr.	Brother of Grace L Ashner	May 27

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.

Anniversaries

Walter Alfonso	Son of Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan & the late Walter Alfonso & Charles Kunsman, Jr	May 18
Nicholas Allesch	Son of Toni Allesch	May 2
Patricia Arey	Daughter of Elizabeth Arey; Sister of Elizabeth Ann, Barbara, Rose Marie & Elaine	May 8
Dakota Arndt	Son of Steve and Mary Arndt; Brother of Ann Marie & Dylan	May 19
Matthew Aungst	Son of Christopher and Mary Kelly Aungst; Brother of Alecia & David Aungst Aungst	May 30
Neal Balmer, II	Son of Lisa Feist; Step Son of Charles Feist; Brother of Kaitlyn Balmer & Laura Balmer	May 9
Donna Lee Benninger	Daughter of Betty Thompson	May 9
Matthew Breiner	Son of Jim and Lynne Breiner; Brother of Monica Breiner	May 17
Michael Buss	Son of Bea Bryfogle; Brother of Lindsay & Katelyn Buss	May 15
Kimberly Caton	Daughter of Thomas and Sydney Caton	May 2
Kenneth Cosentino	Son of Judy Cosentino; Brother of Noreen Cosentino	May 6
Trevor DePugh	Son of Mark Hansen & Tammy Fagan; Brother of Travis DePugh, Tristina Fagan & Mark Hansen, Jr	May 28
Heather Duh	Daughter of Ernest and Laurie Duh; Sister of Laurestine "Laurie" Hollie Duh	May 24
Edwin Frantz	Son of Pamela Green; Brother of Amy & Troy	May 24
James "Jim" Gum	Son of Sherwood and June Gum; Brother of Deborah Martini	May 1
Lisette Hahn	Daughter of Louis and Joyce Szoke	May 3
Mark Hebdon	Son of Lawrence and Ruth Hebdon; Brother of Laura Long & Michael Hebdon	May 15
Justin Hilbert	Son of Robert and Joan Hilbert; Brother of Ashley & Kyle Hilbert	May 26
Loren Holl	Son of Fern Gerth	May 30
Jordon Hyndman	Son of Robin Hyndman; Brother of Shawna & Briana Hyndman	May 23
Wayne Marks	Son of Barbara Carter; Brother of Marie Greenwood	May 13
Frank Mirabile	Son of Joseph and Laura DeVito; Brother of Michael, Joseph & Nicholas	May 18
Cody Myers	Son of David and Denise Myers; Brother of Travis, Crystal and Benjamin Myers	May 15
Kelly Owens	Son of Judy Dorward & Douglas D. Owens	May 20
Harry Rawdon	Son of Margaret Rawdon; Brother of JettaAnn Rawdon	May 13
Allison Reboratti	Daughter of Eduardo and Barbara Reboratti	May 9
Ronald "Ronnie" Sherbaum, Jr.	Son of Ronald and Donna Sherbaum, Sr.; Brother of Daniel and Joseph Sherbaum	May 17
Casey Stengel	Son of Casey and Jane Stengel; Brother of Chrissy, Sarah, Lisa & Mike Stengel	May 4
Kevin Stenlake	Son of Elizabeth Leada Stenlake; Brother of Dawn Frey	May 26
Reeder Thatcher, Jr.	Son of Jane Thatcher & the Late Reeder Thatcher Sr.; Brother of Timothy, Michael & Lynne	May 22
Matthew Tobias	Son of Allen and Roseann Tobias	May 31
Joseph Visnosky, Jr.	Brother of Grace L Ashner	May 4
Joshua Wersinger	Son of David and Joanne Wersinger	May 17
Michael Widmer	Son of Mary Widmer & Steve Widmer; Brother of Suzanne Widmer	May 25

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
♥ Udo and Janet L. Virmalo	Sean Mikhail Virmalo <i>Always with us. Udo, Janet, Eric, Brett & Katelyn</i>
♥ Beverly Cavanaugh	Holly Cavanaugh <i>Happy Birthday, Love you more. Mom & Bo XOXO</i>
♥ Josephine Leiby	Bonnie L. Krause <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Betty Schuler	Dean Lynn Schuler <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Bernice Kushnerick	Jack, John & Johnny <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Elizabeth Hotz	Jimmy Hotz <i>We miss you more every day. Mom & Keith</i>
♥ Mary Thompson	James "Jimmy" Thompson <i>Twenty Two years we have missed you - Only yesterday</i>
♥ Elizabeth Arey	Patricia Arey <i>Dad is with you now. Miss you both. Love, Mother</i>
♥ Ron & Shirley Gable	Doug Gable <i>Much missed son and brother. Ron & Shirley Gable and Sharon Hornyak</i>
♥ Kim and Barb Hunsicker	Marie Lynn Albert <i>We love you and miss you 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 Contributor s*

★ *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 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 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...)

A Mother's Grief

Grief: Our Act of Love

By Elaine Grier, TCF Atlanta, GA

"I had a child who died." How simple these words are, yet how painful they are to say. The death of a child is the harshest blow life has to offer; it destroys our trust in the world at the most basic level. Grief is, our total response to the death of a child; our body, mind, emotions and spirit all react to the loss. While many of us wish to stop the intense grief work we are doing, we find it impossible for many reasons.

First, grief is an act of Love, not a lack of strength or faith. The more we loved our child, the greater will be our grief. The more integrated our lives were with the life of our child, the more we will miss his or her very presence. The intensity of our grief is often representative of the intensity of our love.

Second, grief is a necessary process that we must go through in order to maintain our wholeness and our sanity. If we do not grieve, we will not heal. One of the earliest and hardest lessons we bereaved parents learn is that man and women grieve differently, women generally grieve more openly than men, and women on the whole, are more comfortable verbally expressing their feelings of loss. While segments of our culture dictated that it is more "manly" not to cry, we know this is not true. In fact, it has recently been found that tears of sadness contain an enzyme which inhibits the concentration of gastric acids, therefore, crying during times of stress will actually decrease the incidence of gastric ulcers many of us develop as a result of our loss.

Grief work also helps us to complete unfinished business with our child and close the past relationship that we had. We will never get over the loss of our child, nor would we really want to. We are who we are partly because of our relationship with our child. Our lives will always be influenced by our son or daughter, but most of us will eventually learn to live a meaningful life, despite our tragedy. Our child will always be with us in spirit and in love and we often feel a need to hold on to tangible items, such as clothes or toys, to maintain that feeling of closeness. But, intense grief work allows us to let go of the relationship we had and create a new relationship with our child.

Our remembrances, love and feelings of oneness with our child can never be destroyed. I cannot see or touch my Philip, but I vividly remember him. I have completed earthly mothering, but I still have an intense mother-child relationship.

Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect the grief to ever totally go away, because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

Mother's Day

By Judy A. Sittner, Boise Area Chapter TCF

Another Mother's Day!
But a different one this year.
For you see, I am a mother,
but my child isn't here.

I am a mother who is hurting
for this child who was so dear,
as I face this and other occasions,
each and every year.

I am a mother who feels an emptiness
over and over again,
because I miss THIS child
and all that could have been.

I am a mother who cared
as I watched my child grow,
and truly loved her more
than anyone will ever know.

I am a mother who has memories
and many tears to cry,
over regrets I'll have to live with
until the day I die.

I am a mother who is thankful
for the miracle of birth,
and all my child has taught me
about life and my own self-worth.

I just can't stop being a mother
just because my child isn't here,
because the love we had for each other
will continue for years and years.

And so ...
on this special "Mother's Day,"
I will feel within my heart all the pride, love, and joy
which are the parts,

That make me who I am,
and what I'll always be
A MOTHER,
Just remember that please.

His Eyes

By Vickie Van Antwerp
TCF Brevard, NC

I can't be happy, even if I try
Its not in the cards, he is gone and so am I

Why bother to look for a brighter day
How would I know, I can't see past today

Things spark my eye then fade as fast as they came
Nothing lasts for me; it is all just the same

As if it were stripped away, one by one
Just like life, they fall, until there are none

Who will care, who will carry the torch
Will there be a thought, a memory, left to sort

In this tomb of grief and sorrow
I dread today and fear tomorrow

What hope have I found?
While he lies in the ground

They say it gets better, this pain in the soul
But what the cost, what will be the toll

I can't bring him back and I can't let him go
If anything is true, this I know

That he lives in my heart forever and a day
And I will never let him get away

With every breath that I take, with every beat of my heart
Nothing can tear our souls apart

Each day, is one more day
Closer to him when I'll hear him say

I love you Mom, I've been waiting for you
And I will look in his eyes and say I love you too

I Forgive

By Debbie Ortega
TCF Central Valley, Tracy, CA

I've heard advice for the bereaved that forgiveness is an important part of "healing." I've worked hard at that elusive forgiveness, and came to the realization today that I am actually able to forgive quite a lot.

- I forgive myself for not forgiving the people that caused my daughter's death. Some things are just not "forgivable," and she would understand.
- I forgive others for sharing their "miracles" with me, not understanding how cruelly this attacks my heart, as I wonder where my daughter's miracle was.
- I forgive others for not understanding me. I don't understand anything anymore, so I can't expect others to understand me either.
- I forgive myself for not being able to do all of the things I used to be able to do. I don't function as well as I used to, and that's okay.
- I forgive others for continuing to live in that other world where I once lived with my daughter. It's a good world, and I miss it a lot.
- I forgive myself for no longer fitting into that world and not always being able to fake it. I am different now.
- I forgive others for avoiding me. They don't know what to say and, quite frankly, that leaves me with nothing to say to them either.
- I forgive my daughter for leaving me. She loved life and she loved me. I believe she loves me still.

This is probably not what people mean when they say we need to "forgive," but it's the best I can do. It's enough that I can do anything at all, and maybe they will forgive me as well.

Memorial Day



For each grave where
A soldier lies at his rest

For each Prayer that is
Said today out of love

For each sigh of remembering
Someone who died

Let us also give thought to
The mothers and fathers
The brothers and sisters
The friends and the lovers
Whom death left behind

Sasha Wagner,
L.A.R.G.O

Grief Is An Emotion, Not A Disease

Excerpted from "A Conversation with Rabbi Grollman"
by Judy Kaplan, TCF National Newsletter Editor

Grief is an emotion, not a disease. There is no timetable for recovery, but there is also no getting around the pain. Each of us has to experience the pain in order to recover from it ... Our hopes and dreams may no longer be possible. We may feel hopeless and want to run away. It takes time and effort to regain the ability to function. We must express our pain and be patient with ourselves. The Compassionate Friends plays an important role in this process Grief is a process. Recovery is a decision. Readjustment does not come overnight, but-each of us can resolve to survive - One moment at a time.

Memories of Our Children are Like A Rose

Julie Timmerman
TCF, Tulsa, OK

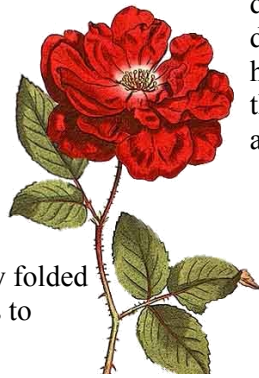
When a child dies our memories are held tightly with lots of pain, just like the tightly folded petals of the rose bud with the many thorns to stick and prick causing pain.

As we talk about our child and share memories with others we begin to open ourselves to healing as the rose petals start to open ever so gradually.

Just as a rose becomes more beautiful as it blooms, so do the memories of our child.

Yes, the thorns are still there and will hurt when touched, but oh how beautiful the rose, and oh, how beautiful the memory of our children!

Share the memory of your child so that memory can start to bloom as beautiful as the rose.



Remembrance

Evan Filmore
TCF Huntington, UT

In the light of day
I awake with thoughts of you.
In the dark of night
I sleep with thoughts of you.
Is it grief or disbelief?

Permission to Backslide

From "How to go on Living" by Peppers and Knapp

Sometimes after a period of feeling good, we find ourselves back in the old feelings of extreme sadness, despair, or anger. This is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. It happens because we are humans, we cannot take in all of the pain and the meaning of death at once. So we let it in a little at a time.

**I carried within my womb,
Then held you in my arms
And now until it no longer
beats I'll carry you in my
heart.**

**Loving you yesterday,
today and forever**

Oh Lord, Let Me Be A Potato

While my husband Frank and I were living in Pakistan many years ago, our six month old baby died. An old Punjabi who heard of our grief came to comfort us. "A tragedy like this is similar to being plunged into boiling water," he explained. "If you are an egg, your affliction will make you hard boiled and unresponsive. If you are a potato, you will emerge soft and pliable, resilient and adaptable." It may sound funny to God, but there have been many times when I have prayed, "Oh Lord, let me be a potato."

Sibling Page

When Living in Grief, “Keep Walking”

Within two weeks after my sister's death, I knew, as did my husband, that I was not in a good place. I felt like I was walking around the edge of a big black hole. One missed step and I would fall into that hole. My husband gently suggested I go see my doctor. I heeded his advice and saw my doctor the very next day. She put me on an anti-depressant and set up my first appointment with a therapist. On my first visit, the therapist and I talked about my sister's death, the tragic way in which she died. I shared some of my darkest thoughts with the therapist. My sister was murdered, in her home, brutally stabbed to death.

I talked about how I thought about her crying out, begging for her life. I talked about the way she fought for her life. I talked about the fear and terror she felt before taking her last breath. I talked about her dying alone. Towards the end of the session, my therapist looked at me and said, There is a quote that comes to mind that I think you will understand. A quote by Winston Churchill. “When you think you are going through hell, keep walking.”

I looked at my therapist. I understood what the quote meant, at least what it meant to me. The therapist told me that I too would keep walking. Slow small steps. She reminded me it would be a long walk and to take my time.

As I drove home that day, I thought about that quote. I also thought how it felt like I was going through hell. Keep walking. The phrase stuck in my mind. Over the next weeks and months, I kept walking. Early on, walking meant getting off the couch and getting dressed. Eventually walking meant doing a load of laundry and fixing myself something to eat. Walking meant facing each day, doing something, anything. Week after week, month after month, I felt myself straying a little farther away from the edge of that black hole.

Six months after my sister's murder, an arrest was made. I was able to take a few more steps away from that black hole.

It has been a very slow process. I've learned patience not only with myself, but with others and the justice system. The black hole is still there, albeit it appears much smaller now. I've moved farther and farther away from that hole. I know it wouldn't take much for me to slide

closer to that hole again, but I keep walking. Every day I keep walking by working, writing, honoring my sister. The black hole will always be there, but as long as it is just a small speck on the horizon, I know I'm walking and I'm winning the battle.

Everyday I think of that quote. Everyday I tell myself...keep walking.

By Shirley Wiles-Dickinson

Shirley Wiles-Dickinson is the youngest of four girls in a Midwestern family. In 2009, her sister was brutally murdered.

What I Need

By Beth Pinion
TCF Andalusia, AL

**A lot of time!
A little space,
A kind of quiet
Resting place,
Are what I need
At times like these,
A special spot
Where I can grieve.**

Thoughts for Siblings on Mothers Day

Excerpted from "One Women's Opinion" by Shirley Ottman

Mother's Day is sure to be a stressful time for a bereaved mom. Even when remaining children in the family gather to make their mother happy and to show her how purposeful her life is to them. Mother's Day is almost certain to be lonely for any bereaved mother.

If your mother doesn't seem as responsive that day, you sons and daughters, give your hugs and kisses anyway. She loves you, too. Remember that she's also the mother of a child no longer here...your brother or sister.. .and she misses your sibling as much as you do.

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

