



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



June 2015

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Volume 29, Issue 6

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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

- June 8** Monthly Support Group Meeting - Topic: Fathers Day/General Sharing
- June 13** Special Event- TCF Family Picnic & Memorial Balloon Release
- July 13** Monthly Support Group Meeting - General Sharing

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.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) 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

TCF Picnic and Memorial Balloon Release

Saturday, June 13, 2015 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 -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, with which to write a message to your loved ones.

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 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: Submission for the July newsletter must be submitted by June 1st.

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](mailto: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 Shirley Grozier - Son - Robert C. Grozier, II

Lehigh Valley Carol Kuehner - Granddaughter - Peyton Sophia Allen

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.

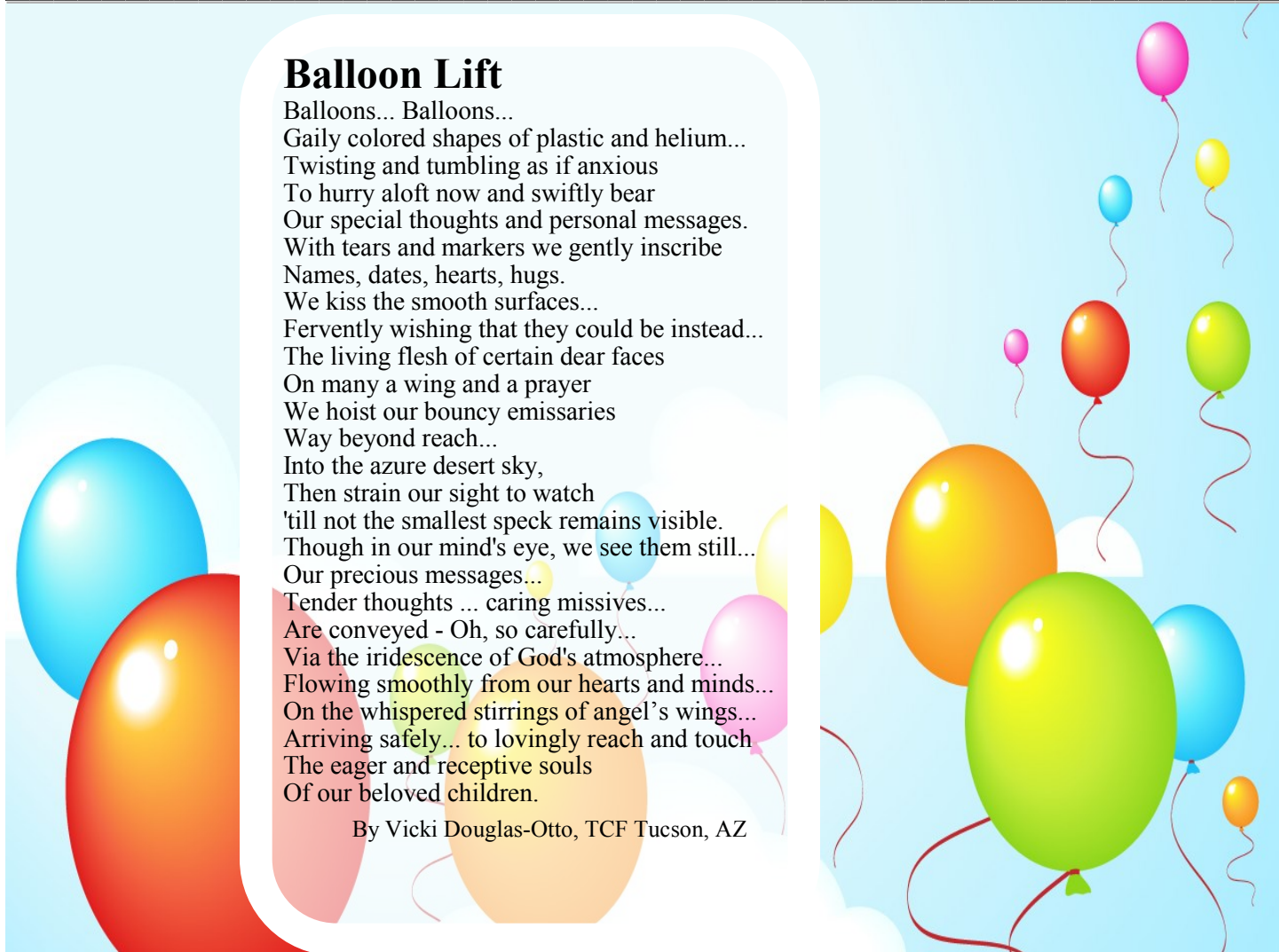
To Our Seasoned Members

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.

Balloon Lift

Balloons... Balloons...
 Gaily colored shapes of plastic and helium...
 Twisting and tumbling as if anxious
 To hurry aloft now and swiftly bear
 Our special thoughts and personal messages.
 With tears and markers we gently inscribe
 Names, dates, hearts, hugs.
 We kiss the smooth surfaces...
 Fervently wishing that they could be instead...
 The living flesh of certain dear faces
 On many a wing and a prayer
 We hoist our bouncy emissaries
 Way beyond reach...
 Into the azure desert sky,
 Then strain our sight to watch
 'till not the smallest speck remains visible.
 Though in our mind's eye, we see them still...
 Our precious messages...
 Tender thoughts ... caring missives...
 Are conveyed - Oh, so carefully...
 Via the iridescence of God's atmosphere...
 Flowing smoothly from our hearts and minds...
 On the whispered stirrings of angel's wings...
 Arriving safely... to lovingly reach and touch
 The eager and receptive souls
 Of our beloved children.

By Vicki Douglas-Otto, TCF Tucson, AZ



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.

Birthdays

Marie Albert	Daughter of Kim & Barbara Hunsicker	Jun 14
Patricia Alliston	Daughter of Glen & Peggy Wessner	Jun 22
Sean Apgar	Son of Randy Apgar	Jun 18
John Ashner, Jr.	Son of John & Grace Ashner	Jun 22
Mark Bailey	Son of Thomas & Karen Bailey	Jun 19
Aaron Bissell	Son of Bob & Patti Bissell; Brother of Danielle Bissell	Jun 17
Rachael Brosky	Daughter of Karl Brosky; Sister of Rebekah Brosky-Dorsey & William Brosky	Jun 9
Elizabeth Brown-Gibson, MD	Daughter of Richard J. & Marilyn Brown; Sister of Margaret Nahrganl & Eric Brown	Jun 15
Cody Cinicola	Son of Larry & Jeanne Cinicola; Brother of Larry Cinicola; Grandson of Frank & Gayle Piscelli and Anna Cinicola	Jun 8
Anthony Coccia	Nephew of Jane Coggins	Jun 30
Paige Fernandez	Daughter of William Fernandez; Sister of Jamie & Billy Fernandez	Jun 18
Ilyana Figueroa	Daughter of Jennifer Santos & Michael Figueroa; Sister of Jayden Figueroa	Jun 21
Peter & Paul Fry	Sons of John & Cynthia Chryst; Brothers of Jeff Fry & the late Benjamin Fry	Jun 1
Jeffrey Halvorsen	Son of Deborah Halvorsen; Brother of Michael Halvorsen	Jun 20
Jack Julo, Jr	Son of Jack & Margaret Julo	Jun 14
Bonnie Krause	Daughter of Josephine Leiby - Mather	Jun 22
Dylan Krum	Son of David & Lora Krum; Brother of The Late Gavin Krum; Grandson of Henry & Shirley Long & Nevin Krum	Jun 22
Wayne Marks	Son of Barbara Carter; Brother of Marie Greenwood	Jun 19
Michael McDonald	Son of Fran McDonald	Jun 26
Michael Milot	Son of John & Patti Milot; Brother of Jill	Jun 30
Peter Radocha	Son of Lucille Radocha; Brother of Gina Sacco & Frank Radocha, Jr	Jun 13
Nicole Reinhart	Daughter of Michael & Pamela Reinhart; Sister of Mikey & Timmy Reinhart	Jun 3
Amanda Schultz	Daughter of Mark & Patty Schultz; Sister of Ryan & Eric Schultz	Jun 18
Steven Seibert	Son of Thomas & Eva Seibert; Brother of Nick & Krista Seibert; Grandson of Eva Juhasz	Jun 27
Thomas Sensinger	Son of Ann Sensinger; Brother of Susan Brown	Jun 14
Philip Smith	Son of Morgan Smith	Jun 22
Brian Virga	Son of Carol Carman; Brother of Bruce Virga, Fran Catino & The Late Christopher Carman	Jun 23
Christopher Yetter	Son of Richard Yetter, Stepson of Robyn Yetter; Brother of Jessica Yetter & Nicholas Yetter	Jun 9

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

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Anniversaries

Christopher Carman	Son of Carol Carman; Brother of Bruce Virga; Fran Catino & The Late Brian Virga	Jun 8
Lorriane Corbo	Daughter of Debbie Goodman; Sister of Lisa Corbo	Jun 23
Rachel Dallas	Daughter of Robert & Linda Dallas; Sister of Sadie Dallas	Jun 14
Denise Deiter	Daughter of Franklin & Lucille Reinhard; Sister of Cheryl Ann McCue	Jun 11
Corey Deprill	Son of Chuck & Sue Deprill; Brother of Michael Deprill	Jun 25
Ilyana Figueroa	Daughter of Jennifer Santos & Michael Figueroa; Sister of Jayden Figueroa	Jun 21
Joel Frisby	Son of Caroline Frisby; Brother of Richard, Gregory, Michael & Timothy Frisby	Jun 4
John Fry	Son of Cathy McDonald; Brother of Joey, Allie & Billy McDonald	Jun 14
Peter & Paul Fry	Sons of John & Cynthia Chryst; Brothers of Jeff Fry & the late Benjamin Fry	Jun 1
Mary Greaser	Daughter of Lucian & Brenda Strybuc	Jun 14
Jennifer Grider	Daughter of Carl & Joan Grider	Jun 29
Robert C Grozier, II	Son of Shirley Grozier; Brother of Laurette Miller & Vance Grozier	Jun 11
Jeffrey Halvorsen	Son of Deborah Halvorsen; Brother of Michael Halvorsen	Jun 4
Jill Harris	Daughter of Fred & Pat Andrew; Sister of Jeff	Jun 28
Lisa Hawk	Daughter of Bruce & Mary Hawk; Sister of Bruce Hawk	Jun 1
Jack Julo, Jr	Son of Jack & Margaret Julo	Jun 18
Frank Kerr	Son of Catherine Milano	Jun 23
Joseph McGouldrick	Son of Pat McGouldrick; Brother of Jennifer McGouldrick	Jun 5
Timothy Mihalko	Son of Nancy Mihalko	Jun 4
Ryan Miller	Son of Patti Miller & The late Richard Miller, Jr; Brother of Richard Miller, III	Jun 12
Lisa Munjone	Daughter of Lorraine Parkhurst	Jun 11
Allison Perno	Daughter of Cathy Perno; Sister of Joseph & Anthony Perno	Jun 10
Stephen Rendish	Brother of Sheri Wilson	Jun 21
Nolan Ritchie	Son of Robert & Tiffany Ritchie; Brother of Triston & Cora Ritchie	Jun 23
Cory Ross	Son of Kathy Ross; Brother of Michael Ross	Jun 12
Adam Sengel	Son of Aydin & Debbie Sengel	Jun 12
Eric Sisson	Son of Daniel Sisson & Crystal Crout; Brother of Courtney & Logan Crout	Jun 29
Jared Thomas	Son of Sandra B. Schueck	Jun 22
Brian Virga	Son of Carol Carman; Brother of Fran Catino; Bruce Virga & The Late Christopher Carman	Jun 9
Craig Yurick	Son of Robert & Sharon Yurick; Brother of Todd Yurick	Jun 21

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
♥ Kim and Barb Hunsicker	Marie Lynn Albert <i>We love you and miss you always</i>
♥ Lucille Radocha	Peter Radocha <i>Happy Birthday, Peter. You can now have a great party with everyone there with you.</i>
♥ Tom & Eva Seibert	Steven Thomas Seibert <i>Happy Birthday, We miss you. Love, Mom, Dad, Nick, Krista and Mama</i>
♥ Fred and Pat Andrew	Jill Patricia Harris <i>We love and miss you. Mom, Dad, Jeff, Sam and Alex</i>
♥ Shirley Grozier	Robert "Bob" Grozier <i>Still always missing you Bob since June 11 last year. Love you my precious son, Mom</i>
♥ John & Grace Ashner	John Ashner, Jr. <i>Happy Birthday We love you and miss you. Mom & Dad</i>
♥ Mark & Patricia Schultz	Amanda Schultz <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Patti & Bob Bissell	Aaron P. Bissell <i>Happy 30th Birthday sweetie. Love you and miss you always. Love Mom, Dad & Danielle</i>
♥ Lora and David Krum	Dylan Krum <i>Happy 20th Birthday Dylan...we love and miss you and Gavin 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 Carol Faber*

★ *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.

A significant part of each parent died when our children died.
Yet a crucial part of each child lives in the heart of every mother and
father. Neither time, nor death will erase that bond.

It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

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 Bereaved Mom's Thoughts on Bereaved Dads & Stepdads on Father's Day

By Cathy Seehuetter, Nina's mom, TCF St. Paul, MN

Father's Day, a day we honor those wonderful dads, for many is a day that can be bittersweet. There are two groups of fathers that fall into that category and, if I may, would like to speak up for. I know I have mentioned the bereaved moms on Mother's Day, but I ask you to keep in mind those dads whose children have died before them. Just as the bereaved siblings are oftentimes the forgotten mourners, the fathers can become invisible too. I know many a bereaved dad who, when met on the street got the question, "How is your wife doing?" I suppose for the person who asks, it is easier not to confront the father's grief head on by asking about someone not present and therefore, easing their own discomfort. I am here to tell you that those dads hurt every bit as much as the moms, but, because of the macho burden placed on men by society, don't always freely show it like we mothers do, and they keep it bottled up inside. Take a minute, at any time, but especially on days such as Father's Day where the focus is on them, to tell that dad you are thinking of them. I guarantee they will appreciate it.

The other group that more often than not are overlooked are the stepfathers. I think that we have the fairy tale, Cinderella, to thank for the bum rap that many of us stepparents get! That is particularly true when that parent isn't the "real" parent. However, I know many, many step-dads who deserve the title of father minus the "step" even more than the biological ones. They are dads, like one I know personally, who sat up all night long after a 13-hour workday and comforted his stepdaughters who were suffering a miserable case of chicken pox, made the midnight trips to the Emergency Room, as well as delighted along with them in their triumphs, and agonized in their defeats. And I know one in particular who grieved with every fiber of his being when his stepdaughter, though he never uses the term "stepdaughter," it is always "daughter") Nina, died almost eight years ago. Along with other bereaved stepparents he didn't deserve comments such as, "Well, at least it doesn't hurt as much because she wasn't your REAL daughter." To him, (just as many others I know), she is just as significant as his own flesh and blood. I wish all the father's, dad's, daddy's, stepfather's and stepdad's a day filled with love, support, understanding, warm hugs, and an abundance of comforting memories.

A New Man In Town

By Dave Simone, Bereaved Father, TCF Tampa, FL

My son is dead. The moment I was told my son died in an auto accident, there was a new man in town. The old man would find a way to fix "it" or at least make "it" better. The new man couldn't fix a thing. Oh, he could make arrangements, settle accounts, acknowledge condolences as though he were really there but the new man was far off, living in a protective shell hardened by disbelief and shock. Yes, he did things, but he didn't feel in the old ways, he was far from being reborn.

My wife's grief would bring the new man back, at least for a while. There was no fixing her, just acknowledgement of the hurt and pain and helplessness we both felt. I was there for her as she was there for me and we bonded in our grief at depths we did not know existed. My son did not die to make our marriage better or worse and his death did not change what it fundamentally was and is. There is however a new level where we meet to hurt and heal together.

When a baby is born there are pain and tears followed by profound joy. If that baby dies before his parents, there is pain and tears and a longing for peace. No man can anticipate the number of tears that will flow during his rebirth. The half hour drive to work each morning was a time of nothing but tears and pain and guardian angels to provide safety for myself and those around me. The new man was every bit the good driver the old man was, but he wasn't there, he was far off being reborn in those unstoppable tears. Peace was nowhere to be found.

I am not going into detail into the many ways I think I have changed. Believe me, I have changed and so have you fellow bereaved father. I cannot believe my son died to make me a better man. I do believe that my son's death shocked me into holding dear all that was always precious to me with the new knowledge that "it" can all end in an instant, and neither the old man nor the new man can ever fix "it". The protective shell is fading away and real peace is finding its way into my heart and soul. But the shell will never be completely gone and the peace will never blend into complacency. We are new men with new priorities and new things to do. This does not mean we abandon all that was of the old man, the newness is in our attitudes and understanding and acceptance of vulnerability.

Following the death of his daughter, Susy, Mark Twain described his loss saying:

It would bankrupt the vocabularies of all languages to put it into words

Send Back The Noise

Peter Graves, TCF San Diego, CA

It's way too quite here
 Since our son is not around.
 I'd pay any price to again hear the sound
 Of a basketball rhythmically hitting the ground;
 Or to answer the question, "Dad, can you make this shot?"
 "Pass the ball..., probably not!"
 His bedroom looks more like a sporting goods store,
 But those balls, gloves, and cleats aren't used any more.
 Soccer, basketball, football, lacrosse,
 Just one more game, win, tie, or a loss.
 I'd buy one more ticket, regardless of cost.
 It's too quiet around here
 Things just aren't the same.
 I'd settle for the sound of a video game.
 I know it's not possible to get back our boys...
 So, please God, Could you just send back the noise?

James's Teddy

By Jenny Mould, TCF Great Britan



This is your teddy,
 He's also my best friend,
 He sits by my bedside,
 He's faithful till the end.

He doesn't turn away from me,
 When I need a hug,
 He doesn't treat me when I'm upset
 As if I've got a dreaded bug.

He just patiently listens
 When I need to be with you,
 He accepts my tears and kisses
 When I'm feeling blue.

In life he was your best possession,
 Now, borrowed by me,
 He's the nearest thing I have to hold of you,
 Except your memory.

Understanding My Bananas

A bereaved mom posted a picture of her beautiful little girl happily munching on a banana. Under the picture the mother had written that eight months after losing her little girl, she and her surviving children were finally able to go

to the food store to buy bananas again. She went on to describe how traumatic the experience was; that people who have not lost a child can't understand how challenging it can be to face your fears, to walk into a store to buy bananas - - the whole time thinking of your child's love of bananas and that now she wasn't here to enjoy them. She said it ripped to the core of her soul, reducing her to tears. Her simple words had a profound effect on me. I knew just how she felt. Having been crushed with the anguish and heartache of losing our children, little ordinary day-to-day things like bananas can bring us to our knees. I wrote back to the mother and said that I was so sorry she lost her beautiful little girl; that I understand how she felt because I have my bananas too.

The mother wrote back and thanked me for truly understanding when so many people do not. As grieving parents we all have our triggers - - bananas, if you will. Every time I see a Mini Cooper car or a young pretty woman with long light brown hair wearing a certain name brand of clothing, or hear a certain song on the radio, my heart breaks and these are just a few examples. All bereaved parents have them. Realizing and understanding these triggers will help you prepare for those times when you're faced with your own bananas. The dictionary's definition of a trigger is an event that precipitates other events. It is my hope that the day will come for each of us that when confronted with our own bananas, we can instead smile and be comforted with the exquisite and beautiful memories of our beloved children as they envelope us in their love.

By Louise Lagerman, TCF Houston, TX, Originally Published in the TCF magazine - "We Will Not Walk Alone", Autumn 2010

Beautiful Dream

By 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



On "Picking Up The Pieces"

By Mary Cleckly, TCF, Decatur, GA

Had someone say to me not too long ago that she was glad to see that I was "picking up the pieces and going on." Well, I am picking up the pieces all right - but what she doesn't know is that they're almost a whole set of new pieces! I haven't been able to go on as though nothing about me has changed since my child died. I'm a different me, and I am still learning about how the new me reacts to old situations.

I am finding that this new set of pieces doesn't exactly fit together all nice and neat like a jigsaw puzzle. Some of the old pieces are still hanging in there, but they don't quite mesh with some of the new pieces. I am in the process of grinding off the rough edges now, hoping eventually for a better fit, one that I can live with more comfortably. Time, patience and hard work are helping me accomplish this.

How are the rough edges on your new pieces coming along?

The Weaver

The pattern of my life has changed,
for life has brought a sorrow;
The pattern must be rearranged,
to fit a new tomorrow.

Although my eyes are blind with tears,
although my heart is weary,
Tomorrow's duties still appear,
even though today is dreary.

The pattern of my life is mine,
a thing that must be finished.
Though time has altered its design,
its brightness has diminished.

A little kneeling by my bed,
some hours of quiet grieving,
And then I must take up my thread of life,
and carry on the weaving.

Sts. Simon & Jude Blessing of Memories Service
Huntington Beach, CA

Being defeated is a
temporary condition,
Giving up is what makes it
permanent

Unknown

Take Your Time

By Sandra Young, TCF Knoxville, Tennessee

One of the hardest things about grief is the so-called "time table". You are told that you should be feeling one way or the other. You are given a time to mourn by the outside world and to them you must "be over it"; "Get on with your life." "Count your blessings." All of this can make you both angry and afraid. Angry because -

A - You don't want to get over "it"

B - You are "getting on" with your life in the best way you know how

C - Your "blessings" have nothing whatsoever to do with the pain of your loss!

Afraid because you feel you are not having some of the feelings you think you should be having because you are not reacting "normally". There is a period of extreme shock that can last from a few weeks to several months; you may not feel, anything except numbness for awhile. That's OK.

The best advice is take YOUR time. Be gentle with yourself. Do what you need to do, not what you think you should do. Don't clutter up your life with things that are going to exhaust you physically and weaken you emotionally. Remember, you are fighting the hardest battle you will ever have to face, so give yourself the best weapons you can. Rest, get in touch with your feelings, and talk. Say your child's name to anyone who will listen...take time.. .your time...to heal.

A Poem for my Daughter

By Karinelyn Paul, Broomfield, CO

I love you now, as I so loved you then
your Spirit is with me forever
When you were born all of heaven sang out
Joyous that we were together

Your eyes twinkled bright as a billion stars
Your lashes brushed sweet angel's kisses
As you snuggled so warmly against my neck
So serenely, you gave me such bliss

As I stroked your head, very gently My Dear
Your hair felt as soft as down feathers
Your fingers, so tiny, wove tightly with mine Rainbow's
end couldn't give me more treasure

I remember you now, I'll remember you when
every day and each night begins
You're a part of my soul, every beat of my heart
I promise, My Darling, Amen

Sibling Page

Sibling Grief

By Marggie Gerner TCF St Louis, MO

I was a sophomore in high school when my little brother, Arthur, was killed. As a sad coincidence, the woman who killed him was the secretary at my school. I must have seen her at school the day he died, but I am not able to consciously remember it. I can't remember seeing Arthur lying in the street either, though I know I did. All I can recall is being horrified and needing to get away from there. I took my younger sister home and never saw Arthur again. It was the dreadful beginning of a very long and painful journey. The pain of the grief is unavoidable, so is the family disruption. What can be changed, however, is the length of the grieving process. There are things that can be done that will help or hinder this process. Unfortunately for our family, we were given no help and we stayed a mess for a long time. I would like to share some of my experiences in the hope that they will help you to cope with your brother's or sister's death.

The first thing I remember is not knowing how to act or what to do. I felt terribly alone and awkward. I was shocked. One minute it was a nice, normal day and the next minute everything was changed. I didn't know how I was supposed to act at school. Part of me wanted to tell everyone what had happened and part of me didn't want to talk to anyone at all. I felt guilty for getting some comfort from the attention (I asked myself if this meant I was "glad" my brother had died), but on the other hand, I felt that people would think I didn't care when I said nothing. It hurt either way.

One way I dealt with my grief was by being sarcastic and laughing whenever something painful came up. I laughed outside, but I think my friends knew I was crying on the inside. Many people don't know how to help us, but hopefully you will have someone you can talk to. If not, perhaps you will be able to talk at home about how you feel. Home may become a pain-filled place. Our parents have been hurt badly. They aren't the same parents we knew before the death. The biggest mistake I made in my grief was trying to "fix" my parents' pain. I wished for and acted in ways that I hoped would change them back to happy, whole people again. I know now that it was not my responsibility to do this. In fact, I couldn't do it, no matter how "good" I was, or how much I tried to make our home pleasant, they were still sad. The bad thing was, by trying to make them better, I stuffed a lot of my own sadness, fears and worries inside. This added even more problems to my grief. In some ways, it felt better to worry about them instead of myself, but as I got older, those old painful memories wouldn't stay covered up anymore.

It is like a splinter that gets covered up with skin and feels better until the infection sets in, and then it hurts so much more when it comes out. We have to take care of ourselves and

trust our parents to take care of themselves. For years I rarely cried about my brother. I always thought that was strange. It was years before I was able to let the tears flow and then I cried for him and for me. I cried for Arthur because he was dead and I missed him; I cried for myself because of all I had missed. I missed feeling happiness in myself and my family. I missed feeling safe and secure. I missed the attention my parents were no longer able to give me. I missed the years of carefree childhood that were ripped away. Those are all losses that sibling grief is besides the loss of a brother or sister. Yes, it hurts! Cry about it. Laugh about it. Talk about it. Write about it. Pray about it. Just don't try to bury it, that won't work in the long run. And you know, I can do all those things today and it doesn't hurt nearly as much as it did when I started.

I now realize that my feelings about my brother's death were not the same as my parent's feelings. I used to think that I didn't love my brother because I wasn't as sad as long as they were. They hated the holidays, but I wanted the fun of the holidays. They couldn't be happy, but I could, especially after the first terrible set of holidays. Our parents have the right to feel sad because that is how they are feeling. We have the right to be happy if that's how we are feeling. Each one of my brothers and sisters had their own feelings. Each was sad, happy, and regretful in their own way and time. We grieved with our separate timetables. Sometimes we shared feelings, and many times they were different. None of us, however bad we felt, came close to having the depth of the pain that our parents did. I didn't understand this then as I do now. This is an important thing to know so that we don't feel guilty about getting on with our lives.

I remember that I used to think about things I did or didn't do with my brother before he died. I felt guilty because I didn't play with him the last time he wanted me to. Of course, I didn't know at the time that he was going to die. I remember times when I got mad and yelled at him for no reason. I felt guilty about that too. I know now that this is just a normal part of a brother-sister relationship. I can now realize that what I did or didn't do had nothing to do with his death. We need to be careful not to take on guilt. One of my brothers had always felt guilty because Arthur was riding his bicycle when he was killed. My brother did not kill Arthur. The woman who was driving the car did. It is important not to blame ourselves. Even if we did have a part in the death (or think we did), we need to forgive ourselves as we certainly didn't deliberately do it.

My brother's death definitely changed my life. It brought pain and unhappiness, but it also brought an awareness of other people's pain and the ability to understand and help others. I hope that you can take something from my experience and use it in your grief and maybe you can pass it on someday, too.

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

