



# The Compassionate Friends

## Lehigh Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

August 2015

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Volume 29, Issue 8

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#### Newly Bereaved

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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

- August 1** Monthly Meeting - General Sharing
- September** Monthly Meeting - General Sharing
- Oct 12** Monthly Meeting - General Sharing
- Oct 21** TCF Basket Bingo - See Pg 2 for details

## 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 you need to connect with someone between meetings, the following members are available to listen and share

- |                   |                   |              |                |                         |              |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Infant Loss ..... | Kim Szep.....     | 610-730-3111 | Suicide.....   | John & Maria Szabo..... | 610 866-5468 |
| Infant Loss ..... | Cathy McDonald... | 610 391-1474 | Addiction..... | Nancy Howe.....         | 484-863-4324 |
| Only Child.....   | Shelly Garst..... | 484 241-5396 | Homicide.....  | Ginger Renner.....      | 610-967-5113 |

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# News, Events & Announcements

This special issue of the newsletter is comprised solely of articles and poems written by members of TCF LV and our local sister chapters.



## TCF Basket Bingo

October 21, 2015

Northampton Community Center  
1601 Laubach Ave, Northampton, PA

Doors open at 5pm, Games start at 7 pm

### Tickets:

\$15.00 In Advance, deadline Sept. 21st  
after Sept 21 and @ the Door - \$20.00

Come join us for a fun filled night and try your luck at winning some great Filled Longaberger Baskets, Specials, Chinese Auction & 50/50. Food, beverages & treats available for purchase.

**Tickets sold at meetings or contact Dawn & Gene Delong @ 610-837-7924**

**Note: Advance tickets are available for purchase until Sept. 21st. No Exceptions**

## Newsletter Mailing FYI

For members who were sent an update letter & form, if you did not return your form this will be your last mailing. To be added back on the list, fill out & return form. Note: It may take a month or two before your mailings resume.



# Look for us on the Web

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

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

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

## 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](mailto: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 proceeding the desired publication month.

Example: Submission for the Oct newsletter must to submitted by Sept. 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)

## 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*

## From The Editor

*Dear Readers,*

*Last month I issued a plea for help with the newsletter production and mailing so that we can continue monthly newsletters. The intent is to form a team that can work together performing the various duties as it has become too much for one person. We have had a couple inquires from members, but we are still very much in need of volunteers. If TCF and our newsletter has helped you with your grief journey and you could possibly spare a little time each month to help us continue to reach out and help others please contact me. The following is a list of jobs/steps that are performed each month in order to get the newsletter out to our readers.*

- ❖ *Reviewing and selecting materials for inclusion in the newsletter - This involves finding appropriate and helpful material (articles and poetry) from our archives, member contributions and outside sources.*
- ❖ *Typing - Typing and proof reading selected material*
- ❖ *Computer - Layout of the newsletter (using selected material) in a way that renders it attractive and readable; Creation of a PDF file of completed newsletter and emailing to printer.*
- ❖ *Maintaining member database - Keeping member information (for Lehigh Valley, Carbon & Easton chapters) up to date; running queries to produce Birthday and anniversary lists*
- ❖ *Mailing - Picking up newsletter from printer (in bath), stamping envelopes; folding, labeling, & stuffing; sorting and mailing of the newsletter (delivering to Lehigh Valley post office bulk mail center).*

**If you have any of the above skills and wish to keep the newsletter in the hands of those who rely upon it please contact me by email at [tcfnewseditor@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnewseditor@gmail.com) or by phone at 484-891-0823**

*I look forward to hearing from you,*

*Kathy Collins*

# 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**

*Note: Due to privacy concerns Birthday and Anniversary listings are only published with permission for Parents/Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents. For additions and corrections complete & sign the Update Form (pg 11) & mail to the address indicated.*

## August Birthdays

Walter Alfonso	Son of Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan & the late Walter Alfonso & Charles Kunsman, Jr	Aug 10
Kimberly Caton	Daughter of Thomas & Sydney Caton	Aug 30
Carol Chanitz	Daughter of John & Ruth Chanitz	Aug 25
Jessica Coe	Daughter of Randy & Diane Coe; Sister of Allison Coe	Aug 13
Kenneth Cosentino	Son of Judy Cosentino; Brother of Noreen Cosentino	Aug 11
Hope Davidson	Daughter of Dean & Donna Davidson	Aug 8
Kimberly Dickinson	Daughter of Debbi A Dickinson, CPBC	Aug 25
Brenda Fehr Hatrak	Daughter of David & Eileen Fehr, Sr.; Sister of Barbara R. Burgin & David A. Fehr, Jr.; Granddaughter of Warren & Rose Fehr and Elwood & Mary Mann	Aug 31
Edwin Frantz	Son of Pamela Green; Brother of Amy & Troy	Aug 11
Jason Frey	Son of Lee Frey & Susan Center; Brother of Jared & Janel Frey	Aug 11
Eric Graver	Son of Mary L Graver	Aug 17
Mary Greaser	Daughter of Lucian & Brenda Strybuc	Aug 9
Jonathan Hawk	Son of Bruce & Mary Hawk; Brother of Bruce Hawk & the late Lisa Hawk	Aug 26
Alisha Heilman	Daughter of Joseph & Patricia Heilman; Sister of Tiffany, Rene', Stacie & Kristi	Aug 28
Allan Itterly	Son of Richard & Jeanette Itterly; Brother of Albert & James	Aug 14
Frank Kerr	Son of Catherine Milano	Aug 27
Kristin Kuser	Daughter of Tim & Elizabeth Kuser	Aug 9
Matt Kush	Son of Rick & Ann Kush; Brother of Mike & Jenn	Aug 24
Joseph Lestishock	Son of Marjorie Lestishock	Aug 30
Kristen Lyn Lisicky-Tyber	Daughter of James J. & Annette Lisicky; Sister of James M. Lisicky	Aug 22
Tina Marko	Daughter of Darlene Loncosky	Aug 8
Francis McGaughran, Jr	Son of Nancy McGaughran; Brother of Kelli, Brian & Michael	Aug 15
Katherine McGraw	Daughter of John & Sue McGraw; Sister of Maggy & Sean McGraw	Aug 15
Jim Minter	Son of Jim & Barbara Minter; Brother of Jeanine Minter	Aug 15
Michael "Mike" Morgan	Son of Raymond & Deborah Vrtis	Aug 17
Wayne Petzold	Son of David & Joan Petzold, Sr.; Brother of Amy, Dave & Father of Katie Petzold	Aug 20
PJ Pfenning	Son of Maureen Pfenning; Brother of Mandy Sciarillo & Lauren Pfenning	Aug 30
Jason Rute	Son of Bill & Linda Cavanaugh	Aug 25
Lauren Schneck	Daughter of James & Lisa Schneck	Aug 10
Tara Stauffer	Daughter of Kermit T. & Faye Nester	Aug 21
Michael Szabo	Son of John & Maria Szabo, Jr	Aug 2

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### August Birthdays

Benjamin Thomas	Son of Kathy Thomas; Brother of James Thomas	Aug 26
Jared Thomas	Son of Sandra B. Schueck	Aug 31
David Uecker	Son of Susan Uecker-Bittner & The Late Phillip C. Uecker; Brother of Amanda Uecker-Miernicki	Aug 2
Quinn Wolfe	Daughter of Matt Wolfe	Aug 20
Adam Wolk	Son of Michael & Sheila Wolk; Brother of Laura & Sarah Wolk	Aug 1
Craig Yurick	Son of Robert & Sharon Yurick; Brother of Todd Yurick	Aug 5

### August Anniversaries

Aaron Bissell	Son of Bob and Patti Bissell; Brother of Danielle Bissell	Aug 19
Carol Chanitz	Daughter of John and Ruth Chanitz	Aug 25
Joseph Chanitz	Son of John and Ruth Chanitz	Aug 28
Felicia Cook	Daughter of Herbert and Helen Cook	Aug 2
Nathaniel Davis	Son of Ronald and Elizabeth Davis	Aug 21
Kimberly Dickinson	Daughter of Debbi A Dickinson, CPBC	Aug 25
John Evans, III	Son of Jack and Ann Evans; Brother of Tom Sampson & Patti Stout	Aug 16
Doug Gable	Son of Ronald and Shirley Gable; Brother of Sharon Hornyak	Aug 1
Kelly Gallagher	Daughter of Tom and Sherry Gallagher	Aug 22
Mark Gery	Son of William and Catherine Gery; Brother of Kristin	Aug 3
Jeanne Hurley	Daughter of Stephen and Jeannette Viglione; Sister of Robert Wambold, Jr. & Michele Yankowy	Aug 13
Garrett Illes	Son of John Patrick Illes; Brother of Christine Elizabeth Illes	Aug 26
Austin Jacobs	Son of Penny Jacobs; Brother of Seth Jacobs	Aug 27
Brandon Jesse	Son of Cathi Jesse	Aug 6
Noah Krynock	Son of Heidi Hricisin; Brother of Seth & Sierra Hricisin	Aug 13
Mitchell "Mitch" Lloyd	Son of Sandra Lloyd; Brother of Douglas; Randy and Fran Lloyd	Aug 15
Michael Mann	Son of Lee and Shirley Lutz	Aug 12
Michael McDonald	Son of Fran McDonald	Aug 7
Glenn Miller, Jr.	Son of Lin Miller; Brother of Lorrie Woolever	Aug 4
Michael Potkovac, III	Son of Annette Potkovac; Brother of Michele Cuvo, Matthew, Mark, John, & Denise Potkovac & the late Donna Marie Potkovac-Roth	Aug 29
James Ralls	Son of Tina Ralls; Brother of Timothy & Geoffrey	Aug 17
Sandra Roberts	Daughter of Millard and Barbara Howell; Sister of Randy, Michaela & Alexandria	Aug 13
Aaron Schaible	Son of Linda Stewart; Brother of The late Jennifer Schaible	Aug 28
Darryl Shurow	Son of Lew and Sharon Richards	Aug 18
Jonelle Sisonick	Daughter of Rella Sisonick Daniels; Sister of Anthony and Nicholas Sisonick	Aug 3
Kyle Strohl	Son of Ron and Gail Strohl; Brother of Jennifer Grimes	Aug 27
Michael Szabo	Son of John and Maria Szabo, Jr	Aug 17
Christina Williamson	Daughter of Chris and Kim Williamson; Sister of the late Christopher Jayden Williamson	Aug 6

# Love Gifts

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Love Gifts are donations given in memory of a child or in memory of or in honor of a friend, relative or special person. These tax deductible donations enable the chapter to continue our mission of reaching out to the newly bereaved and providing ongoing support to all our members. To make a love gift donation please use form on page 11

**We thank the following for their generous donations this month**

<u>Contributor</u>	<u>In Memory of</u>
♥ Robert, Sharon & Todd Yurick	<b>Craig Michael Yurick</b> <i>Happy 46th Birthday. 10 years since you left and still so dearly missed - Love forever- Mom, Dad &amp; Todd</i>
♥ Lee & Shirley Lutz	<b>Michael D. Mann</b> <i>23rd Anniversary. Miss you more each year. Love Mom &amp; Dad</i>
♥ Ellen & Jennifer Winkler	<b>Steven Winkler</b> <i>We miss you and love you always</i>
♥ Jim & Barbara Minter	<b>Jim Minter</b> <i>Happy Birthday, Jimmy. Miss you always. Love Mom &amp; Dad</i>
♥ Lawrence & Linda Melenchek	<b>Nathaniel Davis</b> <i>Love and miss you always. Aunt Linda &amp; Uncle Larry</i>
♥ Ron & Shirley Gable	<b>Doug Gable</b> <i>Much missed Son &amp; Brother. Ron &amp; Shirley Gable and Sharon Hornyak</i>
♥ Glen & Peggy Wessner	<b>Patricia Marie Alliston</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ David & Margie Beidleman	<b>Robert E. Beidleman</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Jack & Nancy Blosky	<b>Kevin Thomas Bloskey</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Richard Marilyn Brown	<b>Elizabeth Gibson M.D.</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Albert & Joan Dixon	<b>Alexandra Eva Dixon</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Rick & Kathleen Fenstermacher	<b>Eric Andrew Fenstermacher</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ William & Catherine Gery	<b>Mark Peter Gery</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Kathleen Kilker	<b>Colleen Kilker</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ John & Jenny Kemps	<b>Skyler Hendrick Kemps</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ John & Jule Leonard	<b>John T. Leonard , Jr</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Michael & Gloria Kissel	<b>Kimberly L. Kissel</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Barbara DeBoer	<b>Sheila DeBoer</b> <i>You're in my heart everyday</i>
♥ Stephen & Jeanette Viglione	<b>Jeanne C. Hurley</b> <i>Daughter of Stephen &amp; Jeanette Viglione, Mother of Cole J Hurley. We miss you more &amp; more</i>

## Donations and Contributions

### TCF Lehigh Valley Contributors

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

# Suggestions To Help Overcome Grieving

By Ardath Rodale; TCF Lehigh Valley, PA Chapter

1. Treat yourself with special care -- warm baths, soft music, touch yourself, eat nourishing meals perhaps by candlelight
2. Take walks and let nature touch your heart. Look for what is new each day, smell the great outdoors, hear the birds sing
3. Make your thankful list each day -- not only for special people but for the beauty around you
4. Throw away the resentments you might hold towards other people
5. Laugh more often
6. Release holding on to what you can't change
7. Forgive yourself for not being perfect
8. Get out in the garden -- touch the earth
9. Don't emphasize problems that cause pain. Maintain your independence when it comes to your well being
10. Be open in sharing with others what is going on inside you. Share your feelings.
11. Dwell on the wonderful contributions of the person who now lives only in your heart
12. Don't chastise yourself for what might have been. Still your mind and stand tall. Take stock of where you are, and build on that
13. Praise God for letting you share the wonderful life of your departed loved one
14. Realize that other people are in need of care, too. Seek out those people and give them your love through a hug, a kiss, a soothing hand, a sympathetic ear, or by running a helpful errand. Only as we get out of ourselves do we start to heal and realize that our mission in life is still not finished.

## Compassionate Friends

By Kim Giamportone, former TCF Lehigh Valley PA Chapter Leader

I would like to address the newer members of TCF. Your child or sibling has died and you may be wondering what on Earth the Compassionate Friends can do for you that you cannot do for yourself. If you have been to a meeting, you may have seen people smiling and laughing. That can be very hard to stomach for the newly bereaved. I never thought I would be one of them in a million years. You may have noticed that our children and siblings have died from all different causes and at different ages. I remember thinking that this mishmash of people could not possibly understand my pain and my loss.

Well, we can't. Nor do we have all the answers. What we can do, however, is acknowledge that we have ALL felt the black hole that has been left in our hearts and will always remain there to some degree. We can share ideas on how to survive special dates, or just survive day to day. We can listen to stories about your child or sibling because we truly want to hear all you have to share. We can look at members who have lost loved ones many years ago, and realize that there will be happiness in our lives again (even if we don't believe that right now).

And, sometimes, it's just nice to get a hug from someone who will share your pain and help you find the strength you need to survive this life. "The healing began when a friend embraced me, leaving some of his tears on my cheek."

***It is not time that heals. It is the healing process that takes time.***

The assumption that time heals emotional wounds is so prevalent that we include it as one of the six myths that most limit grieving people.

If your car has a flat tire, would you pull up a chair, sit down, and wait for air to get back in your tire? Obviously not. Time is not going to put air into your tire. Only the actions of fixing or changing the flat tire will get the car back on the road.

The same is true of grief. Time can't do any more for your broken heart than it can for a flat tire. You make a choice of action to repair the flat tire. Equally so, you make a choice for actions that help you get through (not over) the death of your child and actions to get your life back on the road.

*Bear with me as I give two examples that time does not resolve anything. Actions do.*

You're driving along a road and your tire goes flat. What do you do! You sit in your car and ask, "how could this have happened?"

You learn that your child has just died. What do you do? You sit and ask, "how could this have happened?"

Your tire was fine when you left home and there's no reason why it should have gone flat. Tires don't just go flat, you say, "what did I do wrong?"

Your child is dead and you think, children aren't supposed to die before their parents. "What did I do wrong? What did I do to deserve this?"

You're still sitting in your car and your tire is still flat. A passing motorist stops, admits to being mechanically challenged and then says, "I'm sorry," before he leaves you. Other cars just pass around you. They have their own places to go and things to do.

Family and friends learn your child has died. They attend the funeral. They say they're sorry and admit to not knowing what to say or do and they leave you. They have their lives to live while yours comes to a screeching halt.

As you sit in your car, the motorist who first stopped hours earlier notices your car is still in the same spot as when he left you. "Didn't you fix this tire yet?" the motorist asks in disbelief. As you sit immobilized, the Good Samaritan says, "Here's a sandwich and a soda. That will help!" You stare back and say, "I'm not hungry. My tire is flat." The motorist leaves in a huff saying, "Fine. I was only trying to help."

Weeks, months go by and you're either sobbing or staring out the window because your child has died. A friend calls and asks why you're still sad and crying. Before you get a chance to answer, the friend says, "I know what will make you better. You need a vacation." You snap back, "That

won't bring my child back. "The friend huffs and mumbles, "Fine. If you don't want my help, then I'll just leave and get out of your way!"

The sandwich and soda stopped your belly from growling, but your tire is still flat. You step out of your car to look at your tire. It's a good tire, but it's still flat and it shouldn't be. You look through the trunk for what seems an eternity and you find the tools to repair the flat. Yet you're exhausted and have to sit again.

Your child is still gone, but the sobbing and depression have lessened enough that you can at least shower and make a trip to the grocery store. You could use some help carrying the bags, but no one offers and you don't ask.

Even though you've never repaired a flat tire, you somehow use the tools in the right way. You've learned something new and you feel better, but you still have the flat tire even though it's in your trunk.

As you stare at photos of your deceased child, you allow smiles to creep into your heart. You try to think of ways to get people to say your child's name and not to forget them, so you get a tattoo or have your child's name etched on your car window. As you muster the strength to sort through your child's things, you find the expensive camera you gave her for Christmas.

The flat tire remains in your trunk, but one day you take it to be repaired. You tell of how you learned to change your first flat tire even though it seemed to take forever. People around you smile and say they never could have done that.

With your child's camera, you decide to take a photography class. In class, you're regarded as a natural and no one can believe this is the first you've used a camera. You finish your classes and eventually leave your career as an accountant, because everyone wants to buy your photographs. You've discovered a new talent and actually get paid for something you love to do. You realize you've found a new way of living. There are times when you clutch the camera and cry because your child's death hurts all over, but the good-days eventually outnumber the bad days. While you'd give anything to have your child back, you've found a new you in the joy of photography and blessed that your child had owned this camera and you made a choice. You took action.

Driving along the roadway, you come across a motorist with a flat tire. Everyone else drives around the car, but you take the time to stop. You guide the driver out of her car over to where the flat tire is. The driver says she has never changed a flat tire and assumes the Good Samaritan hasn't either. But the Good Samaritan knows the feeling of being helpless. She helps the driver find the tools and gently talks her through the process. The driver smiles and says she could have never done it without the help of the Good Samaritan. The driver pulls out her wallet and says,

*(Continued on page 9)*



*(Continued from page 8)*

"How much do I owe you?" The Good Samaritan says, "I don't want money, but there is a way you can pay me back?" The driver asks, "How?" The Good Samaritan says, now that you know how to change a flat tire, you will have paid me back if you come across another driver with a flat tire and help them like I helped you."

While the circumstances were vastly different and seemingly uncomparative, both the driver and the bereaved parent had to make choices. They each had to act. It wasn't time that resolved their situations. It was the choices that took the time. For the driver, it was a matter of hours. For the bereaved parent, it was months or years. Yet each had to make a conscious choice to meet the challenge, select the tools and take action.

The key to dealing with the impact of a son or daughter's death is not to wait for time to do what it cannot do, but to take the actions that will help you complete what the death left unfinished.

By Allison's mom, Barbara J. Reboratti  
TCF Lehigh Valley & Quakertown, PA Chapters

## To My Son Jackie

By Grace Ashner, TCF Lehigh Valley, PA

I look up and I see your face.  
I see your eyes, I see your grin.  
I say out loud, almost angrily  
Where have you been?

Then I remember!  
Then I feel the deep pain.  
I want you back.  
I want to touch you again.

But I'll always have you.  
See your face, hear your laugh.  
They're in my heart and my memory  
And will forever last.

Your smile is in the sunshine  
Your laughter in the soft, warm air.  
And then I reach out to touch you.  
I know you are there!

## A Celebration of Life

By Cindy Chryst TCF Easton, PA Chapter  
October 2001

On March 14, 1999 my life was changed forever. My son, Benjamin, age twenty-five was gone. On October 6, he would be celebrating his twenty-eighth birthday. I no longer feel the emotions of life that I once did. My joys are not as happy - my sorrows less sad. I almost feel a numbness of my senses. But, I must still live and go on - as we all must do. I look back over the last two and one-half years and recall some of the events in my life - they seem so distant to me now. But the day he died seems like only yesterday. Occasionally I agonize myself, reliving all the details. Tragedy has a way of etching sorrow deeply in our hearts.

In the beginning I searched everywhere for a sense of peace: reading all types of literature on death and life after death, attending psychic sessions, meeting with a grief counselor, and attending two Compassionate Friends meetings every month. I was a recluse at home but in a panic-driven state to find a solution for my "all- being" pain. For me, The Compassionate Friends was the organization where I felt most comfortable. I have learned how to deal with my panic attacks and how to be able to think and talk about my son (as I do every day of my life) without tearful eyes.

Time is on our side and I have used time to psyche out my fears of his loss by telling myself I will not be sad today - I'll be sad tomorrow - and so on. I take one day at a time.

Last week I lost a sum of money I was feeling quite angry and depressed about my carelessness until a friend suggested that perhaps the money was found by someone who really needed it. I felt better about the loss - concentrating only on the good it might bring someone. So in the loss of my son, I am concentrating on the good I might do for others in my situation.

Every time I hear of a child's death I am eager to tell the family about The Compassionate Friends. This not only keeps my son alive for me, but gives them hope that people actually do survive this horrible tragedy.

I thank God I've found The Compassionate Friends and I thank all of you for bringing some sense of renewed meaning to my life. In my heart I know my son Benjamin is proud that his mother is making lemonade out of lemons.

God bless you all,  
Cindy Chryst

# Sibling Page

*The following two poems were written by Heather Gilson, TCF Lehigh Valley,  
in memory of her brother Robert S. Gilson, IV*

## Memories

It is natural to cry.

It is natural to sigh.

It is natural to sit there and wonder -WHY?

It is natural to be in pain.

It is natural to grieve.

It is natural to not want to believe.

It is understandable when you're mad.

It is understandable when you're sad.

It is even understandable when you're happy or glad.

Because these are the memories of a loved one before.

Memories of times you won't have anymore.

But you must always keep these memories in your heart,  
because it is through you, that your loved one will never depart.

## I Love You Little Sister

IF I would have known those were the last words  
I'd hear, I would have hung on to every word,  
Brother dear.

IF I would have known those were the last words  
you'd say, I would have responded with the same  
love you showed me that day.

I LOVE YOU are three little words that are very  
strong and when said from a brother to a sister,  
they last a whole life long.

And those three little words you said to me were  
the same words everyone should say, for you don't  
know what can happen the next minute, no less  
the next day.

The future is ahead,  
the past far behind.

Always let your heart be happy.

Let LOVE be your guide.

## *Dearest Chris*

Our days are filled with sorrow and tears now that you're gone.  
Our hearts are now empty and our minds are weary, we feel so all alone

We're told that time is the healer of all wounds, but still our hearts break.  
Our dearest brother, Son and Friend, why did God have to take?

Yet your kind smile and gentle spirit still warms our very souls.  
And each day we miss you more than you will ever know.

So, we thank you for the love that you've given us and the memories throughout the years  
And we know someday we will see you again and embrace you with joyous tears

Love Andrea

Andrea Harrison, TCF Lehigh Valley, PA  
In memory of her brother, Christopher Harrison

## 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](mailto:TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com)

The following is  Information change or update  Address or Phone change  Permission (check this box to grant OCR publication Newsletter/ Web permission)

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Names \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Sibling's & or Grandparents Names (We publish only Parents/Guardians, Grandparents and Sibling names)

If this is a information change ... please indicate what changes need to be made ( i.e. name change, correction, sibling name addition etc...)

# **The Compassionate Friends Credo**

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope.  
The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,  
but our love for them unites us.

Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds and relationships.

We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief,  
but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source for strength;  
while some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in a deep depression;  
while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,  
it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,  
but we are committed to building that future together.

We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace,  
share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends

## **The Compassionate Friends Siblings Walking Together** *(Formerly the Sibling Credo)*

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.

Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.

Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.

At other times we need our families to be there.

Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be.

We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.

We are living a life very different from what we envisioned,  
and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.

Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows  
as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.