



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September 2015

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Volume 29, Issue 9

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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

September 14 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

Oct 12 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

Oct 21 TCF Basket Bingo - See Pg 2 for details NOTE: Advance Ticket Sales Deadline - Sept 21

November 9 General Sharing /Handling The Holidays

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

Infant Loss Cathy McDonald... 610 391-1474

Only Child..... Shelly Garst.....484 241-5396

Suicide..... John & Maria Szabo..... 610 866-5468

Addiction..... Nancy Howe..... 484-863-4324

Homicide..... Ginger Renner.....610-967-5113

News, Events & Announcements



TCF Basket Bingo October 21, 2015



Northampton Community Center, 1601 Laubach Ave, Northampton, PA

Doors open at 5pm, Games start at 7 pm

Advance Tickets: \$15.00 (deadline Sept 21 - No Exceptions), At the Door: \$20.00

Advance ticket available at meetings or contact Dawn DeLong @ 610-837-7924

Come join us and try your luck at winning some great Filled Longaberger Baskets, Specials, Chinese Auction & 50/50. Food, beverages & gourmet candy apples available for purchase.

Remembrance Weekend December 12-13, 2015

Zion UCC Church, 2nd & Iron Sts, Lehighton

Saturday events include a 5k or 1 mile run/walk (registration & fee required); various bereavement panel discussions/sharing sessions; Keynote speaker Sara Ruble and Trinity Praise Band concert (Free but registration required)

Sunday 6:30 pm - Worldwide Candle Lighting Service

For information & registration forms visit: www.Zionlehighton.org, or at www.facebook.com/dylanandgavinsrainbow.

For more information Call: Ken at Zion UCC - 610-377-1191 or Email Dave & Lora at davelora@ptd.net.

The 19th Annual TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting December 13, 2015

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is a very special and moving event, when bereaved families join together from around the world and light candles at 7:00 p.m. local time to commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 19th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone

In the Lehigh Valley area Tom & Eva Siebert are hosting their annual Worldwide Candle Lighting Social at their home on Dec 13th at 5:30. Everyone welcome! Covered dishes welcome but not necessary, candles provided.

For information, directions & to RSVP call Tom and Eva at 610 967-5886



TCF Candle Light Remembrance Service December 14, 2015



Sacred Heart Hospital Auditorium 6:45 - 9pm

All members and families, as well as anyone who has lost a child, sibling or grandchild are invited to attend. The service features music, poetry readings, memorial candle lighting, a slideshow of our children, followed by a social.

For the slideshow submit the following no later than Oct. 31st:

- ♥ 1-2 individual (not group) photo(s) of your child, sibling or grandchild (up to 8x10). Note: If you previously submitted a photo you do not need to submit another. All photos returned at the service
- ♥ Your contact info, child's name, birth & anniversary dates, family members names

Submit by:

- ♦ **Email:** a photo quality jpeg & info to: kimberlee.szep@lvh.com ♦ **Mail:** in a stiff mailer to - Kim Szep, 5816 Snowy Orchid Lane, Allentown, PA 18104 or ♦ **Make an appointment** by calling Kim @ 610-530-4244

Please follow the submission instructions carefully and submit all required information prior to the deadline. The chapter is not responsible for submissions that are incomplete, late or sent to the wrong address.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter News | 2 |
| Our Children Remembered Birthdays | 4 |
| Our Children Remembered Anniversaries | 5 |
| Love Gifts & Donations | 6 |
| From the editor- | 6 |
| Articles - Hypothetical TCF Food for Thought | 7-8 |
| Poem - The Gift of Someone Who Listens | 8 |
| Poem - His Shoes Speak to Me | 8 |
| Poems - Catching Butterflies; What is Grief | 9 |
| Sibling Page: - Article - A Tragedy That Last Forever | 10 |
| Love Gift Donation Form | 11 |
| Credos | 12 |

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

New Members

Lehigh Valley Toby & Louise Minner - Son - Douglas Matthew Minner

Lehigh Valley Chris & Lisa Zukowski - Daughter - Abigail Zukowski

About This Newsletter

This newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley Chapter with the hope that it will be a helpful resource for you on your grief journey.

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter please contact the newsletter editor by phone at 484-891-0823; by email: TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com or by mail: TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA

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 can not be forwarded or held. They are returned to us at our expense. If your newsletter is returned 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 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



Look for us on the Web

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

Like our facebook page: www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley for quotes, meeting & event reminders, cancelations and member forum.

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

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.

September Birthdays

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|
| Megan Alisio | Daughter of Nick and Tina Alisio | Sep 8 |
| Todd Belles | Son of Anita Belles | Sep 17 |
| Michael Buss | Son of Bea Bryfogle; Brother of Lindsay & Katelyn Buss | Sep 13 |
| Daniel Catino | Brother of Hunter, Tanner & Joshua Catino | Sep 26 |
| John Counterman, III | Brother of Theresa Legarski | Sep 30 |
| Ashley Dickinson | Daughter of Debbi A Dickinson, CPBC | Sep 3 |
| Alexandra Dixon | Daughter of Albert and Joan Dixon; Sister of Zack Dixon | Sep 22 |
| Rocky Fraccica | Son of Rocky and Sadie Fraccica | Sep 13 |
| Rita Guerrieri | Daughter of Art and Mary Guerrieri; Sister of Maryrose Guerrieri-Nesbitt | Sep 29 |
| Lisa Hawk | Daughter of Bruce and Mary Hawk; Sister of Bruce Hawk | Sep 4 |
| David Hoagland, Jr | Son of Gypsy Garrett | Sep 24 |
| Jonathan Hoffstetter | Son of Richard and Suzanne Hoffstetter; Brother of Diane and Kenneth Hoffstetter | Sep 22 |
| Julie Howe | Daughter of Timothy and Nancy Howe; Sister of Melanie Howe | Sep 3 |
| Jack Kuhns, Jr | Son of Jack and Cindy Kuhns; Brother of Michelle & Josh Kuhns | Sep 23 |
| Richard Kulik | Son of Dolores Kulik; Brother of Christina Schantzenbach and Michael Kulik | Sep 5 |
| Charles Kunsman, Jr | Son of Charles and Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan, Sandra Kunsman, the late Walter Alfonso & the late David Kunsman | Sep 18 |
| John "Jack" Kushnerick, Jr. | Son of Bernice Kushnerick | Sep 17 |
| John "Jack" Kushnerick, Jr. | Brother of Pat & Jan Kushnerick | Sep 17 |
| Paul Levine | Son of Louisa Levine; Brother of Gregory, Mary & Philip Levine | Sep 28 |
| Michael Mann | Son of Lee and Shirley Lutz | Sep 26 |
| Anthony "Tony" Mariani, II | Son Kathleen Collins & the late Anthony E. Mariani; Stepson of Brian Collins; Brother of Matthew Mariani; Grandson of William and Janet Pickett | Sep 13 |
| Harry Rawdon | Son of Margaret Rawdon; Brother of JettaAnn Rawdon | Sep 23 |
| Lydia Rice Cobb | Daughter of Virginia Rice | Sep 27 |
| Anthony Romig | Son of Edward C. Romig, Sr. & Lois Pearsall; Brother of Edward C. Romig, Jr. | Sep 12 |
| Constance Stewart | Daughter of Joanne Stewart; Sister of Keith and Kevin Stewart | Sep 23 |
| Sean Virmalo | Son of Udo and Janet L. Virmalo; Brother of Eric, Brett & Katelyn Virmalo | Sep 13 |
| Stephanie Volkert | Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert | Sep 22 |
| Gregory Weiland, Jr | Son of Robin Weiland; Brother of Rozalyn Weiland | Sep 23 |

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September Anniversaries

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------|
| Aaron Abud | Son of Jose and Susan Abud; Brother of Ariana & Sophia and Susan Abud | Sep 4 |
| James Balloch | Grandson of Bill Gerth & Fern Gerth | Sep 4 |
| Todd Belles | Son of Anita Belles | Sep 28 |
| Rachael Brosky | Daughter of Karl Brosky; Sister of Rebekah Brosky-Dorsey & William Brosky | Sep 8 |
| Holly Cavanaugh | Daughter of Beverly Ann Cavanaugh & Bill Cavanaugh; Sister of Bo Cavanaugh | Sep 25 |
| Christopher Cole | Son of Donald Cole; Brother of Lauren Cole | Sep 10 |
| Ashley Dickinson | Daughter of Debbi A Dickinson, CPBC | Sep 3 |
| Thom Eichlin | Son of Nancy Eichlin | Sep 11 |
| Carol Johnson | Daughter of Lauretta Coyne; Sister of Elaine Muretta, Bob, Jim and Dave Johnson | Sep 23 |
| Kimberly Kohl | Daughter of Lyndon and Linda Kohl | Sep 28 |
| Matthew Kolb | Brother of Sarah and Andrew Kolb | Sep 6 |
| Anthony "Tony" Mariani, II | Son Kathleen Collins & the late Anthony E. Mariani; Stepson of Brian Collins; Brother of Matthew Mariani; Grandson of William and Janet Pickett | Sep 6 |
| Nicole Reinhart | Daughter of Michael and Pamela Reinhart; Sister of Mikey & Timmy Reinhart | Sep 17 |
| Scott Rothrock | Son of Larry and Linda Rothrock | Sep 18 |
| Jeanmarie Siedlecki-Moyer | Daughter of Joe and Monica Siedlecki; Sister of MaryAnn & Michele Siedlecki and the late Joey Siedlecki | Sep 25 |
| David Todd Smith | Son of David and Kathleen Smith; Brother of Stephanie Seifert | Sep 17 |

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.

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> |
|----------------------------|---|
| ♥ Margaret Rawdon | Harry Rawdon <i>My sweet Harry, My heart and my being miss you.</i> |
| ♥ Elizabeth & Ronald Davis | Nathaniel Christopher Davis <i>In Loving Memory</i> |
| ♥ Tom & Sherry Gallagher | Kelly Ann Gallagher <i>In Loving Memory</i> |
| ♥ Debbie Goodman | Lorraine Corbo <i>In Loving Memory</i> |
| ♥ Lin Miller | Glenn W. Miller, Jr <i>In Loving Memory</i> |
| ♥ Mike & Tamara Kulp | Michael Erik Kulp <i>In Loving Memory</i> |
| ♥ Joy Dilts | Mark Wilkins Dilts, Jr <i>In Loving Memory</i> |
| ♥ Monica Siedlecki | Jean Marie Siedlecki & Joey Siedlecki <i>In Loving Memory</i> |
| ♥ Susan J. Sharken - Abud | Aaron Abraham Abud <i>In Loving Memory</i> |

From The Editor

Dear Readers,

In response to my appeal for help with the newsletter we have received a number of offers for help with the mailing portion of the process. We still have a great need for volunteers to help with the other duties so that we can continue monthly newsletters. The duties that would be the easiest to perform and biggest help right now would be a Material Selector and Typist. Of course if someone is interested in the other duties that would be wonderful. Please contact me if you could possibly spare a little time each month to help with monthly newsletter production.

The following is a list of jobs/duties that we are looking to fill

- ❖ *Material Selector - This involves reviewing and selecting appropriate and helpful materials (articles and poetry) for inclusion in the newsletter from our archives, member contributions and outside sources .*
- ❖ *Typist - 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*

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 or by phone at 484-891-0823

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kathy Collins

Hypothetical TCF Food for Thought

By Lora Krum, TCF Carbon County, PA

Imagine a quiet evening for the ER doctor, as he sat at his desk in the middle of his shift. The nurses and other medical staff were also feeling somewhat "relaxed," as they went about catching up on charting and re-stocking supplies. They've had a steady flow of patients with various medical needs, but nothing too severe. Just as quickly as they had gotten themselves into a productive state, the unpredictable nature of the ER quickly changed in a matter of minutes, as 3 new patients were brought into the Emergency Department.

The first patient was a victim of a tragic farming accident. Somehow he was pinned underneath a huge piece of machinery and sustained some internal injuries as well as an almost completely detached leg. He was bleeding profusely.

The second patient was a middle aged, diabetic lady. She had been maintaining her chronic condition for several years now, but over the past couple of weeks she was feeling intense weakness, dizziness and was often light headed. This evening she was feeling even worse and wasn't sure what was happening with her body.

The third individual was a young adult cancer patient. Yesterday was his second chemotherapy treatment. There was a new drug introduced to his protocol and he was feeling some very adverse reactions. He was not sure if this was a normal way to feel, or if his symptoms would improve on their own or get worse.

Let's compare the individual needs of these three examples of Emergency Room patients to the needs of grieving parents who attend their local TCF Chapter meeting. As the evening unfolds, amidst the busyness of setting up for the meeting, the room begins to 'fill up' with people. Some are carrying framed pictures of their dear child, while others cart baked goods or other treats along with them as they face an anniversary of a significant day in the lives and deaths of their children. Some parents enter through the door and scan the room and immediately find a place where they can seat their weary body...and you can tell it's been "one of those weeks" for them. Still others seem to exuberantly bound in and joyfully greet others, as they are so happy to see each other and look forward to sharing special thoughts for the evening.

Among the people in attendance, let's focus on three. There's a fresh new face sitting there with red-rimmed eyes and wrinkled clothes. Her trembling is visible, and

it's also noticeable that she fidgets with the copy of her sweet child's obituary, which includes an angelic photo of that sweet elementary aged boy, as tears pour out of her eyes. There's also a dad there who has been to several meetings before. His 20 year old son was killed in a senseless mugging on his college campus almost a year ago. He would have been 21 next week. He's been quiet and has listened in other meetings. He's having an awful time at work, as his colleagues haven't been able to show the tolerance and compassion that he so needs...and his boss has been putting pressure on him to focus on his job better than he has. He wonders how he can continue to get up each morning and drag himself into such a challenging environment. He sits and rehearses the question he'd like to bring up to the group. Then, there in the middle of this small group is a mom who has been a pretty regular part of the group for almost a decade. She has shared a lot of experiences, tears, laughter, ideas and compassion with so many throughout those years. As she faces the 10th anniversary of her 12 year old daughter's death, she doesn't know why it hurts so badly...why she's experiencing pain more intensely than she has in a few years. She has been a mess all week at home while her friends and family have been quite insensitive to her lamenting and sorrow.

Just as the ER doctor and medical staff would focus immediately on the bleeding man with the almost detached leg, the leader and others would focus immediately on the rawness of the newly bereaved mom's pain. Both need concentrated doses of treatment that will help them in their immediate survival. Both will need to be prepped for further extensive attention followed by arduous amounts of time and struggles on the pathway to recovery. A recovery that will leave them both with a way of life that will be different than they ever dreamed their lives would be like.

As the intensive treatment is granted to those most obvious needs, the others wait for their opportunity to be helped. The diabetic lady, and the cancer patient could easily find themselves in danger if they do not receive some medical attention. That is why they were brought into the emergency department of the hospital in the first place. Without some intervention, each of them could experience worse symptoms, and more intense side effects. If they wouldn't receive medical attention in that critical time when they were looking for it, their condition could become life threatening.

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

The dad who anticipates his son's birthday and first anniversary of his death might be compared to the young adult cancer patient...and the mom who is struggling with the concept of living an entire decade without her daughter may be compared to the diabetic woman who has managed her chronic condition as well as she can, but sometimes flare-ups require intervention. Of course these parents understand the rawness and urgency of that mom's grief...just as the diabetic and the cancer patient understand the urgency of the man whose leg is almost detached. In both scenarios, even if the other conditions don't seem as urgent, they are still conditions that need compassion, care and attention.

Although the symptoms, conditions and complications of grieving parents aren't always visible to the eye, nor can they be diagnosed with scans or lab work, we know that the broken hearts of grief are real. Just as the diabetic or cancer patient would suffer deeply without the medical attention they were seeking when they were brought into the ER, the parents of varying stages of their children's deaths would suffer without the acknowledgement and attention of their needs at this time. That is why they rely on their TCF chapter.

All who need support have to be able to find the place to go to find that support. Once they've found themselves in that environment, we are responsible to care for them all. **We need not walk alone.**

The Gift of Someone Who Listens

By Nancy Myechoalts,
TCF Waterville/Toledo. OH

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile
The first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember
That more than words we speak
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.



His Shoes Speak To Me

By Ora S. Lewis TCF Orange County

His shoes still sit on the closet floor,
Tho' he's been gone a decade and more.

Some days my memories are a bit hazy.
Is it a nightmare or am I going crazy?

I go the closet and there are his shoes
It's easy to see they really were used.

The prints of his feet are still inside.
He really did live, but too soon he died.

Reality returns, with his shoes on the floor
How long will they be there?
'Til I need them no more.



His bronzed baby shoes sit on a shelf
They help me meet a need in myself

These baby shoes speak of a life just beginning
The work shoes tell about life and its ending.

With the passing of years, some peace I've attained.
But the happiness I once knew cannot be regained.

Yet there's much about life I still want to live.
To my family and others, I still yearn to give.

I've cried many tears, felt the guilt and the pain.
My grief has diminished and I can laugh
once again

Catching Butterflies

By Dottie Williams, TCF Pittsburgh PA

It often hurt to come upon reminders of
my son

Tho' often since I lost him I would search
around for one

Which always brought on sadness and the
tears that I would shed

Were caused by names or faces, all things
that I would dread.

But then one day I came upon a man
who'd lost his son

I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't
even shun.

But rather he would treasure and I said I
wondered why

He told me that he called them "Catching
Butterflies."

This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to
hear more

And learned that he took all of them and
carefully would store

All of the reminders that I chose to push
away

He would tuck deep down inside his heart
each and every day.

Now a name or likeness when catching
me off guard

Does not upset me as it did and I don't
find it hard

For now instead I see these times as
opportunities

To see my son awakened in these new
fresh memories.

***Grief is like...
Weeding a flower garden in the
summer. You have to do it over and
over again until the season changes.***

~TCF Pensacola FL

What Is Grief?

By Elizabeth Dent TCF, McMinnville, OR

It's soaking your pillow with tears at night.
your thoughts flying 'round in your head.
You feel like you'll never sleep again,
Wondering why you went to bed.

It's softly crying in the shower,
And hoping no one will hear.
When sobs wrack your chest, taking your breath,
You'll surely be heard, you fear.

You blow your nose and wipe your eyes,
Come out looking innocent.
The silly games we all play,
You wish you knew what they meant.

It's having swollen eyelids,
Your nose peels all the time.
You go through boxes of Kleenex.
Then people say you look fine!

It's guilt and depression and anger,
Emotions are magnified.
Good days and bad days are measured
By the amount of tears that you cried.

It's hanging in limbo from lawsuits,
Your grieving has been put on hold.
You feel like you'll never start healing
Before you're a hundred years old.

It's when someone says, "It's God's will,"
And you're sorry you nodded and cried.
You feel like you've betrayed your child,
Your precious child that died.

It's feeling abandoned by God,
Wondering if He really does care.
Then on a good day, believing,
Convinced, all the time, he was there.

It's crying to God in your sorrow,
Imploring him for some reprieves.
He comes to you in his own time,
Conveying that with you he grieves.

It's having compassion for others,
Supporting them when their child dies.
It brings back the painful memories,
But, "Lord, help them," is what your heart cries.

Sibling Page

A Tragedy That Lasts Forever

By Madelyn Heilweil, Stamford, CT

On June 8, 1989, my life changed drastically. I was extremely excited that morning since I was getting my driver's license later in the day. Upon arriving at school, my brother Neil and I went our separate ways. Neil turned back and said, "Good Luck! Don't mess up!" Those words will remain with me for as long as I live. They were the last words my brother said to me. I left school early to get my driver's license. On the way home, my mother told me that Neil was sent home from school with a headache and chills. When we arrived at home, Neil was sleeping. My mother left for her law study group.

Later, while I was on the phone, I heard a tremendous crash. I raced to my brother's room to find him having convulsions and in a coma. I rushed Neil to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with meningitis, a disease in which the membrane around the brain swells. On June 10th my brother was pronounced brain dead. The doctors told us we would have to make a decision as to whether or not to keep him on life support. Previously, Neil told us that if he were ever on life support, he would want us to turn off the machine. On June 11th the life support systems were disconnected and my brother was officially pronounced dead. At first I blamed myself for my brother's death, and for months I was in a horrible state of depression. The questions "What if I...?" and "If I could have...?" went through my mind over and over again. I felt that if one of us had to die, it should have been me. I would have changed places with him in a heartbeat. Finally I realized that there was nothing I could have done, and my life had to go on.

But everything was different and I changed.

- ❖ I saw life through different eyes and judged people and things differently.
- ❖ I work harder now and I take life more seriously. You could say I try to do enough for both of us - to do everything my brother is no longer able to or never did.
- ❖ I feel as if Neil is still here, watching over me.
- ❖ I try to accomplish things that would make him proud of me. • I have grown up a lot.
- ❖ I joined the sibling group, where I am able to talk to others who understand what
- ❖ I am going through. No matter what people say, they cannot understand unless they have gone through it.
- ❖ I have also started a bereavement group at my school to help others talk about their feelings regarding the loss of a parent, sibling or friend. Now when someone loses a loved one, he or she can come to me and know that I am willing to listen. I understand.

It makes me feel great knowing that I can share my experience and help others overcome a tragic loss and want to go on with their lives. The hurt never goes away. The sharp memory of my brother will never fade. I will never forget the love, the frustration, and even the arguments we had. No one can ever take his place in my heart. When Neil died, a part of me died too.

Ode To Jeff

There will always be a heartache and often a silent tear,
 But always precious memories of the days had you here.
 I hold you close within my heart and there you will remain
 To walk with me throughout my life until we meet again.

Andrea Duncan, TCF/ Winnipeg, Canada

Love Gift Form

Please consider making a Love Gift to support the Compassionate Friends today. Your gift will help defray the cost of chapter expenses such as the newsletter mailings, meetings and our outreach to the newly bereaved. The Compassionate Friends is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and your donations are fully tax deductible.

MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 1ST OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO THE MONTH YOU WISH YOR GIFT PUBLISHED

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LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
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I would like to make a donation In Memory of In Honor of A Chapter Gift (without memorial or honorarium)

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Special Text - Brief Messages Please. Poems & story submissions are always welcome and should be sent directly to the Newsletter Editor for inclusion in the newsletter.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____ Lehigh Valley Carbon County Easton

Note: Please mail Carbon County & Easton gifts to the addresses below

If your gift is for Lehigh Valley please designate which of the following your gift is for (you may circle more than one)

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Mailing Addresses for Carbon County and Easton Chapters

The Compassionate Friends, Carbon County
C/O Patti Bissell
365 Drift Rd
Palmerton, Pa 18071

The Compassionate Friends, Easton
C/O John Szabo
1514 Sculac Dr
Bethlehem, Pa 18020

Member Update Form

Please use this form to change or update information or permit publication of child's Birth and Anniversary dates in "Our Children Remembered" (OCR) section.

Mail this update form to: Kathleen Collins, 2971 Pheasant Dr., Northampton, PA 18067 **or email updates to:** TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

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

Your Name _____ Signature (required) _____ Relationship to Child _____ Email Address _____

Mailing Address (where your newsletter is to be sent to) _____ Phone Number _____

Child's Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

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

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

The Compassionate Friends Credo

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends

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.