



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

New Year & Winter 2017

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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

Jan 9 Monthly Support Group Meeting - General Sharing

Feb 13 Monthly Support Group Meeting - General Sharing

March 13 Monthly Support Group Meeting - General Sharing

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

Other Local Bereavement Groups & TCF Chapters

TCF Carbon County Chapter - 1st Tuesday 7:00 - 9:00 pm at Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn., 501 Delaware Ave. Palmerton
Chapter Co Leaders - Dave & Lora Krum, Phone: 484-719-6753 Contact Email: tcfcarboncounty@gmail.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, 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) meets at The First Presbyterian Church, Allentown Preregistration required, Contact: Nancy Howe 484-863-4324; 484-788-9440; nancyhowe@ymail.com or Jenny Kemps - 610-442-8490

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

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 18014

Please inform the Newsletter Editor of address changes or of a hold or forward on you mail. Newsletters are sent bulk mail and Bulk mail is not held or forwarded, it is returned at our expense. Addresses of newsletters returned are removed from the mailing list

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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



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
- Only Child -
Shelly Garst 484-241-5396
- Addiction -
Nancy Howe 484-863-4324
- Suicide -
John & Maria Szabo 610-866-5468
- Homicide -
Ginger Renner 610-967-5113

Newsletter Submissions

Cutoff dates for publication of Love Gifts, articles and poetry

Issue	Cutoff Date
Winter (January, February, March)	December 1 st
Spring (April, May, June)	March 1 st
Summer (July, August, September)	June 1 st
Fall (October, November, December)	Sept 1 st

Send Poems and Articles (with 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

We reserve the right to alter, modify or reject submissions not in keeping with our mission

Recent Events:

TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting Dec. 11th Thanks to Tom and Eva Siebert who once again invited members into their home to share a meal and light a candle in memory of their child in observance of The Worldwide Candle Lighting

TCF Candle Light Remembrance Service Dec. 12th Thanks to all members and families that attended. Special thanks to Sacred Heart Hospital for use of the auditorium and beverages; Mary Ann Donuts for the donuts; Kim Szep for the beautiful slideshow of our children; all our readers helpers and volunteers, and everyone who brought the delicious treats to share.

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.

We thank the following for their generous donations this month

Contributor	Loved One
♥ Yvonne Hude	Molly Hude <i>Happy 28th Birthday to our beautiful girl! Enjoy! Love You, Mom & Dad & Grammy</i>
♥ Nancy Kornafel	Molly Hude <i>RIP Molly. Miss you. Love, Grammy Nancy</i>
♥ Jack & Nancy Blosky	Kevin Blosky <i>You are often in our thoughts, forever in our hearts</i>
♥ Salvatore & Mary Bartolotta	Salvatore Carai Bartolotta <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Rella Daniels	Jonelle L. Sisonick <i>Loving You Forever</i>
♥ Fred and Pat Andrew	Jill Patricia Harris <i>Happy Birthday Jill. We Love and miss you. Mom, Dad, Jeff, Sam & Alex</i>
♥ Wayne and Linda Hollabaugh	Richard "Rich" L. Hollabaugh <i>Happy Birthday Richard - Son Loved and always in our heart Wayne K & Linda J. Hollabaugh</i>
♥ David and Denise Myers	Cody David Alexander Myers <i>We love and miss you! Love Mom, Dad, Travis, Crystal & Ben</i>
♥ Judy Dorward	Kelly Shawn Owens <i>Thought of and prayed for each and every day</i>
♥ Fern Gerth	Loren Holl <i>In Loving Memory . Love & Miss</i>
♥ Linda Stewart	Jennifer Lynn Schaible <i>Always in my heart. Love, Mom</i>
♥ Douglas D. Owens	Kelly Shawn Owens <i>A lifetime of memories</i>
♥ Shirley May Rostkowski	Daniel Rostkowski <i>Remembering you always. Mom</i>
♥ Doris Hosler	Debbie Sweeney <i>Its been 16 years but seems like yesterday! Love, Mom And Donna</i>
♥ Joseph & Joan Holoman	Thomas Holoman <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Stephen and Jeannette Viglione	Jeanne Catherine Hurley <i>We love and miss you . Your whole family</i>
♥ Ellen Winkler	Steven Winkler <i>We love and miss you tremendously. Always in our hearts and on our minds</i>
♥ Mary A. Thompson and ♥ Brothers & Sisters	James "Jimmy" Thompson <i>Happy Birthday Jimmy, Soon 24 years since you were taken from us</i>
♥ John and Cynthia Chryst	Benjamin Fry <i>Forever in our hearts!! With eternal love!!</i>
♥ Don and Sue Southgate	Troy G. Southgate <i>We love and miss you so much. Always in our hearts</i>
♥ Shirley Grozier	Robert C. Grozier, II <i>Happy Birthday my Bob. Miss you so much every day my son. All my love, Mom</i>

Donations and Contributions

- ★ Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown for meeting room and drinks
- ★ Giant Food Store Employees for United Way Contributions
In Memory of David Todd Smith
- ★ Mary Ann Donuts, Allentown for meeting snacks
- ★ Aetna Payroll Contributors
- ★ United Way Payroll Contributors

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.

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 & mail to the address indicated.

January, February, March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Child	Parents and Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents	Birthday	Anniv.
Evan Albertini	- Son of Louis AlBertini; Brother of Christopher AlBertini	May 28	Feb 13
Sean Apgar	- Son of Randy Apgar	Jun 18	Jan 22
Dakota Arndt	- Son of Steve & Mary Arndt; Brother of Ann Marie & Dylan	Feb 6	May 19
James Balloch	- Grandson of Fern Gerth; Grandson of Bill Gerth	Feb 22	Sep 4
Hannah Rose Bankos	- Daughter of Thomas & Christina Bankos; Sister of Matthew Bankos	Apr 8	Feb 24
Graham Beckhorn	- Son of Alice Keyes; Brother of Patrick Beckhorn & Christopher Beckhorn	Apr 20	Feb 14
Gabriel Benner	- Son of Baily Benner; Brother of Calum Benner	May 4	Feb 9
Kevin Blosky	- Son of Jack & Janet Blosky; Grandson of Jack & Nancy Blosky	Jan 28	Oct 4
Timothy Bogart	- Son of Nancy & Bill Bogart; Brother of Ryan Bogart & Katelyn Bogart	Mar 12	Jul 4
Joshua Booth	- Son of Les & Bonnie Booth	Mar 12	Dec 27
Brian Burke	- Son of Rich & Mary Burke; Brother of Melissa Burke	Jan 3	Oct 9
Rachel Dallas	- Daughter of Robert & Linda Dallas Sister of Sadie Dallas;	Jan 21	Jun 14
Hope Davidson	- Daughter of Dean & Donna Davidson	Aug 8	Feb 8
Sheila DeBoer	- Daughter of Barbara DeBoer & the late Henry DeBoer; Sister of Leslie & Cory DeBoer	Jan 29	Jul 27
Kannah Dew	- Daughter of Heather Surget	Sep 14	Feb 24
Mark Dilts, Jr	- Son of Mark & Joy Dilts; Brother of Beth Dilts	Jan 6	Jul 8
Ky DiVittorio	- Son of Jan DiVittorio; Brother of Ian DiVittorio	Feb 13	Apr 3
Barry Donchez	- Son of Edward & Olga Donchez; Brother of Linda Shive & Mike Donchez	Nov 28	Jan 10
Wayne Ernst	- Son of Julius & Doris Ernst; Brother of David Ernst	Jan 6	Dec 24
John Evans, III	- Son of Jack & Ann Evans; Brother of Tom Sampson & Patti Stout	Mar 12	Aug 16
Maggie Faber	- Daughter of Harry & Carol Faber; Sister of Randi & Eric Gerencser & Heidi & Harry Faber	Jan 17	Jan 17
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	Jan 8
Eric Fenstermacher	- Son of Rick & Kathleen Fenstermacher; Brother of Heather Fenstermacher	Feb 14	Jul 31
Paige Fernandez	- Daughter of William Fernandez; Sister of Jamie & Billy Fernandez	Jun 18	Feb 28
Araya Francisquini	- Daughter of Jamie Francisquini	Jan 11	Jan 2
Joel Frisby	- Son of Caroline Frisby; Brother of Richard, Gregory, Michael & Timothy Frisby	Mar 26	Jun 4
Benjamin Fry	- Son of John & Cynthia Chryst; Twin of Jeff Fry; Brother of the late Peter & Paul Fry; Grandson of Charles & Rose Giltner	Oct 6	Mar 14
Eileen Collins Gant	- Daughter of Dorothy Collins; Sister of John, Steven & Brian Collins, Kathleen Morrison & MaryAnn Watkins;	Mar 25	Feb 14
Kevin Garrison	- Son of Kathleen Garrison; Brother of Anthony Garrison	Dec 2	Jan 16
Sgt. Christopher Geiger	- Son of George & Patricia Geiger; Brother of Michael, Terrance, David & Timothy Geiger	Mar 30	Jul 9
Jesse Gentile	- Grandson of Gerry & Doris Rothermel	Jan 28	Jan 29
Aaron Groff	- Son of Leon & Debra Manuel; Brother of Melissa LaBar	Feb 11	Mar 5
Robert Grozier, II	- Son of Shirley Grozier; Brother of Laurie, Brenda & Vance Grozier	Feb 15	Jun 11
Rita Guerrieri	- Daughter of Art & Mary Guerrieri; Sister of Maryrose Guerrieri-Nesbitt	Sep 29	Mar 11
Brian Gum	- Son of Geary & Brenda Gum	Feb 21	Mar 5
Lisette Hahn	- Daughter of Louis & Joyce Szoke	Mar 4	May 3
Brett Harris	- Son of Chester & Carol Kinsey, Jr.; Brother of Terry & Lisa	Dec 10	Jan 14
Susan Hartman	- Sister of Stephanie Borger	Jan 11	Mar 20
Jonathan Hawk	- Son of Bruce & Mary Hawk; Brother of Bruce Hawk & the late Lisa Hawk	Aug 26	Mar 30

January, February, March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Child	Parents and Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents	Birthday Anniv.	
Heather Hawn	- Daughter of Mike & Cathi Tirrell; Sister of Holli & Chad	Feb 25	Dec 25
David Heard	- Son of Susan Heard; Brother of Daisy Heard	May 20	Feb 10
Anne Marie Mabus Heater	- Daughter of Wayne & Frances Mabus; Sister of Steven Mabus	Jan 7	Nov 25
Mark Hebdon	- Son of Lawrence & Ruth Hebdon; Brother of Laura Long & Michael Hebdon	Feb 24	May 15
Thomas Holoman	- Son of Joseph & Joan Holoman	Jan 18	Mar 15
Lori Hudasky	- Daughter of Irene Hudasky	Mar 18	Apr 22
Austin Jacobs	- Son of Penny Jacobs; Brother of Seth Jacobs	Jan 24	Aug 27
Ryan Jones	- Son of David & Elaine Jones	Mar 7	Mar 7
Hannah Jordan	- Daughter of Lisa Jordan	Jan 18	May 24
Jonathan Keller	- Son of Dennis & Lori Keller; Brother of Amy Keller	Oct 25	Mar 23
Schyler Kempes	- Son of John & Jenny Kempes; Brother of Courtney & Alex Kempes	Mar 8	Feb 10
Julian Keyock	- Son of Gregory Keyock; Brother of Maya & Jacob Keyock	May 5	Feb 17
Kimberly Kissel	- Daughter of Michael & Gloria Kissel, Jr.; Sister of Colleen & Micheal Kissel & Lisa Zelko	Feb 6	Dec 22
Joshua Kortze	- Son of Al & Kim Kortze; Brother of Aubrey & Kim Kortze	Feb 20	Jan 27
Bonnie Krause	- Daughter of Josephine Leiby - Mather	Jun 22	Mar 24
Matt Kush	- Son of Rick & Ann Kush; Brother of Mike & Jenn	Aug 24	Feb 10
John "Jack" Kushnerick, Jr.	- Son of Bernice Kushnerick; Brother of Pat & Jan Kushnerick	Sep 17	Mar 16
Joy Laube	- Daughter of Barry & Jeanette Laube	Nov 3	Jan 15
Jamie Laudenslager	- Son of Jane Laudenslager; Brother of Jon & Shelly	Jan 23	Apr 14
Brian Lentz	- Son of Gary & Judy Lentz	Dec 9	Mar 10
John Leonard, Jr	- Son of John & Jule Leonard; Brother of Karen	Jul 27	Jan 6
Andrea Luecke	- Daughter of Louise Luecke; Sister of Jennae Luecke	Jan 30	Oct 23
Micheal Martin, Jr	- Son of Micheal & Jean Martin	Feb 4	Nov 29
Beth Anne Mather	- Daughter of Peter Mather	Mar 12	Jan 17
Rowan McElmoyle	- Son of Jenny Renninger & James McElmoyle;	Mar 14	Mar 14
Katherine McGraw	- Daughter of John & Sue McGraw; Sister of Maggy & Sean McGraw	Aug 15	Feb 28
Michael McLaughlin	- Son of James & Julia McLaughlin; Brother of Matthew & Patrick McLaughlin	Mar 16	Dec 24
Ed McNally	- Son of Don & Connie McNally; Brother of Sean McNally	Jul 29	Feb 11
Emma McNulty	- Daughter of Jessica & Susan Katzbeck	Nov 19	Mar 11
Frank Michael	- Son of John & Lisa Rigione; Brother of Connor Rigione	Feb 19	Feb 12
Ryan Miller	- Son of Patti Miller & The late Richard Miller, Jr; Brother of Richard Miller, III	Jan 4	Jun 12
Michael Milot	- Son of John & Patti Milot; Brother of Jill	Jun 30	Feb 2
Jim Minter	- Son of Jim & Barbara Minter; Brother of Jeanine Minter	Aug 15	Mar 14
James "Jimmy" Mullen, II	- Son of Jeanie Mullen	Feb 26	Jan 1
Susette Olewine	- Daughter of Louis & Joyce Szoke	Feb 17	Dec 2
Kelly Owens	- Son of Judy Dorward & Douglas D. Owens	Jan 24	May 20
Mardelle Parenti-Blume	- Daughter of Brian & Nancy Kleckner	Feb 9	Mar 1
Buddy Pearson	- Son of Bob & Shelly Garst	Jul 12	Mar 24
Randy Peischl	- Son of Betty Peischl	Mar 1	Jan 29
Donna Potkovic-Roth	- Daughter of Annette Potkovic; Sister of Michele Cuvo, Matthew, Mark, John, & Denise Potkovic & The late Michael N. Potkovic, III	Apr 21	Feb 26
Michael Powers	- Son of Richard & Margaret Powers; Brother of Billy, Richie, Tara & Ryan	Jul 9	Feb 10
Angelo Providakis	- Son of Michael & Joanne Providakis	Feb 7	Apr 9
Caleb Putro	- Son of David & Susan Pultro; Brother of David Pultro, Jr	Mar 31	Oct 13
James Ralls	- Son of Tina Ralls; Brother of Timothy & Geoffrey	Jan 2	Aug 17
Allison Reboratti	- Daughter of Eduardo & Barbara Reboratti	Jan 25	May 9

January, February, March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Child	Parents and Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents	Birthday	Anniv.
Sandra Roberts	- Daughter of Millard & Barbara Howell; Sister of Randy, Michaela & Alexandria		Aug 13
Anthony Romig	- Son of Lois Pearsall & Edward C. Romig, Sr.; Brother of Edward C. Romig, Jr.		Jan 20
Daniel Rostkowski	- Son of Shirley May Rostkowski; Brother of Janet Wise & Andrew Rostkowski		Jan 30
Maria Rothermel	- Daughter of Gerald & Doris Rothermel; Sister of Mark Rothermel		Feb 3
Joey Russo	- Brother of Jena & Jevin Russo		Feb 23
Eric Rute	- Son of Linda Cavanaugh		May 20
Cory Ryan	- Son of Robert Ryan		Jun 15
Jennifer Schaible	- Daughter of Linda Stewart Sister of Andy Schaible & The late Aaron Schaible		Feb 26
Quinna Schleicher	- Daughter of Lin & Judy Schleicher; Sister of Aaron Schleicher		Mar 10
Amanda Schultz	- Daughter of Mark & Patty Schultz; Sister of Ryan & Eric Schultz		Mar 5
Joseph Siedlecki, Jr	- Son of Joe & Monica Siedlecki; Brother of MaryAnn & Michele Siedlecki & the late Jeanmarie Siedlecki Moyer		Jul 9
Andrew Siegfried	- Son of Rich & Ruthann Siegfried; Brother of Ben Siegfried		Apr 18
David Todd Smith	- Son of David & Kathleen Smith; Brother of Stephanie Seifert		Sep 17
Troy Southgate	- Son of Donald & Susann Southgate; Brother of Martin Southgate		Oct 30
Joseph Span	- Son of Joel & Annette Span		Feb 12
Andrew Staub	- Son of Mark & Louise Stahley		Jan 12
Lisa Staub	- Daughter of Mark & Louise Stahley		Mar 2
Geoffrey Steckel	- Son of Dean & Patricia Steckel; Brother of Jennifer & Mark Steckel		Jan 20
Kevin Stenlake	- Son of Elizabeth Leada Stenlake; Brother of Dawn Frey		May 26
Constance Stewart	- Daughter of Joanne Stewart; Sister of Keith & Kevin Stewart		Feb 1
Michael Stocker	- Son of Calvin & Kay Stocker; Brother of Megan Fibrick		Jan 26
Steven Suarez	- Son of Abby Suarez; Brother of Giovanni Miranda; Grandson of Roger & Gabby Schreck		Jan 19
Pete Swartwood, III	- Son of Pete Swartwood		Mar 22
Debra Sweeney	- Daughter of Richard & Doris Hosler; Sister of Donna Mallard		Jan 5
Travis Szerencits	- Son of Craig & Cookie Harron		Dec 1
Tracy Szoke	- Daughter of Randal & Kim Szoke; Sister of Trisha Remaley		Nov 24
Russell Terry	- Son of Brian & Amy Erbe; Brother of Shannon		Jan 9
Reeder Thatcher, Jr.	- Son of Jane Thatcher & the Late Reeder Thatcher Sr.; Brother of Timothy, Michael & Lynne		May 22
James "Jimmy" Thompson	- Son of Mary A. Thompson & The late Richard Thompson; Brother of Marie, Mark, Patrick & Kathy		Apr 6
Meredith Unger	- Daughter of Kathleen Paone		Feb 17
Shane Uttard	- Son of Brenda Deubler		May 13
Sheena Villa	- Daughter of Bill Villa & Barbara Maquera; Step Daughter of Angie Villa; Sister of Patrick Villa, Cruz Maquera & Gianni Villa		Mar 24
Stephanie Volkert	- Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert		Feb 12
Victoria Volkert	- Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert		Feb 16
Chad Wagner	- Son of Carl & Pamela Fehnel; Brother of Cori		Dec 23
Whitney Wagner	- Daughter of Nick & Mindy Snyder		Feb 23
Seth Warhurst	- Son of Debra Warhurst; Brother of Michele Warhurst		Mar 6
Samuel Weiner	- Son of Martin & Marie Levin		Mar 5
Joshua Wersinger	- Son of David & Joanne Wersinger; Brother of Patrick, Hope, Joeseeph, Gertrude & Marjorie Wersinger		May 17
Avery Williams	- Daughter of Joshua & Ashley Williams		Jan 6
Steven Winkler	- Son of Ellen Winkler; Brother of Jennifer; Grandson of Arnold Abramowitz		Jul 26
Michael Zalewski	- Son of Krzysztof & Jolanta Zalewska; Brother of Monika Baraket		Dec 6
Abigail Zukowski	- Daughter of Chris & Lisa Zukowski; Sister of Vincent Disimone, Gabrielle & Madison; Grandaughter of Martin & Michele Glynn		May 18

New Year's Resolutions for Bereaved Parents

By Nancy Mower, TCF Honolulu, HI



That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life,
knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

I Resolve:

That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like
grieving and that I will not let others put a time table on my
grief.

That I will cry whenever I feel like crying and that I will
not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I
should be "brave" or "getting better" or healed by now."

That I will talk about my child as often as I want to and
that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't
deal with their own feelings.

That I will not expect family and friends to know how I
feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot
possibly know how I feel

That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I
will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of
parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of
guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a
normal part of the grieving process and it will pass.

That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional
help if I feel it is necessary.

That I will commune with my child at least once a day in
whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that
I won't feel compelled to explain this communication to
others or to justify or even discuss it with others.

That I will try to eat, sleep and exercise every day in
order to give my body the strength it will need to help me
cope with my grief.

That I know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind
myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack
of energy and a sense of vulnerability are normal parts of the
grief process.

To know that I will heal, even though it takes a long time.

To let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.
To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous - that
is, I will not make steady, upward progress. And when I
find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and
depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is
also a normal part of the grief process and these moods,
too, will pass.

I will try to be happy about something for some part of
every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force
myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can
become a habit.

That I will reach out at times and try to help someone
else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over
my depression.

The new year comes -
When all the world is ready
For changes, resolutions -
Great beginnings.

For us, to whom
That stroke of midnight means
A missing child remembered
For us, the new year comes
More like another darkness.

But let us not forget
That this may be the year
When love and hope and courage
Find each other somewhere
In the darkness -
To lift their voice and speak.
LET THERE BE LIGHT

Sascha Wagner, TCF Des Moines, IO.

The New Year

By Mary Clecky, TCF Atlanta GA

With the holidays past, we're off on another 365 now. Some
of you, I know, wonder if you can make it. That's such an
enormous amount of time to contemplate all at once, isn't it?
You may have some of your "firsts" coming in the months
ahead, and the normal impulse seems to be to lump all those
days together and start dreading them concurrently, like a
prisoner serving several life sentences.

It's possible to do it that way, but that's the hard way.
Getting through this day may take all the energy you can
muster. Why try to handle March or May or July (or whenever
your special days are) now? You can't, really, and you end up
by the trying only defeating yourself in your effort to
effectively survive this day. When this day is past, March or
May or July will still be there, trying to defeat your tomorrow -
but only if you let them!

Get past this day and tomorrow and tomorrow and
tomorrow. By the time March, May, or July gets here you
will have improved your coping skills. You can better
handle your special days with more practice.

I encourage you to know you can and will be better.
Use this New Year constructively to facilitate that end, and
utilize the help that is available to you through your
compassionate friends.



Valentine Message

Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF, Katy, TX
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

I send this message to my child
Who no longer walks this plane,
A message filled with love
Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat
When I ponder your early death
As I think of times we'll never share
I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love
And for those who receive love, too
For a parent the perfect love in life
Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,
With a sadness that is unspoken
As I mark another Valentine's Day
With a heart that is forever broken.



Grief is Like a Jigsaw Puzzle

By Victoria Guthrie
TCF Tampa FL

Grief is not a smorgasbord where you go down the line picking a little this and a little that.

Grief is like a jigsaw puzzle. Some people get all the edge pieces together first and work from the outside in. Others dump everything out on the table at once and dive right into the middle. Some never even open the box at all. They just look at the picture on the lid and why what's inside the box doesn't match or make sense.

You meet a lot of people when you start a jigsaw puzzle. Some are full of advice, or they may try to make the puzzle look the way ought to be instead of the way it is.

But, once in awhile, you meet someone who shares their finished puzzle and helps you to make some sense of yours. Then you find it is not as hard as before. Some of the pieces fit together more easily, and you sigh with relief... and remember

The Month of February

By Fran MacArthur, TCF Southern MD

This is the month that a whole day is dedicated to love. In our sorrow, let us not forget that one emotion which, above all else, can comfort and console us.

Let us think of the things we love:

Our child - whom we loved - still love - and always will love - here in our hearts as long as we live.

Our families - hurting like us - lonely - needing each other - needing us.

Our true friends - listening - trying to help - wanting to lighten our load, but not knowing how - not always understanding, but there.

Our memories - of wonderful times gone by - some that make us laugh - some that make us cry - but all part of the fabric of our lives and of our love for each other.

Our quiet times - to get away by ourselves and think - to read - to note again the world around us - to let peace enter.

Our Compassionate Friends - who are there - who know - who understand when others do not.

"Love makes the world go round" and when our world comes to a sudden, grinding, heart-shattering stop, love is the glue that keeps us from falling off."

Bread Crumbs... Finding Our Way Back

By Richard Edler, South Bay/LA Chapter

Bread crumbs are all we have.

They are what is left behind after the death of our child. They are our memories and our mementos.

A bread crumb is the little answering machine cassette tape that says "*Hi, it's me. Leave a message at the beep.*" We may be the only people with a cassette tape in our safe deposit box. It's not much, a few quick words, but it's his voice - a small crumb from the original.

A bread crumb is his favorite shirt that I still can't part with, so I wear it for good luck on special days. A bread crumb is the last Father's Day card he wrote in his own hand before he went off to college.

Thanks for everything Dad, especially the \$. My years at home were better than words can say and I never took anything for granted. I've had the best childhood anyone could have. Thank you for the ideas and opportunities I grew up with. I love you.

Mark

I call these things crumbs because they are a disappointing piece of the real thing, but treasured because they are all we have.

I also think there is a second way of looking at this. Bread crumbs are a part of children's stories symbolizing signposts along the way to help lead us out of the forest to find our way back to the land of the living, at least if the birds don't eat them.

I like to think that the return from grief is like finding our way out of the forest. The way is marked by great changes or signposts if we will only follow the bread crumbs. I think of them as gifts left behind by our children. They change us and they lead us out of the forest - but at a very different place than we first went in. Here are three I have found, maybe you will find others.

Crumb One

We pick up a new sense of what is important and what is not. We suffer fools, superficial cocktail parties, and convenience friends poorly. We seem to develop an immediate impatience for the meaningless and the trivial. On the other hand, we pick up an incredible sensitivity to the world around us that we did not have before. We watch the news differently. We value people more than things. We live more in the moment and less in the future because we know that sometimes

"tomorrow" doesn't come.

Crumb Two

We find our real self on the road back. After the loss of a child and a period of emptiness, we do eventually come back. But we come back differently - and I believe better - than the person that entered the awful forest. With our new understanding of priorities, we listen again to "that still small voice" that we silenced in the race to climb the career ladder or have the "perfect life" or do what our parents or teachers thought we "should" do. We find new courage to be the person we really are.

We begin living from the inside out instead of the other way around from a sense of what is important, not what is expected. from a life of what's in it for me?" to "how can I help you?" We discover new and compassionate friends, and sometimes drift away from old ones. We go from a thousand name Rolodex of contacts to a handful of people we love.

We often also find our spiritual center and an inner peace. We become unafraid to die, at the same time we are beginning to live again.

Crumb Three

We pick up one more gift that I have noticed. We seem to get anointed with an ability to help someone else. You know what I mean. We didn't want it. We didn't ask for it. But we got it, anyway. It's almost like a giant invisible radar screen gets mounted on our head and we now pick up vibrations from other people in need. And we find that we really can help. People seek us out. People who don't know what to say when a child dies call us and ask: "Could you please go over?" We know we can and will, if only to listen.

I am reminded of the story of a little boy who arrived home late from school. "Where have you been?" his mother asked. "I was helping Timmy who broke his bike," the child answered. "But Honey," the mother said, "You don't even know how to fix a bike." "I know Mom," came the reply, "But I was just helping him cry."

Sometimes we can just help someone else cry, and that is enough. Unlike most other people, we can walk directly up to a bereaved parent or sibling, look them in the eye, and say "I know how you feel." That is what TCF is all about. And in helping another person we help ourselves heal too.

So what do we do with these new gifts or bread crumbs left along the way for us? New priorities. A new sense of self. And the ability to help someone else.

These are definitely good things. They did not come from the death of our child. Nothing good comes from

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the death of a child.

As Rabbi Harold Kushner said in Seattle: "there is no silver lining," but there is change. These changes come *after* the death, when we recognize that we can't change what happened, but we can change what we do about it.

One day our surviving son, Rick, put his arms around us in a family hug and said: "Okay Mom and Dad, now that we are a family of three instead of four, we each have to live our lives one-third better." That, more than any other moment in our grief, marked our turning point.

My wife has a reoccurring dream. She is in Heaven many years from now and she greets our son. "Okay, Mom," Mark says, "So tell me everything you did after I died?" On that day she will be proud to answer: "I lived the rest of my life one third better in your name."

I suspect most bereaved parents divide their lives into those two distinct stages of time: before and after the death. What we do in Stage Two we do in our child's name.

And because we do it, the world after our child died in some small way is changed forever. And when the world in some small way is changed forever, then our child's life continues to make a difference.

And when our child's life continues to make a difference, he or she is never entirely gone.

In times of sorrow...

*May you see God's light on the path
ahead when the road you walk is dark.*

*May you always hear, even in your
hour of sorrow, the gentle singing of
the lark.*

*When times are hard, may hardness
never turn your heart to stone.*

*May you always remember that when
shadows fall, you do not walk alone*

Irish Blessing

Letting Go

By Marge Frankenberg, TCF, Arlington Heights, IL

It's been three years, son, since you died

And you've been ever by my side.

I mourned you then, I mourn you still;

Deep in my heart I always will.

But lately there's a brand new me.

Changes are happening gradually

A ready song, a quicker step

And, gratefully, a bit more pep.

I didn't know I'd see the day

When I could think of you and say

My smile is back, my heart is light,

I battled grief, I won the fight!

I feared that when this day came

Ties to you wouldn't be the same

That when the pain left, you would, too,

And precious memories would be so few.

I cast aside these foolish fears!

Memories are sweeter less the tears.

You're even closer now, you see,

With clearer mind and heart that's free.

I sort out good times and the bad;

Put in perspective the times we had.

These thoughts come back like dear old friends.

They'll comfort me 'til my life ends.

It must please you, my dearest son,

To see my grievous ordeal done,

And when someday we meet anew

(The butterfly's promise will come true!)

We'll be together evermore

With a longing ache nevermore.

Until that day, my distant star,

It's not goodbye, just au revoir!

Sibling Page

I'm Still Here

By Laura Wexler

Laura Wexler, writer & editor, was 17 and leaving for college in a week when her sister Rachel, 18, was killed in a freak boating accident at a summer camp where they were counselors. Laura wrote "I'm Still Here" four years later.

At first "I'm still here" was the mantra I chanted inside my head, chiding myself for sadness, urging myself that, unlike Rachel, I was still living and must not be sad, must not miss a moment of time or anything else precious. Months later, unable to contain my grief, I said *I'm still here* as if I were the only one of my tribe to escape slaughter and wandering plains alone. I wanted to die. Not because I hate life, but because I wanted to see Rachel.

Many times my parents, washed in grief, looked at me through salt water (tears), saying, "*You're still here. You're all we have left*" Those words weighed heavily upon me, made me feel too loved, too lucky. And they made Rachel feel too gone. But, just as many times I wanted to shake my parents out of depression and back into life before Rachel's death, saying, "I'm still here. Don't you leave me too."

For almost a year after Rachel died, I didn't say her name out loud. The sound of the R and the A and the ending L felt foreign on my tongue. Later, when I joined a support group, the facilitator noted that I never said Rachel's name. It just hurt too much. And if I'd had my choice, I would have asked my parents not to say Rachel's name either. Any instance we now used her name was unhappy.

Talking about family or home or anything in my past was terrifying for me. Sometimes, as I told a story or recounted a memory, I said "we" instead of "I." Pretty soon, though, I got the hang of checking over everything in my head before I opened my mouth. The thing is, though, if you tell a lie enough times, you start to forget the truth you're trying to cover up in the first place. I started to feel my memory blurring and that frightened me. Memory was my only link to Rachel.

I ask myself why I have such trouble talking about Rachel's death or even her life, and come up with a couple of things. I really believe no one understands my particular pain, the things I've lost, tangible and intangible, since Rachel's death...

The only person that knows exactly how I feel is dead.

It's hard to worry about your own grief when your parents are not parental anymore. My mother, who probably told me when to take my first breath and how long it would last, abruptly withdrew from being an overbearing presence in my life. She never left me completely, but there were enough times when she'd look down at her feet and say quietly... "Laura, I just can't take this right now. I'm lucky if I can get up in the morning." Just as I wanted my old self, my old world back, I wanted a mother I could fight with.

My father sits as the head of the table, head bent to his chest, and pulls his glasses off to sob freely... This idea that you should be able to protect and comfort and be there for your parents even more than for yourself is particular to people on the brink of adulthood. Like me. In other words, if I were 12 or 13, few people would expect me to assume a parental role. But as I was 18, it was apparently okay for people to continually ask, "How are your parents doing? Are you helping them as much as you can?" I felt guilty enough about being alive. And then to have people insinuate that my main function in life thereafter was to be a comfort for my parents made me feel worse. Because I honestly didn't see that my parents were remarkably comforted by me. They were sad when I was there and when I wasn't. And I couldn't do a thing about it.☞

On Not Saying It

Leonard Ruppert, TCF, Atlanta, GA

I never got around to saying it.
 There was always tomorrow,
 When the time would be more appropriate.
 Besides, you hated "embarrassment."
 Or was the embarrassed one really me?
 Now I say it a lot,
 To the sky, to your photo, to a gravestone.
 Knowing facts say you cannot hear it,
 But believing, inside me, you can.
 When a child, a youth, then a young man,
 I remember how you watched my face.
 First as your god, then as your mentor,
 Finally, I hope, as a friend.
 But "I love you," as years went by,
 Were words we kept bottled inside.
 Now that you've left, the bottle overflows.
 Until I, too, cross the Divide,
 I have to believe you knew.
 And forgave me for not saying it.

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