



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Winter 2019

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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 14 **Monthly Support Group Meeting** - General Sharing

Feb 11 **Monthly Support Group Meeting** -: Memories of the Heart *see pg 2 for more information*

March 11 **Monthly Support Group Meeting** - General Sharing

All cancelations will be posted on our facebook page - 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

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.

We welcome newsletter writings from our members, you can also submit writings by others. All submissions must include the author's name & your contact information. Send to TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014 or email to: TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com by the following cutoff dates:

Issue	Cutoff	Issue	Cutoff
Winter (Jan., Feb., March)	Dec. 1 st	Summer (July, Aug., Sept.)	June 1 st
Spring (April, May, June)	March 1 st	Fall (Oct., Nov., Dec.)	Sept 1 st

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

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 Allentown (grief recovery after substance passing) 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

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

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Chapter Information, News & Events

Newsletter Subscription - Enclosed in this months newsletter is your newsletter subscription renewal form for 2019. There is no subscription fee for the newsletter. Everyone that wishes to continue receiving the newsletter must fill out the renewal form and return it by **Feb 15th**.

TCF Candle Light Remembrance Service Dec. 11th Thanks to all members and families that attended. Special thanks to Sacred Heart Hospital for use of the auditorium & beverages; Mary Ann Donuts ; Kim Szep for the beautiful slideshow of our children; all our readers, helpers, volunteers, and everyone who brought the delicious treats to share.

Memories of the Heart - February 11th Meeting - In this month of love we celebrate our children’s lives with a program we call “Memories of the Heart.” Please bring a memento of your child to share. Mementoes can be something they made; something they treasured or even a story.

Volunteers Needed - Our chapter like every other TCF chapter is run and managed by volunteers, without them we simply wouldn’t exist. Please consider volunteering some time to help the chapter. We need help setting up and cleaning up at meetings, setting up & managing the library, special events; labeling and stuffing newsletter envelopes and more. If you think you can help even part of the time contact Gene DeLong @ 610 837-7924 or Kathy Collins @ 484-891-0823



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

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

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
♥ Delores Kulik	Richard J. Kulik <i>We love and miss you</i>
♥ Dawn & Gene DeLong	David DeLong <i>In loving memory of David DeLong, Love & miss you every day. Love Mom, Dad & Jamie DeLong</i>
♥ Judy Dorward	Shawn Kelly Owens <i>Always in my heart, always on my mind</i>
♥ Shirley Grozier	Robert Grozier II <i>Happy birthday my Bob. I miss you and love you so much. All my love, Mom</i>
♥ Douglas Owens	Kelly Shawn Owens <i>The years pass but the memory remains</i>
♥ Doris Ernst & the late Julius Ernst	Wayne Ernst <i>Love and miss you</i>
♥ Don & Sue Southgate	Troy Southgate <i>We love and miss you so much. Love Mom, Dad & Matty</i>
♥ Ellen & Jennifer Winkler	Steven Winkler <i>We love and miss you so much! You're in our hearts forever.</i>
♥ Caroline Frisby	Joel Frisby <i>Loved and always missed. Mom, Richard, Greg, Mike & Tim</i>
♥ Linda & Mike Stewart	Jennifer & Aaron Schaible <i>Missing you. Love, Mom & Mike</i>
♥ Rella Daniels	Jonelle Sisonick & Anthony Sisonick <i>In Loving Memory</i>

Donations and Contributions

- ★ *Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown for meeting room and drinks*
- ★ *The Shafer Family Charitable Trust*
- ★ *Giant Food Store Employees for United Way Contributions In Memory of David Todd Smith*
- ★ *Aetna Payroll Contributors*
- ★ *Mary Ann Donuts, Allentown for meeting snacks*
- ★ *United Way Payroll Contributors*
- ★ *Everyone who volunteers their time and expertise to running the chapter and helping with the meetings*

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.



Look for us on the Web



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

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

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

January, Febuary & March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Child	Parents and Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents	Birthday	Anniv.
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
Holden Audenried	- Son of Amanda Audenried	Feb 3	Feb 3
James Balloch	- Grandson of Bill Gerth & Fern Gerth	Feb 22	Sep 4
Graham Beckhorn	- Son of Alice Keyes, Brother of Christopher Beckhorn & Patrick Beckhorn	Apr 20	Feb 14
Gabriel Benner	- Son of Baily Benner; Brother of Calum Benner	May 4	Feb 9
Kevin Blosky	- Son of Jack and Janet Blosky; Grandson of Jack and Nancy Blosky	Jan 28	Oct 4
Timothy Bogart	- Son of Nancy & Bill Bogart; Brother of Katelyn Bogart & Ryan Bogart	Mar 12	Jul 4
Joshua Booth	- Son of Les and Bonnie Booth	Mar 12	Dec 27
Julia Bruchak	- Daughter of Darla Bruchak; Sister of Emily Bruchak	Sep 24	Mar 17
Brian Burke	- Son of Rich and Mary Burke; Brother of Melissa Burke	Jan 3	Oct 9
Mitchell Cherry	- Son of Jeffrey & James Conrad; Brother of Christopher Conrad	Mar 31	Jul 31
Rachel Dallas	- Daughter of Robert and Linda Dallas; Sister of Sadie Dallas	Jan 21	Jun 14
Hope Davidson	- Daughter of Dean and Donna Davidson	Aug 8	Feb 8
Cole Davis	- Son of Konnie Krasenics & Charles Davis; Brother of Jahleah Krasenics-Galarza	Jan 10	Apr 8
Sheila DeBoer	- Daughter of Barbara DeBoer & the late Henry DeBoer; Sister of Leslie and Cory DeBoer	Jan 29	Jul 27
Mark Dilts, Jr	- Son of Mark and 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 and Olga Donchez; Brother of Linda Shive and Mike Donchez	Nov 28	Jan 10
Wayne Ernst	- Son of Doris Ernst & The Late Julius Ernst	Jan 6	Dec 24
John Evans, III	- Son of Jack and Ann Evans; Brother of Tom Sampson & Patti Stout	Mar 12	Aug 16
Maggie Faber	- Daughter of Harry and Carol Faber; Sister of Heidi and Harry Faber & Randi and Eric Gerencser	Jan 17	Jan 17
Brenda Fehr Hatrak	- Daughter of David & Eileen Fehr, Sr, Sister of Barbara R. Burgin and David A. Fehr, Jr.; Granddaughter of Elwood and Mary Mann & Warren and Rose Fehr	Aug 31	Jan 8
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 Brother of Jeff Fry Brother of the late Peter and Paul Fry; Grandson of Charles & Rose Giltner	Oct 6	Mar 14
Eileen Collins Gant	- Daughter of The Late Dorothy & John Collins; Sister of Brian Collins; John, Steven, 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 and Patricia Geiger; Brother of Michael, Terrance, David & Timothy Geiger	Mar 30	Jul 9
Jesse Gentile	- Grandson of Gerry and Doris Rothermel	Jan 28	Jan 29
Mican Gianotti	- Son of Jennifer Gerczak	Jan 22	Dec 21
Aaron Groff	- Son of Leon and 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	- Sister of Maryrose Guerrieri-Nesbitt; Daughter of Art and Mary Guerrieri	Sep 29	Mar 11
Brian Gum	- Son of Geary and Brenda Gum	Feb 21	Mar 5
Lisette Hahn	- Daughter of Louis and Joyce Szoke	Mar 4	May 3
Brett Harris	- Son of Chester and Carol Kinsey, Jr.; Brother of Terry & Lisa	Dec 10	Jan 14
Heather Hawn	- Daughter of Mike and 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 and Frances Mabus; Sister of Steven Mabus	Jan 7	Nov 25
Thomas Hillanbrand	- Brother of Tristen & Stephanie Miller	Nov 3	Jan 9
Thomas Holoman	- Son of Joseph and Joan Holoman	Jan 18	Mar 15

January, Febuary & March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Child	Parents and Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents	Birthday	Anniv.
Austin Jacobs	- Son of Penny Jacobs; Brother of Seth Jacobs	Jan 24	Aug 27
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
Schylar Kemp	- Son of John & Jenny Kemp; Brother of Courtney & Alex Kemp	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
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
Jason Lafortune	- son of Jean & Sharon Lafortune	Feb 10	Jan 25
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
John Leonard, Jr	- Son of Jack & 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
Katherine McGraw	- Daughter of John & Sue McGraw; Sister of Maggy & Sean McGraw	Aug 15	Feb 28
Michael McLaughlin	- Brother of Matthew & Patrick McLaughlin; Son of James & Julia 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
Ashley Mickelson	- Daughter of Paul Mickelson	Feb 20	Jul 28
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
Terence Milton, Jr	- Son of Terence Hagins; Brother of Tyreek, Caressa, Asley, Danyell	Jan 1	Jul 26
Jim Minter	- Son of Jim & Barbara Minter; Brother of Jeanine Minter	Aug 15	Mar 14
Colins Nevins Greede	- son of Ted & Mary Nevins Greede	Jun 23	Jan 10
Susette Olewine	- Daughter of Louis & Joyce Szoke	Feb 17	Dec 2
Kelly Owens	- Son of Douglas D. Owens & Judy Dorward	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
Anthony Romig	- Son of Lois Pearsall & Edward C. Romig, Sr.; Brother of Edward C. Romig, Jr.	Sep 12	Jan 20
Daniel Rostkowski	- Son of Shirley May Rostkowski; Brother of Janet Wise & Andrew Rostkowski	Nov 28	Jan 30
Maria Rothermel	- Daughter of Gerald & Doris Rothermel	Mar 25	Feb 3
Joey Russo	- Brother of Jena & Jevin Russo	Jan 1	Feb 23
Eric Rute	- Son of Linda Cavanaugh	Feb 15	May 20
Nicholas Sawacool	- Son of Howard & Laura Sawacool; Brother of Brandon, Candace & Iacie	Feb 27	Apr 1
Jennifer Schaible	- Daughter of Linda Stewart; Sister of Andy Schaible & The late Aaron Schaible	Feb 18	Feb 26
Quinna Schleicher	- Daughter of Lin & Judy Schleicher; Sister of Aaron Schleicher	Feb 2	Mar 10
Amanda Schultz	- Daughter of Mark & Patty Schultz; Sister of Ryan & Eric Schultz	Jun 18	Mar 5
Joseph Siedlecki, Jr	- Brother of MaryAnn & Michele Siedlecki & the late Jeanmarie Siedlecki Moyer	Feb 26	Jul 9

January, Febuary & March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Child	Parents and Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents	Birthday	Anniv.
Andrew Siegfried	- Son of Rich & Ruthann Siegfried; Brother of Ben Siegfried	Mar 27	Apr 18
Joshua Simcox	- Son of Michelle Green & Otis Ramsey; Brother of Joseph, Zoe' & Tessy	Jun 30	Mar 16
David Todd Smith	- Son of David & Kathleen Smith; Brother of Stephanie Seifert	Feb 25	Sep 17
Troy Southgate	- Son of Donald & Susann Southgate; Brother of Martin Southgate	Feb 25	Oct 30
Andrew Staub	- Son of Mark & Louise Stahley	Jan 4	Jan 12
Lisa Staub	- Daughter of Mark & Louise Stahley	Oct 1	Mar 2
Geoffrey Steckel	- Son of Dean & Patricia Steckel; Brother of Jennifer & Mark Steckel	Mar 1	Jan 20
Kevin Stenlake	- Brother of Dawn Frey	Feb 22	May 26
Constance Stewart	- Daughter of Joanne Stewart; Sister of Keith & Kevin Stewart	Sep 23	Feb 1
Michael Stocker	- Son of Calvin & Kay Stocker; Brother of Megan Fibrick	Oct 14	Jan 26
Steven Suarez	- Son of Abby Suarez; Brother of Giovanni Miranda; Grandson of Roger & Gabby Schreck	May 29	Jan 19
Jon Sulick	- Son of John Sulick; Brother of Aymae Sulick	Feb 9	Sep 15
Pete Swartwood, III	- Son of Pete Swartwood	Oct 11	Mar 22
Debra Sweeney	- Daughter of Richard & Doris Hosler; Sister of Donna Mallard	Nov 16	Jan 5
Travis Szerencits	- Son of Craig & Cookie Harron	Mar 11	Dec 1
James "Jimmy" Thompson	- Son of Mary A. Thompson & the late Richard Thompson; Brother of Marie, Mark, Patrick & Kathy	Jan 23	Apr 6
Mark Thompson	- Son of Mary A Thompson; Brother of Marie, Patrick, Kathy & the late Jimmy Thompson	Dec 19	Feb 28
Meredith Unger	- Daughter of Kathleen Paone	May 23	Feb 17
Shane Uttard	- Son of Brenda Deubler	Jan 15	May 13
Sheena Villa	- Daughter of Bill Villa & Barbara Maquera; Step Daughter of Angie Villa; Sister of Patrick Villa, Cruz Maquera & Gianni Villa	Mar 23	Mar 24
Stephanie Volkert	- Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert;	Sep 22	Feb 12
Victoria Volkert	- Daughter of Joanne Fimiano	Jan 14	Feb 16
Chad Wagner	- Son of Carl & Pamela Fehnel; Brother of Cori	Mar 13	Dec 23
Seth Warhurst	- Son of Debra Warhurst; Brother of Michele Warhurst	Mar 4	Mar 6
Samuel Weiner	- Son of Martin & Marie Levin	Feb 14	Mar 5
Joshua Wersinger	- Son of David & Joanne Wersinger; Brother of Patrick, Hope, Joeseeph, Gertrude & Marjorie Wersinger	Jan 19	May 17
Avery Williams	- Daughter of Joshua & Ashley Williams	Jan 5	Jan 6
Steven Winkler	- Son of Ellen Winkler; Brother of Jennifer; Grandson of Arnold Abramowitz	Jan 12	Jul 26
Michael Zalewski	- Son of Krzysztof & Jolanta Zalewska; Brother of Monika Baraket	Jan 7	Dec 6
Abigail Zukowski	- Daughter of Chris & Lisa Zukowski; Sister of Vincent Disimone, Gabrielle & Madison Zukowski; Grandaughter of Martin & Michele Glynn	Jan 27	May 18

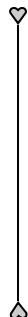
Note: Due to privacy concerns Birthday and Anniversary listings are only published with permission for Parents/Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents. For additions and corrections complete & sign the Update Form & mail to the address indicated.

Don't Think of Him As Gone Away

By Ellen Brenneman, TCF Atlanta Online

Don't think of him as gone away
his journey's just begun;
life holds so many facets
this earth is only one.

Just think of him as resting
from the sorrows and tears
in a place of warmth and comfort
where there are no days and years



Think how he must be wishing
that we could know, today,
how nothing but our sadness
can really pass away.

And think of him living
in the hearts of those he touched...
for nothing loved is ever lost
and he was loved so much.

What is New About the New Year ?

By Dory Rooker,
TCF Upper Valley, Vt

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try. But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help

ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

A New Year

A time for looking ahead and not behind;

A time for faith and not despair;

A time for long great gulps of hopeful expectation.

Drink deeply, friend, so that fortified with the promises it brings, this new year will keep you near fresh springs of healing love, where you may come to weave old and loving memories with new understandings and acceptance and find peace.

*Cognard Ottman,
The Slender Thread*

Goodbyes hurt
the most when
the story isn't
finished



The Season of the Heart

By Marie Andrews
TCF, Southern Maryland

This is the season of the heart! Yet many of us will be asking how to live during this season with a heart that is broken. Just what is it that our hearts are knowing during these days? What are the feelings that pulsate, ebb and flow?

Is it the heart that catches its breath on a memory and is overwhelmed? The heart where hope seems absent? The heart that feels it cannot hold another ounce of pain? The heart that knows the fleeting smile of a loved one? The heart that catches a fragment of joy and is warmed? The heart that knows pain and keeps on loving? The heart that is tempted to lie still and lonely? The heart that searches for the acceptance of a friend?

Questions arise! Why is a heart red and why does it have two lobes? A response might be—A heart is so vulnerable that it is easily bloodied. A heart consists of opposites, changed by sorrow and by joy. A heart, when whole, includes all emotions. A heart can lie cold and sad and broken. A heart can grow and heal and love.



Heart Strings

Those we love deeply are never really very far away.
For we are bound by heart strings
The most powerful of bonds;
Neither death nor distance
can break them.

Nadine Boyd

Thoughts on Valentine's Day

Karen Nelson TCF Elder Chapter Utah

"How sad this day must be for you."

I read it in their eyes.
As if there's no more love
between us anymore,
you and I



How wrong they are
they do not understand
the bond between a parent and child

I do not have to see your face
to remember your sweet smile.

I do not have to hug you,
although if I could, I would.

I do not have to hear your voice,
our love is understood

Everyday I think of you,
my thoughts are full of memories.

I realize that love does not end
with death's painful goodbye.

I await with hope until
we can say hello again,
you and I.

Growing Around Grief - Another way of looking at Grief and Recovery

*Lois Tonkin, Greif Counselor, Wellington New Zealand
Loving lifted from the TCF VIC Newsletter*

Whether we realize it or not, we live in a world of models. Not models whose time is spent strutting the cat-walk, but those that exist within our minds, and which frame the way we see our lives and work. Our models of the world are created by what we are taught, and by our experience of life.

As a novice grief counselor some years ago, the model of grief within which I saw my first clients (poor things!) was largely a theoretical one. Generalizing wildly, one can say that most theories of grief postulate a series of stages, culminating, in resolution. It was against this framework that I placed my clients' stories.

What concerned me was the people I talked to who told me that their grief certainly did not end in the way I thought it should. Most of my clients fit the model well, but there was a sizable minority whose resolution stage did not match up. I was perplexed in grief group discussions when I would hear these people, whose lives were obviously going on and growing quietly

say that their pain was sometimes just as bad as ever, and had never really gone away

Then, in an Elizabeth Kubler-Ross workshop some years ago, an unknown woman described a model of grief which fit her experience. I am indebted to this woman because her model made sense of grief for me in a way that others had not, and has comforted many clients to whom I have shown it since. Colleagues have also found it useful so, with thanks to a woman I do not know, I pass it on.

The woman's child had died some years before. At this time, she said, grief consumed her totally, filling, every part of her life, awake and asleep. She drew a picture (Figure 1) with a circle to represent her life and shading to indicate her grief. She had imagined that as time went by the grief would shrink and become neatly encapsulated in her life, in a small and manageable way; she was realistic enough to assume that it would not go away entirely (Figure 2).

But what happened was different. The grief stayed just as big, but her life grew around it (Figure 3). There were times, anniversaries, or moments which reminded her of her child, when she operated entirely out of the shaded circle in her life and her grief felt just as intense as it ever had. But, increasingly, she was able to experience life in the larger circle.

What helps some clients about this model (and it does not fit everyone) is that it relieves them of the expectation that their grief should largely go away-. It explains the dark days, and also describes the richness and depth the experience of grief has given to their lives. As grief counselors we can encourage them, as time goes by, in tentative attempts to 'grow a new life', My clients have felt comforted, using this model, that they can do so without the sense of disloyalty to the deceased that so often holds back bereaved people. In this way they continue the process of integrating the loss with their lives, and moving forwards!

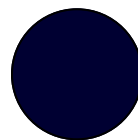


Figure 1

When grief is new our life is totally consumed by it.

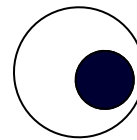


Figure 2

Grief never entirely disappears, but over time it becomes smaller & more

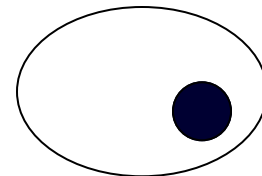


Figure 3

Even though the grief is still there and always will be, a new life expands around it, one is able to grow around grief

Change & Challenge

By Shirley Mutchler, Appleton WI

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too, for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun-loving but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the 'old us' too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar who shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when our child dies. We wonder, our family wonders, our friends wonder - - when will he or she come out of it? Will they make it through the long sleep? What hues will show when they emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of a cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy - but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the "new us." When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches, and reach in turn to pull another from his own cocoon; when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge, then we can proudly say, "I have survived against overwhelming odds. Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give us hope that we can be happy, we can feel fulfilled again, we can love again.

GRIEF CANNOT BE CONQUERED
LIKE AN ENEMY.
GRIEF CAN ONLY BE CHANGED
FROM PAIN TO HOPE.
FROM HOPE TO DEEPER LIFE

Sascha Wagner
Poet Laureate of TCF

It is alright to...

Scream in the shower.

Yell in the car.

Cry anywhere you like.

Misplace your glasses, the car keys and the car.

*Put milk in the cupboard, toilet paper in the refrigerator,
and ice cream in the oven.*

*Beat up on the pillow, stomp on the ground, throw stones
in the lake.*

Change grocery stores if it hurts.

Wear one black shoe and one navy,

have tear stains on your ties.

*Eat french fries for breakfast toast for lunch, and peanut
butter for dinner (as long as you eat).*

Write him a letter. Bake him a cake.

Smell his clothes.

Celebrate his life on his birthday.

Talk to your pets, they understand.

Leave his room the way it is, for as long as you like.

Say his name just to hear the sound.

Talk about him to others.

Tell loved ones what you need.

Say no when you feel like it

Cancel plans if you want. Have a bad day.

It's all right to hurt.

And one day when you're ready:

It's all right to ...

Laugh again.

Dance and feel pretty.

Have a good time.

Look forward to tomorrow.

Sing in the shower.

Smile at a friend's new baby.

Wear make up once more.

Go for a day, a week and even a month without crying.

Celebrate the holidays.

Forgive those who failed you.

Learn something new.

*Look at his picture and remember with happiness, not
pain.*

Go on with your life. Cherish the memories.

And one day when it's time -

It's all right

To love again.

Vicki Tushingham, TCF Bergen/Passaic, NJ

Siblings

Dealing with Grief: A Sibling Viewpoint

By Rick Edler, TCF, LA/South Bay, CA

Two things happened to me on January 11, 1992. I lost my brother to death, and I lost my parents to grief. My dad, the one who seemed to always have the answer to my questions, the "rock" in the family, the one whose job was to fix everything, completely lost it. The fear, anger, and shock in his eyes when told that my brother had died are engraved into my memory. He fell limp in the arms of my mother and me in the emergency room at UCLA medical center. This was the first time I had ever seen my parents lose control. At that moment our roles switched.

"I'll take them," I said to the nurse as she handed me a bag labeled "EDLER." It was the personal belongings of my brother. I quietly took them and placed them in my car. For the next three months, I seemed to make many of the decisions. It was not a courageous leader rising up to the occasion. I was the least common denominator. My parents, although they tried, could not help me. They were trying to deal with the tremendous grief themselves.

For this reason, I put off dealing with Mark's death for many months. I cried and felt sad, but never addressed the issue. My friends were concerned and asked how I was doing. But no one, unless you have been there, really wants to hear the true answers. Mark was the only other person in the world who was a combination of my mom and dad. My friends could not relate nor would I want them to. I would never wish this upon anyone. But this left me alone to deal with it and I chose to put it off.

After three months I met a gentleman at a family retreat with a group of which my dad was a part. Kevin had lost his brother to suicide about nine months earlier. He was farther along in his "coping" than I was. I could talk to him about Mark, mention Mark's name and share stories without making the whole room uncomfortable about the subject.

I saw someone who was dealing with it and it gave me hope. There is a certain vocabulary that you learn after going through this that no book, no story and no amount of explanation can do justice. I don't talk about certain things with my friends because I do not have the time or energy to explain (or try to explain) the many feelings I am having. Kevin understood. He had the vocabulary.

This was the first step into healing. I came to grips with the reality of my new life—different than the one before, but there was no going back. At this point, I went on autopilot. I remember many events of the three years following the death. My girlfriend and I broke up. My parents changed houses. I went through the many firsts, but just kept moving forward. I was not depressed, however. My lows were not very low. But my highs were not very high.

I became involved with The Compassionate Friends sibling group of our local chapter in the third year. I did it half out of responsibility to my parents and half out of the knowledge that if I was running the meeting, then I was in control of how much sharing I needed to put into it. Kind of a control thing. To my surprise the meetings have become so beneficial to my healing that I am surprised at myself. By sharing with others, I feel that I help them and in turn myself. Many feelings, thoughts, or emotions that I may have thought were just mine, I have found are universal with others. After three years I began to come "out of the valley." I can only say that by looking back. Hindsight has allowed me to see my steps of healing. I stepped into the role of being strong for our family because I felt that was best. Many others I have talked to mention a similar reaction. Your parents are barely able to deal with their own grief. The last thing you want to do is bring more pain on them, so, you don't share with your parents.

Last July at The Compassionate Friends conference, many parents walked up to me and asked, "How do I know if my son (daughter) is dealing with this? I am concerned since they do not tell me anything." "You don't know," I answered, "and neither do I, but unless you see something obviously dangerous, they are dealing with it *in* their own way at their own speed and you may not be a part of their grieving."

I now have a different outlook on life. It is precious. I feel that in my new life I am closer to my parents. Each one of us has to live our lives 1/3 better in Mark's memory. I value my friends and time more. I can handle stress much better. Just think of the alternative. I have become a better person by helping others. I like the new person I have become.

I would trade it all in a second!

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.

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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 to be listed (We publish only Parents/Guardians, Grandparents and Sibling names)

* IMPORTANT: If this is a information change specify what change(s) are (i.e. correction, sibling name addition etc...) Use another piece of paper if necessary

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 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.