



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Spring 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

- April 8 Monthly Support Group Meeting** - General Sharing
- May 13 Monthly Support Group Meeting** -: General Sharing Topic: Mothers Day
- June 10 Monthly Support Group Meeting** - General Sharing - Topic: Fathers Day
- June 15 TCF Annual Picnic and Memorial Balloon Launch** - info (pg 3) & RSVP form (pg 12)

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 The Compassionate Friends, C/O Kathleen Collins, 2971 Pheasant Dr. Northampton PA 18067 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: 484-408-7314, 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

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Chapter Information, News & Events

Newsletter Subscription - We thank all the members who renewed their newsletter subscription. We hope that the newsletter will continue to offer comfort to you over the coming year and into the future.

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

Typographical Error - Due to a typing error, in the love gift section of the last newsletter issue Judy Dorward's son was mistakenly listed as Shawn Kelly Owens. His name should have been listed as Kelly Shawn Owens. We regret the error. A corrected listing appears on page 5

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.



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

News, Events, Meetings & Announcements

April 8th Meeting

Topic: General Sharing

May 13th Meeting

Topic: Mother's Day. We will focus on feelings of bereaved mothers on Mothers Day

June 10th Meeting

Topic: Father's Day. We will focus on bereaved fathers feelings of Fathers Day and ways to cope.



Sat. June 15th: TCF Family Picnic and Memorial Balloon Release --

12 Noon at Moore Township Recreation Center, Bath, PA

Families and friends who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling are invited to join us for a pot luck meal and memorial balloon release in honor of the children gone too soon, but who will live forever in our hearts!



The afternoon will begin with a potluck lunch. Every family is asked to bring a covered dish to share. Hot dogs, drinks and paper goods are provided by TCF Lehigh Valley. After lunch everyone will be given a memorial balloon upon which we can write a personal message to our loved one. We will then gather in a circle and release the our balloons as one.

There is a playground for the children and restrooms are conveniently located in the Pavilion.

Information, directions and RSVP form are on the last page of this newsletter.

If you plan to attend please RSVP. This helps us determine the amount of supplies needed. You may do so by using the form or by texting @ 484-891-0823 remember to include your name, number of attending and covered dish you will be bringing.

42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE



RINGS OUT IN
PHILADELPHIA

JULY 19-21, 2019

The Compassionate Friends National Conference is a weekend spent surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. With inspirational keynote speakers, abundant workshops for everyone's wants and needs, and a remembrance candle lighting program culminating with the annual Walk to Remember, this time of healing and hope is the gift we give ourselves. Join us as together we remember and share the everlasting love we have for our precious children, siblings and grandchildren.

The 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019 at the Philadelphia 201 Hotel. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

This years events will include nearly hundred different workshops and sharing sessions, given by professionals and also individuals just like you; A "Healing Haven" to receive free personal services such as a massage; Craft items to commemorate the love for your family member; and a "Reflection Room".

For more information and to register visit The Compassionate Friends national website at : www.compassionatefriends.org

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
♥ Rich and Mary Burke	Brian Michael Burke <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Richard & Susan Storat	Keith D. Storat <i>We miss you and think of you every day! Love Mom, Dad, Todd & Greg</i>
♥ Mr & Mrs Thomas Bailey	Mark Adam Bailey <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ John and Cynthia Chryst	Benjamin Fry <i>20 yrs - Seems like yesterday. Miss you more than ever! Always in our hearts!</i>
♥ Fern Gerth	Loren Holl <i>Love and miss you very much</i>
♥ Chet and Carol Kinsey, Jr	Brett R. Harris <i>We will always love you. Mom and Dad</i>
♥ Bill and Linda Cavanaugh	Holly Cavanaugh, Jason, Eric & Robert Rute <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Shirley Grozier	Robert Grozier, II <i>Happy 5th Anniversary with Jesus, Bob. Always loving and missing you, Mom</i>
♥ Fred and Pat Andrew	Jill Patricia Harris <i>We love and miss you. Mom, Dad, Jeff, Sam & Alex</i>
♥ Elizabeth Hotz	Jimmy Hotz <i>In loving memory. Love, Mom, Dad & Keith</i>
♥ Mark and Kathleen Kilker	Colleen Kilker <i>We love and miss you , honey. Life is sweet! Mom, Dad, Meghan, Bridget & Mark</i>
♥ Udo and Janet L. Virmalo	Sean Mikhail Virmalo <i>Always with us! Mom, Dad, Eric, Brett & Katelyn</i>
♥ David Bremmer	Hunter Bremmer <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Mike and Cathi Tirrell	Heather Le Hawn <i>In memory of a beautiful life, now our angel</i>
♥ Don and Connie McNally	Ed McNally <i>In loving memory of our son and brother, Edward. Love Mom, Dad & Sean</i>
♥ Betty Schuler	Dean Lynn Schuler <i>Happy Birthday. Love and miss you</i>
♥ Harry and Carol Faber	Maggie Jo Faber <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Joan Grider	Jennifer Grider <i>Love you always. The Grider Family</i>
♥ Ginger Renner	Deanna Dawn Renner & Gilbert George Weiss <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Elizabeth Arey	Patricia Arey <i>Forever missed - forever loved - never forgotten</i>
♥ Louisa Levine	Paul Joseph Levine <i>I miss you Paulie. Loving You, Mom</i>
♥ James and Julia McLaughlin	Michael Patrick McLaughlin <i>Brother of Matthew and Patrick McLaughlin; Son of Julia & James McLaughlin</i>
♥ Randy & Diane Coe	Jessica E. Coe <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Rich & Ruthann Siegfried	Andrew D. Siegfried <i>In Loving Memory</i>

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We thank the following for their generous donations this month

Contributor	Loved One
♥ Lin Miller	Glenn W. Miller, Jr. <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Michael & Joanne Providakis	Angelo John Providakis <i>In loving memory of our son Angelo</i>
♥ Lucille Radocha	Peter A. Radocha <i>Forever in our hearts</i>
♥ Geary and Brenda Gum	Brian Gum <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Joan Kunsman	Loved Ones - All my Sons <i>In Loving Memory - I miss and love you so much</i>
♥ Maureen Pfenning	PJ Pfenning <i>Missing and loving you always</i>
♥ Mary L Graver	Eric Michael Graver <i>We love and miss you every day. Love Mom & Earl</i>
♥ Rex and Yvonne Hude	Molly Hude <i>In loving memory of you, Molly. Wish I could hug you again! Love Mom & Dad</i>
♥ Jack and Jule Leonard	John Leonard, Jr <i>In Loving Memory. Mom, Dad & Karen</i>
♥ Marjorie Lestishock	Joseph John Lestishock <i>I love and miss you Joe. You are always in my heart. Love Mom</i>
♥ Thomas and Eva Seibert	Steven Thomas Seibert <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Barbara DeBoer	Sheila Renae DeBoer <i>Forever in my heart</i>
♥ Joanne Fimiano	Stephanie Volkert & Victoria Volkert <i>Miss you and love you both</i>
♥ Bright Hope Pregnancy Support Centers	<i>Saddened with those that have experienced the pain of miscarriage and stillbirth</i>

The following is a correction for a love gift that contained an error in the last issue of the newsletter. We regret the error

♥ Judy Dorward	Kelly Shawn Owens <i>Always in my heart, always on my mind</i>
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Donations and Contributions

- ★ *Falk Funeral Homes & Crematory*
- ★ *Bright Hope Pregnancy Support Centers*
- ★ *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.

Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

Please keep the parents, grandparents and siblings of the following children in your thoughts and hearts

April, May & June Birthdays and Anniversaries

Child	Parents and Guardians, Siblings & Grandparents	Birthday	Anniv.
Walter Alfonso	- Son of Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan, Sandra Kunsman, the late David Kunsman & the late Charles Kunsman, Jr	Aug 10	May 18
Patricia Arey	- Daughter of Elizabeth & the late William Arey; Sister of Elizabeth Ann, Barbara, Rose Marie & Elaine	Apr 18	May 8
John Ashner, Jr.	- Son of John & Grace Ashner; Brother of Suzanne & Michael	Jun 22	Nov 8
Mark Bailey	- Son of Thomas & Karen Bailey	Jun 19	Apr 8
Graham Beckhorn	- Son of Alice Keyes; Brother of Christopher & Patrick Beckhorn	Apr 20	Feb 14
Holly Cavanaugh	- Daughter of Beverly Ann Cavanaugh & Bill Cavanaugh; Sister of Bo Cavanaugh	Apr 27	Sep 25
Matthew Chupella	- Son of Maryann Chupella	May 18	Jul 31
Rachel Dallas	- Daughter of Robert & Linda Dallas; Sister of Sadie Dallas	Jan 21	Jun 14
Denise Deiter	- Daughter of Franklin & Lucille Reinhard Sister Cheryl Ann McCue & Danny Deiter & the late Cathy Ann Mertz	Jul 3	Jun 11
Joel Frisby	- Son of Caroline Frisby; Brother of Richard, Gregory, Michael & Timothy Frisby	Mar 26	Jun 4
Peter & Paul Fry	- Sons of John & Cynthia Chryst; Brothers of Jeff Fry & the late Benjamin Fry; Grandsons of Charles & Rose Giltner	Jun 1	Jun 1
Edward Gaydos, III	- Son of Edward & Sally Gaydos; Brother of Blasia Gaydos	Apr 23	Apr 8
Elizabeth Gibson, MD	- Daughter of Richard J. Brown & The Late Marilyn Brown; Sister of Margaret Nahrganl & Eric Brown	Jun 15	Apr 2
Jennifer Grider	- Daughter of Carl & Joan Grider	May 18	Jun 29
Robert Grozier, II	- Son of Shirley Grozier; Brother of Laurie, Brenda & Vance	Feb 15	Jun 11
James "Jim" Gum	- Son of Sherwood & June Gum; Brother of Deborah Martini	Nov 21	May 1
Jill Harris	- Daughter of Fred & Pat Andrew; Sister of Jeff	Nov 5	Jun 28
David Heard	- Son of Susan Heard; Brother of Daisy Heard	May 20	Feb 10
David Hoagland, Jr	- Son of Gypsy Garrett	Sep 24	Apr 26
Loren Holl	- Son of Fern Gerth	May 31	May 30
Richard "Rich" Hollabaugh	- Son of Linda Hollabaugh & the late Wayne Hollabaugh	Dec 20	Apr 10
James "Jimmy" Hotz	- Son of Elizabeth Hotz	Apr 24	Jul 4
Colleen Kilker	- Daughter of Mark & Kathleen Kilker; Sister of Meghan, Bridget & Mark Kilker	May 6	Jul 23
Audrey King Koch	- Sister of Linda Hollabaugh	Jun 16	Dec 2
Bonnie Krause	- Daughter of Josephine Leiby	Jun 22	Mar 24
David Kunsman	- Son of Charles & Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan, Sandra Kunsman, the late Walter Alfonso & late Charles Kunsman, Jr	May 2	Jul 15
Trever Landis	- Son of Robin Landis; Brother of Marlea, Dana & Kelsey Landis	Apr 16	Dec 9
Michael Malia	- Son of Carol Malia; Brother of Brian Malia	May 24	Apr 2
Michael Milot	- Son of John & Patti Milot; Brother of Jill	Jun 30	Feb 2
Frank Mirabile	- Son of Joseph & Laura DeVito; Brother of Michael, Joseph & Nicholas	Apr 19	May 18
Cody Myers	- Son of David & Denise Myers; Brother of Travis, Crystal & Benjamin Myers	Dec 12	May 15
Kelly Owens	- Son of Judy Dorward & Douglas D. Owens	Jan 24	May 20
Angelo Providakis	- Son of Michael & Joanne Providakis	Feb 7	Apr 9
Peter Radocha	- Son of Lucille Radocha; Brother of Frank Radocha, Jr & Gina Sacco	Jun 13	Jul 1
Cory Ross	- Son of Kathy Ross; Brother of Michael Ross	Jul 24	Jun 12
Eric Rute	- Son of Linda Cavanaugh	Feb 15	May 20
Nicholas Savacool	- Son of Howard & Laura Savacool; Brother of Brandon, Candace & Lacie	Feb 27	Apr 1
Dean Schuler	- Son of Betty Schuler & the late Lester Schuler	May 22	Nov 19
Steven Seibert	- Son of Thomas & Eva Seibert; Brother of Nick & Krista Seibert; Grandson of Eva Juhasz	Jun 27	Dec 22
Andrew Siegfried	- Son of Rich & Ruthann Siegfried; Brother of Ben Siegfried	Mar 27	Apr 18
Jonelle Sisonick	- Daughter of Rella Sisonick Daniels; Sister of Nicholas Sisonick	May 22	Aug 3
Keith Storat	- Son of Richard & Susan Storat; Brother of Todd & Greg	May 18	Jul 22
Jared Thomas	- Son of Sandra B. Schueck	Aug 31	Jun 22
Shane Uttard	- Son of Brenda Deubler	Jan 15	May 13
Sean Virmalo	- Son of Udo & Janet L. Virmalo; Brother of Eric, Brett & Katelyn Virmalo	Sep 13	Apr 28
Joseph Visnosky, Jr.	- Brother of Grace L Ashner	May 27	May 4
Joshua Wersinger	- Son of David & Joanne Wersinger; Brother of Patrick, Hope, Joeseeph, Gertrude & Marjorie Wersinger	Jan 19	May 17
Craig Yurick	- Son of Robert & Sharon Yurick; Brother of Todd Yurick	Aug 5	Jun 21

Mother's Day

Mary Cleckly TCF, Atlanta, GA

As Mothers Day approaches I go back to my box of memories and seek out my mementos of days past. I go back to times when there were two cards, some home made of construction paper with crayoned verses proclaiming me the "greatest mom of all". They were made at school with some S's reversed and no semblance of order, but brought home and presented to me with great pride and accepted in the same vein. Later, more sophisticated cards, store-bought, but the message was the same and the love was still there. I accepted them, loved being made to feel special, and tucked them away, never realizing how valuable they would become.

Now there is one card. There seems to be a double portion of love in that card, I recognize and appreciate that effort. I am thankful there is one card, I value very much what I have left. My heart goes out to those of you have no card. But even with the pain, I'll bet if you were given the choice of no child/no pain, you would like me, gather up as many memories as your child's life span permitted and hold them close to your heart, sorry there wasn't time for more, but never for one man moment willing to exchange for no pain the pleasure of his or her company for however long you had them. When all is said and done, the memories are the important thing. Relish them, but gather them about you all those you have left and who love you and let them help you through this special day. Know that this day takes patience, but that you will survive and go on. I hope your Mother's Day is a peaceful one.



Mothers & Fathers

By Jean Hotopp, TCF, Fox Valley, IL

A mother's love for children
is a very special thing,
filled with many days
that motherhood can bring

Days when children misbehave
and try your patience so
days when they are sweet and kind
and let their loving feeling show

A father's love for children
is very strong and pure
there's no problem a child may have
which a father cannot cure

A parents love for children
is a never ending thing
it lasts from day to day
and year to year
through summer, winter,
fall, and spring.

That special love continues still
when someone's child has died
for the feelings that a parent has
are impossible to hide



The Fixit Man



Being a "jack of all trades and master of none" all my life, our children thought I could fix anything that they broke. I, myself, thought that anything that was made could be fixed and maybe even fixed better than when it was new. Many times, our children would bring me something that had been broken, though they didn't know how it got broken, and ask me if I could please fix it. Most of the time, I would attempt to fix whatever it was, and one way or another, I would succeed. Then one day, something broke and I could not and never will be able to fix. One of our children died. This time, the something that

broke, I could not fix. There are no tools to bring a dead child back to life. All I can think and wonder is: How and why did I end up with something I cannot fix? Since that time, it is hard for me to fix something that breaks. It brings to mind one big thing I will never be able to fix: The Death of Our Child.

*Bill Krieglestein
TCF, Fox Valley, FL*

The Grief of Fathers

By Terry Jago, TCF Regina, Canada

In the early days of my grief
A tear would well up in my eyes,
A lump would form in my throat
but you would not know -
I would hide it,
And I am strong

In the middle days of my grief,
I would look ahead and
see that wall that I had attempted
to go around as an ever present
reminder of a wall yet unscaled..
Yet I did not attempt to scale it
For the strong will survive -
And I am strong

In the later days of my grief I
learned to climb the wall -
step by step
Remembering, Crying, Grieving.
And the tears flowed steadily
as I painstakingly went over.
The way was long,
but I did make it,
For I am Strong.

Near the resolution of my grief,
a tear will well up in my eyes,
a lump will form in my throat
but I will let that tear fall -
And you will see it.
Through it you will see that I still
hurt and I care.
For I am strong

The Little Black Spider

It's funny how see a seemingly small incident can be magnified to something of great significance when you're bereaved parent. With this in mind, here is a story about a spider I encountered one day while doing housework.

What is it about spiders that makes them like water? I don't know what it is, but it seems they definitely do prefer to habitat sinks. (remember the itsy-bitsy spider?) Or maybe we just notice them more when they're in our way then when they're up on the ceiling. At any rate, on this particular day the sun was shining in the air smells fresh. I was enjoying the scenery from the kitchen window as I prepare to wash the dishes. And they're it was. A very small black spider in the kitchen sink. Now it's funny. Before my daughter died several years ago, it didn't bother me much to kill insects. But after we lost her I became a bit more hesitant to kill anything. All life (except mosquitoes and flies!) seemed more precious to me. So I didn't really want to pick this little guy off just because he was in my way. Instead, I touched him lightly and he ran up the side of the sink out of harms way. I was washing the dishes he kept getting dangerously close to the sudsy water, so I kept shoving him off. I was really starting to get annoyed. Later that day he was in the sink again. So this time I put him in the corner of the windowsill over the sink. I figured he'd be happy there. I'd seen other bugs there, so obviously it was a popular hangout. Shaking my head I walked away, wondering how

crazy I must be to go out of my way to protect a spider. I mean this little buggger had inconvenienced me all day. I must be nuts to put up with.

As a day went on I forgot about my little annoying friend. I began to get dressed for work in between the starting supper for my husband and kids. Around 4 pm is always the most hectic part of my day, as the kids are refreshed from their afternoon nap and raring to go. Plus cooking supper (cooking does not come naturally to me). Also, I work a couple of nights a week, and this was one of them. So I'm running around like a chicken with my head cut off. Suddenly, the sky clouded over and a flash thunderstorm ensued. I ran upstairs to shut the windows and then ran back down to close all the others. The last one I got two was the kitchen sink. The wind was blowing wildly and a couple of tall glasses had been knocked over. The window sill, counter and sink were drenched. That's when I saw my little black spider. He was completely soaked. In the sink. Dead. I went through all the stages of grief in about two seconds. First, I couldn't believe it. After all I done to preserve him, and he died anyway. If only I hadn't put him on the windowsill! Why didn't I just bring him down in the cellar in the first place? Then I was mad at him. You stupid little thing. Why didn't you just stay down the other end of the kitchen where I put you this morning? Then the tears came. I was standing in the kitchen crying when my husband came in from work. I just looked at him and said "would you look at this spider – all day he was in my way and I kept moving him. And now he's dead.

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try you just can't keep something alive". He looked at me sadly and said "that's true". We were both thinking of our beloved daughter. Nature pulled a fast one on her too. I took a match book cover and gently slipped it under the spider carefully laying it in the trash. My husband, knowing how upset I was, try to rationalize: "He might not be dead, just water-logged. Leave him nice and flat and I'll keep an eye on him." But I knew in my heart he was dead. I left for work feeling really sad and also stupid for letting it all bother me so much.

As I drove to work I kept thinking about what had happened. I decided I would write a short story about it for the newsletter I realized the incident bothered me so much because it touched on issues of control (or rather lack of it.) We try to control everything. At least I do. Losing a child is the ultimate loss of that control we so desperately seek. I had done everything in my power to protect that little spider. Then out of nowhere, and unforeseen force snuffed out its life. You just can't live someone's life for them. You can't cover all the angles and make sure nothing bad ever happens to them.

When I got home later that evening, my husband told me to go look in the trash. I did, and he was gone! My little spider had recovered from his shock and crawled away. I couldn't

Continued on page 9

The Little Black Spider continued

believe it. (I suppose my husband could have removed the spider to make me feel better, but I doubt it. He knows how important truth is to me)

Well, now there's no story to write, I thought. Then reconsidering, I decided I would still write one. But now, instead of a sad story, my tale would hold an element of rebirth. And that's how I like to think of our daughter. I know, logically, she died. I was there. But perhaps there was a reprieve for her, too. Nature knocked the wind out of her, as it did my little spider. But maybe she woke up on the other side of life, in a place waiting to welcome the rest of us.

*Debi Abraham Petrishen
TCF North Shore, Boston MA*

A Little Farther Down the Road

I know those tears you're crying.
I've been in your shoes.
You feel like there's no use trying.
Like there's nothing left to lose.
You take one step forward,
Move two steps back.
You may not see it now
But it won't always be like that.

A little farther down the road,
You'll see the sun again.
A little farther down the road,
You'll look back at
where you've been.
You'll see how far you've come
And you'll find the strength to go
A little farther down the road.

*Alan Pedersen
Author, Songwriter, Performer,
former TCF National President*

Memories

It is natural to cry
It is natural to sigh
It is natural to sit
and wonder Why?
It is natural to be in pain.
It is natural to grieve.
It is natural to not want to believe
It is understandable when
you're mad.
It is understandable when
you're sad
It is understandable when
{qw}g'happy or glad
Because these are memories of a
loved one before.
Memories of times that you
won't have anymore
But you must always keep these
memories in your heart, because
its through you, that your loved
one will never depart

Heather Gilson, TCF Lehigh Valley

The Seasons of Grief

By Shirley Melin, TCF Fox Valley, IL

The season's take on new meanings when a child dies. The snow of winter melts into the first breath of spring. How well I remember the first spring of my grief. I looked forward eagerly to it's coming surely when the long days of winter are past, Surely Spring will be better!!

How surprised I was at tears springing forth with the discovery of each new crocus, every bursting bud and spring flower. Yes, Spring was beautiful, but oh, so sad, the first year without my son to share it with. For suddenly I realized that it was he who gave me my first crocus, bulb and all when he was five! And he you gave me my first bedding plants for Mother's Day each year.

And now, the Lenten season unfolds once more, and I am aware of other bereaved parents who will withdraw into the privacy of their personal and painful world of memories with this new season. Ash Wednesday, Easter, and Passover, these are totally new experiences in the first years of grief. The liturgical words are 1000 years old; yet tears blur the painful new meaning.

Take time to grieve. Take time for the memories of other Easters. Take time to mourn what might have been. Indulge yourself in the beauty of the Easter Lilly. Don't be afraid if at first there seems to be more pain than comfort in the age old words and beautiful music of Easter. And never be ashamed of your tears. One day you too will say, "It is finished."

To walk in grief is not easy. When the shock and numbness have gone, we are left with the reality. The reality that life includes pain and loss. Easter is a season of many feelings... a time of pain and loss. It is also a time of rebirth. And of real personal growth. So, also, are the Seasons of Grief

Siblings

Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,
How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief.

There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

Mary Lamourex, TCF Marin County, CA

***“There is no death.
Only a change of worlds.”***

Chief Seattle, 1855

Reflections

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations: that life isn't always fair or predictable. That sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness.

Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time – time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger, from *This Healing Journey – An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings*

©The Compassionate Friends

*Little by little, step by step
I learned that I didn't need
To hang on to the death
To remember the life
What a joyous discovery!*

Kitty Brown McGowin TCF, Montgomery, AL

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.*

Submission Deadlines: Winter - Dec 1st; Spring - March 1st; Summer - June 1st; Fall - Sept 1st

Contributor Name (this will be the name that appears in the newsletter)

Address

Phone

Mail to:

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
C/O BRENDA SOLDERITCH
415 S. HOKENDAUQUA DR
NORTHAMPTON, PA 18067

Email Address

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

Name of person gift given for

Edition to be published in. Deadlines listed above. Late submissions will be published in the next edition

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 gift of \$ _____ Lehigh Valley Easton *Note: Please mail Easton gifts to the address below*

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

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

Newsletter Expenses Postage Office Expenses Outreach Program Special Events



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

TCF Annual Family Picnic & Memorial Balloon Launch

Sat. June 15 @ 12 pm (Rain or Shine)
Moore Township Recreation Center
635 English Rd. Bath, PA

You are invited to join us for our annual Picnic. Hot dogs, drinks & balloons are provided by the chapter, Please bring a covered dish to share, lawn chairs & sports equipment.

Please RSVP, so that we can accurately determine the amount of supplies needed, by filling out and returning the form below or texting 484-891-0823 with your name, number of attendees, covered dish and if you are able to volunteer

Directions to the park:

From Bethlehem Area - Take Center St./ PA-512 north, to PA-946 (Community Dr) Turn left proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd turn left, continue .04 miles to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion.

From Carbon County Area -Take PA-248 east to PA-512 (Walnut St.) turn left proceed 4 miles to PA-946 (Community Dr) turn left proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd turn left, continue .04 miles. to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion.

From Easton Area - Take PA-248 west to PA-512 (Walnut St.) turn right, proceed 4 miles to PA-946 (Community Dr) turn left proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd turn left continue .04 miles to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion.

From Wind Gap Area -Take PA-512 South to PA-946 (Community Dr) Turn right proceed 2.4 miles to English Rd and turn left, continue .04 to park entrance on right. Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign Turn right into the park and follow the park road to the first stop sign turn right and follow the road to the pavilion

***Suggestion:** Keep this top portion as a reminder*



RSVP by June 1st

PLEASE PRINT

Yes, I will attend the picnic **Total Attending** **Adults**
Children

_____ **Covered Dish I will bring**

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address _____

Chapter(s) you attend _____

Yes, I will volunteer to help with the picnic **Set Up** **Clean**
Up **Other** _____

Mail to: The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley
Attn: Kathy Collins
PO Box 149
Bath, PA 18014