



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *Lehigh Valley Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**



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**The Compassionate Friends is an international non-profit self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families after the death of a child.**

***Our Mission:*** *When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.*

***Our Vision:*** *Everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.*

### **Meetings**

Our chapter meets at Bethany Wesleyan Church in Cherryville, PA

If you would like to be notified of meetings call or text the newsletter editor at 484-891-0823. Your name will be added to the notification list and we will notify you in advance of meetings.

Note: Because of the large number of members and the small number that attend we will only contact those that are on the notification list.

Meetings are open to bereaved parents, grandparents and mature siblings. Group participation is confidential and voluntary.

### ***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.*

### ***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. You can also help as volunteering as a phone friend.*

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**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
Homicide -	Ginger Renner 610-967-5113

**Newsletter Notes**

This newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley, we hope that it will be a comfort to you on your grief journey.

We welcome original stories and poetry from our members. We reserve the right to modify or reject submissions not in keeping with our mission. All submissions must include the author's name and your contact information. Send to The Compassionate Friends, C/O Kathleen Collins, 2971 Pheasant Dr. Northampton PA 18067 or email to: TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

**Are you moving?** If have a change of address, updates to your member information or 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 News Editor, 2971 Pheasant Dr., Northampton, PA 18067

**TCF Online Support**

The TCF National website has over 35 private facebook pages and a number of moderated chatrooms. To register for the facebook pages or chat rooms go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on the find support tab and then choose online communities.

**Love Gifts**

Love Gifts are tax deductible. They enable us to reach out to newly bereaved and provide ongoing support to all members. They may be given in memory of a child or in memory or in honor of a friend or relative. Please use form in this newsletter to donate.

*We thank the following for their generosity*

Contributor	Loved One
♥ Jack & Nancy Blosky	<b>Kevin Blosky</b> <i>You live in our hearts forever</i>
♥ Davis & Denise Myers	<b>Cody David Alexander Myers</b> <i>We love and miss you! Love, Mom, Dad &amp; family</i>
♥ Rich and Mary Burke	<b>Brian Michael Burke</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Rella Daniels	<b>Jonelle Sisonick &amp; Anthony Sisonick</b> <i>In memory of my Daughter &amp; Son. Love, Mom</i>
♥ Linda Cavanaugh	<b>Jason, Eric, &amp; Robert Rute</b> <i>Forever in our hearts</i>
♥ Joanne Fimiano	<b>Victoria &amp; Stephanie Volkert</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Udo & Janet Virmalo	<b>Sean Mikhail Virmalo</b> <i>Always with us. Udo, Janet, Eric, Brett &amp; Katelyn</i>
♥ Linda Hollabaugh	<b>Richard "Rich" L. Hollabaugh</b> <i>Rich, Love of my life, Dearest Son, Loved Son of Linda J. &amp; the Late Wayne Kenneth Hollabaugh</i>
♥ Shirley Grozier	<b>Robert Grozier &amp; David Grozier</b> <i>God bless you my boys. I love you both. Much love, Mom</i>
♥ Connie McNally	<b>Edward McNally</b> <i>With love, Mom, Dad and Sean</i>

## Donations & Contributions

★ **Bethany Wesleyan Church, Cherryville, PA**  
For our meeting space

★ **Giant Food Store Employees United Way Contributions**  
In Memory of David Todd Smith

★ **Aetna Payroll Contributors**

★ **United Way Payroll Contributors**

## Our Children Remembered

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

### Birthdays and Anniversaries

	Birth	Anniv.
<b>Kevin Blosky</b> - Son of Jack & Janet Blosky; Grandson of Jack & Nancy Blosky	Jan 28	Oct 4
<b>Brian Burke</b> - Son of Rich & Mary Burke; Brother of Melissa Burke	Jan 3	Oct 9
<b>Hope Davidson</b> - Daughter of Dean & Donna Davidson; Sister of Nicholas Davidson	Aug 8	Feb 8
<b>Mark Dilts, Jr</b> - Son of Mark & Joy Dilts; Brother of Beth Dilts	Jan 6	Jul 8
<b>Brenda Fehr Hatrak</b> - Daughter of David & Eileen Fehr, Sr.; Sister of Barbara Burgin & David Fehr, Jr. Granddaughter of Warren & Rose Fehr and Elwood & Mary Mann	Aug 31	Jan 8
<b>John Fry</b> - Son of Cathy McDonald	Mar 19	Jun 14
<b>Eileen Collins Gant</b> - Daughter of The Late John & Dorothy Collins; Sister of John, Steven, Kathleen & Brian Collins & MaryAnn Watkins	Mar 25	Feb 14
<b>Sgt. Christopher Geiger</b> - Son of George & Patricia Geiger; Brother of Roseanne Reenock, Michael, Terrance, David & Timothy Geiger	Mar 30	Jul 9
<b>David Grozier</b> - Son of Shirley Grozier Brother of Laurie, Brenda & Vance	Jan 15	Jan 14
<b>Robert Grozier, II</b> - Son of Shirley Grozier; Brother of Laurie, Brenda & Vance	Feb 15	Jun 11
<b>Brian Gum</b> - Son of Geary & Brenda Gum	Feb 21	Mar 5
<b>Heather Hawn</b> - Daughter of Mike & Cathi Tirrell; Sister of Holli & Chad	Feb 25	Dec 25
<b>David Heard</b> - Son of Susan Heard; Brother of Daisy Heard	May 20	Feb 10
<b>Matt Kush</b> - Son of Rick & Ann Kush; Brother of Mike & Jenn	Aug 24	Feb 10
<b>John Leonard, Jr</b> - Son of Jack & Jule Leonard; Brother of Karen	Jul 27	Jan 6
<b>Andrea Luecke</b> - Daughter of Louise Luecke; Sister of Jennae Luecke	Jan 30	Oct 23
<b>Ed McNally</b> - Son of Don & Connie McNally; Brother of Sean McNally	Jul 29	Feb 11
<b>Emma McNulty</b> - Daughter of Jessica & Susan Katzbeck	Nov 19	Mar 11
<b>Michael Milot</b> - Son of John & Patti Milot; Brother of Jill	Jun 30	Feb 2
<b>Jim Minter</b> - Brother of Jeanine Minter	Aug 15	Mar 14
<b>Mardelle Parenti-Blume</b> - Daughter of Brian & Nancy Kleckner	Feb 9	Mar 1
<b>James Ralls</b> - Son of Tina Ralls; Brother of Timothy & Geoffrey	Jan 2	Aug 17
<b>Eric Rute</b> - Son of Linda Cavanaugh	Feb 15	May 20
<b>Nicholas Savacool</b> - Son of Howard & Laura Savacool; Brother of Br&on, C&ace & Lacie	Feb 27	Apr 1
<b>Constance Stewart</b> - Daughter of Joanne Stewart; Sister of Keith & Kevin Stewart	Sep 23	Feb 1
<b>Shane Uttard</b> - Son of Brenda Deubler	Jan 15	May 13
<b>Stephanie Volkert</b> - Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert	Sep 22	Feb 12
<b>Victoria Volkert</b> - Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zacary Volkert	Jan 14	Feb 16

### "DON'T SCRAPE THE ICE"

The season for ice and snow is upon us (again)! Although we want to make sure the grave site markers are visible, it causes permanent damage to some markers if snow and ice are scraped off. Even plastic scrapers will mar bronze. Before using salt, snow removal chemicals, etc..., it is suggested that you check with the groundskeeper at your cemetery.

~TCF Billings, MTGrief  
Fatigue Do you ever feel like me? Right now, I am utterly tired of grief. I don't want to hurt, cry or feel empty.

## For the New Year

By Mary Ehmann TCF, Valley Forge, PA

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

♥ Let's not try to image the future. Take one day at a time.

♥ Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.

♥ Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share the difficult times. You may all become closer for it.

♥ Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. Each of us is an entity, therefore different. So how can there be a perfect understanding?

♥ When a good day comes, relish it; don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. It WILL come again and multiply.

♥ Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body only compounds your troubles. Drink lots of water and take stress-type multivitamins, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body heal, as well as your mind.

♥ Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you. As you find you are caring about the pain of others, you are starting to come out of your shell – a very healthy sign.

I know following these won't be easy, but what has been? It's worth a try, don't you think? Nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

## Little White Blanket

By Deborah Antinori  
Basking Ridge, New Jersey  
Bereavement Magazine, Jan/Feb 1999

Little white blanket...first snow on the grave since you left. How can it be? Just yesterday you were here. You left in summer's humid heat. Cicadas sang your eulogy over fresh-turned soil. Now snow's first appearance covers your smooth, flawless sleeping ground.

Little white blanket covers and cares for you when I no longer can. I care for you now with prayers and memories and by framing photographs of times gone by. Photos of you and me. When I look at us, I can still feel you sitting next to me, breathing, smiling, living your life with me.

Then I feel you gone from here, from me. I never knew before how to feel what's not there. Feeling the not-me-ness of me, without you.

Little white blanket, tuck in my loved one. Cover her gently, make her comfortable, send her my love. When spring comes and little white blanket disappears, let the crocuses I planted bloom their first blooms, counting every first since you left. First morning without you, first week alone, first month bereft, first Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, first New Year without you...a strange year without you. With the passing of time, I fear I'll forget you, so I hold on to my grief, as I once held on to you.

Little white blanket, first snow on the grave, assure me she's cared for, that she won't forget me, that we are still us, that I am still me...that somewhere in spirit, she is still her.

First snow, nature's wise surround

for my departed, teach me how to mend the hole ripped in the fabric of my life, christen the ground, baptize me in understanding the cycles of life; living, loving, and letting go.

## A Tear Fell



*I rode by your school by chance today  
And I just happened to look that way.  
The boys all had their ball caps on;  
then I remembered my son was gone.*

*Just when I thought I was doing so well,  
Before I knew it - a tear fell.  
Then on Sunday as I sat in church  
I looked around and missed you so much.*

*I saw other boys in their Sunday suits  
And I remembered you were just as cute.  
People all think I'm doing so well;  
They don't know today - a tear fell.*

*When I'm reminded of what might have been  
It gets too hard to hold it in.  
When life will catch me off my guard,  
That's when I seem to be hit so hard.*

*It seems all roads lead back to you  
As I take each day and try to get through.  
They say time makes it better,  
but I cannot tell.  
I only know today - a tear fell.*

*By Carolyn Bryan TCF, Orange Park, FL*

**What soap is  
for the body,  
tears are  
for the soul.**

*Jewish Proverb*



## Grief Fatigue

By a Bereaved Mom, TCF Greater New Orleans

Do you ever feel like me? Right now, I am utterly tired of grief. I don't want to hurt, cry or feel empty. I want to scream. I am sick of it. I can't get away from the always-aching pit in my heart and soul. I search for understanding. I do all I can in the memory of my child who is gone and the others like her. I try to move into life again. I smile, I laugh, but inside I ache, my soul literally burns inside my body. This ache in my heart grows worse and harsher each day.

Some say it gets better – WHEN??? That is what I want to know. When in this life am I going to feel better? I learn to live like this. It has not eased or vanished...I just cope better. Inside me I desire my child,

outside I act fine and dandy! I want to feel whole, confident, full, happy, all the things that are so long gone I can't remember them. Oh, what I wouldn't give for the bliss of ignorance once more.



### WINTER MEMORIES



*The days are getting colder,  
and the first snow's not too far off.*

*It used to be so pretty  
gently falling from aloft.*

*But the snow won't be as pretty,*

*as it gathers on the ground,*

*'cause there'll be a snowman missing,  
my son is not around.*

*The playing children's laughter,  
used to be a special song,  
but this year will be different,  
without my son to sing along.*

*The song has lost its music,  
and it'll be just another day,*



*as I gaze down from my window  
and watch the children play.*

*But the snow will again be pretty,  
in a far off distant time,*

*and we'll build snowmen together  
and we'll never look behind.*

*For now, I'll remain with memories,  
and the melting snow will fade,  
but he builds snowmen to his heart's content,  
because he now lives where snow is made.*

Jeremiah Sundown TCF Nashville, TN

Sometimes  
Carrying on,  
**JUST CARRYING ON,**  
Is a Superhuman  
Achievement

Albert Camus

## Love Gift Form

Your love 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 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donations are fully tax deductible.

Deadlines are the 1st of the month previous to the month you wish publication in. Example the deadline for publication in January is December the 1st

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

Address

Phone

Email Address

Lehigh Valley Chapter Mailing Address

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

Easton Chapter Mailing Address

JOHN SZABO  
1514 SCULAC DR  
BETHLEHEM, PA 18020

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

Name of person gift given for

Month to be published in. Late submissions and those that do not indicate a month 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.

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



## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, LEHIGH VALLEY

Phone: 484-891-0823

E-mail: [tcflehighvalley@gmail.com](mailto:tcflehighvalley@gmail.com)

### **Other Local TCF Chapters and Support Groups**

**TCF Carbon County Chapter** - 1st Tuesday 7-9 pm Leaders - Dave & Lora Krum, Phone: 484-719-6753 Email: [tcfcarboncounty@gmail.com](mailto:tcfcarboncounty@gmail.com)

**TCF Quakertown Chapter** - 2nd Tuesday 7:30 - 9 pm Phone: 267-380-0130, Email: [contact@tcfquakertownpa.org](mailto:contact@tcfquakertownpa.org)

**TCF Pocono Chapter** - 1st Monday 7:00pm  
Leader Teresa Myers Phone: 570-350-6695,  
Email: [tcfpoconochapter@gmail.com](mailto:tcfpoconochapter@gmail.com)

**TCF Easton Chapter** - currently holding Zoom meetings - Meeting links posted on Easton Chapter Facebook page. Leader Baily Benner Phone: 610-515-3526

**GRASP** (grief recovery after substance passing)  
Contact: Nancy Howe 484-863-4324; 484-788-9440; [nancyhowe@ymail.com](mailto:nancyhowe@ymail.com) or Jenny Kemps - 610-442-8490

## The Compassionate Friends Credo

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**W**e 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, 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 they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in 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 a 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 to grieve as well as to grow.

*We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends.*