



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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May

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Chapter 1562

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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.

Meetings

Our chapter meets at Bethany Wesleyan Church in Cherryville, PA

To be notified of meetings call or text the newsletter editor at 484-891-0823. We will add you to the notification list and you will be notified of upcoming meetings

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

Note: In order to meet safely all attendees must agree to the following

- Face masks shall be worn covering the nose and mouth at all times during meetings. Bandanas, Scarves etc are not acceptable
- Do not attend if you are feeling ill, have been exposed to Covid or have tested positive in the last 14 days
- Chairs will be preset to maintain social distancing
- No food is allowed

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 walk beside you if you allow us to. We have no easy answers or quick fixes, but we care, share and understand. Although our 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.

Telephone Friends

Sometimes you may need to talk to someone who cares and understands between meetings. To help we maintain a list of telephone friends. During these times the following members are available to listen, share and offer what support they can.

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

To volunteer as a telephone friend contact the newsletter editor



TCF National Support Resources

The TCF National website has over 35 private Facebook pages and a number of moderated chatrooms. To register for the FB pages or chat rooms go to www.compassionatefriends.org and click on the find support tab and then choose online communities.

Newsletter Notes

This Newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley Chapter. We hope that it will be of some comfort to you on your grief journey.

We welcome original stories and poetry from our members.

All submissions must include the author's name and your contact information. Send to the newsletter editor (address listed above)

If you move please contact the Newsletter Editor with your new address

Newsletter Editor Contact

• by mail:

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Mother's Day by Mary Wildman, TCF Moro, IL

As I write this, I am very much aware that Mother's day is coming soon. That will be an undoubtedly difficult day in countless homes. For all the thousands of mothers who will be glowing with a radiant kind of pride and happiness that day, there will also be those of you whose hearts are aching for that phone call that will never come, that special visit, that one Mother's day card which will not arrive. For us, the reading and re-reading of that one last card - "Mom, you are the greatest and I love you" - will have to last a lifetime.

How does a mother face a lifetime of silence on "her" day? Ask those of us who have "been there" already, and we will tell you of lonely Mother's Day visits to spring-green cemeteries where the sweet clear notes of a single spring bird perched nearby float over our heads and seem surely to have been intended as divine comfort for a heart full to breaking. You will hear of yellow roses being sent to a small church - "in memory of and a cherished story of a kind and sensitive friend who sent a single rose that first Mother's Day "in remembrance".

Always we struggle with the eternal questions - how does life in fairness extract from us the life of a beloved child in exchange for a clear bird call in a spring-green cemetery, a slender vase of yellow rosebuds or even the kindness and sensitivity of a friend who remembered our loneliness and pain on that day? Where is the fairness and justice in such barter?

The answer comes back again and again - life does not always bargain fairly. We are surrounded from birth to death by those things which we cannot keep, but which enrich, ennoble and endow our lives with a fore taste of Heaven because we have been privileged to behold, to experience, to wrap our arms around the joyous and beautiful.

Can we bottle the fragrance of an April morning or the splendor of a winter's sunset and take it home with us to place it on our fireplace mantle? Can we grasp and hold the blithesome charm of childhood's laughter? Can we capture within cupped hands the beauty and richness of a rainbow? Can we pluck the glitter of a million stars on a summer night or place in an alabaster box the glow and tenderness of love?

No, we cannot. But to those who have been given the splendor, the blithesome charm, the glory, the glitter, the tenderness and the love of a child who has departed, someday the pain will speak to you of enrichment, the compassion for others, of deeper sensitivity to the world around you, of a deeper joy for having known a deeper pain. Your child will not have left you completely, as you thought. But rather, you will find him in that first clear, sweet bird call, in those yellow rosebuds, in giving and receiving and in the tissue wrapped memories that you have forever in your heart.

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**
- ★ **The Matt Kush Foundation**
In Memory of Matt Kush



Love Gifts



Love Gifts 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. Gifts are tax deductible.

We thank the following this month for their generosity

Contributor	Loved One
♥ Shirley Grozier	Robert (Bob) Grozier, II <i>Hi my Bob, Still missing you a lot. You're always in my mind & heart. I love you so much. All my love, Mom</i>
♥ Betty Schuler	Dean Lynn Schuler <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Mark & Kathleen Kilker	Coleen Kilker <i>We love and miss you, honey. Life is sweet! Mom, Dad, Meghan, Bridget & Mark</i>

Our Children Remembered

Birthdays and Anniversaries

	Birth	Anniv.
Patricia Arey - Daughter of Elizabeth & the late William Arey, Sister of Elizabeth Ann, Barbara, Rose Marie & Elaine	Apr 18	May 8
Jennifer Grider - Daughter of Carl and Joan Grider	May 18	Jun 29
David Heard - Son of Susan Heard, Brother of Daisy Heard	May 20	Feb 10
Colleen Kilker - Daughter of Mark and Kathleen Kilker, Sister of Meghan, Bridget and Mark Kilker	May 6	Jul 23
David Kunsman - Son of Charles and Joan Kunsman, Brother of Sherry Flanagan, Sandra Kunsman, the late Walter Alfonso & the late Charles Kunsman, Jr	May 2	Jul 15
Cody Myers - Son of David and Denise Myers, Brother of Travis, Crystal and Benjamin Myers	Dec 12	May 15
Eric Rute - Son of Linda Cavanaugh	Feb 15	May 20
Dean Schuler - Son of Betty and the late Lester Schuler	May 22	Nov 19
Jonelle Sisonick - Daughter of Rella Sisonick Daniels, Sister of Nicholas Sisonick	May 22	Aug 3
Shane Uttard - Son of Brenda Deubler	Jan 15	May 13
Joseph Visnosky, Jr. - Brother of Grace Ashner	May 27	May 4

Actor Glenn Ford tells this story: The Indian Statesman Nehru gave Ford a rose and said, "Keep this rose and look at it for a long time." When the two men met again a year later, Nehru asked whether Ford had kept the rose and looked at it. Glenn Ford said, yes he had. "And what did you think?" asked Nehru. The actor answered: "I kept seeing the rose. Even after it faded and lost its petals, I kept seeing the rose."

Nehru nodded and said, "That is the secret of love. If you love something, you will see its beauty. Even if it fades and goes away, you will see its beauty."



A Mother's Day Wish from Heaven

By Jody Seiheimer,
TCF South Shore, Hingham, MA

Dear Mr. Hallmark,

I am writing to you from heaven, and though it must appear a rather strange idea, I see everything from here. I just popped in to visit your stores to find a card. A card of love for my mother, as this day for her is hard.

There must be some mistake I thought... every card you could imagine, EXCEPT, I could not find a card; from a child who lives in heaven. Still she is a mother too, no matter where I reside. I had to leave, she understands, but oh, the tears she's cried.

I thought that if I wrote to you, that you would come to know. That though I live in heaven now; I still love my mother so. She talks with me, and dreams with me; we still share laughter too. Memories are our way of speaking now, would you see what you could do?

My mother carries me in her heart, her tears she hides from sight. She writes poems to honor me, sometimes far into the night. She plants flowers in my garden, there my living memory dwells. She writes to other grieving parents, trying to ease their pain as well.

So you see Mr. Hallmark, though I no longer live on earth. I must find a way, to remind her of her wondrous worth. She needs to be honored, and remembered too, just as the children of earth will do.

Thank you Mr. Hallmark, I know you'll do your best. I have done all I can do; to you I'll leave the rest. Find a way to tell her, how much she means to me. Until I can do it for myself - when she joins me in eternity

Mother's Day

By Lisa Schneck,
TCF - Carbon County, PA



I was sitting in my car, looking down at my daughter's grave. I saw so many yellow dandelions surrounding her grave. As I walked down to the site, I noticed a huge cluster of the yellow dandelion flowers. I was awestruck by the size of this one flower, for it was triple the size of a single yellow dandelion flower seen in one's yard.

I bent down and picked it, for I felt like it was meant for me from her. It made me cry, but gave me comfort just the same...for she often picked these "Yellow Flowers" for me. Yes, it is a weed, but to me it was like a perfect rose.

**On this Mother's Day and every day,
Please remember
once a mother...
always a mother.
Whether your
precious child took
their first breath or
not, you will be your
child's mother
forever, no one can
take that away from
you... not ever.**

Cathy Seehuetter, TCF St Paul, MN



My Gold Star

By Debb Clay American Legion Post 291

I took the road "less traveled"
and arrived upon a shore
Where sunlight danced on
surface currents - opening a door

To memories of you and me
our feet upon the sand
And how our voices filled the air
as your touch filled my hand.

You were just a little child
but even then you knew
That giving of yourself
was all that you were meant to do

And day by day you walked the path
that led you toward the day
You'd place your country
and its worth ahead of "Self" and say

"I'll go and serve and do my part
to keep my homeland free,
When others tread a different path
it matters not to me,

For this I know and will profess
to all who choose to hear,
Our country needs us all to serve
and that is why I'm here."

I stand alone now on that shore,
as sorrow fills my brow
A mix of tears and smiles collide
with thoughts of then and now

Yet as I witness warmth and sparkle
from the water's skin,
The silent streams upon my face
with brilliant light begin

To fill my heart, the air, this place
with who you really are
And what you did
and why you had to venture out so far

So now I'm left without you here
my grief I try to hide
But what I can show is my "star" –
it shines as does my pride.



Freedom Is Not Free

By Kelly Strong

I watched the flag pass by one day.
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young Marine saluted it,
and then he stood at ease.

I looked at him in uniform;
so young, so tall, so proud
With hair cut square and eyes alert
He'd stand out in any crowd.

I thought, how many men like him
Had fallen through the years?
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mothers' tears?

How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many foxholes
were soldier's graves?
No, Freedom is not free.

I heard the sound of taps one night
When everything was still.
I listened to the bugler play
and felt a sudden chill.

I wondered just how many times that
taps had meant "Amen"
When a flag draped a coffin
of a brother or a friend.

I thought of all the children,
Of all the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
with interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard
at the bottom of the sea,
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.
NO, Freedom isn't Free!

When a parent dies
You lose your past;

When a child dies
You lose your future

I Don't Wear Makeup Anymore



I don't wear makeup anymore
I still shower every morning,
Brush my teeth just like before,
Comb my hair, polish my nails,
But I don't wear make-up anymore.

There's a black dress in the closet,
Wore it once, but not once more.
Not today, perhaps tomorrow,
And I don't wear make-up anymore.

I still want to look professional,
Check the mirror on the door,
Heels and hose and matching jewelry,
But I don't wear make-up anymore.

Turn the key and start the engine,
Slowly exit the driveway,
Shifting gears, slide into traffic,
So begins another day.

Just another day without you,
You, the apple of my eye,
Who gave me joy, now sadness
"Oh, God, why did my son die?"
I can feel the pressure building,
And I know what is in store...
Gushing forth the tears of heartbreak,
That's why I don't wear make-up anymore.

By Alice C. Osborn, TCF Northshore/Boston

Trust They Say

Trust they say,
ask and you shall receive.
It is in the book of what
I'm supposed to believe.

Your prayers will be answered,
give thanks every day.
But when death tears apart your life,
it's so hard to say.

An Angel of mine
was taken away.
It's been 14 years
and I miss him every day.

Faith is so hard
when a child is lost.
You want to hold on
but it's a devastating cost.

Yet it's memories and God's promise
that keeps me afloat.

Love never dies
love is filled with hope

By Joanne Providakis, TCF Lehigh Valley

A Beginning

One day you wake up and realize that you must have survived it because you are still here, alive and breathing. But you don't remember the infinitely small steps and decisions you took to get there. Your only awareness is that you have shed miles of tears on what seems to be an endless road of sorrow. One day - one glorious day - you wake up and feel your skin tingle again, and you forget just for an instant that your heart is broken...and it is a beginning.

Susan Borrowman TCF, Kingston, Ontario

Sibling Page

Thoughts for Siblings on Mothers Day

Excerpted from "One Women's Opinion"
by Shirley Ottman

Mother's Day is sure to be a stressful time for a bereaved mom. Even when remaining children in the family gather to make their mother happy and to show her how purposeful her life is to them. Mother's Day is almost certain to be lonely for any bereaved mother.

If your mother doesn't seem as responsive that day, you sons and daughters, give your hugs and kisses anyway. She loves you, too. Remember that she's also the mother of a child no longer here...your brother or sister.. and she misses your sibling as much as you do.

People Think We're Fine

By Mary Matthews, TCF Ft Lauderdale, FL

People think we're fine, you know
They say, "oh, siblings heal so fast."
But they don't know the empty feelings
Or longing for the past

People think we're fine, you know,
"Look how they've resumed their lives", they
say But they don't know of our troubled
hearts
Or the loneliness from day to day

People think we're fine, you know
"See how they're getting over it?" they sur-
mise
But they don't know that we've learned to
laugh and smile,
Only to complete our broken heart's disguise

A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here.
Why? How can this be? Someone
tell me the reason, the answer.
How can I fill the void, the space
once so full of life? What will I do?
How will I be strong for others
when the sting of pain is so real,
so near? real, so near?

Though everyone sees calm, my
soul screams at the injustice, the
unfairness of losing you. I miss you,
I think of you everyday and feel
you in my heart always. Whatever
the reason for your leaving, I know
your living had a reason.

Despite the brevity of your life,
you lived a lifetime's worth. You
blessed us with your presence, your
specialness. I have only to think of
you to feel the joy you've left as a
legacy. You shaped the purpose of
my life. I can see the world
through your eyes.

Robin Holeman Robin Holeman TCF
Tuscaloosa, AL

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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, 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.

Other Local TCF Chapters & Support Groups

TCF Carbon County - 484-719-6753

TCF Easton - 610-515-3526

TCF Quakertown - 215-703-8431

GRASP (grief recovery after substance passing)

TCF Pocono - 570 - 350 - 6695

484-863-4324 or 610-442-8490

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 501c(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

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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

Edition to be published in. Deadlines listed above. Late submissions or those that do not indicate an edition 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