



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *Lehigh Valley Chapter*

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



Volume 40 Issue 4

Copyright © 2026 The Compassionate Friends, Inc

**April**

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is an international non-profit self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families that have experienced 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.

TCF, Lehigh Valley  
Chapter 1562

Phone  
835-201-4606

Email:  
tcfhighvalley@gmail.com

Website  
www.lehighvalleytcf.org

Facebook Page  
facebook.com  
The Compassionate Friends of  
The Lehigh Valley

Pinterest  
The Compassionate Friends,  
Lehigh Valley Chapter

Chapter Leader &  
Newsletter Editor  
Kathleen Collins  
TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

Treasurer  
Kathleen Collins

TCF National  
Headquarters  
877- 969-0010  
www.compassionatefriends.  
org

**Our Chapter Meetings** are held at Bethany Wesleyan Church, Cherryville, PA, the second Monday of the month at 7pm

Our support group provides a confidential and welcoming space for bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult (16 yr +) siblings. We hope that by being among others who understand this profound pain, you will feel free to talk, cry, and share your experiences; it is also perfectly acceptable to simply come and listen.

To honor your loved one, we invite you to bring a picture of your child to display during the meeting on special days or at any time you wish. Refreshments brought in memory of your child are also warmly welcomed.

For additional information about meetings, directions to our meeting space or to be added to the meeting reminder text list call or text 835-201-4606

#### **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

- Monday April 13
- Monday May 11

*Cancellations will be posted on the website & sent to meeting list members*

#### **To Our New Members**

Coming to your first meeting can be an emotional experience, but please know that everyone present has experienced the profound loss of a child and shares a deep understanding of the pain you are enduring. We cannot walk your unique grief journey for you, but we can offer to take your hand and walk beside you if you allow us to. We have no easy answers or quick fixes; instead, we offer a safe space where we care, share, and understand.

Although each member's circumstances may differ, we have all "been there" and can genuinely say we understand. You are not alone.

#### **To Our Seasoned Members**

Think back to your very first meeting. You likely arrived feeling hurt, confused, and deeply alone in your grief. Do you remember the quiet relief of realizing you weren't alone? That others had walked this path and survived? That same love and support you received is now a gift you hold for others. While you have grown stronger and may no longer need the meetings for your own healing, our newest members need *you*. Please consider returning to share the hope that was once shared with you.

## 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

All submissions must include the author's name and your contact information. Send to the newsletter editor

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

### Newsletter Editor Contact

- by mail:  
The Compassionate Friends, LV  
C/O Kathleen Collins,  
2971 Pheasant Dr.,  
Northampton, PA 18067
- by email:  
TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com
- by phone :  
835-201-4606

<b>Inside this issue:</b>	
Chapter & Meeting News	2
Article - Appropriate Expectations You Can have For Yourself in Grief	2-4
Our Children Remembered	3
Love Gifts	3
Poem - Crocus	4
Articles - Spring Is Coming Poem - Spring	5
Poem - Get On With Your Life Article - Loneliness and How to Overcome It	6
<u>Sibling Page</u> Poem - He Lives In Me Articles - It's A Family Affair; Grief Is Lonely	7
Love Gift Form	8

## Chapter & Meeting News

**Please Note:** The chapter's primary phone number has changed. Our new number is 835-201-4606. All other contact details such as email address and website remain the same.

### Meetings

12 members attended the March meeting. Thank you to all who attended and a special thank you to Claire for providing much welcome meeting treats. We hope that everyone found some encouragement at the meeting.

## Appropriate Expectations You Can Have For Yourself in Grief

The following is a list of appropriate expectations that you can have in grief. Evaluated yourself using each one and see if you are maintaining realistic expectations for yourself:

You can expect that:

- Your grief will take longer than most people think.
- Your grief will take more energy than you would have ever imagined.
- Your grief will involve many changes and be continually developing.
- Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life: psychological, social and physical.
- Your grief will depend upon how you perceive the loss.
- You will grieve for many things both symbolic and tangible, not just the death alone.
- You will grieve for what you have lost already and for what you have lost for the future.
- Your grief will entail mourning not only for the actual person lost but also for all the hopes, dreams, and unfulfilled expectations you held for and with that person, and for the needs that will go unmet because of the death.
- Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions, not solely those that are generally thought of as grief such as depression and sadness. The loss will resurrect old issues, feelings, and unresolved conflicts from the past.
- You will have some identity confusion as a result of this major loss and the fact that you are experiencing reactions that may be quite different for you.
- You may have a combination of anger and depression, such as irritability, frustration, annoyance, or intolerance.

*Continued on page 4*

## Our Children Remembered April Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

	Birth	Anniv.
<b>Patricia Arey</b> - Daughter of Elizabeth & the late William Arey; Sister of Elizabeth Ann, Barbara, Rose Marie & Elaine	Apr 18	May 8
<b>Jessup Cadden-James</b> - Son of Colleen Cadden	Dec 8	Apr 23
<b>Holly Cavanaugh</b> - Daughter of Bill Cavanaugh; Sister of Bo Cavanaugh	Apr 27	Sep 25
<b>Edward Gaydos, III</b> - Son of Edward and Sally Gaydos; Brother of Blasia Gaydos	Apr 23	Apr 8
<b>David Hoagland, Jr</b> - Son of Gypsy Garrett	Sep 24	Apr 26
<b>Richard "Rich" Hollabaugh</b> - Son of Linda Hollabaugh & the late Wayne Hollabaugh	Dec 20	Apr 10
<b>James "Jimmy" Hotz</b> - Son of Elizabeth & The Late James Hotz	Apr 24	Jul 4
<b>Zaine Krluc</b> - Son of Ramiz and Merima Krluc	Apr 10	Jun 12
<b>Robert Rute</b> - Son of Linda Cavanaugh	Jul 9	Apr 4
<b>Nicholas Savacool</b> - Son of Howard & Laura Savacool; Brother of Brandon, Candace & Lacie	Feb 27	Apr 1
<b>Talia Shumway</b> - Daughter of Don and Amy Shumway	Jun 5	Apr 3
<b>Sean Virmalo</b> - Son of Udo and Janet L. Virmalo; Brother of Eric, Brett & Katelyn Virmalo	Sep 13	Apr 28



### Thank You for your "Love Gifts"



From:	Loved One
♥Liz & Jim Hotz	<b>Jimmy Hotz</b> <i>Love Mom, Dad &amp; Keith</i>
♥Merima Krluc	<b>Zaine R. Krluc</b> <i>Happy 4th Birthday my love. Missing you always. Love, Mom</i>
♥Elizabeth Arey	<b>Patricia Arey</b> <i>Pattie, Nineteen years without you. Hard to believe you would be 60 this month. Forever in my heart, Mother</i>

**What are Love Gifts?**  
*Love Gifts* are heartfelt expressions of love given in memory of our precious children, family members, and friends. With no dues or fees our chapter sustains its mission through the generosity of Love Gift donations. Gifts can be made in any amount and are tax deductible. Please use the form on the last page of this newsletter and mail or bring to the meeting.

*Many thanks to the following for their ongoing contributions to the chapter*

- |                                                                             |                                                                  |                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bethany Wesleyan Church, Cherryville</i><br><i>For our meeting space</i> | <i>The Matt Kush Foundation</i><br><i>In Memory of Matt Kush</i> | <i>United Way</i><br><i>Payroll Contributors</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|

*Continued from page 2*

- You will feel some anger and guilt, or at least some manifestation of these emotions.
- You may have a lack of self-concern.
- You will have trouble thinking (memory, organization and intellectual processes) and making decisions.
- You may feel like you are going crazy.
- You may be obsessed with the death and preoccupied with the deceased.
- You may experience grief spasms, acute upsurges of grief that occur suddenly with no warning.
- You may begin a search for meaning and may question your religious and / or philosophy of life.
- You may find yourself acting socially in ways that are different from before.
- You may find yourself having a number of physical reactions.
- Society will have unrealistic expectations about your mourning and may respond inappropriately to you.
- You may find that there are certain dates, events, and stimuli that bring upsurges in grief.
- Certain experiences later in life may resurrect intense grief for you temporarily.

In summary, your grief will bring with it, depending upon the combination of factors above, an intense amount of emotion that will surprise you and those around you. Most of us are unprepared for the global response we have to a major loss. Our expectations tend to be too unrealistic, and more often than not we receive insufficient assistance from friends and society. Your grief will not only be more intense than you expect but it will also be manifested in more areas and ways than you ever anticipated. You can expect to see brief upsurges of it at anniversary and holiday times, and in response to certain stimuli that remind you of what you have lost. Your grief will be very idiosyncratic and dependent upon the meaning of your loss, your own personal characteristics, the type of death, your social support, and your physical state.

*From "How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies" by Therese A. Rando*



## *Crocus*

*In the front garden  
Close by the door,  
Bloom golden crocuses.  
They've been there before.*

*When you were quite little  
So young and so small  
We planted some dozens  
One day in the fall.*

*They slept o'er the winter  
There under the snow,  
Then in the springtime  
Bloomed with a glow.*

*You learned about flowers,  
How they sleep and they grow.  
You loved so to find them  
Peeking out from the snow.*

*You had such a wonder!  
You loved life so much!  
Do these early blossoms  
Remember your touch?*

*They'll bloom there again,  
year after year.  
A small drop of sunshine,  
A small golden tear.*

*Joan Schmidt TCF Holmdel, NJ*

## Spring is Coming

If you are newly bereaved and looking toward your “first” spring, you may be surprised by some of the feelings you may experience during the next few weeks. We hear so much about the beauty of spring - the new life and the feelings of renewal that are supposed to accompany this lovely time of year. During my “first” year, I expected that spring would cheer me up, and make me feel lots better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days as life seems to burst forth everywhere, I was “in the pits.” When a friend said to me, “Doesn’t a day like this really lift your spirits and make you feel better?” I had to reply honestly that I was having a really bad day – that the sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed. The coming of spring cannot make everything okay again. What it can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature’s process will continue, and that can offer us hope.

I am looking forward to spring this year. I welcome the sun’s warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the south, and forsythia, the daffodils and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don’t expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

*Evelyn Billings, TCF Springfield, MA*

## Spring

I'm afraid of the spring.  
I'm afraid, you might say,  
Of other children's voices  
As they come out to play.

Shall I shut all the windows  
So I don't hear a thing?  
Shall I shut my eyes  
So I can't see spring?

I'm afraid of the feelings  
Deep down in my heart;  
With all the pain and the hurt  
I may fall apart.

Shall I let winter live  
The whole year through?  
And feel safer inside  
And a lot colder too?

*Penny Lenehan  
TCF Brookside, NJ*




---

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*

*"Like a bird singing in the rain,  
let grateful memories survive in time of sorrow."*

*Robert Louis Stevenson*



## Get On With Your Life

"Get on with your life,"  
I hear people say,  
And those who don't say it  
are thinking that way.  
"It's been quite a while -  
so I just do not see  
The possible gain  
if you grieve constantly."

"Then take all the things  
That your child held so dear.  
If they give sadness,  
then why keep them near  
To store with the mass cards  
and last lock of hair,"  
And perhaps, like our child,  
we'll forget they're not there.

So they think our sorrow  
should end with the days  
Of empty fruit baskets  
and old cold-cut trays,  
And all of the pain  
we felt with friends near  
Should wilt now like flowers  
they left at his bier.

Now what do you do  
to get on with your life?  
You can't bury pain  
that still cuts like a knife.  
So I guess we're supposed to  
"get on" for the crowd,  
Where everyone's sign reads  
"no sadness allowed."

So get on we do,  
and we put on a face  
That 'mid worlds of laughter  
seems not out of place.  
Now all of the folks  
that we see every day  
No longer need reasons  
for looking away.

Then one day they'll ask,  
"Why are you so glum?"  
"You're down in the dumps -  
what can it be from?"  
"You've been doing so well for so long,  
so it seems,"  
And the seething volcano  
inside of me screams.

*Ken Falk  
TCF Northwest Chapter, CT*

## Loneliness and How To Overcome It

Why are there times when a bereaved parent feels lonely, even though surrounded by loving people and people the bereaved parent loves? Loneliness is the outgrowth of separation from one who has given meaning to life. Yes, other relationships offer meaning, but it is normal for the searing pain from the loss of one's child to supersede the pleasure from other experiences. Part of yourself had been invested in another person. When that person has died, in a sense, you are lonely for a part of yourself that has been destroyed.

At times you look around you and think that no one else is experiencing the pain you are feeling; that no one else's world has been shattered. This self-centeredness is a natural part of the grief process. Do not deny it, but **DO NOT HOLD ON TO IT AS A WAY OF LIFE**. Give yourself permission to accept help from others and then to reach out and help others. Although your child is not here to give continuity to your life, by having lived and having given purpose to your life, your child can be the bridge of your continuity with life as a thinking, loving and active person.

*Ruth Eiseman  
TCF Louisville, KY*

# Sibling Page

## He Lives In Me

I shall see him  
 in the beauties of the earth,  
 in the loveliness of summer sunsets,  
 and the loneliness of winter winds.  
 In the delicate new life  
 of springtime trees,  
 in the blazing glory  
 of Fall's bright leaves.  
 I shall see him  
 in the face of youth  
 seeking, straining, for love and truth.  
 And in the peaceful face of age,  
 completing the journey of our days.  
 I shall see him  
 in the ocean's mighty power.  
 I shall see him  
 in the wonder of the stars.  
 I shall see him  
 in the face of happiness and care.  
 I shall see him everywhere.  
 ~ E. Rita Asher, TCF Cape Cod, MA  
 Written at dawn the day following my brother's death

## (This is a Sibling Story) It's a Family Affair

When a child dies, grief is a family affair. It hits mom, dad, and siblings with equal despair. Mom cries and cannot get out of bed. Dad holds in emotions and leaves much unsaid. Sister and brother simply cannot understand why death came and dealt this kind of hand. No one acts as they should and nothing is the same. The family wants to draw together but seems to only share pain. Someone must be responsible when a child dies. Each family member thinks in some way it's them, and cries.

But no one is responsible for things we cannot control. So reach out to each other and keep the family whole.

Don't let the differences in how each grieve change the love in your family or its belief. Be strong when you can and weak when you must,

and love each other with kindness and trust. So treat the family with love and you will survive. For we who have been there and made it through together can say that holding on to each other makes love last forever.

~Jackie Roxen, TCF, Broward, FL

## Grief Is Lonely

Grief is lonely. When my sister died two years ago, everyone knew about it and talked about it. Everyone was in shock, , .

But now, two years later, the anniversary of her death came and went without even a card in the mail. No one remembered the day. No one called to say "I am thinking of you." No one asked "How are you feeling?"

My family has stayed in close contact and we talk about Susan all the time. But when it comes to grieving over Susan, everyone grieves alone. No one knows how I feel about my little sister and how it hurts me so deeply to know she's not here.

Everything else in life can be shared with someone else but not grieving. No one can fully understand the pain because everyone's pain is different. When the pain is greatest, the loneliness is the greatest too. I never thought I could feel this much pain and still survive. I am alone in my grief. There is no one else here with me.

Susan was born when I was 11. She committed suicide when she was 16. The baby of the family, the youngest of four kids, our hearts are broken forever.

~ Cherie Bagadiong  
 TCF St. Mary's County, MD

### Note:

*Siblings (age 16+) are welcome to attend our compassionate friends meetings.*

*Also The Compassionate Friends hosts a moderated chatroom and a facebook page just for bereaved siblings. To join go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on the "Find Support" tab.*



# The Compassionate Friends Credo Copyright © 2007

**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.*

## 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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on find and then choose online communities.

## Other Local TCF Chapters & Support Groups

**TCF Quakertown** - 267-379-0429

**TCF Easton** - 610-577-5193

**TCF Pocono** - 570-350-6695

**GRASP** - 484-788-9440

(grief recovery after substance passing)

## Love Gift Form

*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 1st



Mail this form to:

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, LEHIGH VALLEY  
 C/O KATHLEEN COLLINS  
 2971 PHEASANT DR.  
 NORTHAMPTON, PA 18067

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

---

**Address**

---

**Phone**

---

**Email Address**

---

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 are published in the next edition.*

**Special Text** - *Brief message & signature (Examples Messages - Happy Birthday; Loved & missed forever, Always in my heart Signatures - Love Mom, Dad etc. )*

I would like my love gift to go toward: ( you may choose more than one)

- Newsletter**
 **Postage**
 **Office Expenses**
 **Special Events**