



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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TCF Online Support Community

www.compassionatefriends.org
To participate, click on "Online Support" under the resource 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. There are no religious affiliations and no dues.

The mission of TCF is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

About Our Meetings...

Meetings are held monthly on the 2nd Monday 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.

We maintain an extensive free library of grief-related materials that is set up at meetings. Donations are always welcome.

Meeting and Events Calendar

- Aug. 12 Monthly Meeting: General Sharing
- Sept. 9 Monthly Meeting: Guest Speaker - Rev. Anne Huey
- Oct. 14 Monthly Meeting: General Sharing

Other Local TCF Chapters Meetings

Carbon County
1st Wednesday 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn.
501 Delaware Ave. Palmerton
610-826-2938
Email: pannbiss@aol.com

Easton
2nd Thursday 7 - 9 pm
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,
2115 Washington Blvd., Easton
610-866-5468
Email: szabojanosl@verizon.net

Quakertown
2nd Tuesday 7:30 - 9 pm
St. Lukes Quakertown Hospital
1021 Park Ave, Quakertown
215-536-0173
Email: tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net

Local Children's Support Groups

Ryan's Tree for Grieving Children (ages 5-18)

Sessions are offered at various times throughout the year.
For information or to register contact Krista Malone @ 610-997-7120 or visit www.slnh.org/ryanstree

Children's General Bereavement Group (ages 5 - 13)

Jeanette Laube, MA facilitates a children's bereavement group on a as needed basis. Preregistration required. Meeting day, time & place coincide with TCF, LV meetings. To preregister or get further information contact Jeanette @ 610-762-5782

TCF Telephone Friends

There are times that you need to connect with someone between meetings ...for those times the following bereaved parents are available to listen, care and share

- | | |
|--|---|
| Infant..... Cathy McDonald... 610 391-1474 | Suicide..... John & Maria Szabo..... 610 866-5468 |
| Multiple Children/
General Loss..... Betty Thompson... 610 868-0303 | Addiction..... Nancy Howe..... 484-863-4324 |
| Only Child..... Shelly Garst..... 484 241-5396 | Homicide..... Ginger Renner..... 610-967-5113 |

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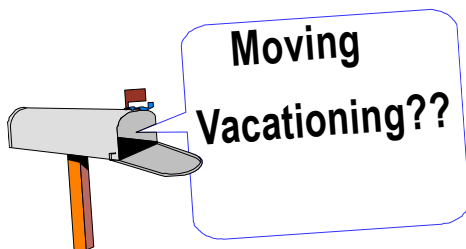
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Newsletter Submissions

Submit articles and poetry to the editor by the first of the proceeding month. Include the author's name & your contact information.

Mail to: **The Compassionate Friends**
Attn: Newsletter Editor
PO Box 149
Bath, PA 18014

Email to: TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com



The Post Office does not forward or hold bulk mail, it is returned to us at our expense and we will remove you from the mailing list. If you are moving or having your mail held please remember to inform the Newsletter Editor
Thank You

Events and Announcements

September Meeting

Guest Speaker - Rev. Anne Huey, MDiv, MSHS, BCC

Rev. Huey will be addressing the group at our September Meeting. Rev. Huey is currently supervises the Spiritual and Bereavement Care Programs at St. Lukes hospice. She has over 20 years experience working with hospice care and over 30 years in the ministry. She has spoken with our group several times over the years and her intelligent and insightful visits are always well received.

Even if you are unable to attend any other meetings this year we encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to hear Rev. Huey speak.

Mark your calendar for September 9th

TCF Children's Memorial Garden

Please look for an update on the garden in the next newsletter. For information, to purchase an brick engraved with your child's name or if you or someone you know would like to sponsor a garden feature please call the project coordinator, John Szabo at 610-866-5468

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

Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

Special Days can be especially difficult times. Please keep the families of the following children in your heart this month

Birthdays

Kimberly Caton	Daughter of Thomas & Sydney Caton	Aug 30
Carol Chanitz	Daughter of John & Ruth Chanitz	Aug 25
Jessica Coe	Daughter of Randy & Diane Coe; Sister of Allison Coe	Aug 13
Kenneth Cosentino	Son of Judy Cosentino; Brother of Noreen Cosentino	Aug 11
Jacob Cruz	Son of Amanda Sanchez	Aug 15
Hope Davidson	Daughter of Dean & Donna Davidson	Aug 8
Kimberly Dickinson	Daughter of Debbi A Dickinson, CPBC	Aug 25
Brenda Fehr Hatrak	Daughter of David & Eileen Fehr, Sr; Sister of Barbara Burgin & David Fehr, Jr; Granddaughter of Warren & Rose Fehr & Elwood & Mary Mann; Wife of Matthew Hatrak	Aug 31
Kevin Fetherman	Son of Jean Fetherman & the Late John J. Fetherman	Aug 26
Edwin Frantz	Son of Pamela Green; Brother of Amy & Troy	Aug 11
Jason Frey	Son of Susan Center & Son of Lee Frey, Brother of Jared & Janel Frey	Aug 11
Dean George, Sr	Son of Delphin & Sylvia George; Father of Dean A. George, Jr & Lisa George	Aug 28
Eric Graver	Son of Mary L Graver	Aug 17
Mary Greaser	Daughter of Lucian & Brenda Strybuc	Aug 9
Jonathan Hawk	Son of Bruce & Mary Hawk; Brother of Bruce Hawk & the late Lisa Hawk; Father of Madisynn; Uncle of Shaine & Sloan Hawk; Husband of Ashley Hawk	Aug 26
Alisha Heilman	Daughter of Joseph & Patricia Heilman	Aug 28
Allan Itterly	Son of Richard & Jeanette Itterly; Brother of Albert & James	Aug 14
Kristin Kuser	Daughter of Tim & Elizabeth Kuser	Aug 9
Matt Kush	Son of Rick & Ann Kush; Brother of Mike & Jenn	Aug 24
Joseph Lestishock	Son of Marjorie Lestishock	Aug 30
Kristen Lyn Lisicky-Tyber	Daughter of James J. & Annette Lisicky; Sister of James M. Lisicky	Aug 22
Katherine McGraw	Daughter of John & Sue McGraw; Sister of Maggy & Sean McGraw	Aug 15
Jim Minter	Son of Jim & Barbara Minter; Brother of Jeanine Minter	Aug 15
Michael "Mike" Morgan	Son of Raymond & Deborah Vrtis	Aug 17
Wayne Petzold	Son of David & Joan Petzold, Sr.; Brother of Amy, Dave & Father of Katie Petzold; Husband of Joan Kay	Aug 20
Ryan Ritzer	Son of Sandy Sherrer; Brother of Richard Ritzer, Jr	Aug 19
Jason Rute	Son of Bill and Linda Cavanaugh	Aug 25
Lauren Schneck	Daughter of James and Lisa Schneck	Aug 10
Tara Stauffer	Daughter of Kermit T. and Faye Nester	Aug 21
Michael Szabo	Son of John and Maria Szabo, Jr	Aug 2
Benjamin Thomas	Son of Kathy Thomas; Brother of James Thomas	Aug 26
Jared Thomas	Son of Sandra B. Schueck	Aug 31
David Uecker	Son of Susan Uecker-Bittner & The Late Phillip C. Uecker; Brother of Amanda Uecker-Miernicki	Aug 2
Adam Wolk	Son of Michael and Sheila Wolk; Brother of Laura & Sarah Wolk;	Aug 1
Craig Yurick	Son of Robert and Sharon Yurick; Brother of Todd Yurick	Aug 5

Anniversaries

Joshua Bartosic	Son of Traci Jennings; Brother of Aaron Bartosic & the late Natasha Marie Bartosic	Aug 13
Aaron Bissell	Son of Bob & Patti Bissell; Brother of Danielle Bissell; Nephew of Orval & Lorraine Parkhurst	Aug 19
Carol Chanitz	Daughter of John & Ruth Chanitz	Aug 25
Joseph Chanitz	Son of John & Ruth Chanitz	Aug 28
Felicia Cook	Daughter of Herbert & Helen Cook	Aug 2
Jacob Cruz	Son of Amanda Sanchez	Aug 15
Nathaniel Davis	Son of Ronald & Elizabeth Davis	Aug 21
Kimberly Dickinson	Daughter of Debbi A Dickinson, CPBC	Aug 25
John Evans	Son of Ann Evans; Brother of Tom Sampson & Patti Stout	Aug 16
Donald Freudenberger	Son of Nola Freudenberger	Aug 29
Doug Gable	Son of Ronald & Shirley Gable; Brother of Sharon Hornyak	Aug 1
Kelly Gallagher	Daughter of Tom & Sherry Gallagher	Aug 22
Mark Gery	Son of William & Catherine Gery; Brother of Kristin	Aug 3
Jeanne Hurley	Daughter of Stephen & Jeannette Viglione; Sister of Robert Wambold, Jr & Michele Yankowy, Mother of Cole J. Hurley	Aug 13
Noah Krynock	Son of Heidi Hricisin; Brother of Seth & Sierra Krynock	Aug 13
Mitchell Lloyd	Son of Sandra Lloyd; Brother of Randy, Fran & Douglas Lloyd	Aug 15
Alexander Madden	Son of Judith Madden; Brother of Thomas Maher & Jennifer Cenci	Aug 20
Michael Mann	Son of Lee & Shirley Lutz	Aug 12
Michael McDonald	Son of Fran McDonald	Aug 7
Glenn Miller, Jr.	Son of Lin Miller; Brother of Lorrie Woolever	Aug 4
Jeffrey Pettis	Son of John & Gloria Zucal; Brother of Sherry White	Aug 24
Lauren Pignoli	Daughter of Cheryl Donovan; Mother of David	Aug 26
Michael Potkovac, III	Son of Michael & Annette Potkovac, Jr.; Brother of Michele Cuvo, Denise, Matthew, Mark, John Potkovac, & the late Donna Marie Potkovac - Roth	Aug 29
Aaron Schaible	Son of Linda Stewart; Brother of The late Jennifer Schaible	Aug 28
Darryl Shurow	Son of Lew & Sharon Richards	Aug 18
Jonelle Sisonick	Daughter of Rella Sisonick Daniels; Sister of Anthony & Nicholas Sisonick	Aug 3
Kyle Strohl	Son of Ron and Gail Strohl; Brother of Jennifer Grimes	Aug 27
Michael Szabo	Son of John and Maria Szabo, Jr	Aug 17
Jonathan Venkauskas	Son of Dan and Jane Venkauskas; Brother of Becky Venkauskas; Grandson of Daniel and Betty Venkauskas;	Aug 11
Christina Williamson	Daughter of Chris and Kim Williamson; Sister of the late Christopher Jayden Williamson	Aug 6

All that we love deeply becomes a part of us

Helen Keller

Love Gifts

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Our largest monthly expense is the printing and mailing of newsletters to our 400 readers. Your tax deductible Love Gift donations enables the chapter to continue our mission of reaching out to the newly bereaved and providing ongoing support to all our members. Love Gifts are most often given in memory of a child who has died. They may also be given in memory of or in honor of a friend, relative or special person. To make a love gift donation please use form on page 11

We thank the following for their generous donations this month

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ♥ Lee & Shirley Lutz | Michael Douglas Mann
<i>21st Anniversary of going home to our Lord. Love and miss you still</i> |
| ♥ Thomas & Sydney Caton | Kimberly Jo Caton
<i>Missing another birthday without you. Love and miss you</i> |
| ♥ Ron and Shirley Gable | Doug Gable
<i>Much missed son & brother. Ron & Shirley Gable, Sharon Hornyak</i> |
| ♥ Stephen & Jeannette Viglione | Jeanne C. Hurley
<i>Daughter of Stephen & Jeannette Viglione; Mother of Cole Hurley; Sister of Michele Yankow & Robert Wambold, Jr. August 13</i> |
| ♥ Robert & Sharon Yurick | Craig M. Yurick
<i>Happy 44th Birthday to our precious son and brother. Love forever, Mom, Dad & Todd</i> |
| ♥ William & Catherine Gery | Mark P. Gery
<i>In Loving Memory</i> |

Donations and Contributions

TCF Lehigh Valley Contributors

- ★ *Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown for meeting room and drinks*
- ★ *Mary Ann Donuts, Allentown for meeting snacks*
- ★ *Giant Food Store Employees, Village West, Allentown For United Way Contributions*

- ★ *Aetna Payroll Contributors*

- ★ *United Way Payroll Contributors*

TCF Carbon County Contributors

- ★ *Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn. for meeting room*
- ★ *The Country Harvest, Palmerton for meeting snacks*

You will never leave our hearts, although you are gone and we know not where.

You will never leave our hearts, for we will always care.

Our memories are treasures, so rich and well preserved,

Inscribed deep inside of us, in each and every nerve.

It's been five long years since you were taken against your will and ours.

We brave the bitter grief and wipe the many tears

But deep inside of us you will never leave our hearts.

For God's gift to us was truly a precious work of art.

Michael Toth, TCF, Miami, FL

Summer Thoughts

By Libby Gonzalez, TCF Huntsville, AL

Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, "It's not fair!" I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing, and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be.

In my reverie, I was reminded of a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter." I also remembered a good friend telling me to "count my blessings" and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing that I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I was determined that this summer would not be an eternity; I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like working in my garden, and flowers. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course, I still have times of sadness. I know I always will, but I have decided that in the process of grieving, we close so many doors that the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before

the death of my child but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel this way, and I know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this summer as he would have done.

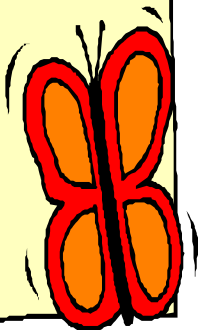


TIPS FOR SURVIVAL

Lovingly lifted
from TCF Delaware County Newsletter

We need to remember that there is a light at the end of the tunnel; things will get better or become bearable. Consider these tips:

- ✈ Get through each week, one day at a time. Each day, one hour at a time.
- ✈ Get busy with activities that take up some of your thinking time.
- ✈ Develop new interests, skill, goals. Meet new people; bereaved parents.
- ✈ Active sports get you out of the house and help to buoy your spirits.
- ✈ Reach out to others in distress and you will help yourself.
- ✈ Share your grief. Allow others to grieve with you. Be open with friends who want to know how you are feeling and what they can do to support you.
- ✈ Search out something to be thankful or appreciative for each day.
- ✈ Keep a sense of humor.
- ✈ Show emotion. If you feel it, show it.
- ✈ Get involved with a church, temple, or organization (The Compassionate Friends would fill the bill nicely as a strong support for you during the terrible months of early grief).



Waiting for Answers

By Mary Clark, TCF, Sugar Land-SW Houston, TX Chapter

Years ago I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul.

But when I walked out into the spring, air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory? During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared were true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed.

My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said, "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.



62 years I have been searching for my missing piece.

At 21 they told me it was for the best

I tried so hard to believe

At 21 I cried and they told me I should pull myself together

I tried so hard to believe, I tried so hard to stop

At 21 they told me there would be other children

I tried so hard to see it their way

At 21, alone I went on as if nothing had happened

At 26 there were more children

They said, "See, everything is wonderful"

I said yes, and it was, but my piece was still missing

Secretly, I thought I must be a bad mother

I should be happier

And so life went

A creeping sadness I couldn't shake

62 years I waited for someone to ask and say, "how hard for you"

Someone said it and the missing piece has been found, reborn My baby, my child, my dreams

You were my first step into believing in the future

You, my child, my missing piece

So many years I was isolated from you and myself

Now my pain is clean

I still don't know WHY but I know I have a right to grieve

And remember

And acknowledge

What you mean and meant to me

Strange, now at 83 I truly feel like I can go on

written by an 83 year old mother in treatment for a complicated grief reaction 62 years after the death of her baby. From TCF National Newsletter

The Loss Of a Baby

Mary Cleckly, Unknown TCF Chapter

In the years I have worked with TCF, I have come to know there is a special spot in my heart for those parents whose babies were lost during the pregnancy, at birth or shortly afterward. I guess it's because I know it is a much misunderstood loss and grief.

Having had the experience of seeing my daughter and her husband suffer the loss of their first and fourth pregnancies, that spot in my heart has grown larger. I know too well the pain they would have experienced had their second and third children not survived. But, in no way does their survival lessen the importance of the loss of the other two.

As I sat holding my first granddaughter shortly after she was born, I was surprised to realize there was sadness mingled with my joy. All of those many young voices echoed in my head as I heard them try to impress upon me just how special the baby who died really was. Their words made me know this was a large part of the commitment to their marriage. They told me of the pain they experienced when people, sometimes family, tried to discount this loss by advising another pregnancy - and soon. It was as though this child wasn't important. It was sometimes suggested they were lucky they didn't get to know the baby! These bystanders failed to understand that the parents knew and loved this child as long as the mother carried him.

It will be somewhat easier for those who grieve quietly for a baby who died, when society recognizes the grief involved. We can't ease their pain entirely, but we can help by letting them know we understand the loss wasn't an easy one. But, then, none of them are, are they?

A Baby Castle

In a baby castle just beyond my eye,

My baby plays with angel toys that money cannot buy. Who am I to wish him back into this world of strife? No, play on, my baby, you have eternal life.

At night, when all is silent, and sleep forsakes my eyes, I'll hear his tiny footsteps come running to my side; His little hands caress me, so tenderly and sweet,

I'll breathe a prayer and close my eyes and embrace him in my sleep.

Now I have a treasure that I rate about all other: I have known the glory, I am still his mother.

~from the book *Helping Each Other Through The Seasons Of Grief*

I'll Never Know

By LisaMarie Emerle from
www.geocities.com/Babiesinheaven/poems

How do I say goodbye ...
 when I didn't get to say hello?
 I want so bad to keep you ...
 how do I let you go?

I have so many dreams,
 so much love want to share
 There's nothing I can do ...
 why is life unfair?

You're my perfect angel...
 I dreamed you long ago
 I never got to hold you but
 it breaks my heart to let you go

God will rock you in your cradle
 and watch you as you sleep
 I will love you in my heart ...
 it's all I get to keep

you are blessed my child ...
 you're in heaven up above
 You'll never be alone. ...
 you have Mommy & Daddy's love

Hush my little baby...you need not ever cry
 You were always wanted! I wish you didn't die
 You'll be my sunshine in the day and brightest star at night
 Reach for God's hand and go to the light

I would rather endure the pain
 of losing you right now
 Then the thought of you suffering thru life...
 we'll get thru somehow

I was blessed to have you briefly...even
 though I have to let you go
 I wish I knew the reason but
 I guess I'll never know



"You Should Be Over it " ...But What Is "IT"? author unknown

"It's been a year, you should be over it." What exactly is "IT"? Do people who have never suffered loss really know what "IT" is? To us, the bereaved...

"IT" is five days after the funeral, and your world caves in with the reality of the loss.

"IT" is Thanksgiving Day, trying to find something to be thankful for.

"IT" is Christmas without the "merry," and New Year's without the "happy".

"IT" is your first day back to work when every minute you are afraid you will burst into tears.

"IT" is their birthday, but there is no them to celebrate.

"IT" is Valentine's Day, only this time no hearts and flowers to share with them, and your heart is broken.

"IT" is your birthday, and there is still no them to celebrate it with.

"IT" is springtime when everything comes alive except you, that is.

"IT" is Easter and everyone is singing "Let Us Rejoice & Be Glad" but there is no rejoicing and no glad in your heart.

"IT" is Mother's Day and you sadly remember how happy being a mother made you feel.

"IT" is Father's Day and you sadly remember how happy being a Father made you feel.

"IT" is the 4th of July and the celebrations remind you just how little you feel you have to celebrate now.

"IT" is vacation time and you just stay home, because there is nowhere to go to not feel so empty.

"IT" is Halloween and you pass out candy, but memories of all of past happy times together make you sad.

"IT" is seeing milestones in your life progress and pass and your loved one is gone, never to share them with.

"IT" is looking at the moon and wondering if they see the same moon like the two of you always did in the past.

"IT" is receiving the first wedding invitation to their friend's wedding and knowing that life goes on.

"IT" is going back into that church for the first time and remembering and feeling that all eyes are on you.

"IT" is going to another funeral for the first time and feeling yourself shaking all over, too distraught to stay, but unable to leave.

"IT" is doing all the things you always did, plus all the things you had hoped to do together, and doing it all when all of your energy has been used for grieving.

"IT" is being strong when you really feel weak.

"IT" is dealing with all the legality of estates and such when all you want to do is hibernate.

"IT" is a whole big bunch of stuff you didn't ask for, didn't want and can't even give away.

"IT" is going to the cemetery and seeing the monument with their name, and it hits you hard that THIS IS REAL!

"IT" is feeling like a traitor when you get rid of their personal belongings.

"IT" is approaching the first anniversary of their death and reliving it all. And some things might be better, but the void is no less.

"IT" is people forgetting, and you cry, and people remembering, and you cry.

"IT" is a future of unknowns and uncertainties and emptiness.

"IT" is in the first glimpse of sunrise and in your last waking breath, and even in your sleep and dreams ...

So maybe when someone tells you that you should be over "IT" by now, you should just tell them what "IT" really is!

Sibling Page

COURAGE

By Patricia Kelley, TCF, Richmond, VA In loving memory of her brother Sean

My brother died three years ago, when he was seventeen years old. It was an accident. When he fell while hiking in the mountains, I was fifteen and my brother was my hero. I would do anything to make him proud. When I lost him, I could have just given up. I have the courage to love people even though I know that could lose them. I had many opportunities to just forget everyone else and lose myself. My brother was my best friend and when he died I could have too.

I decided that he would not have wanted me to throw my life away. I try my hardest to work hard in school and to live up to what his expectations would have been. I am not living just for him. I am living for myself. A lot of people try to escape their problems by drinking or doing drugs. Alcohol and drugs only make problems worse because escaping a problem is not solving the problem. Self-respect means knowing who you are and treating yourself with dignity. I want people to look at me and to respect me. Staying in school and working to my potential is essential for respect. People cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. As Shakespeare said, "This above all else, to thine own self be true."

I do not like choices based on what the popular decision is. I base my thoughts and ideas on what believe is right and important. I know that my brother would have been proud of me because I made it through the most difficult time in my life, without him. I kept living when I lost the most important person in the world to me. Courage is to keep fighting even though it looks like you are going to lose. When he died, I felt the world crash down on me. Everything I had hoped for just seemed empty. Even now sometimes it will just hit me that my brother is gone.

I have to keep on living and facing the world because that is what life is all about. Sometimes things happen that seem impossible to face. If I do

not face my problems, who will?

Life is not supposed to be easy but it is not devastating either. There are so many wonderful things that happen and I have to have to have the courage to realize it. Life is not just a long line of problems. It is also a long list of answers. I need courage and self-respect to find these answers. I have to trust myself and my future that everything will work out. It always does. The answers to life's problems can only be found through hard work and belief in yourself. My belief in myself comes from a big brother who always had faith in me.

BROTHER

Crystal Rodgers, TCF Lehigh Valley
In memory of her brother Brian

Missing you is constant,
I'm sick of it
but I always will.

Its painful to see your pictures
or your stuff,
I'm sick of it
but I always will.

Thinking of the nevers,
I'm sick of it
but I always will.

Wishing I would have said I love you more,
I'm sick of it
but I always will.

Tears that run like a faucet,
I'm sick of it
but I always will.

Hoping its you knocking on my front door,
I'm sick of it
but I always will.
always and never,
I'm sick of it

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.*

MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 1ST OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO THE MONTH YOU WISH YOUR GIFT PUBLISHED

Contributor Name _____

Mail to:

Address _____

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 149
BATH, PA 18014**

Phone _____

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 Month _____ desired publication month. Deadline by the 1st of the prior month

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 donation of \$ _____ Lehigh Valley Carbon County Easton

Note: Please mail Carbon County & Easton gifts to the addresses below

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

Mailing Addresses for Carbon County and Easton Chapters

The Compassionate Friends, Carbon County
C/O Patti Bissell
365 Drift Rd
Palmerton, Pa 18071

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

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) newsletter section.

Mail this update form to: Kathleen Collins, 2971 Pheasant Dr., Northampton, PA 18067 **or email updates to:** TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

The following is Change or Update of information Change of Address or Phone Number Permission (check this box to grant OCR publication permission)

Your Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Mailing Address (where your newsletter is to be sent to) _____

Child's Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Date of Death _____

Parent's Names _____

Child's Sibling's Names _____

If this is a information change ... please indicate what changes need to be made (i.e. name change, correction, sibling name addition etc...)

TCF CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source for strength; while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in a deep depression; while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends

TCF SIBLING CREDO

**We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.
We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.**

Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.

Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.

At other times we need our families to be there.

Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be.

We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.

We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.

Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.