



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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www.compassionatefriends.org
click on "Online Support" under the "Find Support" tab

Who We Are

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national nonprofit self-help organization that offers friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings.

About Our Meetings...

Meetings are held 2nd Monday each month from 7 to 9 pm at Sacred Heart Hospital (2nd Flr. Conference Center), 4th & Chew Sts, Allentown. Free parking deck passes are available at the meeting.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and mature siblings. Younger siblings may benefit from one of the children's bereavement groups listed below. Meetings vary, from sharing, to guest speakers, to special presentations. Separate sharing sessions are offered to new members. Participation in group sharing is confidential and voluntary. Our hope is that being among other bereaved parents you may feel free to talk, cry and share, but it is okay to just come and listen too.

Meeting and Events Calendar

August 11 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

September 8 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

October 13 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

Meeting Cancellations

All cancellations will be posted on our [facebook page - facebook.com/TCFLehighValley](https://www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley), on our [website homepage & calendar - www.lehighvalleytcf.org](http://www.lehighvalleytcf.org) and on [voicemail 484-891-0823](mailto:484-891-0823). Please refer to these sources for updates on the meetings

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: szabojanos1@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) - www.slhn.org/ryanstree

Sessions are offered at various times throughout the year. Call Krista Malone @ 610-997-7120 for information or register

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. Call 610-762-5783 to register or for more information

TCF Telephone Friends

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

Infant Loss	Kim Szep.....	610-730-3111	Suicide.....	John & Maria Szabo.....	610 866-5468
Infant Loss	Cathy McDonald...	610 391-1474	Addiction.....	Nancy Howe.....	484-863-4324
Multiple Children/ General Loss.....	Betty Thompson...	610 868-0303	Homicide.....	Ginger Renner.....	610-967-5113
Only Child.....	Shelly Garst.....	484 241-5396			

Inside this issue:	
Chapter News	2
Poem - Alike	3
Our Children Remembered Birthdays	4
Our Children Remembered Anniversaries	5
Love Gifts & Donations	6
Article - A Newly Bereaved Parent Speaks	7
Article - And now 10 years after	7
Article - Most people who suffer loss feel	7
Poems - To Touch You Face Again; Unwanted Companions; Gone From My Sight	8
Article - My Perspective On Coping with Suicide	9
Poem - Separated by Suicide	9
Sibling Page: - Articles - A year of Grief, Anniversary Reactions	10
Love Gift Donation Form	11
Credos	12

News, Events & Announcements

Please mark your calendar for these Upcoming Events

Basket Bingo - October 15

TCF Joint Chapter Candle Light Remembrance Service - December 8th

TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting - December 14th

Please see next months newsletter for more information about these events, and information on how to submit your child's photo for the remembrance Service slideshow.

New Local Bereavement Group

A new local chapter of GRASP (Grief Support After Substance Passing) has formed in the Lehigh Valley. Peer-led support group meetings are held on the third Monday each month, from 7-8:30 pm at the First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Crest & Tilghman Sts. Allentown. There is no fee to attend and all are welcome, but pre-registration is required.

To register or for more information, contact Nancy at 484-788-9440 or 484-863-4324 or by email: nancyhowe@ymail.com



We are on the Web



Visit our **web page** at www.lehighvalleytcf.org for support group information, meetings schedule, upcoming events and helpful links.

Like our facebook page: www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley for quotes, meeting & event reminders, and member forum.

Find us on **Pinterest** under the keyword **The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley Chapter**

About This Newsletter

This newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley Chapter with the hope that it will be a helpful resource for you on your grief journey.

If you 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 sent to TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014



Please Note: Our newsletters are mailed through Bulk Mail and the Post Office does not forward or hold bulk mail. It is returned to us at our expense.

If you are moving or having your mail held please remember to inform the Newsletter Editor (see information above). If your newsletter is returned to us and we are not notified your name will be removed from the mailing list.

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: TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014 or email to: [email: TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com](mailto:TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com)

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

New Members

We regret the cause that has brought you here. As fellow bereaved we offer care, compassion, comfort and a deep understanding of the pain you are experiencing. Attending there first meeting last month were:

Carbon County - Larry & Jeanne Cinicola whose beloved son Cody Matthew Cinicola died at 19 years of age

Lehigh Valley - Beverly Rivera whose beloved son Pablo Elliot Rivera, Jr died at 17 years of age

Alike

By Cathy Heider, TCF Algona IA

We're so alike, you and I.

I lost a daughter. You lost a son.

She was eight months. He was thirty-seven.

She never spoke. He called you every Sunday

She died nine years ago. He's been buried two months now.

I always look at babies. You see all the young fathers.

I miss my daughter. You miss your son.

You see, we're so alike, you and I.



When it seems that our sorrow is too great to be borne, let us think of the great family of the heavy-hearted into which our grief has given us entrance and inevitably, we will feel about us their arms and their understanding.

Helen Keller

Our Children Loved and Remembered Always

Birthday and Anniversary dates can be especially difficult.

Please keep the parents, grandparents and siblings of the following children in your thoughts and heart this month

Please Note: Due to privacy concerns Birthday and Anniversary listings are only published with permission for Parents/Guardians, Siblings and Grandparents. If your child, grandchild or siblings name does not appear or a correction is needed please complete and sign the Update Form on page 11 and mail to the address indicated. Thank You

August Birthdays

Walter Alfonso	Son of Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan & the late Walter Alfonso & Charles Kunsman, Jr	Aug 10
Kimberly Caton	Daughter of Thomas and Sydney Caton	Aug 30
Carol Chanitz	Daughter of John and Ruth Chanitz	Aug 25
Jessica Coe	Daughter of Randy and Diane Coe; Sister of Allison Coe	Aug 13
Kenneth Cosentino	Son of Judy Cosentino; Brother of Noreen Cosentino	Aug 11
Hope Davidson	Daughter of Dean and Donna Davidson	Aug 8
Juliana Eberharter	Daughter of Mary Green	Aug 13
Brenda Fehr Hatrak	Daughter of David & Eileen Fehr, Sr.; Sister of Barbara R. Burgin & David A. Fehr, Jr.; Granddaughter of Elwood & Mary Mann and Warren & Rose Fehr	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 and Lee Frey; Brother of Jared and Janel Frey	Aug 11
Dean George, Sr	Son of Delphin and Sylvia George	Aug 28
Eric Graver	Son of Mary L Graver	Aug 17
Mary Greaser	Daughter of Lucian and Brenda Strybuc	Aug 9
Jonathan Hawk	Son of Bruce and Mary Hawk; Brother of Bruce Hawk and the late Lisa Hawk	Aug 26
Alisha Heilman	Daughter of Joseph and Patricia Heilman; Sister of Tiffany, Rene', Stacie & Kristi	Aug 28
Allan Itterly	Son of Richard and Jeanette Itterly; Brother of Albert and James	Aug 14
Frank Kerr	Son of Catherine Milano	Aug 27
Kristin Kuser	Daughter of Tim and Elizabeth Kuser	Aug 9
Matt Kush	Son of Rick and Ann Kush; Brother of Mike and Jenn	Aug 24
Joseph Lestishock	Son of Marjorie Lestishock	Aug 30
Kristen Lyn Lisicky-Tyber	Daughter of James J. and Annette Lisicky; Sister of James M. Lisicky	Aug 22
Katherine McGraw	Daughter of John and Sue McGraw; Sister of Maggy and Sean McGraw	Aug 15
Jim Minter	Son of Jim and Barbara Minter; Brother of Jeanine Minter	Aug 15
Michael "Mike" Morgan	Son of Raymond and Deborah Vrtis	Aug 17
Wayne Petzold	Son of David and Joan Petzold, Sr.; Brother of Amy, Dave and Father of Katie Petzold	Aug 20
PJ Pfenning	Son of Maureen Pfenning	Aug 30
Ryan Ritzer	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

August Birthdays

Jared Thomas	Son of Sandra B. Schueck	Aug 31
Benjamin Thomas	Son of Kathy Thomas; Brother of James Thomas	Aug 26
David Uecker	Son of Susan Uecker-Bittner & The Late Phillip C. Uecker; Brother of Amanda Uecker-Miernicki	Aug 2
Quinn Wolfe	Daughter of Matt Wolfe	Aug 20
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

August Anniversaries

Joshua Bartosic	Son of Traci Jennings; Brother of Aaron Bartosic & the late Natasha Marie Bartosic	Aug 13
Aaron Bissell	Son of Bob and Patti Bissell; Brother of Danielle Bissell	Aug 19
Carol Chanitz	Daughter of John and Ruth Chanitz	Aug 25
Joseph Chanitz	Son of John and Ruth Chanitz	Aug 28
Felicia Cook	Daughter of Herbert and Helen Cook	Aug 2
Nathaniel Davis	Son of Ronald and Elizabeth Davis	Aug 21
John Evans, III	Son of Jack and Ann Evans; Brother of Tom Sampson & Patti Stout	Aug 16
Donald Freudenberger	Son of Nola Freudenberger	Aug 29
Doug Gable	Son of Ronald and Shirley Gable; Brother of Sharon Hornyak	Aug 1
Kelly Gallagher	Daughter of Tom and Sherry Gallagher	Aug 22
Mark Gery	Son of William and Catherine Gery; Brother of Kristin	Aug 3
Jeanne Hurley	Daughter of Stephen and Jeannette Viglione; Sister of Michele Yankow & Robert Wambold, Jr.	Aug 13
Garrett Illes	Son of John Patrick Illes; Brother of Christine Elizabeth Illes	Aug 26
Austin Jacobs	Son of Penny Jacobs; Brother of Seth Jacobs	Aug 27
Brandon Jesse	Son of Cathi Jesse	Aug 6
Noah Krynock	Son of Heidi Hricisin; Brother of Seth & Sierra Hricisin	Aug 13
Mitchell "Mitch" Lloyd	Son of Sandra Lloyd; Brother of Randy, Douglas & Fran Lloyd	Aug 15
Alexander Madden	Son of Judith Madden; Brother of Thomas Maher & Jennifer Cenci	Aug 20
Michael Mann	Son of Lee and 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 and Gloria Zucal; Brother of Sherry White	Aug 24
Michael Potkovic, III	Son of Michael & Annette Potkovic, Jr.; Brother of Michele Cuvo, Denise Reichard, Matthew, Mark, John Potkovic & the late Donna Marie Potkovic-Roth	Aug 29
Aaron Schaible	Son of Linda Stewart; Brother of The late Jennifer Schaible	Aug 28
Darryl Shurow	Son of Lew and Sharon Richards	Aug 18
Jonelle Sisonick	Daughter of Rella Sisonick Daniels; Sister of Anthony and 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

Please Note: Due to privacy concerns Birthday and Anniversary listings are only published with permission for parents/guardians, siblings and grandparents. If your child, grandchild or siblings name does not appear above or a correction is needed please complete and sign the Update Form on page 11 and mail to the address indicated.

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

Contributor	In Memory of
♥ Bob & Sharon Yurick	Craig Michael Yurick <i>Happy 45th Birthday , Forever loved and remembered. Mom, Dad & Todd</i>
♥ Jim & Barbara Minter	Jim Minter <i>Happy Birthday , Love and miss you more every day. Love Mom & Dad</i>
♥ Rich & Jeanette Itterly	Allan D. Itterly <i>We love and miss you more each day. Love Mom , Pop, Albert & James</i>
♥ Barbara DeBoer	Sheila Renae DeBoer <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Ronald & Shirley Gable	Doug Gable <i>20 years Much missed Son and Brother. Ron & Shirley Gable and sister Sharon Hornyak</i>
♥ Stephen & Jeannette Viglione	Jeanne Hurley <i>Daughter of Stephen & Jeannette Viglione, Mother of Cole J. Hurley, Sister of Michele Yankow & Robert Wambold, Jr.</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 In Memory of David Todd Smith*

★ *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*

To contribute through the United Way to The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley, ask your employer for the appropriate form and use the number **12116** in the write-in area.

A Newly Bereaved Parent Speaks

By Rachel Mercer, TCF Atlanta, GA.

I remember so well when I was very young, riding my bicycle down the street, up the street - fast as I could. Wind in my face, as close to complete happiness as could be. Riding too fast, losing control and slamming into the curb. Flying over the handlebars and hitting the ground, hard! I can still remember so well after all these years, lying there on the ground feeling hurt all over but most of all the breath knocked out of me, wondering if I would live. But in seconds I was on my knees, gasping in air and in minutes back on the street. I've had much worse physical hurt since then, but I've never forgotten that fall.

When my daughter died, a giant force threw me to the ground and knocked the life right out of me. This fall is worse than anything I could ever imagine. The bruises go all the way to my heart and soul and I can't get past it. What am I doing wrong? Am I not trying hard enough - too hard? Any time I feel I might be getting to my knees, a song, a word, some little nothing brings me down again. The sadness comes over me and trying to push it away is like pushing smoke. Will I ever be better? I have no control, no power over my own emotions and more often than not, I just don't care. Trying to rebuild my life without her in it is the hardest thing I have ever done or ever will do. I will never forget this fall, either.

And Now, Ten Years After

By Carole Ragland, TCF Houston-W, Texas (adapted)

With the approach of the 10th anniversary of my son's death, I find myself reflecting on the past 10 years of my life: It has been a time of peaks and valleys, with gradually more peaks and less valleys as time dims the pain. I still have my "heavy heart", but Robert's death does not dominate my life as it did in the early years. The pain is still there and always will be but, not with the incapacitating intensity.

The memories are still fresh, but do not bring with them the raw pain of those first months and years. I frequently wonder and fantasize about what Robert would be doing, what he would look like, what his life would be like if he were still alive. As the years have passed, I have watched his friends marry and have children, and have been forced to come to terms with the painful truth that I will never know these things.

To those new in grief, I tell you that the pain diminishes in time, but the memories do not. He is always with us. "Wouldn't Robert have loved that!" "Do you remember the time that he..." The memories are sweeter without the terrible pain. It is easier to laugh at happy memories and continue on with your life without guilt and that is as it should be.

I will always take great comfort in the promises of the Bible and certain knowledge that I will see Robert again, firmly believing, as should all bereaved parents, that "at the moment of our death, the child who has left us will be there to welcome us home."

Most People who Suffer Loss Experience One or More of the Following:

- * Feel tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest.
- * Have an empty feeling in their stomach and lose their appetite.
- * Feel guilty at times and angry at other times.
- * Feel restless and look for activity but find it difficult to concentrate.
- * Sense the loved one's presence, hearing their voice, or seeing their face.
- * Wander aimlessly, forget, and don't finish things they have started.
- * Have difficulty sleeping; dream of their loved one.
- * Experience an intense preoccupation with the life of the deceased.
- * Assume mannerisms or traits of their loved one.
- * Feel guilty or angry over things that happened or didn't happen in the relationship with the deceased.
- * Feel their mood change over the slightest things.
- * Cry at unexpected times.

All of these are natural and normal grief responses. It is important to cry and talk with people when you need to do so. By learning about the process of grief and learning also to express our feelings concerning our experience, we are helped to arrive at a healthy readjustment of our lives and a reinvestment of our emotional energy.

Irma Escue - Hospice Bereavement Team / Boulder, CO

To Touch Your Face Again

By Jeremiah Sundown TCF Nashville TN

I thought I'd always feel you
We were never far apart
But now when I want to feel you
I simply touch my heart

I thought I'd always have you
And call you my best friend
(And) It never once occurred to me
What we had would know an end

I thought I'd always hold you
Closer than close can be
(And) I'd be the first to someday go
That's how it's supposed to be

One day again I'll hold you
Closer than close can be
And we'll always be together
And so I'll wait and so I'll see

One day I'll always have you
To call you my best friend
And love will all abound us
When I Touch Your Face Again

There'll come a day I'll feel you
My poor weary heart will mend
I'll simply reach out in front of me
to Touch Your Face Again

Unwanted Companions

By Peggy Kind
TCF, Santa Rosa, CA

We have many unwanted companions
As we walk this road of grief.
They gang up or come singly
Will there ever be relief?

Fear keeps stalking stealthily
It jumps upon us unaware
Or walks beside us with its presence
To let us know that it is there.

Sorrow is our constant shadow
Pain is its closest friend.
Tears abound by streams and oceans
It seems they'll never end.

Anger rears its ugly head
Some are defined, some not.
We thrash about quite wildly
In confusion we are caught.

Behind the dark clouds is some sun
Though we're beset with doubt.
But we'll tread this road with courage
Some day it will come out.

Gone From My Sight

*I am standing upon the seashore. A ship, at my side,
spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean.
I stand watching her until she fades on the horizon, and someone at my side says,
She is gone! "Gone where?" The loss of sight is in me, not in her.
Just at the moment someone says, "She is gone,"
there are others who are watching her coming.
Other voices take up the glad shout,
Here she comes!"
And that is dying."*

Adapted from a poem by Henry Van Dyke

My Perspective On Coping With Suicide

Corky David, Sylmar, California
Bereavement Magazine Sept/Oct 1996, (adapted)

In the years since that tragic event, I'm still implementing and acquiring coping skills. I'd like to share some of what I've learned with the hope that something I write will be helpful to those who may be struggling with suicide's aftermath. Every emotion and feeling is normal -grief, anger, guilt, sadness, confusion. The decision to end your loved one's life was not yours. It was not your fault. You could not have prevented the death. You can't stay by someone's side twenty-four hours a day, every day to prevent him from taking his life.

Most of my friends and family did not want to talk with me about Will's suicide, I have two theories about this:

- 1) They know this is a painful subject for me.
- 2) It reminds them of their own mortality.

I was able to express my feelings and talk about it at survivor support groups and with my therapists. Post-traumatic stress experienced after the suicide must be dealt with. It is unhealthy to deny or rationalize it's effect on your life. If living one day at a time is too overwhelming, take one hour at a time. At times I focused on getting through five minute periods. Be patient... healing is a life long process.

The road to recovery is rough and steep, not smooth and steady. Expect to take steps forward and then slide backwards. Some days will be easier than others. I try to channel my emotional upset into constructive activities. My healthy outlets are aerobic dancing, riding a merry-go-round and going to the beach where I obtain spiritual rejuvenation of my soul. When I'm at the ocean, I meditate and communicate with my Higher Power. I try to go somewhere other than my hometown on the weekend anniversary of Will's death. I don't like Sundays! By accepting the fact that I could not bring Will back, and I would have to live with partial answers to my questions, I've finally made peace with the woulds, coulds, shoulds, whys and if onlys that constantly tormented my life. Suicides are not wrapped up in neat packages. They leave many loose ends, I believe one's only salvation is acceptance. Time can be an ally. For me, the more time that elapsed, the more the emotional intensity of the trauma diminished. I discovered that pain and loss are inevitable in life, but misery is an option. In working through the healing process after the tragedy of suicide, I have emerged as an infinitely more understanding, empathetic and compassionate person. When I'm the most depressed, I offer my help to someone who needs it, or I

do something nice for somebody. The kindness I give to another nourishes me and lifts my spirits. That's a gift that I really give to myself.

Joan Rivers once said, "You have to let grief break your heart so that the light can get through". There is light at the end of that long tunnel. Reaching that light is worth every painful step. You are understood and, in my heart, loved.

Separated by Suicide

by Jill Wagner TCF Hardin Co. OH

When we are separated by suicide
From someone very dear,
The grief that consumes our life
Is a mixture of sorrow, anger and fear.

The sadness from so great a loss
Equals nothing else we've known.
We strive ourselves to learn to cope
But, in the end, we must be shown.

Shown just how common the anger is
And shown that we must not hide
From the feelings - no matter how they hurt
When we are separated by suicide.

We must also learn to deal with the fear
Of losing others that we love
And we must confront what angers us
Even if it's directed "above."

It's not uncommon to feel anger with God.
Why didn't he just intervene?"
And stop this terrible loss we've had.
"Where could our God have been?"

When we are separated by suicide
We need support from people who care.
But, most of all, we need to be
With others who have also "been there".

To talk and hear from their own lips
How they might have learned to cope
Will help to validate our feelings
And give us a glimmer of hope.

Hope that one day we will return
To a life without sorrow and pain.
Because, when we are separated by suicide
We have to learn to live again.

Sibling Page

A Year of Grief

By Greta Sharpe TCF, Adafusia, AL

It has been a year since you went away. Time goes by so slowly — I never knew so much pain, along with fear and emptiness, could be felt by anyone. Your death had sent me into a darkness and void that words can't describe. I never knew I could cry 'til there were no more tears, but these came unannounced.

The price of loving a brother as special as you will take me a lifetime to pay. My pain hasn't been for me only, for friends don't want to see the cost of loving and losing. They, say, get on with your life but they don't understand how big a part of my life you were. So, I will take my pain, along with my special memories, and live day-by-day.

These memories from happier days are all I have of you now. So I will place them first in my heart. If I was given a choice, knowing the pain and devastation that I feel today, I would still want you to be my big brother to love..
..for memories can't be taken away.

Anniversary Reactions

From: <http://www.counselingstlouis.net>

One of the most troublesome reactions to a major loss is called an "anniversary reaction," when grief returns in full force on or near

- * the anniversary of the sibling's death
- * his or her birthday
- * holiday times
- * while listening to certain music * transitional events, such as a relocation, promotion, marriage, etc.

Our subconscious mind is a ruthless timekeeper where loss is concerned. It is as if we have a calendar within us. Often without even being consciously aware of the date, acute pain surfaces, and we begin to feel terrible, but we don't associate the emotional pain with the loss that happened long ago. At other times, even though we are very much aware of the reason for the pain, it is still intense,

and feels as if it will last forever.

What helps survivors deal with anniversary reactions? Sometimes, simply becoming aware of the date can help reduce the pain. Since

anniversary reactions may come up decades later, this is more difficult than you might imagine.

Jonathan

"When my brother died, I had no idea that it would continue to have an impact on my life, even now when I am 15 years older than I was then. My brother, Brian, died on April 19th, and last year, as that date approached, I began to feel terrible. But I didn't realize that it had anything to do with Brian's death. It seemed like everyone in the family was against me.

My kids were annoying me deliberately. My wife got on my nerves constantly and I was thinking that everything was her fault. One day I answered the phone, and happened to look at the calendar next to the phone. Suddenly, it hit me. April 19th! A surge of grief came over me, and I had to hand the phone to my wife.

I went into the bedroom and started to cry. It seemed like yesterday--he was sixteen years old and I was seventeen. He was in a car wreck. A truck plowed into him as he turned into the bowling alley. He went into a coma, and they thought he was coming around, but suddenly, his brain swelled up and he died.

After that, everything went back to normal, and I wasn't so angry. This year, though, I was prepared. I gave the flowers at church in my brother's memory. I don't know why, but it was easier to get through the end of April this year."

Alice

"It never occurred to me that I would be sad about my sister's death when my first child was born. At first, I was so happy. Then I realized that if my sister had lived, she would be so happy for me. It seemed like I was losing not the young girl who died from leukemia when she was eight years old and I was ten, but the grownup MaryAnn would have become. She would have been my best friend, the aunt to my child, she would have been joyous because of this birth. I was happy and sad at the same time."

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

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**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)

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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) section.

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

The following is Information change or update Address or Phone change Permission (check this box to grant OCR publication Newsletter/ Web permission)

Your Name

Signature (required)

Relationship to Child

Email Address

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

Phone Number

Child's Name

Date of Birth

Date of Death

Parent / Guardian Names

Child's Sibling's & or Grandparents Names (We publish only Parents/Guardians, Grandparents and Sibling names)

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

The Compassionate Friends 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

The Compassionate Friends Siblings Walking Together

(Formerly the 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.