



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



February

February 2015

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TCF Online Support

www.compassionatefriends.org
click on "Online Support" under

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

Feb 9 Monthly Support Group Meeting- - Topic: Memories from the Heart *see page 2 for more info*

March 9 Monthly Support Group 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 7:00 - 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...	732-732-3246	Addiction.....	Nancy Howe.....	484-863-4324
Multiple Children/			Homicide.....	Ginger Renner.....	610-967-5113
General Loss.....	Betty Thompson...	610 868-0303			
Only Child.....	Shelly Garst.....	484 241-5396			

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Our Morning Call "Be An Angel" Wish List

- Reduced rate printing services or digital copier for newsletter printing
- Laptop computer with or capable of running MS Office Pro for production of newsletter and presentations
- Monetary Donations or Visa, Staples or Amazon gift cards in any amount to purchase supplies

News, Events & Announcements

Mark your calendars for these upcoming meetings & events

❖ February 9th Support Group Meeting

Memories From the Heart

Please bring a memento, picture or memory of your child to share with the group.

❖ March 9th Support Group Meeting

General Sharing

❖ June 13 TCF Family Picnic and Memorial Balloon Launch

12 Noon Moore Twp Recreation Center, Bath, PA

Publication cutoff date for love gifts & poetry submissions

Love Gifts, articles and poetry need to be submitted by the first of the proceeding the desired publication month. Example: To have a submission published in the March newsletter submit by the 1st of February.

For Love Gifts to the address on the Love Gift form.

For Poems and Articles Include the author's name & your contact information and mail to: TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014 or email to: email: TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

We reserve the right to alter, modify or reject submissions not in keeping with our mission

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



The Valentines of Yesterday

By Anette Mennen Baldwin,
TCF Katy, TX

In my lifetime I have received many valentines. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, school friends, good friends, boyfriends, acquaintances and my husband have showered me over the years with lovely valentines which have so appreciated. The tradition of declaring friendship and love on Valentine's Day is a very fond memory.

However, the sweetest valentines I have ever received are from my son. From the first days in nursery school when my son made a hand plaque and a drawing on construction paper to the final valentine in 2002, I cherished these gifts of love from my only child.

I have kept every valentine my son ever made for me or bought for me. I have every valentine gift he ever gave me. These are the treasures that remind me how special my love for my son truly is.

There is no love to compare with the unconditional love we give our children. I think my son knew that nobody in the world would love him as much as his mother did. He also knew that he would love his children in just this same way. This unconditional love that we give our children is the most precious love in life. It is always our hope that they, too, will find the joy of this love with their children.

When our child dies, we cling to our unconditional love as we feel the anguish of a final separation on this earthly plane and a tsunami of betrayal as the devastation of this incomprehensible loss sweeps over us. The pain is real. It is physical, emotional, psychological, and forever embedded on our psyche. Yet without that unconditional love, there would be no pain. Who among us would trade the most infinitely rewarding love and the subsequent pain of loss for a life of lukewarm relationships?

And so, on Valentine's Day this year, looked back at this love, at the good times, the wonderful handmade

childhood valentine cards and gifts, and the carefully selected cards of adulthood that my son gave to me. His words, his love, his appreciation for all that we had shared as mother and child are reflected in these treasures.

There were tears, certainly, but they were tempered with the many wonderful sweet memories of my son and his life. It is these sweet memories which sustain me, give me hope and bring gratitude for all that was given to me.

My son is forever in my heart. He is with me every day and every night, and especially; he is with me on Valentine's Day.

Thoughts on Valentine's Day

By Karen Nelson TCF Elder Chapter, Utah

"How sad this day must be for you."
I read it in their eyes.
As if there's no more love
between us anymore,
you and I

How wrong they are
they do not understand
the bond between a parent and child.

I do not have to see your face
to remember your sweet smile.
I do not have to hug you,
although If I could, I would.
I do not have to hear your voice,
our love is understood.

Everyday I think of you,
my thoughts are full of memories.
I realize that love does not end
with death's painful goodbye.
I await with hope until
we can say hello again,
you and I.



We are on the Web



Visit our **web page** at www.lehighvalleytcf.org for 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**

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 sibling's 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.

Birthdays

Susan Antler	Daughter of Charles and Charlotte Antler	Feb 21
Dakota Arndt	Son of Steve and Mary Arndt, Brother of Ann Marie & Dylan	Feb 6
James Balloch	Grandson of Bill Gerth & Fern Gerth	Feb 22
Justin Bramich	Son of Nancy Quinton; Brother of Ryan & Ian Bramich	Feb 2
Ky DiVittorio	Son of Jan DiVittorio; Brother of Ian DiVittorio	Feb 13
Eric Fenstermacher	Son of Rick and Kathleen Fenstermacher; Brother of Heather Fenstermacher	Feb 14
Aaron Groff	Son of Leon and Debra Manuel; Brother of Melissa LaBar	Feb 11
Mark Hebdon	Son of Lawrence and Ruth Hebdon; Brother of Laura Long & Michael Hebdon	Feb 24
Kimberly Kissel	Daughter of Michael and Gloria Kissel, Jr.; Sister of Colleen & Micheal Kissel & Lisa Zelko	Feb 6
Joshua Kortze	Son of Al and Kim Kortze; Brother of Aubrey and Kim Kortze	Feb 20
Janet Mitchell	Daughter of Inez Housel; Sister of Jay Housel; Lisa Housel, Tammy Housel & Brian Housel	Feb 24
Amanda Mohr	Daughter of Beverly Mohr & Rodney Mohr	Feb 25
James "Jimmy" Mullen, II	Son of Jeanie Mullen	Feb 26
Susette Olewine	Daughter of Louis and Joyce Szoke	Feb 17
Angelo Providakis	Son of Michael and Joanne Providakis	Feb 7
Sandra Roberts	Daughter of Millard and Barbara Howell; Sister of Randy, Michaela & Alexandria	Feb 3
Jennifer Schaible	Daughter of Linda Stewart; Sister of Andy Schaible & The late Aaron Schaible	Feb 18
Quinna Schleicher	Daughter of Lin and Judy Schleicher; Sister of Aaron Schleicher; Granddaughter of Marie Moyer	Feb 2
Adam Sengel	Son of Aydin and Debbie Sengel	Feb 27
Joseph Siedlecki, Jr	Son of Joe and Monica Siedlecki; Brother of MaryAnn & Michele Siedlecki and the late Jeanmarie Siedlecki Moyer	Feb 26
David Todd Smith	Son of David and Kathleen Smith; Brother of Stephanie Seifert	Feb 25
Troy Southgate	Son of Donald and Susann Southgate; Brother of Martin Southgate	Feb 25
Kevin Stenlake	Son of Elizabeth Leada Stenlake; Brother of Dawn Frey	Feb 22
Jon Sulick	Son of John Sulick; Brother of Aymae Sulick	Feb 9
Kassidy Sullivan	Daughter of Jessica Potteiger	Feb 20
Jonathan Venkauskas	Son of Dan and Jane Venkauskas; Brother of Becky Venkauskas; Grandson of Daniel and Betty Venkauskas	Feb 17

Anniversaries

Evan Albertini	Son of Louis AlBertini; Brother of Christopher AlBertini	Feb 13
Susan Antler	Daughter of Charles & Charlotte Antler	Feb 21
Hannah Rose Bankos	Daughter of Thomas & Christina Bankos; Sister of Matthew Bankos	Feb 24
Graham Beckhorn	Son of Alice Keyes; Brother of Patrick Beckhorn & Christopher Beckhorn	Feb 14
Hope Davidson	Daughter of Dean & Donna Davidson	Feb 8
Brock Depew	Son of Alex & Patricia Polohovich; Brother of Troy Austin Depew	Feb 12
David "Dave" Fegley	Son of Dick & Peg Fegley	Feb 18
Paige Fernandez	Daughter of William Fernandez; Sister of Jamie & Billy Fernandez	Feb 28
Eileen Collins Gant	Daughter of Dorothy Collins; Sister of John, Steven & Brian Collins, Kathleen Morrison & MaryAnn Watkins	Feb 14
Raymond Haas, Jr.	Brother of Charles Haas & Linda Wronowski	Feb 29
Christopher Harrison	Son of Jerry & Elizabeth Harrison; Brother of Andrea	Feb 10
David Heard	Son of Susan Heard; Brother of Daisy Heard	Feb 10
Schyler Kemps	Son of John & Jenny Kemps; Brother of Courtney & Alex Kemps	Feb 10
Matt Kush	Son of Rick & Ann Kush; Brother of Mike & Jenn	Feb 10
Kristen Lyn Lisicky-Tyber	Daughter of James J. & Annette Lisicky; Sister of James M. Lisicky	Feb 15
Aidan Maher	Son of Raymond & Courtney Maher; Brother of Brady Maher	Feb 2
Katherine McGraw	Daughter of John & Sue McGraw; Sister of Maggy & Sean McGraw	Feb 28
Ed McNally	Son of Don & Connie McNally; Brother of Sean McNally	Feb 11
Carrie Meuret	Daughter of Jennifer Zayas; Sister of Dakota Zayas	Feb 13
Thomas Miller	Grandson of Emma Butz	Feb 18
Michael Milot	Son of John & Patti Milot; Brother of Jill	Feb 2
Russell "Russ" Nicholson	Son of Jim & Lyn Nicholson; Brother of Rachel Nicholson	Feb 24
Donna Potkovac-Roth	Daughter of Michael & Annette Potkovac, II; Sister of Matthew, Mark, John, Denise Potkovac, Michele Cuvo & the late Michael Potkovac, III	Feb 26
Michael Powers	Son of Richard & Margaret Powers; Brother of Billy, Richie, Tara & Ryan Powers	Feb 10
Maria Rothermel	Daughter of Gerald & Doris Rothermel; Sister of Mark Rothermel	Feb 3
Joey Russo	Son of Susan Russo; Brother of Jena & Jevin Russo	Feb 23
Jennifer Schaible	Daughter of Linda Stewart; Sister of Andy Schaible & The late Aaron Schaible	Feb 26
Tara Stauffer	Daughter of Kermit T. & Faye Nester	Feb 19
Constance Stewart	Daughter of Joanne Stewart; Sister of Keith & Kevin Stewart	Feb 1
Kassidy Sullivan	Daughter of Jessica Potteiger	Feb 20
Frank Thiel	Son of Gregg & Debi Thiel; Brother of Ryan, Greg & Adam Thiel	Feb 11
Meredith Unger	Daughter of Kathleen Paone	Feb 17
Stephanie Volkert	Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert	Feb 12
Victoria Volkert	Daughter of Joanne Fimiano; Sister of Zachary Volkert	Feb 16

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
♥ Salvatore & Mary Bartolotta	Salvitore Carai Bartolotta <i>In Memory of our son, Salvitore Carai Bartolotta</i>
♥ Mary A. Thompson	James "Jimmy" Thompson <i>You were taken from us 22 years ago - Only Yesterday</i>
♥ Don and Sue Southgate	Troy Southgate <i>We love and miss you so very much. Always in our hearts. Love, Mom, Dad & Marty</i>
♥ Rella Daniels	Jonelle Sisonick <i>In memory of my daughter Jonelle Sisonick at the Holiday Season</i>
♥ Rick & Ann Kush The Matt Kush Fondation	Matt Kush <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Sharon Richards	Darryl Shurow <i>In loving memory of my son</i>
♥ Peter Mather	Ensign Beth Anne Mather <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ David & Denise Myers	Cody Alexander Myers <i>We love you and miss you !</i>

Donations and Contributions

TCF Lehigh Valley Contributors

- ★ *The Matt Kush Foundation
In memory of Matt Kush*
- ★ *Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown
for meeting room and refreshments*
- ★ *Mary Ann Donuts, Allentown
for meeting snacks*
- ★ *Giant Food Store Employees for contributions in
memory of David Todd Smith*

- ★ *Susan McGraw for the Children's Memorial Garden*
- ★ *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.

“Who, then, can so softly bind up the wounds of another as he, who has felt the same wound himself” ~Thomas Jefferson

Thomas and Martha Jefferson had 6 children. Five of whom died. His wife, Martha, died at age 33. After Jefferson's death, little envelopes with locks of hair from his wife and children and words of love written in his handwriting were found in a secret drawer in his cabinet. It was obvious that they had been handled frequently.

Besides Jefferson, 20 other presidents of the United States have had one or more children die.

Between Now and Then

By Kim Bodeau, TCF Chippewa Falls

"There are moments which mark your life. Moments when you realize nothing will ever be the same and time is divided into two parts, before this, and after this." ~John Hobbes (Fallen)

We all know this moment in our lives, that line that designates before and after. It seems like an eternity ago, it seems like a moment ago, one breath away. It is now the pivotal moment in my life, where I measure the then and now.

My grief has not been transformed into some meaningful nugget of wisdom, but I have learned much wisdom, as I have learned to integrate grief into my life. These bits of wisdom were passed from others who had walked with grief longer. Early on, I asked someone how I would get through the years ahead, acknowledging my son's birthday, the holidays, the ordinary days. She said I would get through them by taking baby steps, focusing on the day, the moment, the breath in front of me. I and my family have traveled these past seven years by taking baby steps.

Some say that time heals and that grief changes, but I have found that instead, it is my response to grief that has changed. My arms still ache to give him a hug, my heart yearns for his physical presence, and grief can still knock me to my knees, but now, I get up faster, as my grief carrying 'muscles' are stronger. I am able to predict what moments are going to be challenging and find space and time to be with that grief filled moment. The days when I feel capable of accomplishing tasks while grieving, outnumber the days, when I just want to stay curled up on the couch. I can plant the tomatoes, weed the garden and can those tomatoes in the fall, while still grieving.

As I become more familiar with grief, I am also more aware of the resiliency that lies within me and from that resiliency, I feel strength to live with my life as it is. Perhaps the aspect of this that surprises me most is that I do feel joy. Joy is felt when I experience a beautiful sunset, a formation of spectacular clouds, time with my daughters, or when I discover a penny or other connection to my son. As time passes, and as I find balance in carrying my grief, I am also learning that joy and sorrow sit side by side and there is room

in my heart for both. We grieve deeply, we love deeper still.

As you take your own baby steps, becoming familiar with grief in your life, you too will discover the resiliency that lies within. Someday, you will find room in your heart for both your sorrow and your joy. As Mitch states in his poem, "you will learn to weave together unraveled threads on the loom of a falling star."

I'll Never Be The Same

By Peggy Kociscin, Unknown Chapter

Confusion reigns with in my heart,
Within my soul, because
I know I cannot ever be
The woman I once was.

How can I be complete and whole
When part of me is gone...
A special part... a precious part ...
That part that was my son

One cannot lose a child to death
And still remain the same
Untouched by tears of emptiness
Undaunted by the pain.

The cruelest nightmares come to pass
Life's better pill to swallow
In light of this, I can endure
All else that's yet to follow.

There's nothing that can fill the empty
Spaces that remain;
I've tried and failed so many times,
I cannot try again.

No trying to regain the past...
That's all a bitter sham...
It's time that I resigned myself
To be being who I am.

To the woman I've become
No acting out a part
A mother with a shattered dream
And a broken heart.

A Stranger... My Friend

By Diana Griller TCF, Kokomo, IN

I don't remember who, but someone
called me to the phone that day.
A lady said she didn't know me,
but just wanted to say
That she had lost a child, too,
and would pray for my deep pain.
My days that had been sunny
were now filled with crashing rain.

Her voice was kind and soothing
as she spoke to me with care.
I grasped each word intensely that
the stranger was willing to share.
Her child died in a way similar to mine,
a passenger in a car.
She knew my shocking sorrow and
recognized my new, deadening scar.

She said we have a mutual friend
in the funeral director there,
For he had buried her child too
and now mine - I could not bear.
I cried and cried as she talked to me
that sad, heartbreaking day,
But she quickly instilled in my mind right then
that crying was okay.

She briefly spoke of brighter days to come
somewhere along the way.
She assured me, too, that God was there,
if only I could pray.
I don't remember all she said,
my mind was far away,
But I thank God for sending her, a stranger
my friend - that day.

She called me again a few days later
to see if I was alive.
Still in shock. I remembered her-
the lady who had survived.
Such grief, such devastating sadness,
I was totally in despair,
But my new friend called again,
keeping me in her care.



We came to meet, this lady and I,
in life's ungracious bend.
I love her now, this total stranger,
she's my Compassionate Friend.

Heaven's Children

By Sue Smith, Oklahoma TCF

Do you suppose they meet like us
To lend support and love?
As we assemble, do they gather, too,
Watching from above?

Do you suppose they ask our God
To care for parents, here?
Just as we beseech Him
To hold our children dear?

Do you suppose, among themselves,
They comfort one another?
When they see deep grief consume
Their Father and their Mother?

Do you suppose, together,
They wipe away our tears?
Holding hands, as we do
To cleanse away our fears?
Do you suppose they listen
To the breaking hearts we share?
As we tell our stories
Our tragedies laid bare?

And, do you suppose they know the Truth,
These children who we adore?
Knowing fully that God's Love
In Abundance He will outpour?

And, do you, suppose they understand
Far better than we mortals?
That peace and Joy and soul's content
Await us at the portals?

And, do you suppose until the day
They see us face to face
They're tugging on God's Heartstrings
To keep us in His Grace?

*Of all the music that reached farthest into heaven,
it was the beating of a loving heart*

Henry Ward Beecher

Beyond Surviving

Iris Bolton, TCF, Atlanta, GA

Hundreds of books have been written about loss and grief. Few have addressed the aftermath of suicide for survivors. Here again, these are not answers, only suggestions from those who have lived through and beyond the event. I've compiled their thoughts. (Note: Many of these suggestions are appropriate for all bereaved parents, whatever the cause of your child's death.

1. Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with 'why' it happened until you no longer need to know 'why', or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy, you are in mourning.
5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger. at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself.
6. You may feel guilty for what you did or did not do.
7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean you will act on those thoughts.
8. Remember to take one moment one day at a time.
9. Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
10. Feel free to cry. Tears are healing.
11. Give yourself time to heal. A lot of time.
12. Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
13. Expect setbacks. Don't panic if emotions return like a tidal wave. Grieving takes time.
14. Try to put off major decision for over a year.
15. Give yourself permission to seek professional help if you need it.
16. Be aware of the pain within your family — even if it 'looks' different from your pain.
17. Set your own limits; learn to say NO
18. Steer clear of people who tell you what or how to feel.
19. Know that there are support groups that can be helpful.
20. Call on your personal faith to help you.

21. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief: headaches, stomach aches, loss of appetite, over eating, inability to sleep, sleeping too much
22. The willingness to laugh with others, something your child has said or done or at yourself is ok — it is a sign of healing beginning.
23. Wear out your questions, guilt, anger or other feelings until you can let them go.
24. Know that you will never be the same again; but you can survive and go beyond

About Hearts

By Bill Glover, TCF, Atlanta, GA

Each of us has two hearts. The one that beats in our chest and sustains life. We know about that one. And the one that is described by philosophers as the residence of our spirit and our consciousness. Most of us probably didn't get to know that one until our loss. Remember the fists that sat in the middle of your chest for the first several months? And you went to the doctor, and he did an EKG, and he said, "Your heart is just fine, No-o-o problem!"

The heart that was laid open by this event can't be seen on an x-ray or measured by an EKG. And once opened, it can't be sewn up. We're stuck with it. AND BETTER OFF WITH IT! The COMPASSION lesson is learned when you can control your tears for your own child, but can't control your tears for another's child.

And through this terrible experience, we have all learned that compassion and love, both seated in heart No. 2, are the only important things in life. The price has been terrible, but we have learned what REALLY matters, and just as importantly, what DOESN'T!

**When you say
the word "love,"
you catch the feeling,
but the pure essence
cannot be spoken.**

Deepak Chopra "The Way of the Wizard"

Sibling Page

Siblings Speak Out

Lovingly lifted from the TCF Livonia, MI Oct 2014 Newsletter

Having a brother or sister die creates a family crisis. Some of us have extreme reactions while others react as if we've never heard the news. Many things affect the way we behave, what we think, and how we feel. Some of us may know all the facts of what caused our sibling's death, while some of us may be confused by what we overheard. We may believe we were not included in what happened, or feel overlooked by the adults.

We may wonder why this had to happen. We may even think we are to blame, even when others say we were not. All of us have thoughts and feelings we are afraid to share. Other siblings have probably felt very much the same way we do at times. Reading the thoughts below of other siblings may encourage us to talk with adults we trust, to attend a sibling support group meeting or write our feelings in a diary.

Siblings see if you relate to any of the statements below.

- ♦ Children grieve too, in our own way, in our own time. We grieve differently from adults. Sometimes we appear not to be grieving at all.
- ♦ We do not want to be forgotten while our parents grieve. Parents often seem to emphasize the child that died instead of those of us who are living.
- ♦ We need to know we are loved as much as our brother or sister who died. Sometimes we wonder if we would be missed as much.
- ♦ We are afraid someone else will die. We want to be reassured but don't know what questions to ask.
- ♦ Our relationship with our dead brother or sister was different from the relationship we had with our parents. We will not grieve the same as our parents will.
- ♦ We know our sibling was not perfect. We know that he/she did things that were wrong. Please do not make an "angel" out of her or place him on a pedestal.
- ♦ Just because siblings are not grieving or speaking openly doesn't mean that they aren't grieving in private. Often we talk with our friends or other adults.
- ♦ We will grieve when we are ready. Please do not rush us or tell us we aren't doing it right. When we are not willing to talk about our dead brother or sister, it may be because we are trying to protect our parents. We do not want to make our parents cry or hurt more.
- ♦ We are different people since our sibling died. Our parents are different people now too. We may think and act in new ways. Our personalities and values may not be the same as before they died.
- ♦ People may have told us to "be strong" for our parents. We may resent this or find this too difficult, so we may feel even worse.
- ♦ We may be overprotective of our parents after our sibling dies. Often, our parents are overprotective of us. We just want to be treated as "normal" kids.
- ♦ We are not the same person as our sibling who died. Please do not compare us to them. Comparing children harms our self-esteem.
- ♦ We are concerned when our parents bottle their grief inside and refuse to talk with us about it. It makes things more frightening.
- ♦ Some siblings like to visit the cemetery, some do not. Avoid forcing us to go if we don't want to. We may not be ready to attend support group meetings. Listen to our answers when we are asked about going.
- ♦ Even though we had fights with them, we did love them and miss them. There is a big hole in the family now. Sometimes we believe we are to blame for their death. Maybe we could talk about it with an adult we trust. Perhaps someone can help us sort out what our responsibilities are.
- ♦ It is okay for our parents and us to talk about them together.
- ♦ It's also okay for us to cry together.
- ♦ We know our family will never be the same again. We wonder what it will be like in the future.
- ♦ Birthdays, anniversary, and holidays are especially hard to bear. Sometimes we act as though these days are not special. Sometime we pretend our family is the same way as before our sibling's death.

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**

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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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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

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.

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



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