



# The Compassionate Friends

## Lehigh Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies



March

March 2015

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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

**March 9** Monthly Support Group Meeting - General Sharing

**April 13** Separate Sharing for Men and Women

## Meeting Cancellations

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

## Other Local Bereavement Groups & TCF Chapters

**TCF Carbon County Chapter** - 1st Wednesday 7:00 - 8:30 pm at Palmerton Community Ambulance Assn., 501 Delaware Ave. Palmerton Chapter Leader - Patti Bissell, Contact Phone: 610-826-2938 Contact Email: pannbiss@aol.com

**TCF Easton Chapter** - 2nd Thursday 7:00 - 9:00 pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd., Easton Chapter Leaders John & Maria Szabo, Contact Phone: 610-866-5468 Contact Email: szabojanos1@verizon.net

**TCF Quakertown Chapter** - 2nd Tuesday 7:30 - 9:00 pm at St. Lukes Quakertown Hospital; 1021 Park Ave, Quakertown Contact Phone: 215-536-0173, Contact Email: tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net

**GRASP** (grief recovery after substance passing) 3rd Monday at The First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Crest & Tilghman Sts., Allentown Preregistration required, Contact: Nancy Howe 484-863-4324; 484-788-9440; nancyhowe@ymail.com

## 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)** Meeting day, time & place coincide with TCF, LV Facilitated by Jeanette Laube, MA on a as needed basis. Preregistration required. Call 610-762-5783

## 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
Only Child.....	Shelly Garst.....484-241-5396	Homicide.....	Ginger Renner.....	610-967-5113

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## News, Events & Announcements

❖ **April 13 - Monthly Support Group Meeting - Separate Sharing for Men & Women** - Men and women often grieve differently. This meeting offers the opportunity for men to speak with men and women to speak to women about their grieving experience

❖ **June 13 - TCF Family Picnic and Memorial Balloon Launch** - Moore Twp Recreation Center, Bath, PA Please plan on joining us for our annual covered dish picnic. Picnic will begin at 12 Noon followed by a balloon launch to celebrate the lives of our children.

### In Memorium Betty Thompson

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Betty Thompson, a faithful and supportive member of TCF, Lehigh Valley. Betty served as chapter treasurer and a telephone friend for many years, and along with her husband, the late Doug Thompson, instituted the Butterfly Pin program for new members. We extend our sincere sympathy to all Betty's family and friends.

### Publication Cutoff Date for Love gifts & Poetry/Article Submissions

Love Gifts, articles and poetry must be received by the first of the month proceeding the desired publication month.

Example:

To have a submission published in the May newsletter submit by the 1st of April.

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

Send Poems and Articles (Including the author's name & your contact information) by 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"***

## Springtime Reflections

By Audrey Cain, TCF Buffalo, NY

When I was in elementary school our class had to learn a song that began "Welcome sweet springtime, we greet thee in song." The reason I remember it so well is because I hated it and got in trouble eventually when commented out loud that it was a stupid song. These days, I can appreciate the sentiments of the song as shiver through the remaining weeks of winter. I'm tired of winter. Winter blahs give me an urge to get spring housecleaning under way and while I'm cleaning out the closets of my home, I'll also have to "houseclean" my thoughts because the long winter days have given me too much time to sit and think.

Yes, I'm tired of winter - and I'm tired of grieving. At first that may sound harsh, but parental grief is so much more than a "heavy burden" - it overwhelms and suffocates. I'm not sure there is an adjective that can truly describe it - perhaps it's something we can only "feel".

I know grief over the death of our son will always be part of my life - I will always feel the pain of it to one degree or another. But I need to "houseclean" my thoughts every so often and "sweep out" some of the corners of my heart where I've allowed that grief to build up and create emotional downs - I need to sweep out the "whys?", the "what ifs?" and some of the negative thoughts that pull me down. Like the "stuff" that seems to re-clutter the closets of my home, negative feelings may again clutter the closets of my mind and I'll have to "houseclean" all over.

But in the process of "sweeping out" those emotional downs, I know I'm also healing. Springtime - days of robins' songs and daffodils. And Mother's Day. A difficult day to get through to say the least, but more so if you are newly bereaved. Looking at cards my son gave me, I laugh a little (I can do that now) and I cry a little (I still do that too), but I know that no matter where he is, I am still and always will be Rob's Mom - he lives in my heart and my love can form a bridge to wherever he is.

The newly bereaved may not find comfort in any of the delights of Spring, but this is normal for the point in time

where you are. Will you get through these days - will you ever find joy in anything again? A tulip bulb survives the cold of winter; when it's time, a tender shoot gradually pushes its way up through the hardness of the ground and slowly but surely it bursts forth and lives again - a love flower, re-born in spite of the struggle.

The death of a child takes parents through the most difficult and unbearable "winter" of their lives. We too must struggle against the greatest of odds in order to endure in spite of the harshness - and we too can survive and learn to live again. Easy? No! Possible? Yes! A sentence in an article caught my attention recently: "Tulips laugh beneath the snow, waiting to burst forth in splendor." I like that thought - somehow it perks me up! I hope you like it too, and I hope the days of Springtime will be good days for you!

## Spring

By Karen Nelson, TCF Utah

Yellow-green willow branches  
Stretch and breach the cerulean blue of sky,  
Brilliant colors break the earth  
and glow in the newfound warmth of spring  
And I sit with sweated shoulders  
and drink in the day,

I need its reminders of the cycles of life,  
Birth, then death, then life again.  
This is my hope for you,  
My precious, and for me.  
My heart was as cold and bitter as winter  
when they broke the earth for you.  
I died that day a little, too  
and each awakening spring

I hope that I can live again.  
That I can hold your place in my heart  
and still reach out to life, embracing it  
without being able to embrace you.  
Each spring my faith is renewed  
my faith in resurrection's spring.



**We are on the Web**



Visit our **web page** at [www.lehighvalleytcf.org](http://www.lehighvalleytcf.org) for group information, meetings schedule, upcoming events and helpful links.

**Like our facebook page:** [www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley](http://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.*

## March Birthdays

Joshua Bartosic	Brother of Aaron Bartosic; Brother of the late Natasha Marie Bartosic	Mar 2
Timothy Bogart	Son of Nancy & Bill Bogart; Brother of Katelyn Bogart & Ryan Bogart	Mar 12
Joshua Booth	Son of Les & Bonnie Booth	Mar 12
Trevor DePugh	Son of Mark Hansen; Brother of Travis DePugh, Trintina Fagan & Mark Hansen, Jr	Mar 22
John Evans, III	Son of Jack & Ann Evans; Brother of Tom Sampson & Patti Stout	Mar 12
John "Chuck" Frenchko	Son of John & Myrtle Frenchko	Mar 2
Joel Frisby	Son of Caroline Frisby; Brother of Richard, Gregory, Michael & Timothy Frisby	Mar 26
John Fry	Son of Cathy McDonald; Brother of Joey, Allie & Billy McDonald	Mar 19
Eileen Collins Gant	Daughter of Dorothy Collins & the Late John Collins, Sr; Sister of John, Steven & Brian Collins, Kathleen Morrison & MaryAnn Watkins	Mar 25
Sgt. Christopher Geiger	Son of George & Patricia Geiger; Brother of Michael, Terrance, David & Timothy Geiger	Mar 30
Lisette Hahn	Daughter of Louis & Joyce Szoke	Mar 4
Lori Hudasky	Daughter of Irene Hudasky	Mar 18
Garrett Illes	Son of John Patrick Illes; Brother of Christine Elizabeth Illes	Mar 17
Ryan Jones	Son of David & Elaine Jones	Mar 7
Schylar Kemps	Son of John & Jenny Kemps; Brother of Courtney & Alex Kemps	Mar 8
Beth Anne Mather	Daughter of Peter Mather	Mar 12
Rowan McElmoyle	Son of James McElmoyle & Jenny Renninger	Mar 14
Michael McLaughlin	Son of James & Julia McLaughlin; Brother of Matthew & Patrick McLaughlin	Mar 16
Randy Peischl	Son of Betty Peischl	Mar 1
Valeri Powers	Sister of Stephen, Raymond & Gerald Taranto	Mar 31
Caleb Putro	Son of David & Susan Pultro; Brother of David Pultro, Jr	Mar 31
Nolan Ritchie	Son of Robert & Tiffany Ritchie; Brother of Triston & Cora Ritchie	Mar 29
Maria Rothermel	Daughter of Gerald & Doris Rothermel; Sister of Mark Rothermel	Mar 25
Andrew Siegfried	Son of Rich & Ruthann Siegfried; Brother of Ben Siegfried	Mar 27
Geoffrey Steckel	Son of Dean & Patricia Steckel; Brother of Jennifer & Mark Steckel	Mar 1
Travis Szerencits	Son of Craig & Cookie Harron	Mar 11
Tracy Szoke	Daughter of Randal & Kim Szoke; Sister of Trisha Remaley	Mar 9
Reeder Thatcher, Jr.	Son of Jane Thatcher & Late Reeder Thatcher Sr.; Brother of Timothy, Michael & Lynne	Mar 12
Matthew Tobias	Son of Allen & Roseann Tobias	Mar 15
Sheena Villa	Daughter of Bill Villa & Barbara Maquera ; Step Daughter of Angie Villa; Sister of Patrick Villa, Cruz Maquera & Gianni Villa	Mar 23
Chad Wagner	Son of Carl & Pamela Fehnel; Brother of Cori	Mar 13
Seth Warhurst	Son of Debra Warhurst; Brother of Michele Warhurst	Mar 4

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## March Anniversaries

Penny Azar	Son of Michelle M. Azar & the late Diab Azar; Brother of Michelle Weidman & Jean-Pierre Azar	Mar 11
Nathan Deutsch	Nephew of Roseann Mikalik	Mar 14
Darlene Fitch	Sister of Diane Lehr & Gary Fitch	Mar 10
John "Chuck" Frenchko	Son of John & Myrtle Frenchko	Mar 11
Benjamin Fry	Son of John & Cynthia Chryst; Twin Brother of Jeff Fry & Brother of the late Peter & Paul Fry	Mar 14
Aaron Groff	Son of Leon & Debra Manuel; Brother of Melissa LaBar	Mar 5
Rita Guerrieri	Daughter of Art & Mary Guerrieri; Sister of Maryrose Guerrieri-Nesbitt	Mar 11
Jonathan Hawk	Son of Bruce & Mary Hawk; Brother of Bruce Hawk & the late Lisa Hawk	Mar 30
Ryan Jones	Son of David & Elaine Jones	Mar 7
Jonathan Keller	Son of Dennis & Lori Keller; Brother of Amy Keller	Mar 23
Bonnie Krause	Daughter of Josephine Leiby - Mather	Mar 24
John "Jack" Kushnerick, Jr.	Son of Bernice Kushnerick; Brother of Pat & Jan Kushnerick	Mar 16
Brian Lentz	Son of Gary & Judy Lentz	Mar 10
Rowan McElmoyle	Son of James McElmoyle & Jenny Renninger	Mar 14
Jim Minter	Son of Jim & Barbara Minter; Brother of Jeanine Minter	Mar 14
Adria Parker	Daughter of Adele Parker; Sister of Briana Parker & Nathan Parker	Mar 22
Eliza Parker	Daughter of The late Adria Parker; Granddaughter of Adele Parker	Mar 22
Buddy Pearson	Son of Bob & Shelly Garst	Mar 24
Quinna Schleicher	Daughter of Lin & Judy Schleicher; Sister of Aaron Schleicher;	Mar 10
Amanda Schultz	Daughter of Mark & Patty Schultz; Sister of Ryan & Eric Schultz	Mar 5
Lisa Staub	Daughter of Mark & Louise Stahley; Granddaughter of William & Patricia Johnson	Mar 2
Jason Steigerwalt	Son of Sandra Steigerwalt	Mar 20
Pete Swartwood, III	Son of Pete Swartwood	Mar 22
Sheena Villa	Daughter of Bill Villa & Barbara Maquera ; Step Daughter of Angie Villa; Sister of Patrick Villa, Cruz Maquera & Gianni Villa	Mar 24
Chad Wagner	Son of Karen & Diana Wagner	Mar 27
Seth Warhurst	Son of Debra Warhurst; Brother of Michele Warhurst	Mar 6
Christopher Yetter	Son of Richard Yetter; Stepson of Robyn Yetter; Brother of Jessica Yetter & Nicholas Yetter	Mar 5

# 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	<b>Salviaore Carai Bartolotta</b> <i>In Memory of our son, Salvitore Carai Bartolotta</i>
♥ Caroline Frisby	<b>Joel Frisby</b> <i>You are our treasure. Love, Mom &amp; Brothers</i>
♥ Randal and Kim Szoke	<b>Tracy Szoke</b> <i>10 years too many!! We love and miss you Tracy. Love You, Mom, Dad, Trish &amp; Nikita</i>
♥ Mary Ann Morgan	<b>Richard Melcher</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>
♥ Eugene, Dawn & Jamie Delong; Dave Kaufman & Jill Lichty	<b>Mary Jane Kaufman</b> <i>In Loving Memory</i>

# Donations and Contributions

## TCF Lehigh Valley Contributors

- ★ *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*

- ★ *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.

### ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY

*May there always be work for your hands to do  
 May your purse always carry a shilling or two  
 May the sun always play on your windowpane  
 May a rainbow chase after each spot of rain  
 May the hand of a friend always be near you  
 May god fill your heart with gladness and cheer you*

*An Irish Folk Blessing*



# The Big Surprise

## I SURVIVED!

by Martha Honn  
Bereaved Mom  
BP/USA, So. IL Chapter  
Written 7-11-06

Prior to my son Cameron's death I thought that if something happened to one of my children I would just die or perhaps go insane. I'd heard other people say similar things, so I knew that other parents felt the same way. Now that I think about it, none of those parents had ever experienced the death of a child. I suppose all we were really saying was that we felt so much love for our children that we couldn't imagine living without them.

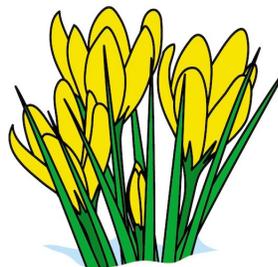
On June 4, 1999 I received the call all parents hope they never receive. I was informed that my sixteen-year-old son Cameron had been in an accident and that I should come to the hospital. It was there that I was informed that Cameron hadn't survived the accident.

During the next few days I was asked to make decisions at the worst time in my life and I made them with the help of my two surviving children and the man who is now my husband. I realized that these were the last things I would do for my son. I existed in a funny place. I was aware of picking out clothes for Cameron. It was strange because I hadn't picked out Cameron's clothes for him in several years. We picked out a casket for Cameron. How weird that felt. It didn't seem real, yet on some level I knew it was very real. I just couldn't believe what had happened, yet I knew it wasn't a nightmare. We planned the funeral. It was held at the high school gym where Cameron had played basketball and attended the homecoming and prom. We picked out songs for his funeral. His sister said we should play "Time of Your Life" by Greenday because she remembered her brother going through the house singing that song. We went to the visitation. I was not prepared to see my son in a casket. So many people came. It was comforting to know that so many people loved Cameron. The air in the gym was heavy with sadness. It was so painful, yet at the same time I felt numb. My daughter and I both spoke at Cameron's funeral. After all, we knew him better than any minister did. That night we went back to the cemetery by ourselves. As I looked at his grave I still couldn't believe he was dead. How could I live without Cameron? This was not how it was supposed to go. Children are supposed to bury their parents. My heart felt big and heavy and it hurt. Prior to Cameron's death I didn't realize your heart could physically hurt from mental and emotional pain. My heart was broken and the

pain was mental as well as physical. I lived through the funeral because I had to attend to the task of burying Cameron, but I figured I would die soon. After all, that's what I'd always heard people say. **The big surprise-I survived!** Several months later I was standing in my kitchen when it felt as if my heart was being squeezed. I thought, "so I'm going to die in my kitchen." I waited, but I didn't die. I survived. Perhaps I just wanted to die to escape the pain. Time has passed and I have learned to live with the pain caused by the death of my child. I have learned that the heart can withstand far more pain than I would ever have thought possible and still keep beating. I have learned to love Cameron as much in death as I loved him in life. He is still my son and I am still his mom.

About four years after Cameron's death, I was at the cemetery cleaning around his grave when a lady I knew came over and started talking. We visited a little bit and then she said, "I'd just die if something happened to one of my children or my grandchildren." I responded by saying, "only people who have never experienced the death of their child say that." As I stood there watching her walk away I thought, "**I used to be one of those people.**"

**Martha Honn's journey through grief began on June 4, 1999 when her youngest child, sixteen-year-old Cameron Smith died instantly in an automobile accident. Cameron was a front seat passenger in a car driven by a friend on the first night of summer vacation. They encountered a severe rainstorm and the car hydroplaned and crashed into a concrete sign post.**



## *Believe*

*Crocuses poke their heads through the crusty snow to let us know the long, bleak winter is ending and spring will come again. So, too, the long bleak winter of your aching, breaking heart will end and spring will come again one day.*

*Be patient - but believe it - your spring will come again.*

*Betty Stevens, TCF Baltimore, MD*

## A Different Place

By Ruth Lee-Knight TCF Saskatoon SK

Time heals all things  
They tell me  
I know it isn't true  
But haven't the heart  
To say so  
They mean well

People bring platitudes  
They don't have more to offer  
It's not their fault  
For their efforts  
I bless them with silence  
And a weary trace of smile

I welcome those sincere souls  
But they can't understand  
How I feel  
How I am  
I reach up to them  
From my ice flow

I want to make contact  
With their safe shore  
But it can never be  
And I know this  
I can come to rest  
Beside them for a moment

Maybe longer  
But I know I will be  
Drawn away again  
By the stronger harsher  
Current that has me  
Forever in its icy grip

But they can't know this  
Their sense incomplete  
They know only  
What they have experienced  
They work - spend - play  
Full of pale concerns and causes

They have their little worries  
These people on safe shores  
Their world intact  
I lived among them once  
My life like theirs  
Not seeing a gathering storm

I was full of small concerns  
Had my little worries  
I once told others  
Time heals all  
Before I learned  
It isn't true.

## Go Easy on People Who Say Stupid Things

#36 taken from Healing a Parent's Grieving Heart-100 Practical Ideas after Your Child Dies by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D.

I'm sure you've realized by now that people don't know what to say to a grieving parent. Often they say the wrong things:

"Time heals all wounds."

"God wouldn't give you more than you can handle" "At least you had her as long as you did"

"You can have another child"

"Now you have an angel in heaven"

"You'll grow so much stronger because of this"

"I know how you feel"

Most of these people are well-intentioned. They truly don't realize how phrases like these diminish your unique and significant loss. Perhaps instead of getting angry at them, you can keep in mind that they are, in fact, trying to help. How many hurtful things did you inadvertently say to mourners before your loss? As Maya Angelou wrote, "You did what you knew how to do and when you knew better, you did better."

Sometimes entering into an honest deeper discussion with such people about what the death has really been like for you is a way to break through the clichés, helping them as well as you.

**CARPE DIEM:**

Try talking with your partner (or a close friend) about the hurtful remarks others sometimes make. Say, "Don't you hate it when people say..." This conversation may help you express your feelings of hurt and frustration.

## Numbers

Susan B Borrowman, TCF Kingston, ON

Yesterday this woman spoke to me  
About a lady whose son had died.

Killed. Traffic. Fifteen.

"When?" I asked.

The woman threw back her head  
And pondered the simple question.

"Twenty-seven years ago."

And I thought back four -

To a three year old.

"Funny," I said,

"There doesn't seem to be much difference In numbers."

## A Name for My Pain

By June Williams-Muecke  
TCF Houston West, TX

I have given a name to my pain -

it's called "Longing."

I long for what was,  
and what might have been

I long for his touch and smell of sweat;

I long to hold him one more time.

I long to look on his beautiful face  
and impress it upon my memories and heart.

I long to return to the day before  
and protect him from his death.

I long to take his place,  
so he may live and have sons too.

I long for time to pass much faster,  
so my longing and pain will lessen.

Will they?

***The sun is still shining,  
the sky is still blue,  
but life here just isn't the same  
without you.***

*Found inscribed on a tombstone*

## Would They Come Back?

By Bea Kroon - TCF, Bradenton, FL

We miss them so, but would they come back?

When I see the beauty of the birds soaring ecstatically in the sky, somehow claiming the beauty as their own; I watch them carefully, sometimes they are playfully cutting into the wind to forge in their direction of choice.

I think of our loved ones up in heaven, and I feel they are as happy as the birds soaring and dipping and floating with wings spread wide.

There too, however, they have important work to do: Greeting the new loved ones into the kingdom of heaven and acting as God's angels to watch.

I sense that they wouldn't come back if given a choice. It would be like a caged bird who had had his wings clipped to protect him from flying outside into an uncaring world: Walking on the floor in stoic resignation.

## The Connection

By Jana K. Shell, TCF Annapolis MD

When I'm walking in the sunshine,  
I'm walking in your love.  
When I'm walking in the rain,  
Your tears fall from above.

Your laughter is the birds,  
In song outside my window.  
Your spirit passes by,  
Each time I bear the wind blow.



 When I smell the blooming flower,  
Your fragrance lingers there.  
end in the waters of reflections  
Your face is shining fair.

You come to see me many ways,  
Each one different from before.  
In the rainbow shines your eyes,  
Your whisper I hear, As the waves brush the shore.

Through our bond of love,  
This connection will always be  
A special part of you,  
And a special strength to me.

# Sibling Page

## A Sister's Lament

Excerpted from My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Piccoul

"There should be a statute of limitations on grief. A rule book that says it is all right to wake up crying, but only for a month. That after forty two days you will no longer turn with your heart racing, certain you have heard her call out your name. That there will be no fine imposed if you feel the need to clean out her desk, take her artwork from the refrigerator, turn over a school portrait you pass if only because it cuts you fresh again to see it. That it is okay to measure the time she has been gone, the way we once measured her birthdays..... She still takes me by surprise. Like nearly a year after her death when my mother came home with a roll of film she's just developed of my high school graduation. We sat down at the kitchen table, shoulder to shoulder, trying not, to mention as we looked at all our double-wide grins that there was someone missing from the photo.

And then, as if we'd conjured her, the last picture was of her. It had been that long since we had used the camera, plain and simple. She was on a beach towel, holding out one hand toward the photographer, trying to get whoever it was to stop taking the picture

mother let me have that picture. But I didn't frame it; I put it into an envelope and sealed it and stuffed it far back into a corner drawer of a filing cabinet. It's there, just in case one of these days I start to lose her.

There might be a morning when I wake up and her face isn't the first thing I see. Or a lazy August afternoon when I can't quite recall anymore where the freckles were on her right shoulder. Maybe one of these days, I will not be able to listen to the sound of snow falling and hear her footsteps."

## When My Sibling Died I Felt...

that a part of me died and that I was all alone

very angry at everything

my childhood had died, too

angry and sad that my family life as I had known it was over

terrified that I would lose someone else that I loved  
cheated that I didn't have a brother  
angry at how it happened  
alone  
afraid to get close and let anyone in  
terrible  
I wanted to cry  
angry, depressed, confused, drained,  
worried  
why did it happen to him and not someone else  
I wanted him back

Author Unknown

## To Honor You

To honor you, I get up everyday and take a breath  
And start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew  
your smile  
And the way your eyes twinkled with mischief  
and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked,  
And sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows  
rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold  
nothing back,  
Risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You were my light, my heart, my gift of love from the  
very highest source. So everyday, I vow to make a  
difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

Connie F. Kiefer Byrd  
In Loving Memory of Jordan Alexander Kiefer  
8/88 - 12/05  
from the TCF Atlanta online sharing

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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.

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER  
P.O. BOX 149  
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Enclosed is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Lehigh Valley  Carbon County  Easton

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

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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**

## 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](mailto:TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com)

or by mail sent to TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014



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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.

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

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