



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



July 2015

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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

July 13 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

August 10 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

September 14 Monthly Meeting - General Sharing

Other Local TCF Chapters Meetings

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

Infant Loss Cathy McDonald... 610 391-1474

Only Child..... Shelly Garst.....484 241-5396

Suicide..... John & Maria Szabo..... 610 866-5468

Addiction..... Nancy Howe..... 484-863-4324

Homicide..... Ginger Renner.....610-967-5113

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News, Events & Announcements

June Picnic

On June 13th, TCF members, family and friends gathered to share good food and enjoy the fellowship at our annual memorial balloon release and picnic. We enjoyed a variety of delicious food and desserts. After lunch we wrote personal notes to their loved ones on their balloons, Donna Davidson read the poem "Balloons of Love" and we released our balloons in unison and watched as they floated up into the bright blue sky.

Thank you to all that attended and shared the beautiful day. And a very special thank you to our volunteers, who made this event possible.

Watch your mail for a letter from us.

We are in the process of updating our member records and have sent mailings out to those of you who we may have not heard from in awhile. If you receive a letter please fill out the enclosed form and return promptly. If we do not receive your completed form back within 30 days we will assume that you no longer wish to continue as a member and you will be removed from the mailing list. While you can always be added back on it may take a few months before your mailings start again. So we encourage you to take the few minutes required to fill out the form and drop it in the mail. Thank You

New Member

Lehigh Valley Edward Gaydos, Jr - Son - Edward C Gaydos, III

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 at TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com or by mail sent to TCF Lehigh Valley, ATTN: Newsletter Editor, PO Box 149, Bath, PA 18014



Are you moving or going on vacation and having your mail held or forwarded?

Please remember to inform the Newsletter Editor (see contact information above) of your new address or if your mail is being held or forwarded. Newsletters are mailed bulk mail and the Post Office will not forward or hold bulk mail. It is returned to us at our expense. If your newsletter is returned to us and we are not notified your name will be removed from the mailing list.

Newsletter Submissions

Love Gifts, articles and poetry must be received by the first of the month preceding the desired publication month. Example: Submission for the July newsletter must be submitted by June 1st. 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](mailto:TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com)



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, cancelations and member forum.

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

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.

A Plea From Your Editor

Dear Readers,

I have been the editor of the Newsletter for nearly 10 years. I took on this role as a way to honor my son, Anthony's, memory while giving back to an organization that I am grateful for.

Over the years I have also taken on the management of the member database of the Lehigh Valley, Easton and Carbon County chapters; designed and manage the TCF Lehigh Valley website, manage our social media presence, coordinate the annual picnic and candle light remembrance services and liaise with TCF Regional, National and outside non-profits and businesses. With all these responsibilities as well as my role as a wife, mother and daughter I am nearing the point of burnout. I hope that this does not sound like whining or patting myself on the back, neither of which is my intent. My intent is to let you know that I need help, because I know I cannot continue much longer as I have been.

Right now my main area of concern is the newsletter, because it is the most time intensive. There are several different jobs involved in producing the newsletter:

- ❖ *Reviewing and selecting materials for inclusion in the newsletter* - This involves finding appropriate and helpful material (articles and poetry) from our archives, member contributions and outside sources.
- ❖ *Typing* - Typing and proof reading selected material
- ❖ *Computer skills* - Layout of the newsletter in a way that renders it attractive and readable; Creation of a PDF file of completed newsletter and emailing to printer.
- ❖ *Maintaining member database* - Keeping member information up to date
- ❖ *Mailing* - Picking up newsletter from printer, stamping envelopes; folding, labeling, & stuffing; sorting and mailing of the newsletter (delivering to Lehigh Valley post office bulk mail center).

I have been doing most of these jobs but cannot continue to do so. Most other TCF chapters have a committee who work together to produce the newsletter and I believe forming a committee and dividing the workload is the best course of action to keep the newsletter going.

If you have any of the above skills and wish to keep the newsletter in the hands of those who rely on it please contact me by email at tcfnewseditor@gmail.com or by phone at 484-891-0823

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kathy Collins

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

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.

July Birthdays

Joseph Chanitz	Son of John & Ruth Chanitz	Jul 16
Lorriane Corbo	Daughter of Debbie Goodman; Sister of Lisa Corbo	Jul 13
Sarah Davidson	Daughter of Dean & Donna Davidson; Sister of Nicholas Davidson	Jul 10
Denise Deiter	Daughter of Franklin & Lucille Reinhard; Sister of Cheryl Ann McCue	Jul 3
Darlene Fitch	Sister of Diane Lehr & Gary Fitch	Jul 20
Kelly Gallagher	Daughter of Tom & Sherry Gallagher;	Jul 14
Luke Hahn	Son of Dana Hahn	Jul 7
John Leonard, Jr	Son of John & Jule Leonard; Brother of Karen	Jul 27
Mitchell "Mitch" Lloyd	Son of Sandra Lloyd; Brother of Douglas,Randy & Fran Lloyd	Jul 27
Michael Longyore	Son of Charlotte Longyore	Jul 6
Joseph McGouldrick	Son of Pat McGouldrick; Brother of Jennifer McGouldrick	Jul 24
Ed McNally	Son of Don & Connie McNally; Brother of Sean McNally	Jul 29
Buddy Pearson	Son of Bob & Shelly Garst	Jul 12
Bradley Peters	Son of Robert & Anne Peters, Jr.; Brother of Jessica Mohn & Morgan Peters	Jul 22
Michael Powers	Son of Richard & Margaret Powers; Brother of Billy, Richie, Tara & Ryan Powers	Jul 9
Pablo Rivera, Jr	Son of Beverly Rivera; Brother of Jeremy & Jesserina Rivera	Jul 10
Cory Ross	Son of Kathy Ross; Brother of Michael Ross	Jul 24
Aaron Schaible	Son of Linda Stewart; Brother of Andy Schaible & the late Jennifer Schaible	Jul 30
Ronald "Ronnie" Sherbaum, Jr.	Son of Ronald & Donna Sherbaum, Sr.; Brother of Daniel & Joseph Sherbaum	Jul 17
Jeanmarie Siedlecki-Moyer	Daughter of Joe & Monica Siedlecki; Sister of MaryAnn & Michele Siedlecki & the late Joey Siedlecki	Jul 30
Christopher Stasurak	Son of Paul & Adriane Stasurak	Jul 10
Casey Stengel	Son of Casey & Jane Stengel; Brother of Chrissy,Sarah,Lisa & Mike Stengel	Jul 22
Kyle Strohl	Son of Ron & Gail Strohl; Brother of Jennifer Grimes	Jul 10
Chad Wagner	Son of Karen and Diana Wagner	Jul 30
Hunter Wolfe	Son of Tony Wolfe & Kimberly B Sargent; Brother of Carter & Olivia Wolfe & Katarina Sargent	Jul 23

Birthday and Anniversary dates can be especially difficult. Please keep the parents, grandparents and siblings of the following children in your thoughts

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

July Anniversaries

Megan Alisio	Daughter of Nick and Tina Alisio	Jul 12
William Bender	Son of Dean and Sheri Tretter	Jul 8
Timothy Bogart	Son of Nancy and Bill Bogart; Brother of Katelyn Bogart & Ryan Bogart	Jul 4
Hunter Bremmer	Son of David Bremmer; Brother of Heather Bremmar; Grandson of John Bremmar, Jr	Jul 12
Sarah Davidson	Daughter of Dean and Donna Davidson; Sister of Nicholas Davidson	Jul 10
Sheila DeBoer	Daughter of Barbara DeBoer & the late Henry DeBoer; Sister of Leslie and Cory DeBoer	Jul 27
Brian DeLong	Son of Lenny and Linda Fritzing	Jul 4
Mark Dilts, Jr	Son of Mark and Joy Dilts; Brother of Beth Dilts	Jul 8
Alexandra Dixon	Daughter of Albert and Joan Dixon; Sister of Zack Dixon	Jul 31
Eric Fenstermacher	Son of Rick and Kathleen Fenstermacher; Brother of Heather Fenstermacher	Jul 31
Sgt. Christopher Geiger	Son of George and Patricia Geiger; Brother of Roseanne Reenock; Michael, Terrance, David & Timothy Geiger	Jul 9
Eric Graver	Son of Mary L Graver	Jul 9
Luke Hahn	Son of Dana Hahn	Jul 5
James "Jimmy" Hotz	Son of James and Elizabeth Hotz	Jul 4
Molly Hude	Daughter of Rex and Yvonne Hude; Grand daughter of Nancy Kornafel	Jul 2
Allan Itterly	Son of Richard and Jeanette Itterly; Brother of Albert and James	Jul 8
Colleen Kilker	Daughter of Mark and Kathleen Kilker; Sister of Meghan, Bridget and Mark Kilker	Jul 23
Dylan Krum	Son of David & Lora Krum; Brother of the late Gavin Krum; Grandson of Nevin Krum; and Henry & Shirley Long	Jul 15
David Kunsman	Son of Charles & Joan Kunsman; Brother of Sherry Flanagan, Sandra Kunsman, the late Walter Alfonso & Charles Kunsman, Jr	Jul 15
Kristin Kuser	Daughter of Tim and Elizabeth Kuser	Jul 31
Michael Longyore	Son of Charlotte Longyore	Jul 31
Francis McGaughran, Jr	Son of Nancy McGaughran; Brother of Kelli, Brian & Michael	Jul 8
Doreen Meyers Ortiz	Daughter of Terry and Angeline Meyers; Sister of Dwayne T. Meyers	Jul 13
Amanda Mohr	Daughter of Beverly Mohr & Rodney Mohr	Jul 22
Valeri Powers	Sister of Stephen, Raymond & Gerald Taranto	Jul 31
Peter Radocha	Son of Lucille Radocha; Brother of Frank Radocha, Jr & Gina Sacco	Jul 1
Joseph Siedlecki, Jr	Son of Joe and Monica Siedlecki; Brother of MaryAnn & Michele Siedlecki and the late Jeanmarie Siedlecki Moyer	Jul 9
Matthew Snyder	Son of Robert and Elizabeth Snyder; Brother of Megan and Jesse Snyder	Jul 10
Christopher Stasurak	Son of Paul and Adriane Stasurak	Jul 10
Keith Storat	Son of Richard and Susan Storat; Brother of Todd & Greg	Jul 22
Benjamin Thomas	Son of Kathy Thomas; Brother of James Thomas	Jul 13
Travis "Bo" Tkach	Son of Jim and Sandi Tkach; Brother of Tristin & Tyler Tkach	Jul 20
Steven Winkler	Son of Ellen Winkler; Brother of Jennifer; Grandson of Arnold Abramowitz	Jul 26
Hunter Wolfe	Son of Tony Wolfe & Kimberly B Sargent; Brother of Carter & Olivia Wolfe & Katarina Sargent	Jul 7

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
♥ Linda Stewart	Aaron M. Schaible <i>Happy Birthday Daddy! Love , Ryan, Alana, & Kaleb</i>
♥ Liz Snyder	Matt Snyder <i>Missing you a lot ! Love, Mom & Dad</i>
♥ David Bremmer	Hunter Bremmer <i>In Loving Memory, Dad</i>
♥ Yvonne Hude	Molly Hude <i>We miss your smile & laughter so much but we know you are with us. Love Mom & Dad, Grammy & Mike</i>
♥ Nancy Kornfel	Molly Hude <i>2 yrs and still missing you, Love Grammy, Mom & Dad</i>
♥ Karen & Tom Bailey	Mark Adam Bailey & Betty Thompson <i>In Loving Memory</i>

Donations and Contributions

TCF Lehigh Valley Contributors

- ★ *Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown for meeting room and drinks*
- ★ *Mary Ann Donuts, Allentown for meeting snacks*
- ★ *Giant Food Store Employees, 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 Griever's Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all grief is not created equal and each griever has certain unalienable Rights.

That among these are:

Life

A broken heart that now beats for two can honor and respect those gone by living also for two.

Liberty

From the well-meaning, not always helpful advice and opinions.

Freedom to grieve in any way we choose.

The Pursuit of Happiness (and Peace)

To one day, in our own time, acknowledge that pain can coexist with joy.

That the journey to peace honors those who have gone before us.

Happiness is not a destination, it is in the pursuit that we find meaning.

Signed this day of July 4, 2014 by Tanya Lord

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Fireworks Are Like the Love in Our Hearts

By Jane Ojo, TCF Central Oregon Chapter

July brings central Oregonians lingering blue skies, lazy afternoons and the Fourth of July celebration, complete with the grand fireworks finale bolting from the top of Pilot Butte. This was one of my son's favorite holidays. When he was six, I asked him why fireworks were so special to him. He said, "The lights explode in the dark and make the whole sky light up! The fireworks are like the love in our hearts. We should always try to spread our love out to others."

Profound wisdom comes from the lips of children! From that summer on, in my mind, fireworks have been a triumphant testament of love's enduring power and wonder. I miss my son, Joshua, terribly. I comfort myself knowing that his wisdom and kindness were precious gifts in my life. Wherever you are on the Fourth of July, I hope that the splendor of sparkling fireworks comforts you and reminds you that the love you hold for your child is the light that is able to shine through you for others.

We all have known grief well, yet as Compassionate Friends, we need not walk alone in the darkness. We can

lighten the path for each other. Life can cripple and destroy us, but when we gather to share each other's burdens, we are able to gain strength. Love for our children is our common flame; sharing and caring keep the flame alive.



Freedom to Live Takes Time

By Lisa Scully, TCF Orange Park, FL

Summer vacation is traditionally a time for children. Families get together and children are almost always around. This can be difficult for bereaved parents. Seeing children at play can bring back memories of their child, now gone. It may also cause some to regret all those 'kid things our children will never experience.

The Fourth of July can be particularly difficult. Firecrackers, cotton candy, hot dogs and parades; picnics and family reunions - all are a part of our Independence Day celebrations. But we don't feel like celebrating because we are not free. We are prisoners of our grief, our memories and our lost dreams for our children. It is important to remember you do not have to join in these celebrations. If you choose to join in, you do not have to be the life of the party. It takes time for your heart to heal; it will get easier. In time you will be free from some of your pain; free to participate and enjoy life again. Until then, be gentle to yourself and give yourself time to heal.



Where Is That Spark?

By David Ziv TCF Warrington, PA

Where is that spark, that sparkle,
That has vanished from my life?
Like dead champagne, flat, inert
No effervescence, none at all
Will it return?

Now and then I tell myself
That I'm doing well and getting by
But in my heart I must confess,
The magic and the music, once mine to hold
No longer fill the air

The only panacea I am told
Is time and time alone
And reaching back again
Into the love and sweet memories we shared
Just you and I

Where is that spark, that sparkle,
That has vanished from my life?
Elusive as it is, it may return someday
When we meet again somewhere
Just you and I



Little Blue

By Lora Krum, TCF Carbon County PA

The day had been a long one, and it was already quite dark. Still, he picked up the keys, and after staring at them for a long moment, he sighed and walked down the yard where he made his way into the garage. Once there, he opened up every door of the little blue car, as well as the trunk. Quietly, slowly and methodically, he removed every item which seemed to have "had its place" in this little "workshop on wheels." All of the tools and gadgets, all of the loose change, the sunglasses, and those "little things" which others would see as purely trash...little candy and gum wrappers, receipts from special purchases of toys and electronics, that had been there for quite a few years.

Thoughtfully, he placed the larger items on the shelves in the garage. Then, after holding those crumbled wrappers and outdated receipts in the palm of his hand, he stared at the trash can but instead clenched his hand tightly around this collection of cellophane, foil and brittle paper until it formed a tightly compact ball which he then placed in his front pocket.

In the chill of the late evening, he closed the trunk and 3 doors of the car and then walked around to the driver's side door so that he could once again sit in the driver's seat and put the key in the ignition. All alone, he drove to the car wash where he vacuumed away tiny pebbles and cookie crumbs that had remained on the backseat floor for quite some time. He wiped away finger prints from areas of chrome which had once been smudged, and then a hand print that had been on the one window. In an instant, all of those little messes were gone and it was now just like any other clean interior.

As he drove "Little Blue" into the car wash stall for one final bath, he wiped off the dashboard, console, door handles and steering wheel. Memories were flooding through his mind. First of the day when two little boys excitedly ran up to this shiny little car in the dealer's lot and exclaimed that this was THE ONE! How they hopped in and smiled from ear to ear as they took it for a test drive. How they convinced their dad that no other car would fit him like this one!

Then, his mind was filled of visions of pulling up at the school every afternoon where two boys would skip happily to the car, and fling their book bags along with them as they scurried into the backseat. After being buckled they'd instantly start their daily dose of teasing and rituals. They may not head right home... Perhaps there was something to pick up at the hardware store, or on really good days if the boys had some pocket money burning a hole, they'd head to Wal-Mart and search the toy and electronics aisles for that just right trinket of the day.

They'd get home and park that little blue car *aside* of the garage, and once getting backpacks and lunch boxes into the house, would hurry right back out to their favorite little domain. Three men...one big, and two small. Tinkering with stuff that only guys could appreciate. Taking scooters and riding laps around the perimeter of the garage. When the weather was warmer, there were chalk drawn roads from inside of the garage straight out through the drive area. Huge cardboard boxes from some appliance had always remained carefully folded and stored...and then would come out and opened up into a little structure, complete with cut out windows and doors. Some days it was a house, other days a school. Other days it was a fast-food restaurant with a drive up window (or in their case a ride up window as they pedaled their bikes over to order their imaginary food.)

When I would be heading home from school, my thoughts were always about what I'd see my three guys doing when I'd drive up the alley towards the garage. Sometimes a couple of helmeted bike riders (safety was always important) would meet me at the end of the road. Or perhaps they would "flag me in" or direct traffic, with big smiles on their faces. I can still feel the warmth in my heart as I imagine those little clips of loving, special memories.

As I headed in to the house (after parking *outside* of the garage, aside of Little Blue) the three men would continue with their rituals and activities. So much stemming from the initial act, each day, of pulling in to home in Little Blue.

As I direct my thoughts back to *him*, the intended subject of this story, it is once again impossible to not have everything become intertwined. Somehow, every connection and every action that is now a memory is always a memory of "the four of us."

This Dad's gentle thoughts now drift, as he pulls out of the car wash and heads back toward home. He's now thinking of how things would progress at home, once they left the sacred garage and headed in for dinner, homework, showers and family time together. His heart weeps as he remembers heading into their rooms, sitting on the edge of their beds, reciting prayers along with them and then kissing them goodnight, as he'd tap their pillow and partially shut the door, so that the hallway light could filter through for them. How after another long and busy day, he'd once again make his way down the yard, and pull that little blue car into the garage for the night, where everything would once again be closed up and secure for the evening...and his boys, his family, were securely resting for another night.

On his way home, he slowly guides the Little Blue car down the now familiar narrow roadways, and then stops

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

and sits. He shares one last little moment with Little Blue in a place and time where there are now rituals full of remembrance and longing. In the clear, starlit night, he stares out of the car window as his 12 year companion's engine rumbles a bit more roughly than it did on the day he drove it off of the lot. The soft moonlight shimmers down on the two granite stones, and seeing their names and images of their faces, he tries to imagine what their voices would sound like as now young men. He thinks of the memories which never happened. That these two sons never took driving lessons, or asked for the keys to take their dates to a movie. Those often taken for granted moments this dad will never know is only a small part of the torture he feels each day, in knowing of all of he tomorrows that will never come.

He silently tells those precious boys how much he loves and misses them. He silently tells them how grateful he is for every moment they shared together. So many of them in that old, little, blue car.

A deep sigh as he puts it back in "drive" and he slowly, silently rolls back out through the gated entrance, down the street, down the alley, and back into the garage. Stepping out of the door to the yard, he sees the dark and quiet house with no soft light filtering out of a hallway window. Everything is once again closed, locked and secure. But, as he walks into the back door with the key now separated from the ring and places it on top of the title on the kitchen counter, he is very much aware of how nothing will ever be the same.

Feelings

By Sally Migliaccio, West Islip, NY

Her clothing is folded in tidy array
How it was left is how it will stay.

Her desolate dresser silently weeps
In the still of the night, when everyone sleeps.

The closet continues to guard and protect
Items hanging on hangers, forlorn with neglect

And the bed she adored, where she bounced high with glee
Cries invisible tears when no one can see.

The bathtub she splashed in will not again see
Someone who will love it as fiercely as she.

It sits idle now, no longer a "star"
And asks (in its way) if I know where you are.

The house that she lived in, the yard where she played
Are missing the landscape of love that she laid.

Her numerous playthings, her once favorite toy
Languish mournfully now without any joy.

This dwelling called "home" has relinquished its heart,
That gift from the one who was forced to depart.

Now it withers from grief - its spirit extinct
And we watch through our tears
as the walls seem to shrink.

Our angel was gone in the blink of an eye
She took the light with her that day in July.

Yet now there are times when my heart feels her near
Then I know she's not left me.. her love is still here.

***As we grieve the loss of our children and one another's,
we begin to find a different kind of love than one we ever expected***

*Rosalie Baker
TCF Rochester NY*

Sibling Page

Looking to the Light

By Rhonda St. John
TCF Grosse Pointe Woods, MI

It is difficult to articulate thoughts and feelings about a life-altering event such as the death of a brother. For a long time, the only thing I could do to find any solace was to read about the tragic experiences of others. I was often moved to tears, so strong was my identification with their anguish.

I never suffered from denial. My brother's death was always a very tangible thing. It was my grief. I owned it. In accepting it, I feel that the healing was somehow expedited. I don't mean to imply that I am now returned to the unaffected individual that existed prior to his death, that my acceptance of his death is now clear.

I don't think you ever "get over" such a loss. What happens is that incorporation of that loss into your daily life. In my case, that process brought a number of changes in attitude and priority which, as it turned out, were in my best interest. I had become centered on myself and my career to such an extent that I was armed against life's disappointments. When meeting me, it became clear to others that "career" was what is was all about. I keep pictures of my brother all around so that I can see him several times each day. In doing so, I am alternately both comforted and saddened. But mostly, I am comforted. I know he is in heaven and I believe he looks in on me and is aware of the magical events that have taken place in my life. When I look upward through my kitchen skylights, I can see the sky and the top of the big old elm in the lights. I talk to him in my heart and I know he is near. I still shed my tears, for I miss him and will the remainder of my life.

Given a choice, I wish he had never become ill and that he hadn't ended his life. Today, some two years after his death, I can accept it and understand his choice. The love we feel for a loved one never has to leave us, even though our loved one has departed physically.

Wherever we look, You are there.
You are the light on the water.
You are the blossom on the tree.
You are a thought and you are a feeling.
Wherever we are. You are.

Martha Dubinsky, TCF Rockland, NY

Smile

By Chelsey McHale Phoenix, AZ

By definition, grief is deep sorrow especially caused by someone's death
To me, grief is a lifelong suffering that can slowly deplete but never goes away, a pain that is so strong, yet so beautiful, as our love for them shines through the broken parts

It's every emotion you can think of,
felt for the rest of your days on this earth
It hurts and it hurts

But remember, it could be worse
You ask how this is when you feel such remorse. Well, you could look back and not feel grateful about one memory
They say when you grieve so much for someone, it means you had true happiness in your life

So grief is bittersweet
And nothing I say will make it all okay
I know it's easier to wallow in the pain than keep it small and contained,
But we talk with others who share our pain and are in that club we never wanted to join

I know sometimes it's easier to destroy ourselves than it is to heal ourselves
But when you start to feel the guilt
And when your world starts to tilt
As hard as it may be, think of a good memory
It may make you cry, it may make you ask why, it may make that heaviness on your chest feel heavier.
But remember to breathe and remember to smile
Your loved one watches you from above,
Feeling your pain and your unconditional love.
But we owe it to them to not always be so sad.
We owe it to them to look back on positive memories we had.
But every so often, subside the tears,
and once in a while,
look up, and give them a smile

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.

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

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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...)



2015 Memorial Balloon Release

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