



# The Compassionate Friends

## Lehigh Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Volume 38 Issue 10

Copyright © 2024 The Compassionate Friends, Inc

October

TCF, Lehigh Valley  
Chapter 1562

Phone  
484-891-0823

Email:  
tcflehighvalley@gmail.com

Website  
www.lehighvalleytcf.org

Facebook Page  
facebook.comTCFlehighvalley

Pinterest  
The Compassionate Friends,  
Lehigh Valley Chapter

Steering Committee  
Brian & Kathleen Collins,  
Dean & Donna Davidson,  
Gene DeLong, George Geiger,  
Brenda Solderitch

Newsletter Editor/  
Database & Website  
Manager  
Kathleen Collins  
TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com  
484-891-0823

Treasurer  
Brenda Solderitch

TCF National  
Headquarters  
877- 969-0010 (toll-free)  
www.compassionatefriends.  
org

**Our Mission:** When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

#### You're Invited

**The Lehigh Valley chapter meets at Bethany Wesleyan Church, Dining Room, Cherryville, PA, the second Monday of the month at 7pm**

Our support group meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and mature siblings. Group participation is confidential and voluntary.

For information about meetings, directions to our meeting space or to be added to the meeting text reminder list call or text 484-891-0823

Note: For the safety of all attendees

- Please do not attend if you feel ill, were exposed to Covid, the Flu, or tested positive in the last 14 days

#### Next Meeting Monday, October 14

*Note: Meeting Cancellations will be posted on the chapter Facebook page and a text sent to all on the meeting notification text list.*

#### 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 walk beside you if you allow us to. We have no easy answers or quick fixes, but we care, share and understand. Although our 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.

#### Telephone Friends

Sometimes you may need to talk to someone who cares and understands between meetings. To help we maintain a list of telephone friends. During these times the following members are available to listen, share and offer what support they can.

Infant Loss - Kim Szep -	610-730-3111
Only Child - Shelly Garst -	484-241-5396
Addiction - Nancy Howe -	484-863-4324
Homicide - Ginger Renner -	610-967-5113



*To volunteer as a telephone friend contact the newsletter editor*

#### TCF National Support Resources

The TCF National website has over 35 private Facebook pages and a number of moderated chatrooms. To register for the FB pages or chat rooms go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on the find support tab and then choose online communities.

## Newsletter Notes

**This Newsletter** comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Lehigh Valley Chapter. We hope that it will be of some comfort to you on your grief journey.

### We welcome original stories and poetry

All submissions must include the author's name and your contact information. Send to the newsletter editor

**If you move** please contact the Newsletter Editor with your new address

### Newsletter Editor Contact

- by mail:  
The Compassionate Friends, LV  
C/O Kathleen Collins,  
2971 Pheasant Dr.,  
Northampton, PA 18067
- by phone:  
484-891-0823
- by email:  
TCFNewsEditor@gmail.com

<b>Inside this issue:</b>	
Article - Suggestions for Coping with Your Child's Day	2,4
Love Gifts	3
Our Children Remembered	3
Poem - The Hawk	4
Article - A Death by Suicide	4
Article - A Native American Lesson in Grief	5
Article - A Grandparents Point of View	6
Poems - Double Grief, Bereaved Parents; A Friend	6
<u>Sibling Page</u>	7
Article - Say Their Name	7
Poem - Memories of Your Face	7
Love Gift Form	8

# Monsters Under The Bed

Remember when you were little and the monsters were under your bed. You were afraid to go to bed because you were in the room all alone and the lights were off. If you left the light on you knew you were safe because those monsters were afraid of the light and would not come out. Also you could call dad and he would come in and get down on the floor and scare those bad ole monsters away and you would be safe tonight. If mom came in she would hug you and talk to you in a way only moms knew how to do and you were safe. With the help of mom and dad you got through the days when monsters lurked under your bed.

When my daughter died I found out that those monsters were back and I was afraid to be alone again. This time I could not call mom and dad to come and chase those bad ole monsters away. Mom and Dad did not understand these monsters and anyway they had monsters of their own since it was their grand daughter who died. No I was alone. My wife was beside me, but her monsters were different so she was alone too.

These monsters were a whole new breed. They did not flee when the lights came on. They were not afraid of other people. They just stayed with me and they seemed to attack when ever they wanted to. Their attacks would cause me much pain, sadness, anger, despair, guilt, and many other unpleasant emotions. At first they were attacking many times day and night, it seemed as if I could not get anything done. At work I went through the motions, when I came home at night, I was so worn out emotionally I just sat there and stared at the TV.

That was in March of 1999. Our daughter, Angela, died suddenly on March 22 and it has been a long and bumpy road. My life took many twists and turns as I dealt with my monsters. My wife and I found that we were fighting the same monsters, they were just attacking each of differently. The best thing we found was the Compassionate Friends. At meetings we were allowed to talk about our daughter, how she lived and how she died. We talked about the monsters under our bed. We found out that these monster were under a lot of beds. They attacked the other people who came to the meetings. They caused that very same pain, sadness, guilt, despair, and everything else that we felt in the other people at the meetings.

We found the best thing that we could do to chase away those monsters was to call on our friends, our Compassionate Friends, when the monsters came to attack us. These were people who understood. Just as mom and dad understood our monsters when we were young, now our Compassionate Friends understand our monsters of today.

Our daughter died in 1999 and our son, Brad, died on April 23, 2006. We are still going to Compassionate Friends because we need the time to chase away our monster, but we also see that by being at the meeting we help other parents chase away their own monsters. Our monsters will never go away, they will always be with us because we will always have the love we shared with our children. Maybe what we need to do is make friends with our monsters because if we ever lose them would it mean that the love we shared with our children will also be lost? I never want to lose that love.

*Richard Szczepaniak TCF Enid, OK*

# Our Children Remembered

Please keep the parents, grandparents and siblings of the following children in your thoughts and hearts

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

	Birth	Anniv.
<b>Brian Burke</b> - Son of Rich and Mary Burke ; Brother of Melissa Burke	Jan 3	Oct 9
<b>Christopher Cole</b> - Son of Donald Cole; Brother of Lauren Cole	Oct 10	Sep 10
<b>David DeLong</b> - Son of Gene DeLong & the Late Dawn DeLong; Brother of Jamie DeLong	Oct 23	Dec 7
<b>Jillian Faustner</b> -Daughter of Joan Cottone; Sister of Jennifer, Jessica & James	Aug 7	Oct 21
<b>Oliver Klitsch</b> - Son of Shawn and Abigail Klitsch; Grandson of Mark and Pam Klitsch	Jan 24	Oct 15
<b>Nykolos LaRosa</b> - Son of Shelly Youwakim; Brother of Krystole LaRosa	Sep 25	Oct 28
<b>Andrea Luecke</b> - Daughter of Louise Luecke; Sister of Jennae Luecke	Jan 30	Oct 23
<b>Joseph Mcdonald</b> - Son of Cathy McDonald	Dec 26	Oct 13
<b>Steven Poliquin</b> - Son of Chris and Eva Poliquin; Grandson of Louise Mazza	Oct 8	Feb 23
<b>Christine Rappleyes</b> - Daughter of Wendy Meixell	Oct 12	Nov 20
<b>Deanna Renner</b> - Daughter of Ginger Renner & The late Merle Renner	Oct 11	Oct 22
<b>Scott Rothrock</b> - Son of Larry and Linda Rothrock	Oct 20	Sep 18
<b>Kevin Stewart</b> - Brother of The Late Constance Stewart	Oct 6	Jun 15
<b>David Uecker</b> -Son of Susan Uecker-Bittner & The Late Phillip C. Uecker; Brother of Amanda Uecker-Miernicki	Aug 2	Oct 3
<b>Gilbert Weiss</b> - Brother of Ginger Renner	Nov 17	Oct 22
<b>Adam Wolk</b> - Son of Michael and Sheila Wolk; - Brother of Laura & Sarah Wolk	Aug 1	Oct 22



## Love Gifts, Donations & Contributions



With no fees, our volunteer staffed chapter sustains its mission through the generosity of donations (Love Gifts). Each donation, of any size, allows us to maintain member support, publish our monthly newsletter, and manage chapter expenses. Donations may be given in memory of a child or in memory or in honor of a friend or relative. Gifts are tax deductible. The Love Gift Donation can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

*We thank the following this month for their generosity*

Contributor	Loved One
♥ Pam Klitsch	<b>Oliver Klitsch</b> <i>We miss you more every day our sweet Oliver. Holding you deep in our hearts until we can hold you again in heaven. Love Baba, Pop Pop, Mommy, Vivi, Daddy, Aunt Sissy &amp; Uncle Link</i>
♥ Gene & Jamie Delong	<b>David &amp; Dawn Delong</b> <i>Happy heavenly birthday to Dave and in memory of Dawn, 5 years of missing</i>

*Our thanks to the following for their contributions to the chapter*

*Bethany Wesleyan Church, Cherryville, PA  
For our meeting space*

*The Matt Kush Foundation  
In Memory of Matt Kush*

*United Way Payroll Contributors*

*If a star fell for every time I thought of you,  
the sky would be empty*

*Unknown*

## *...in the autumn*

*Some people love to see the changes  
in the colors of the leaves,  
When the sky is clear and  
dark blue as the sea.*

*They love to smell the oak leaves burning  
But it is then my heart is yearning  
To be with ones I know  
I cannot see.*

*There's something in the autumn  
That makes my heart so heavy,  
I miss them all but know  
they're where they should all be.*

*If I can make it through the winter,  
And see the spring unfold before me,  
Then I'll know once more they're there,  
and wait for me.*

*When the morning sun comes later,  
and the afternoons die early,  
And my spirits drop like leaves  
around my feet.*

*I'm so aware that am mortal  
and I can almost see the portal  
that I will pass through and  
Be evermore complete.*

*Jim O'Neil, TCF, Montgomery, AL*

## **Circle**

How do you bear it all?  
The cry came from a Mother  
Whose son had died only weeks before.  
We were in a circle, looking at her,  
looking around, looking away.  
Tears in our hearts, in our eyes.  
How do we bear it ? I don't know,  
But the circle helps.

*Eva Lager,  
TCF Western Australia*



## **The Talking Pumpkin**

**By Mary Cleckley TCF Atlanta, GA**

Halloween always was a special time at our house. When my son was a year old, my husband got out an old intercom set he had packed away and with its help created a special pumpkin - one that talked! Our son was intrigued by it, as was his sister later and all the neighborhood children who came and discovered our unusual pumpkin. Eventually the word spread and parents came miles out of their way so their children could talk to our pumpkin. We continued that tradition over the years. My husband always handled the chatting with the visitors from his comfortable chair in the den. My job has always been to not only hand out the goodies, but to also make sure the little ones know he's a friendly pumpkin and not to be feared when they come upon him for the first time.

We went through all the stages over the years with our own two children: believing (like in Santa Claus and the Good Fairy), doubting (I'd like to believe, but something's all wrong here and that voice sounds awfully familiar), discovery (If I look under the leaves, I can see where the wires come out of the house!), to joining in on the charade and even speaking for the pumpkin sometimes.

That first Halloween after our son died, we found it was no longer a favorite night and we couldn't bring out the talking pumpkin. We had a plastic one instead of the usual carved, real pumpkin, intending to get through the night as quickly as possible. The memories were too painful, but we had failed to realize how much the children would miss him. They approached our house as usual, yelling hello to the pumpkin and were disappointed when he didn't answer. I told the kids he had laryngitis and they left candy for him, to help him get better soon.

The next year, we returned his voice and have had him ever since. I relive many memories on Halloween night, as I see everything from the little ones with stars in their eyes as they earnestly talk with the pumpkin and believe, to the blasé older ones who have a need to let the world know they're too old for such foolishness!

I know we are creating memories and some years down the road, a young father or mother will tell their child about a talking pumpkin who only came out on Halloween night at the Cleckley's. That thought has helped make Halloween a special night again for us; one that gets us in touch once more with our children in all stages of childhood. The memories of old and simpler times do bathe and soothe the painful scars of more recent ones. For you, too, I hope.



## The Grief of a Parent who has Lost an Infant

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should the child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for parents. No parent ever expects to outlive his child; the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to his parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant.

**Shame and Guilt** - Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman. "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.

**No Memories** - Parents may only have "souvenirs of the occasion" (birth certificate, I.D. bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older, they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.

**Loneliness in Grief** - It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is newborn, they may give the impression you are grieving unnecessarily, they hope you can "forget this baby" and "have another one."

**Neglected Fathers** - Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby, too.

**Mothers vs. Fathers** - Since the mother has bonded with her child during the pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father's, who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

*Claire McGaughey and Sue Shelley  
TCF St. Louis, MO*

## The Scent of my Baby

When we think of babies  
We think of that certain scent.  
The scent that newborns seem to have,  
or me - that came and went.  
The scent of my baby  
is a different one.  
It's not shampoo or baby powders  
It's not that "newborn scent".  
But that of fresh cut flowers.  
For God chose my son to be with Him  
And leave me down below.  
So the flowers I place upon his grave  
Are the only scent I know.  
So when I smell a flower  
My son always comes to mind  
And the delicate scent of a flower  
Seems to suit my son just fine.  
For my son touched and brightened my life  
Just like a flower may.  
And the true beauty of a flower  
Was my son in every way.

*Debby Root  
TCF, Fox Valley*



It hurts when you have  
someone in your heart but  
can't have them in your arms

*Anonymous*

*Sometimes love is for a moment,  
Sometimes love is for a lifetime,  
Sometimes a moment is a lifetime.*

*Pamela S. Adams, TCF Winnipeg, Canada*

## Love Never Goes Away

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing,” Sound familiar? All of us have known hints before, but none of our previous “ouchies” can compare with the hurt we now feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet, most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have. So, we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely, we can’t live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few commonly recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable. . . . some day.

TIME . . . the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child . . . the first word, first tooth, first date, first car . . . now we don’t have that measure anymore. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME . . . to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress through grief against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.

Don’t push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned into minutes and then moments . . . but don’t expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don’t get over grief . . . it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost - try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn’t lose our child . . . HE DIED. We didn’t lose the love that flowed between us . . . . it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn’t love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I’m very, very glad I loved. Don’t let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

*Darcie D. Sims*

## What did your child leave you?

I recently attended a workshop called “Living with Loss.” One exercise was to write an “ethical will” that is an accounting of the intangibles a loved one has left behind. I’d like to share what I believe my infant son left me.

- He proved to me that life truly is fragile, and I will handle it now more carefully. My children yet to come will benefit from my having had and lost Michael.
- He taught me that not all problems in life are monumental, and that I must remember to put things in perspective.
- He allowed me to reassess my spiritual beliefs. I need to do this from time to time in my life, and that is all right because there is a loving, caring God, and He is with me no matter what.
- He showed me that each individual, in some way, leaves a mark in this world, or moves someone just so, regardless of how long his life is, or how short.
- He gave me a reason and a need to help other people.
- He reminded me to show, and tell, the people I love how I feel about them as often and as openly as I can!

*Linda Worth TCF, Bremerton, WA*

# Sibling Page

## One More Day

If I were granted one more day  
To spend alone with you,  
I'd say the things I should have said  
And do all I wanted to do.

I'd tell you that I love you.  
Did I tell you that before?  
Or did I just take it for granted  
That you'd always walk through the door?

I'd play all the games you asked me to play  
But I was too busy, you see.  
I'm sorry for the times I wasn't there,  
Now, I wish you were here for me.

I'd tell you I miss you so very much.  
You've been gone forever, it seems,  
And I still hope that one of these days  
I'll wake from this terrible dream.

If one more day were given to me  
To tell you the things I'd say,  
The only thing I'd want after that,  
Would be just one more day.

*Crystal Gibb*  
*Bereavement Magazine, Jan 1991*

**The Compassionate Friends  
hosts a chatroom and a  
facebook page just for  
bereaved siblings**



**To join go to  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
and click on the "Find  
Support" menu. There you will  
find options for moderated  
chatrooms and private  
facebook pages and  
information on how to join.**

## DEAR MOM & DAD A NOTE FROM YOUR SURVIVING CHILD

Dear Mom & Dad,

There may be moments when you wonder about me. How I am doing since our precious family member was stolen from us. A few things I wish you would know:

- I am hurting so much, but afraid to share with you just how much, lest I add to the tremendous pain I see you are suffering
- I don't know what to say to you sometimes. I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing. I'm afraid of saying the right thing
- I know you knew my siblings from the day they were born, but I knew them my entire life. We were so close in years and they were older than me and so there is not a day of my life that they did not exist. You have years of memories before they were here. My life without them started the day they died
- I feel unloved sometimes as I watch you fuss over them instead of me who is still here. I understand why and don't begrudge you, but some days it stings
- I feel guilty for not protecting them and don't understand the lion that roars inside of me from all this hurt
- I've become fiercely protective of my other siblings and you. Don't mistake that façade of strength to mean I'm okay
- I don't understand this grief and that makes me question how I could possibly know how to help you and our family with their grief. But somehow feel responsible to do so
- I worry as I watch you fade and diminish from your grief
- I wish you could kiss this and make it all better, like you did when I was little and scraped my-self. I know you can't but I still look up to you and the little child in me still wants it with all my heart.
- I don't blame you for their death
- I know I may be hard to handle: angry, sullen, distant. Please know that is just the hurt coming from my deep pain that I sometimes direct at you because I can't get to the one that is responsible. Under all the ugliness, I still love you very much

*Julie Brown*

# The Compassionate Friends Credo Copyright © 2007

**W**e 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, 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 they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in 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 a 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 to grieve as well as to grow.

*We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends.*

## Other Local TCF Chapters & Support Groups

**TCF Carbon County** - 484-719-6753

**TCF Easton** - 610-515-3526

**TCF Quakertown** - 267-379-0429

**GRASP** (grief recovery after substance passing)

**TCF Pocono** - 570 - 350 - 6695

(484) 788-9440

### Love Gift Form

*Your love 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.*

Deadlines are the 1st of the month previous to the month you wish publication in. Example the deadline for publication in January is December the 1st

Contributor Name *(this will be the name that appears in the newsletter)*

Mail Love Gifts to:

Address

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, LEHIGH VALLEY  
C/O BRENDA SOLDERITCH  
415 S. HOKENDAUQUA DR  
NORTHAMPTON, PA 18067

Phone

Email Address

I would like to make a donation of \_\_\_\_\_  In Memory of  In Honor of  A Chapter Gift *(without memorial or honorarium)*

Name of person gift given for

**Edition to be published in.** *Deadlines listed above. Late submissions or those that do not indicate an edition will be published in the next edition.*

**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.*

Please designate which of the following your gift is for ( you may circle more than one )

Newsletter Expenses

Postage

Office Expenses

Outreach Program

Special Events