



The Compassionate Friends

Lehigh Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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November

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Chapter 1562

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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, November 11

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

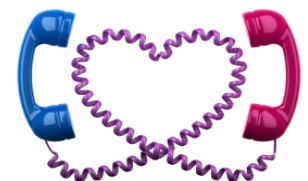
To Our New Members

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 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:
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November: Cool days, chilly nights, autumn leaves changing colors, football games, apple cider and pumpkin pie. Ah. November! . . . Is it November already? Oh, no! Make it go away! Just let me sleep; wake me up in January. November is here, the start of the holiday season.

This is the time of year most bereaved parents dread. This is the time of year when thoughts turn to spending time with family and friends and celebrating. Holiday decorations start popping up everywhere you turn and holiday music begins to play at the malls and on the radio. People are busy cleaning their home, and are all abuzz with getting ready for. . . Oh, no! Thanksgiving!

Everyone is asking what are you doing for Thanksgiving?" For the bereaved parent, especially the newly bereaved, this question can become daunting and almost horrifying. What am I doing for Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving - giving thanks. But I don't feel very thankful.

How can I be thankful, when my child lives no more?

How can I be thankful, when he/she will never again walk through my front door?

How can I be thankful, when my eyes are filled with tears?

How can I be thankful, when he/she won't be here throughout the years?

How can I be thankful, when my heart will never mend?

How can I be thankful, when I've lost my dearest friend?

How can I be thankful, when his/her hugs and kisses have now ceased?

How can I be thankful, and sit down to a feast?

How can I be thankful, when my heart is filled with sorrow?

How can I be thankful, when I can hardly make it to tomorrow?

What do you answer? What will you do this year? For some, the choice is to keep the same tradition they have in the past. Others choose to remain home and ignore the holiday completely.

There are parents who go on vacation or out to Thanksgiving dinner at a restaurant. Newly bereaved parents may question "what am I supposed to do?" There is no standard right or wrong answer. Whatever feels the most

Our Children Remembered

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

	Birth	Anniv.
Christopher Brunner - Son of Cynthia Kern	Nov 29	Mar 20
John Counterman, III - Brother of Theresa Legarski	Sep 30	Nov 2
Christopher Daud - Son of Marie Daud	Nov 4	Sep 16
Chelsie Graham - Daughter of Chris & Debbie Graham	Sep 18	Nov 2
Jill Harris - Daughter of Pat Andrew & The Late Fred Andrew; Sister of Jeff	Nov 5	Jun 28
Michael Leh - Son of Jeneane Leh; Brother of Dayna & Samantha Leh	Nov 11	Aug 19
Joseph Lestishock - Son of Marjorie Lestishock	Aug 30	Nov 2
Emma McNulty - Daughter of Jessica & Susan Katzbeck	Nov 19	Mar 11
Jacob Miller - Son of William R & Caroline P Miller	Nov 15	Nov 16
Marissa Monteverde - Daughter of Nadine Monteverde; Sister of Tanya & Jeremy	Jan 23	Nov 4
PJ Pfenning - Son of Maureen Pfenning; Brother of Amanda Sciarillo & Lauren Pfenning	Aug 30	Nov 5
Timothy Printz - Son of Matt & Claire Printz; Brother of Wendy, Micah, Calvin & David	Nov 6	Nov 6
Christine Rappleyes - Daughter of Wendy Meixell	Oct 12	Nov 20
Jason Rute - Son of Linda Cavanaugh	Aug 25	Nov 13
Heidi Schlenzig - Daughter of Tom & Janice Byrne	Nov 9	Aug 7
Dean Schuler - Son of Betty Schuler & the late Lester Schuler	May 22	Nov 19
Leo Shiner - Grandson of Morris & Maggie Shiner	Nov 23	Sep 8
Anthony Sisonick - Son of Rella Sisonick Daniels; Brother of Nicholas Sisonick	Nov 8	Aug 27
Jessica Smolenski - Daughter of Thomas & Pamela Smolenski	Nov 3	Jul 6
Matthew Solderitch - Son of Brenda Solderitch & Late Stephen Solderitch Sr., Brother of Tina	Nov 24	Nov 3
Weston Weiant - Son of Madeline Weiant	Nov 24	Nov 24
Gilbert Weiss - Brother of Ginger Renner	Nov 17	Oct 22
Emma Werner - Daughter of Samantha Behler; Sister of Skylar Werner & Lonnie Behler, III	Dec 15	Nov 1
Christopher Williamson - Son of Chris & Kim Williamson; Brother of the late Christina Joy Williamson	Nov 12	Nov 12
Paul Woodling - Son of Gregg & Mary Ann Miller	Jul 21	Nov 5
Liam Young - Son of Thomas & Gabrielle Young; Brother of Nathan & Nora	May 13	Nov 14

Thanksgiving - continued from page 2

comforting is the right answer for you. Family members or friends might disagree with your decision and say you are wrong. This often happens if you decide to break tradition, want to be alone, or decide not to celebrate at all. People can become very insistent, and tell you that Thanksgiving is about being with others. I have found that my choice has varied over the years from choosing to be alone and not acknowledge the holiday at all; to going to friends' and family members' homes; to just having dinner at home and when asked, I say, "I know that you may not like my answer, but still. I need to do what is best for me."

However you decide to spend this Thanksgiving, please remember that for however short or long your precious, awesome, amazing, wonderful child was with you here on earth, you are blessed to be their parent. You have been given a most spectacular gift - a one of a kind, unique, extraordinary child to carry in your heart, thoughts, and soul for all eternity. And this is a reason to be forever thankful.

From my home and heart to yours may you have a blessed Thanksgiving and may it be filled with peace.

*Bev Rosen Katowitz
TCF, Charlotte, NC*

Empty Chairs

It's the usual holiday table
 Heaped with the blessings
 Of labor and harvest
 But there are chairs -
 Empty chairs.
 Some of our number
 Have moved away
 The distance is too great
 And they could not return today.
 There are other chairs
 That remain unfilled
 A mother, a father, or a child
 Once vital to the family
 Now transcending spatial partying
 And feasting in glory.
 Vacant chairs
 Hearts that remember
 Thank you, Lord, for bountiful table
 Thank you for the occupied chairs
 And thank you for the memories
 That surround the empty chairs.

~Rotha J. Essenburg

Memories

The certain special memories
 That follow me each day,
 Cast your shadow in my life
 In a certain way.

Sometimes the blowing wind
 Or the lyrics of a song,
 Make me stop and think of you
 Sometimes all day long.

Memories are good to have
 To share and keep in my heart,
 Just knowing that you're still inside
 Makes sure we'll never part.

Collette Covington TCF, Lake Charles, LA

A Thought as we near Thanksgiving

*I'm thankful, Lord, for loving care;
 I'm thankful, too, for something more;
 I'm thankful, Lord, that I can bear
 The things that I'm not thankful for.*

Claire Sanford, TCF Logansport, IN



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
♥ Nancy & Brian Kleckner	Mardelle M. Parenti <i>Love and miss you, Mom and Dad</i>
♥ Maggie & Morris Shiner	Leo Shiner <i>Love you bigger than space forever!</i>
♥ Betty Schuler	Dean Lynn Schuler <i>Love you and miss you</i>
♥ Pat Andrew	Jill Patricia Harris <i>Happy Birthday Jill. Love and miss you and Pop Pop. Love Mom, Jeff, Sam & Alex</i>

Our thanks to the following for their contributions to the chapter

*Bethany Wesleyan Church, Cherryville
For our meeting space*

*The Matt Kush Foundation
In Memory of Matt Kush*

*United Way
Payroll Contributors*



One November Day

Everything we do; Changes
Our life in some way,
This happened to me
One November day

That's when I had
My son; You see,
It was a joyful
Time for me

As time went on
And years went by,
He became his own person
A wonderful guy.

Those who knew Him
Loved Him so much,
It amazes me;
All the lives He touched,

For those of you; That
He never met,
He is one person;
You'd Never Forget,

He's in God's Hands
For He passed away,
But I'll always remember
That one November Day.

*By Sherry Brown, TCF Lehigh Valley, PA
Submitted by Brenda Solderitch
in memory of her son, Matthew*



The Noble and the Brave

When America had an urgent need,
These brave ones raised a hand;
No hesitation held them back;
They were proud to take a stand.

They left their friends and family;
They gave up normal life;
To serve their country and their God,
They plowed into the strife.

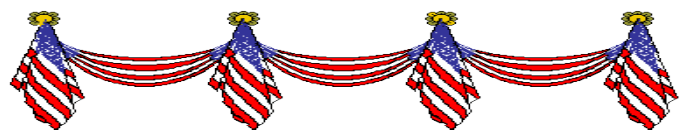
They fought for freedom and for peace
On strange and foreign shores;
Some lost new friends; some lost their lives
In long and brutal wars.

Other veterans answered a call
To support the ones who fought;
Their country had requirements for
The essential skills they brought.

We salute every one of them,
The noble and the brave,
The ones still with us here today,
And those who rest in a grave.

So here's to our country's heroes;
They're a cut above the rest;
Let's give the honor that is due
To our country's very best.

by Joanna Fuchs



When Words Become Gifts

On Thanksgiving Day, 1994, two of my three young adult sons, Erik and David, were killed in a freak car accident. Years after the accident, my husband and I were at David's college alma mater for a holiday event. I was in the dessert line when a woman came up to me and said, "I saw your name tag—are you David Aasen's mom?" After doing a double take (it had been some time since I had been asked what used to be a rather common question), I replied with much appreciation, "Yes, I am!" With those three, almost magical, words this person gave me five gifts.

Her first gift was saying David's name. Instead of just thinking to herself, Hmmm, I bet that's David Aasen's mom but I better not say anything, she said something. Her second gift was sharing a story with me about how her daughter, a classmate of David's, still treasures the friendship she and David shared. Acknowledging that I'm still a mom was her all-important third gift. While my sons' deaths have resulted in my becoming a bereaved mother, death cannot take away the fact that I am, and always will be, Erik and David's mom. The fourth gift was permission to share a bit of my grief journey with her. Since their deaths, I explained, there haven't been any truly easy, carefree, feeling-on-top-of-the-world days, but taking each day as it comes has been the most "doable" way for me to go on. Her questions and manner did not make me feel obligated to cover up my grief and was the fifth gift. I felt valued for my honesty and my integrity remained intact.

The warmth of those five gifts has lingered on in my heart and has comforted me. As I reflect on the experience, I marvel at how just a few simple words had such an impact. I have come to the conclusion that most bereaved parents want nothing more than the opportunity to talk comfortably with others about their children.

Just being able to share stories about our sons and daughters in a safe place, along with the permission to mourn in our own way and for as long as we need to, even for a lifetime, is what matters most to us.

The real treasure comes when others introduce our children's names and stories into an everyday conversation. Knowing our sons and daughters are remembered and live on in the hearts and lives of others is a measure of the meaningful legacy that our sons and daughters have left to us and to the world.

Nita Aasen In memory of my sons. Erik and David Aasen, TCF St. Peter, Minnesota

Transitions in Grief

It is good to speak of our children, to recall the wonderful memories of their lives. It is good to honor our children with ritual, ceremony, prayer, and thanksgiving for the gift that will always be our child. It is good to celebrate the life of our child, to cherish our time with them.

It is also wise to acknowledge that by honoring our child in these ways, we are doing our grief work. This work also involves pushing, pulling, and dragging ourselves through the purgatorial fog that transcends our every thought after our child dies. The grief is overwhelming; the process of grief work is demanding, punishing, and often harsh.

Either we stay in one place, "stuck" in our grief, or we reach out and help ourselves. There are no other choices. The loss of our child to death is the most traumatic event of our adult lives. We have lost the future, and we have lost an immense piece of ourselves when our child died. We must work to rebuild ourselves. Rebuild ourselves for a new life: a life without our child sharing this physical plane with us.

But as we share our child with others, speak of the life that no longer is, celebrate that life in ritual, ceremony, and memories shared, we are doing our grief work. At first it is difficult. The throat swells, the breathing is shallow, and the words are so difficult to find. But we pursue, for we do not want the memory of our child to be erased.

We carry our child forward into the future; we see the world for two now. We cherish this new journey that we take for our child and ourselves. This effort is our child's legacy. Our child will live as long as we live.., through our words, actions, thoughts, memories, and memorial efforts.

And as we do these things that are good, we find the burden lifts ever so slightly. Days, weeks, months, and then years pass. At some point we realize that we, too, have transitioned. Our subconscious mind has accepted the worst that life can give, and we have emerged as different people cherishing the goodness that is always our precious child.

Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF Katy TX

Sibling Page

WHY CAN'T I LET GO

You were always my hero.
I always wanted to be like you.
You were my younger brother,
Still, I always looked up to you.

You were always there for me,
Even when things were at their worst.
You helped me through my hardest trials,
And we always made it through.

Now as I set here, writing these words,
Remembering you and times gone by,
I'm trying to find a way to tell you,
I'm trying to say good-bye.

Nineteen years are just too many,
To just let you go,
I can't believe you're gone, you died,
And left me here alone.

Some days I'm fine, some days I'm low,
But most days, I just miss you so.
It was you and me,
But now, what do I do?

Each night I ask why?
Why I'm so angry?
Why I can't cry?
Why I can't let you go?

I know we'll see each other again,
But the years seems so long.
I long for the day I'll see you again,
Waiting for me with open arms.

Brother, I love you and miss you so.
But now I need you most.
This time in my life is oh so hard,
I just can't let you go.

Stephen Welch TCF, St Louis, MO

I Am Your Sister and Always Will Be

"I am your sister and always will be." That's how Susie signed her cards to me. After a while, she shortened it to, "I am..." And of course I knew the rest of it. Susie was two and one-half years younger than I. She was alive one evening talking on the phone to Mom about the Oscars and to Dad about moving. The next day she was found. Whatever it was--it ended her life and changed mine forever.

There was a wonderful side of my sister that I didn't pay enough attention to. She was a kind and loving person, always ready to shelter lost animals and lost souls. When she was in a good mood, her smiles warmed my heart. Yet I spent most of my life wishing that things were different: wishing that she thought more of herself, wishing that she would take my advice, wishing that she were happier, wishing that we could accept each other.

Now, for two years, I've done nothing but wish she were here so we could have another chance to work at our relationship. Now, I wish that I had been able to give her my unconditional love & support. (She needed it and deserved it.) Now, I wish that I could have been with her that night so she would not have been alone. Now, I wish that I would have held her in my arms and told her how very much I loved her. Because, Susie, I am your sister and always will be.

Michele Walters TCF, Baltimore, MD

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

To join go to 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. 

The Compassionate Friends Credo Copyright © 2007

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, 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