



Quakertown Chapter

servicing Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

PO Box 1013

Quakertown PA 18951

Chapter Info line: 215-536-0173

Chapter email: tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net

website: www.tcfquakertownpa.org

The Compassionate Friends National Office

877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

Eastern PA Regional Coordinators

Bobbie Milne mcfly423@aol.com

Ann Walsh tcfeastrc@yahoo.com

Quakertown Chapter Founders -Eileen & the late Tim Bolish

Facebook page: Quakertown PA Compassionate Friends

A self-help organization offering friendship, love, and understanding to bereaved parents, siblings, and their families.

we talk, we listen, we share, we care, we understand

We extend a special warm welcome to you, the newcomers. We are sorry for the reason you have received our newsletter. We know that it takes courage to attend your first TCF meeting, and it may take three or more meetings for you to feel the benefit of group sharing. We will not offer a "quick fix" or hurry you along in your grief, but we can offer you much needed support, and provide an opportunity for you to meet new friends who are traveling the same path.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETING INFORMATION - Our next support group meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 7:30 PM-9 PM** at the **St Lukes Quakertown Hospital, 1021 Park Ave., Quakertown, PA** in Taylor conference rooms A & B.

BRING A PHOTO OF YOUR CHILD/SIBLING FOR THE REMEMBRANCE TABLE. Bring memoirs / photos of your child/sibling for the birthday table when its their birthday. Tell us about your memories of your loved one...we'll listen, cry and hug with open arms.

2015 Quakertown Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Leader : Darlene Dusza

215-536-0173 (TCF) (c) 267-374-1171

nanadusza@verizon.net

Treasurer : MaryAnn Kulp

Secretary : Ginny Leigh-Manuell

Assistant Secretary : MaryAnne Macko

Newsletter Editor / Community Outreach

Darlene Dusza

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Sellersville PA 18960

215-536-0173

tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net

Remembrance and thank you cards

Lynette Lampmann Crystal Hunter

MaryAnn Kulp Nancy Eisenhart

Ginny Leigh-Manuell Jennifer Pini

UNITED WAY #14064

Greater Lehigh Valley

Hospitality Committee : Carol Graham

Mary Anne Macko Nancy Eisenhart

Committee Members : Linda Stauffer

Bonnie Maurizio Barbara Reboratti
Donna Hesse

Chapter Librarians: Theresa Sitko/Linda Ervin

Email - Telephone Friends

Barb Reboratti - daughter, Allison

death-- result of crime 215-538-0941

victim.advocate@verizon.net

Darlene Dusza - daughter, Michelle

death-- result of auto accident 215-536-0173

nanadusza@verizon.net

Jennifer Pini sibling, Jason

death -- suicide 215-828-3810

dance140@hotmail.com

Crystal Hunter-sibling, Justin

death - medical condition

crys.hunter@gmail.com

614-746-8076 (sibling contact person)

Donna Hesse - daughter, Kisha

death -- result of auto accident

dmhesse150@yahoo.com

Anne and Craig Landis - son, Marc

death - result of suicide

215-536-5143

Collection of Redners Save-A-Tape program

Mail your register save-a-tape slips to our PO box to help our chapter. You may black any debit / credit card numbers, but do not black out the dollar amounts. Remember to use your Pump Perks card for the save-a-tape program. Send complete sales receipt.

PRINTER INK CARTRIDGES

STOP don't throw them away... Save your empty ink cartridges and give to our chapter for recycling. We earn rewards for recycling them and can purchase paper and other items to help cut the costs of printing the newsletters, programs for events etc... Bring to a meeting or an event in a plastic bag and give to Darlene or a member on our steering committee. **NOTE: we are only recycling the small ink cartridges NOT for commercial size copiers/printers.**

Other TCF support group meetings and children support groups etc:

Lehigh Valley Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month on the 2nd floor of Sacred Heart Hospital on Chew St. at 4th St. in Allentown PA at 7 PM
Contact: 484-597-0240

Peace Valley Group meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Lenape Valley Presbyterian Church at Rt. 202 and Ute Rd, New Britain PA at 7:30 PM;
Contact: Karen Kovacs 267-218-5889

Ryan's Tree for Grieving Children, Inc. located in Lehigh Valley, PA, Support for children ages 5-18 who are grieving the loss of a family member or friend.
- Is currently not offering services contact St. Luke's Hospice at 610-997-7120 or Krista.Malone@sluhn.org.

Stepping Stones for children ages 4 -12 years old, has a program for children who are grieving a sibling, parent, etc.... Held at: Camelot for Children, 2354 W. Emmaus Ave, Allentown PA 18103 call: 610-969-0330 for more information

Greenshore Arts Consortium Grief and Empowerment Workshops - located in Quakertown - contact: Hillery Woods Siatkowski, NCTMB at 206-552-4229 or email massage @moondogyoga.com for dates and more information

www.kidsaid.com - is a FREE online resource and is a safe place for kids and teens to help each other deal with grief and loss. There are options of email support groups, sharing artwork, poetry, and stories, and a place for parents and kids to ask questions and get answers.

***Kids-to-kids** is an email support group for kids ages 12 and under

***K2K-teens** is an email support group for teens ages 13- 18.

THANK YOU

Thank you to, Brian Doyle, Carol Graham and Nancy Eisenhart for providing our December refreshments. They do this in remembrance of their children, Ashley (Brian), Adam and Peter (Carol) and Kelly (Nancy)

If you would like to provide refreshments in remembrance of your loved one at a meeting please contact Carol Graham at 215-538-3651. You may also sponsor refreshments for a meeting for a fee of \$30 or more depending on what you would like and the hospital's catering service will set up and provide the drinks and refreshments for the evening.

A special thank you to Mary Ann Kulp, Nancy Eisenhart, Lynette Lampmann, Ginny Leigh-Manuell, Crystal Hunter and Jennifer Pini for the Remembrance and Thank you cards that you receive. They do this in remembrance of their children/ siblings, son, Tony (MaryAnn), daughter, Kelly (Nancy), son, Shawn (Lynette), son, Brian (Ginny), brother, Justin (Crystal) and brother, Jason (Jennifer). An appreciated Thank You to our members for helping to set up and tear down for our meetings, they do this in remembrance of their children and siblings. A special thank you to St. Luke's Hospital for providing us with our meeting rooms each month.

Thank you to, Betty and Charlie Hottenstein, for taking on the monthly task of assembling our monthly newsletters for mailing, they do this in remembrance of their daughter, Tracy Hottenstein.

Thank you for your Love Gifts and Support

We the parents and families of the Quakertown Chapter of Compassionate Friends would like to send a special Thank You to the following donors. Without their generosity in giving to a good cause we would not be able to continue reaching out to newly bereaved parents and families with our Outreach packet and newsletters.



Maurice & Ruth Onraet, In Loving Memory of their son, Thomas Onraet, Dec 19 - June 29

Linda & Dan Brophy, In Loving Memory of their daughter, Alexandria Kathryn Gasior, Feb 16 - Aug 13

Rebecca & Ed Scheck, In Loving Memory of her daughter, Jaime Scheck, Nov 17 - Nov 8

Brian Doyle, In Loving Memory of his daughter, Ashley Doyle, Dec 8 - June 29

Carol & Albert Graham, In Loving Memory of their sons, Adam Graham, Nov 19 - July 5 and Peter Graham, Jan 10 - Jan 19

Marie & Hugh Madden, In Loving Memory of their daughter, Cindy Cole, Nov 19 - Apr 14

Holiday Angels

In Memory of Brandon S. Gilbert - given by Susan and Skye Gilbert



Self-help Program

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they go through the grieving process. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.

To Our New Members

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

To our Members who are further down the "GRIEF ROAD"

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

Information Regarding Our Meetings

PLEASE don't stay away from a meeting because the topic scheduled does not interest you. We are here to discuss whatever is on your mind, we don't stay on the topic only. This is YOUR group and we are here for each other. You do not have to talk at meetings. We welcome your participation in our group but it is not a requirement. Coming to listen to the others is Okay too. Remember also that our meeting is open to adult siblings, grandparents, or adult family members such as aunts or uncles.

Support Group Meetings

We are so sorry for the cause that brings us together. It takes courage to attend a Compassionate Friends support group meeting. We understand how it feels to walk into a room of strangers and share personal feelings, especially when you are in so much pain. At your first meeting, we hope you find care, support, understanding and a group of friends to share with. Truly, there are no strangers among compassionate friends.

As a reminder to families that would like to attend a support meeting. Please allow yourself at least 3 or 4 meetings of attendance to determine if they are for you. It may take a few meetings before you are able to talk about your loved one and that is understandable. What you say at our meetings is kept in the meeting, you can cry, hug, talk about how you are feeling freely. Our meetings are for parents, grandparents and siblings in grade 9 or above and adult siblings.

Your Friends at TCF Quakertown Chapter

Library Books

We have a nice library of books for our members to check out and read and return them back to our library. A problem we currently have is that some books have not made their way back to our library and our library is shrinking. If you have checked out a book or magazine from our library and are done reading it won't you PLEASE return it to us at our October meeting. If you are not able to make the meeting you may mail it back to us or have someone else return it to us.

Also, if you have any books that would help other grieving families through their journey and would like to donate them to our library please give them to our librarians.

Quakertown Chapter does have a siblings group that meets at various places, days and times. To try and accommodate the surviving siblings that cannot attend a regular meeting because of childcare issues or work schedule etc. Please contact our sibling contact person: Crystal Hunter via email or by phone. Contact info on front page.

Newsletter Errors and Omissions

For any errors or omissions please contact Darlene via email at tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net with the error and the correction for the next month newsletter.

Please remember we are all volunteers and grieving parents / siblings and we do forget and make mistakes too.

About This Newsletter

This newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Quakertown 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 215-536-0173; or email: tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net

PLEASE NOTE: If you are moving or your email has changed please notify the newsletter editor so that we can update your information and you continue to receive the newsletter. If the newsletter is returned to us either via mail or your email bounces back and you have notified us you will be removed from the mailing list.

Newsletter submissions:

Submit articles and poetry to the editor by the 15th of the proceeding month. Include the author's name & your contact information. You may mail to our PO Box 1013, Quakertown PA 18951 or email as a pdf file or word document to: tcfquakertownchapter@verizon.net.



A NEW YEAR

By: Shirley Ottman

Bereaved Mother

Denton, TX

A time for looking ahead

and not behind.

A time for faith

and not despair.

A time for long great gulps

of hopeful expectation.

Drink deeply friend so that

fortified with the promises it brings,

This New Year will keep you

near fresh springs of healing love,

Where you may come to weave old and loving memories

with new understandings and acceptance...

And find peace.

New Year's Wishes For Bereaved Parents

To the newly bereaved: We wish you patience – patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

To the bereaved siblings: We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To those who are single parents: We wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone with your loss.

To those experiencing marital difficulties after the death of your child: We wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To those who have suffered the death of more than one child: We wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

To those of you who have experienced the death of an only child or of all your children: We offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

To those of you who are plagued with guilt: We wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.

To those of you who are deeply depressed: We wish you the first steps out of the "Valley of the Shadow".

To all mothers, fathers, and those of you unable to cry: We wish you healing tears and the ability to express your grief.

To those of you who are exhausted from grieving: We wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned: We wish you the understanding you need, the assurance that you are not alone, and that you are loved.

gently lifted from: irisremembrance.com

Coping with the New Year Blues

Written by Lora Mercado on Thursday, January 1, 2015

It seems that everyone is excited to start the new year ahead with gusto, and plans for the future. To someone who is grieving the loss of a loved one, this can bring about even stronger feelings of sadness and despair. The one we spent our time with is no longer here to make plans with, while the world moves on without us.

Some grieverers may feel that there is nothing left to live for at this very delicate time in their life. This thought couldn't be more wrong. Each and every one of us has a purpose in this life. Just as the ones we are missing had purpose. As hard as it may be, we need to find it within ourselves to live out the purpose that was given to us upon our birth. You have a significant reason for being here.

Consider sharing your story of your loved one by going to a support group or volunteering somewhere that has meaning to you. One can never tell how much sharing a part of themselves can help change the life of another. You may never realize how much your story has affected a person, but by putting yourself out there, you will not only ease the pain of others, but you will begin to heal your own heart as well.

If you are uncomfortable with face to face meetings, then find an online community that you like and start posting in the forums. In no time, you will find that you have created friendships with people in similar situations, who also need a shoulder to cry on. It goes both ways, which is the most wonderful part of online bereavement groups. Everyone there knows the pain of loss and understands the grief that you are going through.

If you find that your sadness is unbearable, please talk to a family member and seek the advice of a medical professional.

Just So You Know

I can't stop grieving just because you believe it is time for me to move on.

I can't stop hurting just because you do not understand the piercing pain in my heart.

I cannot stop my tears from flowing just because they make you uncomfortable.

My heart is not suddenly mended just because you believe I have grieved long enough.

I will grieve the loss of my loved one for the rest of my life.

Just so you know.

by: John Pete

John Pete is a Certified Grief Counselor and Founder of GriefStreets.Com (formerly mygriefspace.net), an online peer-support community for people grieving the loss of a loved one. He has appeared on the "Grieving The Healing Heart" radio program and is published in the 2011 book, "Open To Hope"

Bereavement and time off work

If you were recently thrown into the pit of bereavement and time off work is an option, then take it. Use as much time as you can to heal and learn to live without that special loved one in your life.

Taking time off work after the death of someone close to you is good not only for your own mental well-being, but also for your job. You need time – days, weeks and sometimes months – to learn how to live a new “normal” life without that special someone there. There is also the physical aspect of dealing with the death of a family member. Depending on your relationship to him or her, there are some important duties that need to be done.

Emotionally, you will go through a very rough time. Even though you may find work as an escape from reality, it is still not the best place to be immediately after losing your loved one. You may find yourself feeling lost or unable to make decisions on your own. Many employers are sympathetic to your needs at this time, but some aren't, so it's best to take this time to yourself.

Unknowingly, you may also:

- Cry uncontrollably
- Refrain from eating or sleeping
- Be unable to keep up with household duties
- Become angry or impatient
- Have trouble concentrating on work or other day-to-day responsibilities

However, your relationship to the person who died determines how long you may be away from work. An immediate family member such as a father-in-law or sister-in-law may not cause you to miss more than just a few days of work. On the other hand, losing your spouse or child can cause an extraordinary amount of grief, causing you to lose more time.

It is said that losing a child is the hardest of all deaths because children shouldn't die before their parents. However, when this happens, most parents – mainly mothers – will take an extended bereavement leave from work. If the child passes away at birth, the mother usually has the typical six weeks maternity leave she can take off besides bereavement leave. Your company's human resources department will have more information about maternity leave, and whether fathers are entitled to this time as well. Physically, there is not much legally to do after a child dies.

After the funeral is over, there are bills to pay and thank you notes to write, but the majority of bereavement and time off work is for the parents to grieve. This could take a long time. Most fathers go back to work within a few weeks, while mothers may sometimes need to take more time. It is best not to rush this process.

A final note on bereavement and time off work

You cannot put a time frame on how long someone grieves; however, when it comes to the workplace, you will need to set a limit as to how much time you take off. When you do go back to work, take your time and ease back into your workload. Expect to have good and bad days, and make sure you have a place to go or a person to talk to if need be. There will be times when being back at work overwhelms you. Like your life at home, you will need to find a new normal and a new way to do things.

by Mary Beth Adomaitis

http://dying.lovetoknow.com/Bereavement_and_Time_Off_Work

Talk About Grief

It's difficult to know how to deal with grief, either directly or indirectly, but it's the little things that are important to show you really care.

Six weeks. That's about the length of time after a tragedy when the shock subsides, the adrenaline wears off and reality sinks in.

Unfortunately, it's also around the six week mark when – if the tragedy didn't affect you directly – you kind of forget about it. You dropped over a lasagna. You sent flowers. You texted and maybe you even took time off work to attend the funeral. You shed tears and they were genuine. But then your sympathy and altruism were swallowed by the demands of day to day life like quick sand. And things soon returned to normal. Well, for you they did.

Those at the centre of the tragedy are still tentatively patting themselves down after the explosion having staggered one or two steps down a road that stretches into forever. This is when they need the most support, right when most of their friends have filed the situation away under “Really Sad Things That Are In The Past”. Partly, it's because we want to believe they're feeling better but we also feel helpless and uncomfortable, unsure how to help someone navigate their grief.

“After the ‘I'm so sorry's’ and ‘Here's a lasagna’ ... people just don't know what to say” says a friend who was bereaved last year. “So they say nothing. Or worse, they just move on and probably think ‘Well, she'll just have to get used to her new reality’ ... which is true to a point.”

In the days after a death, there's a surprising amount to do. Funerals to be planned, eulogies to be written, people to notify. Administration. In the case of a shock diagnosis, there are decisions and medical appointments to be made. But as days become weeks, the activity subsides and the even harder yards begin.

“People tend to drift away at around the time you're trying to work out how to function again in the world” says a friend who lost her baby daughter two years ago. “The initial deep shock has started to wear off and there you are ... just floating along with no idea how to behave any more. You start to panic about boring people. About being depressing. A downer. God forbid. People desperately want to think you're okay ... maybe so you're no longer on their ‘to do’ list to worry about.”

Grief is often a private affair that others cannot share or perhaps even understand, agrees Petrea King, author of *Sometimes Hearts Have to Break* and CEO of the Quest for Life Foundation. “Grief can spring out of drawers and cupboards, off shelves, from photographs, wafts to our nostrils upon a perfume, is precipitated by music, clutches at our heart, hollows out our insides and plummets us to the depths.”

We're funny about grief. We like to think it's finite and able to be quantified and quarantined. We like to talk about ‘closure’. We think we're being helpful when we urge someone to ‘be strong’ or exclaim ‘you look so well!’ to a friend who's sick or bereaved in the hope that it might just be true.

“About two months after we lost our daughter, I remember an elderly neighbor saying, ‘Oh you look like you're back to your old self,’” recalls my friend Rebecca. “I looked at him in horror and then went inside and wept. How could I be communicating to people I was ‘okay’? I wasn't okay! My baby died! So you're always trying to find this balance between wanting the world to know you're in deep mourning but not inconveniencing anyone.”

“Sometimes I worry I'm bringing it up too often,” admits another bereaved friend who is sinking after he unexpectedly lost a loved one earlier this year. “But it's all I can think about and in some ways it's worse now because I'm no longer buoyed by the wonderful flurry of support that held us up in the weeks after it happened.”

Rebecca told me of wanting to post something about her older daughter on Facebook six weeks after her baby girl was stillborn. “I was paralyzed because I kept thinking ‘But what if people think that because I'm on Facebook, that I'm fine now?’”

So what can we do to support our friends in the darkness? Talking to a number of bereaved people, they all say they feel they've been given a gift when someone speaks the name of the person they've lost.

When they give them a chance to talk, cry, even laugh.

“It's the small things that people do,” says the mother whose son died the day after he was born and who gave mourners at his funeral little bags of sunflower seeds to plant in his memory. “Like sharing photos of their sunflowers or letting us know that they keep photos of our son close by, even talking about their ‘nephew’ or ‘grandson’, saying his name....they're all reminders that they care.”

Petrea King puts it so beautifully: “Grief is a strange beast that we learn to live with. We don't get ‘over it’ as if it were a surmountable obstacle. We can become more comfortable with our discomfort but there is no finite time for grief as there is no finite time for love.”

Mia Freedman is publisher of <http://www.mamamia.com.au/>

This article was published in U Sunday, December 2, 2012

How long should I remain a part of a support group?

Many of the "seasoned grievers" are often asked, "Why do you still go to those bereavement support groups and/or conferences? Some of our friends and or family members question our need for being a part of a support group after several years. Non-bereaved members of society think we should "be over it" and "get on with our lives" since it's been so long since our child died.

People do not realize that our deceased child will always be our child and that we are "recovering bereaved parents." Many people in society have the opinion that it is OK to be a "recovering alcoholic" but not OK to be a "recovering bereaved parent!" My response to those questions has been, "Rhonda lived. I return to the meetings and conferences because these people have become my extended family. I can also now assist others on their grief journey as other bereaved parents once accompanied me on my journey.

It does not matter how long we've been bereaved there seems to be situations that occur in our lives when it is helpful to be able to network with others like ourselves."

It might also be beneficial to share with those who question us to mention how society honors political figures, movie and television stars and other prominent individuals. Think about all of the documentaries that are on television near the birth/death anniversary of people like Princess Diana, John Kennedy and other individuals. How many times do people pay to view a prominent individuals who are deceased home or estate or stand in line at a post office to purchase a commemorative stamp that honors someone that is deceased? Our children were more important to us than any prominent person, so give yourself permission to commemorate your child's life by attending bereavement functions and doing things to honor his/her life.

Each of our grief journeys will be as unique as our fingerprints. We cannot measure time by how someone else is handling his/her grief. Our needs will depend upon our personality traits, previous life experiences, tragedies we've encountered since our child's death, coping skills we have learned, the support system that we had and still have and the relationship that we had with our child. Some bereaved parents may find that the need to attend bereavement functions for a few years while others may make a lifetime commitment of honoring their child and helping others.

Some bereaved parents find the need to attend bereavement functions as there may be some unresolved grief issues that occur later during their grief journeys. The death of a spouse, parent or friend, a divorce, relationships that are severed, a change or loss of job and relocation may be any of several causes that make us feel that we are going through the early phases of our grief once again. We may also find that physical changes in our bodies will cause us to need the support of other bereaved parents later in our grief.

We, as bereaved parents will always need to hear our child's name, see their photos, listen and tell stories about him/her. Time alone does not heal our deep wounds but doing our grief work with time eases the intense pain of early grief. It is perfectly normal to attend support group meetings and conferences twenty, thirty or forty years after our child died as we are the veterans that can companion others on their grief journey and honor our child's memory as OUR CHILDREN LIVED.
Kay Bevington, Rhonda Bevington's mother, Van Wert, OH
Founder of Alive Alone Support Group - Bereaved Parents of the USA website

Sisters and brothers

Dear Siblings,

I hope you managed to get through Christmas the best way you could and found lots of love and support with family and friends. Our Christmas Service held on the 16th December was beautiful, very moving and a special way of remembering and honoring our siblings. We are now faced with another new year, may it be a kinder year to you all and I hope your grief journey is a little easier for you to travel. I cannot believe it is going to be 4 years since by beautiful sister Tanya, passed away on the 9th February, it certainly doesn't feel like 4 years ago! My Mum and I have just gone through some of Tan's belongings (clothes, shoes and handbags) as we haven't been able to do this

before and as hard as it was, we managed to share many memories, stories and laughs. Another step forward for the both of us as we continue to travel along the grief road. I found this piece of writing whilst researching for sibling grief on the Open to Hope website and thought I would share it with you as I feel we have all felt like this at some time while dealing with friendships on our grief journey. This was posted by a sibling who lost her brother and was sent the article by a friend who was also grieving.

I wish you would not be afraid to speak to me about what is going on in my life, and to ask what you can do to help. If I cry or get emotional when we talk about them, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me. The fact that I have suffered has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry, and I thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.

I wish you wouldn't pretend that nothing is happening to me, because it is a large part of my life. I need my friends and family by my side. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn't think that if I have a good day, my grief is over, or that if I have a bad day, I need psychiatric counseling. Grieving and what I'm going through is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me.

I wish you knew that all of the "crazy" grief reactions I am having are in fact very normal. Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected during and following what is happening to me.

I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over if and when I appear to be smiling or happy.

I wish you would understand the physical reactions to grief. I may gain weight or lose weight...sleep all the time or not at all...want to surround myself with business or be all alone, all of which may be related to my grief. A birthday, anniversaries of big days, holidays, and the day I found out, are all terrible times for me.

I wish you could tell me that you are thinking about me, and if I get quite withdrawn, just know I am doing my best to cope.

Please don't try to coerce me into being cheerful or tell me that it will be better soon.

It is normal and good that most of us re-examine our faith, values, and beliefs throughout this journey. We will question things we have been taught all our lives, and hopefully come to some new understandings to include those with God. I wish you would let me tangle with my religion, opinions, and beliefs without making me feel guilty.

I wish you would not offer me drinks or drugs to ease the pain. These are just temporary crutches. The only way I can get through this grief is to experience it, and sometimes immerse myself in it. I have to hurt before I can heal.

I wish you understood that grief and difficult situations change people. I am not the same person I was before I experienced it nor will I ever be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to "get back to my old self," you will be frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values, and beliefs. Please try and get to know the "new me"...maybe you will still like me.

In memory of my beautiful big sister, Tanya - 22.5.73 - 10.2.09

I miss you and love you more each day, you will forever live on in our hearts.

Submitted by your little sister, Karen Kirkpatrick (Chooky) xoxoxo

Siblings Walking Together

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

How to gracefully endure a “Happy New Year” after the death of your child.

3 mindsets for facing a fresh calendar with dates you’d rather skip

If you are beginning the first “Happy New Year” since the death of your child, 2012 will bring many painful dates to muddle through. As you look ahead at a new calendar, you likely and rightly see an emotional minefield laid out before you. But please believe that somehow, some way unknown to you now, you can survive it.

Birthdays are particularly hard. January 28th, Daniel’s birthday, is one of the mountains I’ll be forced to climb again in the near future. I know I will awaken wanting to remember his smell when he was a baby. I will (again) review a mental video of past birthday parties. I can reach for a scrapbook of fading photographs, recalling how he changed from year to year, birthday to birthday, but that isn’t the same as sharing just one more birthday candle with him.

I understand now, years after his death, that the sharpest pain I will struggle with every January 28th for the rest of my life is my impotence to undo his death or to barter him back. I can’t change his past or my future without him.

Facing your loss on days you used to circle on a calendar with joy but now anticipate with dread is a real challenge. And yes, you will suffer more some days than others. But you also can move a few steps closer to the knowledge that your loved one still has a place with you and can be taken into the future with you. And every day, you’re getting one day closer to comprehending where and how your worlds now intersect. What can you do to promote healing — versus scab picking?

Plan ahead what you intend to do on the most predictably difficult days — birthdays, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Grandparent’s Day, etc. — and take control of each one. Here are some suggestions to choose from.

(1) Build in private time to actively honor your love for your child, which is unwavering and eternal.

I include time for spiritual reflection and renewal. I don’t include anyone in those moments who would only agree to it due to a feeling of obligation. I don’t bring in people who never knew my son to witness it, either. It is a closed circle so that I don’t have to explain how I’m feeling, justify it, or have it absolved or “understood”. My feelings simply are what they are and that is a private matter for me.

Sometimes I go to church with a close friend and pray; sometimes I go to a park and take a walk and let the sun shine on my face. Sometimes I sit alone in my car and cry, but that is okay. Sometimes I call a daughter first thing after waking up that morning and together, we remember him aloud, or I kneel on my knees, alone in my bathroom, and whisper my plans for the day to him.

(2) Determine how, this year, you are going to honor your child’s life — and then do it.

Loving another person is the greatest gift we can bestow and the greatest gift, in return, that we can be given. So when that is lost to us, how can we do as Dr. Seuss suggests (my favorite mantra): “Don’t cry because it’s over; smile because it happened”?

We can honor that it happened by putting something physical in the world to represent it.



My favorite thing to do is to plant a tree, to put a living thing in the ground that can provide shade to generations that will outlive me, as I had hoped he would. I imagine Daniel would like that, and so that is something I can do — not in January in Wisconsin, but in the spring. To every thing, there is a season. I can buy a tree and have it put in a favorite dog park or plant a rosebush in the front yard. I can plant a tree at my daughter’s house this year, if she wants one, without saying why. It’s no longer important to me that the world listens when I murmur his name; only that I continue to say it and the trees continue to be planted.

(3) Understand that grief is hard work, and dealing with it is even harder work. Open your mind to new routes and tools.

If climbing a mountain was easy, everybody would do it. You didn’t volunteer to climb even a bunny hill of grief, but suddenly you find you’re a member of the club nobody wants to join — the bereaved parents’ club — and our specialty is climbing mountains because, well, because they are there, blocking out the sun and all of the light we once knew. The mountains are dates on the calendar, and yes, I guess you could sleep through them, with enough sleeping pills, but guess what? Those mountains just slide over into the next day. And the next.

The safest way to mountain climb is with a climbing partner. This site is meant to help you — I am here to help you, along with countless other bereaved parents who have climbed a few mountains of their own in recent years; they can (and will) weigh in and offer practical help. We’re listening for your invitation to offer a hand or a thought or a prayer.

Along the way, if you can manage it when your heart feels most frozen or splintered, try to open your mind to new ways of experiencing the world. Challenge boundaries and truths. Explore and test your relationship with your faith or spirituality or truest beliefs about the meaning of soul and existence. Close your eyes, listen with your heart, and turn your face toward life. Your life. In this way, we can take your hand and share your burden.

from the: Bereaved Parents’ Watering Hole

Our 12th Annual Childrens Memorial Candle Lighting



If anyone had taken any photos at the candle lighting please forward along to the newsletter editor if we may include them in our photo album of events.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED FOR JANUARY Birthdays and Always

Pamela Minnichbech, daughter of Paul & Dolly Cell, 1/1
Beverly Sue Otten, daughter of Mary Leuz, 1/2
Bobby Rolph, son of Judy & Bob Rolph, 1/3
Marc Landis, son of Anne and Craig Landis, 1/4
Anthony Bonino, son of Robert and Susan Bonino, 1/5
Lisa Kuniega-Lewis, daughter of Arlene and Alan Vogel, 1/5
Christopher Accardi, son of Anthony and MaryEllen Accardi, 1/9
Peter Graham, son of Carol and Albert Graham, 1/10 - anniv 1/19
Ryan Mitman, son of Victoria and James Weisbrod, 1/10
Sean Ryer, son of Pat Ryer, grandson of Diana Adams, 1/11
Deborah Hornberger, daughter of Eleanor Morrow, 1/12
Chris Inscho, daughter of Peggy Daggett, sister of Diane Anderson, 1/12
Ellen Crooke, daughter of Annette & Daniel Crooke, 1/12
Jason Pini, brother of Jennifer Pini, 1/13
Kevin Figanial, son of Thomas & Valerie Figanial, 1/13
Greggory, nephew of Mary Pat Hallman, 1/13
Geneva Doll, daughter of Keith and Barbara Doll, 1/14
Cynthia Benge, daughter of Robert and Cheryl Benge, 1/18
Karen Graham, daughter of John and Barbara Graham, 1/19
Stormy Weaver, infant daughter of Nathan and Amber Weaver, 1/20
Nick Umberger, son of Nina & Jeff Wolfinger, nephew of Bev Pearson, 1/23
Allison Reboratti, daughter of Barbara & Eduardo Reboratti, sister of Ashley & Elliot, 1/25
Austin Jacobs, son of Penny Jacobs, 1/24
Megan Eschenburg, daughter of Gary and Peggy Eschenburg, 1/27
Ross VanHouten, son of Brenda VanHouten, 1/27
Karen Salmanson, daughter of Betty and Fred Schwenk, 1/28 - anniv 1/11
Matthew Lincul, son of Linda and Ed Lincul, 1/29
Marsha Chai Lambert, daughter of Matha & ChinLing Chai, sister of Monica, 1/29

Our Beloved Children...In our Hearts always... Remembered on the Remembrance Day of their death

Lisette Martin, daughter of Luke & Amanda Martin, granddaughter of Nelson & Evelyn Martin, 1/1
Joey Ogialoro, son of Mike & Becky Ogialoro, grandson of Rose & Joe Ogialoro & Gary & Vickie Shoudt, 1/2
Joseph Harper, son of Chris & Janeen Harper, grandson of Rosemarie & Francis Salamone, 1/2
Jessica Roth, daughter of Wilbur and Carol Roth, 1/5
Eric Santayana, son of Debi and Walt Schimpf, 1/5
Philip Gold, son of Alan and Frances Gold, 1/5

SPC Shane Smith, son of Dennis and Kelly Smith, 1/7
Stephen Stalheim, son of Barbara and Gabriel Mertens, brother to Daniel and Peter Stalheim, 1/9
Anthony DelConte, son of John & Marie DelConte Jr., brother of Dana Turock, 1/9
Shirley Lange, daughter of Shirley McGuigan, 1/9
Michael Saks, son of Joseph Saks, 1/9
Jason Heuckeroth, son of Mark & Debbie Heuckeroth, brother of Jaime, 1/9
Eric Gorman, son of Butch & Marianne Gorman Jr, Brother of Patrick Gorman 1/10
Karen Salmanson, daughter of Betty & Fred Schwenk, 1/11
Daniel Attilio, son of Patrick & Ann Marie Attilio, 1/12
Morgan Mysza, daughter of Dean & Jill Mysza, 1/12
Brett Stebulis, son of Barbara and Leonard Stebulis, 1/13
Ken Trauger, brother of Donna Gibson and Jim Trauger, 1/15
David Roscilo, son of Barbara Frojan, 1/16
William Mindler, son of Kathryn Mindler, 1/16
Karin Adair, sister of Martha Stoler, 1/17
Curtis Anthony, son of Paul Anthony & Donna Kapper, grandson of Charlie & Nancy Kapper, 1/18
Jacob Burkett, son of Kathy & Jim Hardgrove, 1/19
K. Scott Frey, son of Ken and Roberta Frey, 1/20
Clayton Sitko, son of Henry and Theresa Sitko, 1/20
Robert Toft Jr, son of Robert and Joy Toft, 1/21
Margaret Welhaf, sister of George Blood Jr, 1/21
Eric Martin, son of Daniel Martin, brother of Mikaela Martin, 1/22
Matthew DiNicola, son of Ron and Myra DiNicola, 1/23
Michael Macko, brother of Mary Anne Macko, 1/23
Jacob Jones, son of Elaine and Paul Barndt, 1/23
William Ingelido Jr, son of Roseann Smiley and William Ingelido Sr., 1/23
Susan MacNamee, daughter of Ruth MacNamee, sister of Edward MacNamee Jr, 1/23
Nathan Radosky, son of Dean Radosky and Tammy Madison, grandson of Sandra and Warren Madison, 1/25
Julie Hartwich, daughter of Donna and Dave Hartwich, 1/27
Hector Valle, son of Hector Valle, 1/27
Sean Lally, son of Francis and Christine Lally, 1/30
Kristin Statuti, daughter of Henry and Maryann Statuti, Shirley & Henry Statuti- 1/31
Stephen Lees, son of Gregory Lees, 1/31
Linda Toland, daughter of Harold Caplan, sister of Andrea Dunning, 1/31
and all the children that will never be forgotten as we celebrate their lives and memories



* * * * * **UPCOMING MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS** * * * * *

- *January 13, 2015 - 7:30 PM - general meeting
- *January 27, 2015 - Steering Committee dinner meeting 6 PM
- *February 10, 2015 - 7:30 PM - general meeting



Newsletter Update Form The purpose of this section is to update your information, email address, mailing address, phone number, Child's name, sibling's name, birth date and anniversary death date. This information will also help us in remembering your child / sibling on their days with a remembrance card sent to you by our chapter. Any questions contact the newsletter editor at 215-536-0173. Mail to the above address. I am the ___parent ___sibling ___grandparent

Your Name _____ I give permission to remember my child/sibling in the chapter newsletter/
 Address _____ website newsletter on their remembrance day and their photo if submitted
 _____ Phone # _____

Child / Sibling name _____ birth date _____ anniversary date _____

Child / Sibling name _____ birth date _____ anniversary date _____

If you would like to receive information about our special events, memorial walk and butterfly release, candle lighting etc. via email please provide your email address below. Would you please consider to receive our newsletter via email as a link to a chapter website where you are able to view it before it is mailed to those who do not have email.

___ yes ___ no email address: _____ PLEASE PRINT

 Authorization Signature

 Date

LOVE GIFTS

A LOVE GIFT is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died; either on his/her birthday or anniversary of the death. It can also be from someone who wants to honor a friend or relative who has died, or anyone who wants to help support the work of TCF. Your LOVE GIFTS are TAX DEDUCTIBLE, and are the Chapter's main monetary support. Chapter Non-profit #2053

I wish to make a donation in memory _____ honor _____ of _____

**Birth date _____ Death date _____

Love gift message _____

Please send your check payable to: TCF Quakertown Chapter and mail to: TCF Quakertown Chapter, PO Box 1013, Quakertown, PA 18951

I / We would like our Love gift to be used for: _____ Special Events /Speakers/community outreach _____ Memorial Garden
 _____ Candle Lighting Program _____ Memorial Walk & Butterfly Release _____ General operating expenses

Your Name _____
 email _____

Address _____

 Telephone _____

LOVE GIFTS

If you would like to remember your loved one in our newsletter and make a donation to help support the group please fill in the form and mail it in by the 15th of each month for the next months newsletter. Information and love gift must be received by above date to insure it to be in the next month's newsletter. Any love gifts received after the above date will be mentioned in the following month's newsletter. Thank you, The Newsletter Editor



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

PO Box 1013

Quakertown, PA 18951

Meeting Date: January 13, 2015



WE ARE A SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS, SIBLINGS, GRANDPARENTS AND FAMILIES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THE DEATH OF A CHILD OR SIBLING OF ANY AGE.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter. Please return this page to the above address.

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, 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 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 .(c) 2007