



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

January 2017

Quakertown Chapter

PO Box 1013

Quakertown, PA 18951

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The Compassionate Friends is a nationally renowned 501 C (3) non-profit organization with 700 chapters in the US. All donations are tax deductible.

The mission of The Compassionate Friends: 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.

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER PIECE OF THE GRIEF JOURNEY

By Debra Reagan —

I was sitting at my desk and glanced at the new calendar hanging on the wall. Suddenly, I was hit with the overwhelming thought of *another*. My heart ached over the thought of **another** birthday for my deceased child, **another** anniversary date, and all the other holidays that would come around another time. Many questions came to mind. Had I not gone through the depths of grief? Had I not walked through the Valley of the Shadows? Was this not enough? How could I be expected to do more??

It struck me the New Year was about **another** part of this grief journey. I had traveled through the depths of my grief, and the deep anguish had eased a bit. Now, I was about to encounter what I considered the breadth of my grief and I wasn't sure

what that meant. These are the definitions I found for the word breadth: 1) distance from side to side, 2) something of full width and 3) of comprehensive quality. As I pondered the distance of my journey, I thought about my life and the distance behind me. In some ways three years still feels like yesterday. Then I thought of the distance in front of me and the unknown road I have yet to travel. Each day I will find another way to carry this loss because the love for my child will be with me for the remaining distance of my life. As I looked at the second meaning of breadth, I continued to wonder about my grief. I thought about how my heart has grown wider. In the beginning of my grief, I feared

(Another Year cont page 4)

We talk. We listen. We share. We care.

Our Support Group Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of every month at St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital, 1021 Park Ave., Quakertown, in the Taylor Conference rooms A & B on the ground floor of the professional wing. Meetings are 7:30 - 9 PM.

No need to register. No fees or dues. Just come as you are.

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 monthly meetings. 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.

Newsletter Errors and Omissions

For any errors or omissions please contact Linda via email at kt4ever@mac.com with the error and the correction for the next month newsletter.

Please remember we are all volunteers and grieving

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 email:

newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org

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 not notified us you will be removed from the mailing list.

Newsletter submissions:

Submit articles and poetry to the editor by the 15th of the preceding 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:

newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org

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I am so, so sorry you are here.

I know this is your worst nightmare realized. I know this wasn't plan A, B, C, or Z. I know the weight of it all is suffocating, soul-crushing, devastating, and earth-shattering in every way possible. I know you would trade it all just for one more moment.

I know your heart is broken. How I wish I could make you feel at home again. How I wish I could take away the pain.

How I wish I could place that baby back in your arms. You could watch them grow. All the giggles, skinned knees, and eskimo kisses. I know you would savor every moment. I know you would breathe that baby in till you no longer had any breath in you. I know you would give every ounce of you to save every ounce of them, one thousand times over.

I know you miss them. I know you wish you could just smell them one more time, see their face one more time, kiss that squishy cheek and then freeze that moment so it would last forever. There are things that pictures and videos can never replace, and having that baby in your arms is at the top of the list.

I know.

If I could “fix” this, I would move mountains. My gosh, I would in a heartbeat.

You, sweet momma, are so brave. You are strong. You are such a good momma.

You need to know this.

On the days when it's all you can do just to function, that's okay.

On the days when you try your hardest to pull yourself together, and somehow things just don't work out, give yourself grace. Give yourself room to breathe, you are so loved, sweet momma.

On the days when no one but you mentions their name, I am so, so sorry. Say their name bravely. Know that they are still real, they were still here, and you are still their momma.

On the days when you feel like you could burst from anger and pain, go somewhere alone, cry it out, curse at the sky— there's nothing worse than having to fake it. Just don't. Please, let

yourself feel it. You've been through too much to put on a face, and healing doesn't come when we are living under a facade. On the days when the world tells you to “heal” and “move on”, friend, healing from child loss doesn't look like healing from an injury. Our children were not a broken bone, they are a piece of our hearts, and now a piece of our hearts is gone. Friend, you will heal, just not in the way the world wants you. You will breathe easier. You will ache maybe a little

less, but I've heard from mommas much, much further down the road than I, the longing will never, ever, ever leave. That's the beauty and the fierceness and the strength of a mother's love.

Momma, you are strong.

You are so brave. You are doing such a good job.

You are irrevocably changed, in the sweetest, head-over-heels, all-in, never-stopping way. Your love is strong. That's the promise you made when you swore to love them every second of their life and every second of your own, no matter what the cost was on your heart.

Nothing on this earth has shown me unconditional love better than the love of a

grieving momma. I see your love. I see the power of it. It's stronger than any amount of pain, than a sea of tears, than even the grasp of death.

I know, because of that love, you would brave every ounce of pain one thousand times over just for them. Even when you don't feel it... Look, momma. Here you are... You're still breathing. You're still standing. You are so brave.

Sweet momma friend, I am so sorry you are here. Know that you are so loved.

Know that where there is great pain, there is even greater love.

So much love to you,
A Momma Who Knows



Just For Today

Just for today, I will try to live through the next 24 hours...not expecting to get over my child's death, but learning to live with it...one day at a time

Just for today, I'll remember my child's life, not his death, and bask in the comfort of the treasured days and moments we shared.

Just for today, I will forgive all the family and friends who didn't help or comfort me the way I needed them to. They truly did not know how.

Just for today, I will reach out to comfort a relative or friend of my child. For they are hurting too, and perhaps we can help each other.

Just for today, I will free myself from my self-inflicted burden of guilt. For deep in my heart, I know if there was anything in this world I could have done to save my child from death, I would have done it.

Just for today, I will honor my child's memory by doing something with another child, be it my own, or someone else's, because I know that would make my child proud.

Just for today, I will offer my hand in friendship to other bereaved parents, for I DO know how they feel.

Just for today, I will smile...no matter how much I hurt on the inside...for maybe if I smile a little, my heart will soften and I will begin to heal.

Just for today, I will allow myself to be happy and enjoy myself, for I know I am not deserting my child by moving on.

Just for today, I will accept that I did NOT die when my child did. My life did go on and I am the ONLY one who can make that life worthwhile again.

~by V.Tushingham, taken from the Bereaved Parents of the USA Tampa Bay Newsletter, Sept 2001.

Letter to Mom

by Joy Curnutt

Mom, please don't feel guilty

It was just my time to go.

I see you are still feeling sad,
And the tears just seem to flow.

We all come to earth for our lifetime,
And for some it's not many years

I don't want you to keep crying
You are shedding so many tears.

I haven't really left you

Even though it may seem so.

I have just gone to my heavenly home,
And I'm closer to you than you know.

Just believe that when you say my name
I'm standing next to you,

I know you long to see me,

But there's nothing I can do.

But I'll still send you messages

And hope you understand,

That when your time comes to "cross over,"

I'll be there to take your hand.



Another Year, cont. from page 1

my heart would grow smaller with one less person to love. I now realize just the opposite is true. A part of my heart will always remain in 2005, but another part of my heart moves forward with a new hope. I also want to grow wider in spirit until the day I am joined with my child again.

The impact of this loss has touched every part of my life. As I process another layer of this loss, I realize another aspect of my life that has changed. I am a different person because of loving and losing my son. As each day on the new calendar goes by,

I will continue to travel this journey of transformation and seek to find another way to share Clint's light and love. I hope to be a better person because of this love.

I will proudly carry the love for my child along with the impact of losing him every day for **another** year. I will honor the loss and I will rejoice in each cherished memory. The joy of the past and the love in the present will carry me forward with new hope for **another** day.

Trial by Fire - 9 Tips for Grieving Couples

by Lisa Church

You will often hear that grief and loss bring couples together, but it can actually do just the opposite. It is possible to emerge on the other side of grief with a closer marriage, but it does take work.

Here are some tips adapted from the book "Hope is Like the Sun: Finding Hope and Healing After Miscarriage, Stillbirth or Infant Death" that can help your marriage survive the stress of loss:

1. Give each other the freedom to grieve in an individual way.

Resist the temptation to feel that your way is the only way to handle loss. Do not be fooled if it seems that your spouse has not been affected by the loss.

2. Remember the good times.

Think about activities you enjoy as a couple and make time to do them- even if you do not feel up to it yet.

3. Expect tough times.

Be tolerant with your mate and understand that you are both going to fail each other during this turbulent time.

4. Do not lash out at one another.

In a weakened state of grief, this will only push you apart. Find constructive ways to release the stress and anger of grief.

5. Prepare for change.

Loss and grief change people and it will change the face of your marriage. Decide together that this trial will bring you closer and commit to your relationship.

6. Reach out.

Resist the urge to spend time away from your mate or reach out to others who better understand your grief.

7. Avoid placing blame.

Tossing accusations at your spouse will only place a wedge in your relationship. Understand that feelings of guilt, anger, and confusion are normal during this time.



8. Love each other.

Be sure to offer the hugs, cuddling, and love that each partner needs to feel secure and supported. Be sure to resume your physical relationship as soon as possible.

9. Seek information and support.

Educate yourselves on grief and try to understand one another. If you are having difficulties resolving your grief as a couple and you feel your marriage is in trouble, get help immediately! Do not wait until it is too late to seek help.

"Next to love, sympathy is the divinest passion of the human heart"

Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of their death

Lisette Martin, daughter of Luke & Amanda Martin;
granddaughter of Evelyn & Nelson Martin, Jr. – 1/1

Joseph Harper, son of Chris & Janeen Harper;
grandson of Rosemarie & Francis Salamone – 1/2

Joseph Ogliodoro, son of Mike & Becky Ogliodoro;
grandson of Rose & Joseph Ogliodoro; Gary & Vickie
Shoudt – 1/2

Philip Gold, son of Alan & Frances Gold – 1/5

Jessica Roth, daughter of Wilbur & Carol Roth – 1/5

Eric Santayana, son of Debi & Walt Schimpf – 1/5

Anthony DelConte, son of John & Marie DelConte, Jr.;
brother of Dana Turock – 1/9

Jason Heuckeroth, son of Debbie & Mark Heuckeroth;
brother of Jaime – 1/9

Stephen Stalheim, son of Barbara & Gabriel Mertens;
brother of Daniel & Barbara Stalheim – 1/9

Eric Gorman, son of Butch & Marianne Gorman, Jr.;
brother of Patrick & Jennifer Gorman – 1/10

Karen Salmanson, daughter of Betty & Frederick
Schwenk – 1/11

Kiana Alverenga, daughter of Tina & Jose Alvarenga –
1/12

Daniel Attilio, son of Patrick & Ann Marie Attilio – 1/12

Morgan Mysza, son of Dean & Jill Mysza – 1/12

Brett Stebulis, son of Barbara & Leonard Stebulis –
1/13

Ken Trauger, brother of Jim Trauger & Donna Gibson –
1/15

William Mindler, son of Kathryn Mindler – 1/16

David Roscilo, son of Barbara Frojan – 1/16

Karin Haughey 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 Kathleen & Jim Hardgrove – 1/19

K. Scott Frey, son of Ken & Roberta Frey – 1/20

Clayton Sitko, son of Henry & Theresa Sitko – 1/20

Robert Toft, Jr., son of Robert & 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 & Myra DiNicola – 1/23

William Ingelido, Jr., son of William Ingelido, Sr. &
Rosann Smiley – 1/23

Jacob Jones, son of Elaine & Paul Barndt – 1/23

Michael Macko, brother of Mary Anne Macko – 1/23

Susan MacNamee, daughter of Ruth MacNamee – 1/23

Nathan Rodosky, son of Dean Rodosky; grandson of
Sandra & Warren Madison – 1/25

Julie Hartwich, daughter of Donna & Dave Hartwich –
1/27

Hector Valle, son of Hector Valle – 1/27

Karen Slotter, daughter of Dolly Bibic – 1/29

Dan Bardsley, son of Emma Bardsley; brother of John &
Anita Bardsley – 1/30

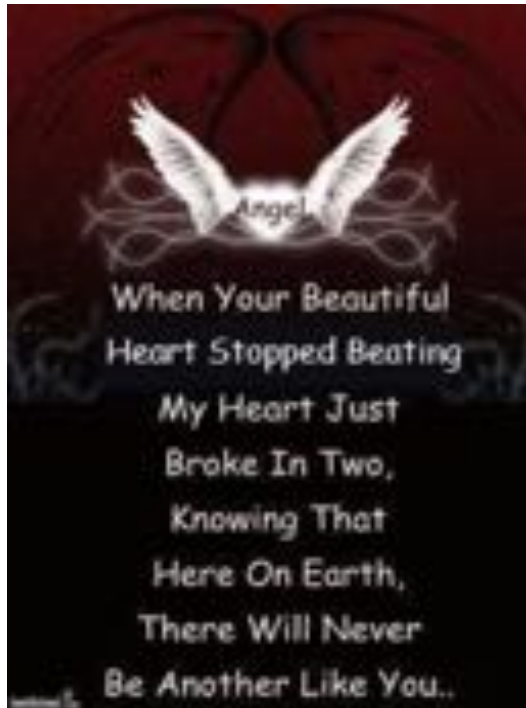
Stephen Lees, son of Gregory Lees – 1/31

Kristin Statuti, daughter of Henry & Maryann Statuti –
1/31

Linda Toland, sister of Andrea Dunning & Valerie
Schulz – 1/31

Don't Tell Me

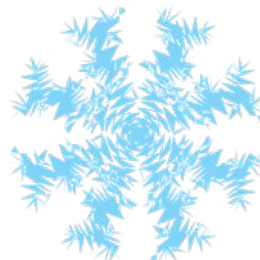
Please don't tell me you know how I feel,
Unless you have lost your child too.
Please don't tell me my broken heart will heal,
Because that is just not true.
Please don't tell me my son is in a better place,
Though it is true, I want him here with me.
Don't tell me someday I'll hear his voice, see his
face,
Beyond today I cannot see.
Don't tell me it is time to move on,
Because I cannot.
Don't tell me to face the fact he is gone,
Because denial is something I can't stop.
Don't tell me to be thankful for the time I had,
Because I wanted more.
Don't tell me when I am my old self you will be glad,
I'll never be as I was before.
What you can tell me is you will be here for me,
That you will listen when I talk of my child.
You can share with me my precious memories,
You can even cry with me for a while.
And please don't hesitate to say his name,
Because it is something I long to hear everyday.
Friend please realize that I can never be the same,
But if you stand by me,
You may like the new person I become someday.



THERE WILL BE LAUGHTER AND JOY AGAIN

The guilt of laughing and being happy after the death of our child can be horrible. "I must be a terrible person." This is an area in which I still unconsciously self-sabotage myself. Here is a question that has helped many parents get past this. "Would my child want me to stay in this place of so much darkness and pain, or would he or she want to see me happy again?" I think if we are willing to admit it, our child would feel terrible if they knew they were the cause of our never smiling, laughing, or having joy again. It's okay to smile. It's okay to laugh. It's okay to be happy and have joy in our lives again. It does not mean we have "moved on" or left our child behind as nothing but a faint memory. That is just plain impossible. What it does mean is that you have gotten to the place where you can live again beyond the death of your child. Our daughter, Becca, had bone cancer at age three. Part of her treatment was the amputation of her left leg. This gave us twenty six years of a front row seat to someone who had a very part of her cut off, but learning how to live a full life without that leg. Each of us has had our child cut off from us like an amputation. But each of us can eventually learn how to live a full life with that child no longer here on this earth. There will be daily reminders. Some events will be more difficult than others. But not only is it possible, it will happen, if and when you are ready to allow yourself to be happy again and live a full life with that part of you missing. And finally, this is the first year our perspective has changed from thinking about today being the day she died, to being the day of her heavenly birthday. So with that, I will end by saying, "Happy fifth birthday in heaven, Becca!"

Laura Diehl



Thank you, Thank you, Thank you

Thank you to Brian Doyle in memory of his daughter Ashley for providing our December refreshments. *If you would like to sponsor refreshments or bring some in remembrance of your loved one at a meeting please call Carol Graham at 215-538-3651.*

A special thank you to Mary Ann Kulp, Nancy Eisenhart, Lynette Lampmann, Jenn Pini, Kelly Logan 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), and brother, Jason (Jennifer), Kelly does it in remembrance of all those who have gone too soon. 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 Linda Stauffer for doing our newsletter. She does this in memory of her daughter Katie. Thank you to, Betty and Charlie Hottenstein, for taking on the monthly task of addressing our monthly newsletters for mailing, they do this in remembrance of their daughter, Tracy..

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.

Love Gifts for November

Steve Dusza - Love Gift for the Memorial Garden in Darlene & Michelle Dusza's Memory.

Jeanne Hofmann - Love Gift for Candle Lighting Ceremony in Memory of her son Scott.

The Poinsettias at the Candle Lighting Ceremony were donated by:

Henry & Theresa Sitko, Mandy Sitko, Max Sitko and Family

In memory of: Our father- Walter Pettie, Our 3 brothers- Walter Jr., Michael Joseph and Patrick Dean. Henry's sister- Carol Ann Slayman. Our 2 nephews- Andrew Thorn and Petie Shultz. And our dear son- Clayton Walter Sitko.

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 _____



Our Children Remembered on their January Birthdays

January Birthdays

Joseph Cavataio, son of Libby Cavataio – 1/1

Pamela Minnichbach, daughter of Paul & Dolly Cell – 1/1

Beverly Sue Otten, daughter of Mary Leuz – 1/2

Bobby Rolph, son of Judy and Bob Rolph – 1/3

Marc Landis, son of Anne & Craig Landis – 1/4

Anthony Bonino, son of Robert & Susan Bonino – 1/5

Lisa Kuniega-Lewis, daughter of Arlene & Alan Vogel - 1/5

Christopher Accardi, son of Anthony & Mary Ellen Accardi – 1/9

Ryan Mitman, son of Victoria & James Weisbrod – 1/10

Sean A. Ryer, son of Patricia Ryer; grandson of Diana Adams – 1/11

Ellen Crooke, daughter of Annette & Daniel Crooke – 1/12

Deborah Hornberger, daughter of Eleanor Morrow – 1/12

Kevin Figanial, son of Thomas & Valerie Figanial – 1/13

Greggory Hallman, nephew of Mary Pat Hallman – 1/13

Jason Pini, sibling of Jennifer Pini – 1/13

Geneva Doll, daughter of Keith & Barbara Doll – 1/14

Cynthia Benge, daughter of Robert & Cheryl Benge – 1/18

Karen Graham, daughter of John & Barbara Graham, Jr. -1/19

Stormy Weaver, daughter of Nathan & Amber Weaver – 1/20

Nick Umberger, son of Nina & Jeff Wolfinger; nephew of Bev Pearson – 1/23

Austin Jacobs, son of Penny Jacobs – 1/24

Allison Reboratti, daughter of Barbara & Eduardo Reboratti – 1/25

Megan Eschenburg, daughter of Gary & Peggy Eschenburg – 1/27

Ross Van Houten, son of Brenda Van Houten – 1/27

Karen Salmanson, daughter of Betty & Frederick Schwenk – 1/28

Matthew Lincul, son of Linda & Ed Lincul – 1/29





The Compassionate Friends
Quakertown Chapter
PO Box 1013
Quakertown, PA 18951



Next Meeting January 10, 2017



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 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.

