



The Compassionate Friends

September 2019 Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

QUAKERTOWN CHAPTER OF TCF TH MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

August 15, 2019 marked the 20th Anniversary of The Compassionate Friends of Quakertown. This Chapter has been supporting bereaved families in the Bucks, Montgomery, and surrounding areas since 1999. Parents who bonded through grief, found Compassionate Friends to be helpful, and they knew that our area needed this kind of support. In the past 20 years, the roster of families we support continues to grow. This fact is bitter sweet as no one ever wants to willingly join our group. The reason we have bonded is due to the unthinkable loss of a child, grandchild or sibling.

For the majority of the past 20 years, Darlene F. Dusza led this chapter. Darlene and Barbara Reboratti bonded over the death of their daughters, Michelle & Allison back in 2001. They sought comfort and understanding from sharing their grief with others. We sadly had to say goodbye to Darlene in 2016 after she lost her battle with cancer. Darlene was the force behind much of our chapter's success. It was Darlene's dream to build a Memorial Garden for our children and siblings gone too soon. In 2017, we broke ground for



the garden in James Memorial Park, Sellersville and completed it in April 2018. Our Chapter's Memorial Garden is growing beautifully and allows our members and the public, a peaceful place to visit, sit and reflect.

Our chapter's success is due many dedicated parents, grandparents and siblings who have focused their grief on helping others. Anne and the late Rev. Craig Landis were pivotal in bringing the chapter to a more formal stage. They took the support meetings from casual dinner meetings to monthly meetings held the 2nd Tuesday of every month at St. Luke's Hospital in Quakertown. Rev. Craig served as one of the first chapter leaders. During the same period, Barb Reboratti served as treasurer and opened bank accounts in the chapter's name. Darlene served as secretary. Slowly our chapter evolved to what it is now, thanks to the hard work by many. These people have added their skills, talents

and leadership to connect with new members. They have increased our purpose, and offered a listening ear. The chapter has grown substantially from the outreach efforts. We have spread grief awareness through our monthly newsletter, website, Facebook page and Facebook groups. There are dozens of others behind the scenes who have donated hours of their time and this Chapter could not make it without them. We are stronger together! We need not walk alone!

We are The Compassionate Friends (*continued on 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.

Quakertown Chapter
PO Box 1013
Quakertown, PA 18951
Chapter Info Line: 484-408-7314
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website: www.tcfquakertownpa.org



Please give some thought to volunteering with The Compassionate Friends. Our Chapter is growing and we need helping hands to continue to help others that are new to this path of grief. We need not walk alone.

TAMING THE GRIEF MONSTER

Having been a bereaved mother for nine years, I am now able to look back and see how I was able to get from, “I don’t think I can survive this all-consuming pain” to “I will always love and miss Kevin, but the memories and joy of having him for 24 years now outweigh the pain of losing him.”

Traversing this path of profound grief will undoubtedly be the most difficult thing you ever have to do in your life! Unfortunately, there are no magic wands or quick fixes; how could there be? A parent’s love for their child is total and unconditional, unlike any other kind of love. Even if we didn’t always like their actions or choices, our love for our child never wavered.

Since we are each unique individuals, as was our relationship with our child, there is no one “cookie cutter” way to grieve or heal. However, there are things you can do to help yourself.

The following are some suggestions that have helped me and others make the journey through grief a little easier and less frightening. Be prepared though, there will be some work involved, the mere passage of time does not magically heal grief.

Taking Care of Yourself

First and foremost, you need to take care of yourself. Never feel guilty about taking time for yourself or asking for help. Be as compassionate with yourself as you would with a dear friend going through a tragedy. What is helpful varies greatly from person to person. Some find staying busy helps, while others need solitude; some benefit by a bubble bath or massage; others prefer exercise while still others prefer talking to a friend. No matter how you find small respites from the agony of grief, there is one important constant – taking care of your health. It is important to avoid under-eating or over-eating (especially with junk food.) Be sure to stay hydrated; dehydration puts an additional and unnecessary strain on your body. Avoid excessive caffeine or alcohol; water and/or juices are best.

Sleep is frequently a major problem, as it was for me. I needed prescription medication for the first three years. Talk to your doctor or psychiatrist if this is an issue for you. Sleep deprivation takes a major toll on both your body and mind.

Crying

Never underestimate the healing power of tears! They are the body’s way to release toxins and the mind’s way to express strong emotions. Allow yourself as much crying as you need. If it makes others uncomfortable, so be it. Obviously there are going to be times when it is inappropriate. Try to put the tears “on hold” until you can be alone, like in the car or at home. I believe I was lucky because I cried easily, and excessively! After a good cry I would feel a degree of relief from the pain and anxiety. Some people aren’t able to cry, or can only cry minimally. If

this is the case, I suggest using a prompt to bring on the tears, for instance a song or holding an item related to your child. Otherwise, try vigorous physical exercise to release some of those emotions.

Anger

Anger is almost always present, no matter the circumstances of your child’s death. A parent is never supposed to lose a child, it is completely wrong! We want to lash out at someone or at God. Even though irrational, we are often angry at ourselves, thinking that somehow we should have been able to prevent it. It is normal and natural to have these feelings in the beginning. Sometimes there is a person responsible for your child’s death – either accidentally or intentionally. If anger towards a particular person becomes all consuming, especially to the point of wanting to take revenge, you should seek counseling as soon as possible. Extreme anger is not only harmful to you but delays healing. There is an old saying that, “Holding on to anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.” Although it sounds strange, letting go of the anger, and eventually

coming to some form of forgiveness, is a gift of freedom you give yourself. This doesn’t mean that you need to make that person your new best friend or that you will ever forget, but giving power to the anger can destroy you.

Journaling

Journaling can be a very helpful way to tame the jumble of thoughts that accompany any significant life tragedy. It is one type of outlet, a tool that you can easily utilize. I found that writing provided an excellent outlet for me. I wrote down my thoughts and emotions, significant dreams, as well as things I wanted to say to Kevin. It doesn’t have to be seen by anyone else and can be rambling or repetitive. Journaling also provides a way to measure your healing. As you look back, months or years later, you are able to see your progress and appreciate just how far you have come.

“

Clearly, we grieve the person we lost.
What many don’t understand
is that is only part of it.
We grieve what we had and all we shared.
We grieve all the important
things they have missed
and will miss.
We grieve the future we were
supposed to have together.
This list goes on. Grief is complicated.

JONI GRIEFTOLIFE.COM



Is There a God?

Not everyone believes in God (or a higher power) but if they do, as in my case, faith is almost always questioned in a life-altering tragedy such as this. I remember screaming, “Why did Kevin have to die when bad people get to live? Eventually, as my anger subsided, I thought of a famous book by Rabbi Kushner, When Bad Things Happen to Good People. His theory was that God didn’t cause the tragedy but he can be a source of strength afterward. When I was finally able to pray again, I was rewarded with the comfort and strength I needed then, and still do.

Eventually, as I let go of the anger, I came to some realizations that helped me put things into a better perspective. These included: I appreciate all the many blessings and people who still exist in my life; the depth of the pain is not as great as the depth of the love; and I believe that I will see Kevin again when it’s my time to cross over.

Linda Zelik is a USC graduate and retired Occupational Therapist. Her world came crashing down in 2010 when her 24-year-old son died. She describes the early years following his death as; "Being devastating, filled with depression, tears and anxiety. Life became a long and painful journey of searching for ways to heal enough to feel 'normal' again." Today she enjoys an active life with several volunteer jobs including raising and training service dogs and being a Compassionate Friends facilitator. Linda Zelik is the facilitator of the South Bay/L.A. chapter of TCF. She has a newly published book entitled, From Despair to Hope, Survival Guide for Bereaved Parents. It can be found through her website: <http://www.griefhelp4parents.weebly.com> or at amazon.com.



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties



About Our Chapter

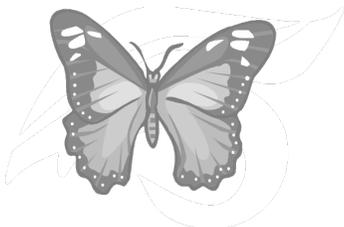
Ginny Leigh-Manuell, Chapter Leader
 Crystal Hunter-Co-leader
 Sherri Albro, Chapter Treasurer
 Gail Blase, Chapter Secretary
 Mary Anne Macko, Assistant Secretary
 Linda Stauffer, Chapter Newsletter & Website
 Theresa Sitko, Memorial Garden Director
 Barbara Reboratti, Chapter Delegate
 Carol Graham
 Lynette Lampman, Hospitality
 Mary Catherine Niderostek, Hospitality
 Diane Guerecki, Remembrance Cards
 Lisa Dechant, Remembrance Cards
 Bob Albro

TCF National Office:

877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

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



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're 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



OUR CHILDRENS' BIRTHDAYS REMEMBERED for September



9/1 – Sophie Burock, infant daughter of Russ and Theresa Burock

9/1 – Mark Teufel, brother of Helene Teufel

9/2 - Cpl. Elliot Teisler, son of Daniel & Roberta Teisler

9/3 – Shari Geib, sister of Lisa Cohen

9/3 – Julie Howe, daughter of Tim & Nancy Howe, sister of Melanie

9/6 – Rachel Sands, daughter of Charlotte Tatu, sister of Christian, mother of Tommy

9/9 – Robert Reynolds, brother of Lisa Robey

9/10 - Calvin Gross, son of Karen Gross

9/11 - Justice Goodwin, son of Holly & Keith Goodwin

9/12 – Anne-Marie Acker, daughter of Anne Marie Acker

9/12 - Clayton Stiko, son of Henry & Theresa Sitko

9/15 – 1st Lt. Matthew Gaffney, son of Phillip & Kathleen Gaffney

9/18 - Gregory Giachetti, son of Lawrence & Wanda, sibling of Jeffrey & Susan Giachetti

9/18 – David Roscilo, son of Barbara Frojan

9/23 – Damien DeRose, son of Lynn DeRose

9/23 – John Roeder Sr, son of Don & Joan Roeder, brother of Kerrie

9/24 – Michael Yothers, son of Brenda Yothers

9/26 - Michael Adamson, son of Darlene & Daniel Dean, brother of Michelle

9/30 - Adrienne Heber, daughter of Anna & John Heber

9/30 – Christopher Reed, son of Sally Reed



(Continued from page 1)

Contacting our chapter or coming to the first meeting is something NO ONE EVER WANTS TO DO. Yet, look how far we have come. Look at how many people we have connected with. Many lasting friendships have been made. We hear over and over again that the support meetings, Facebook groups and the sharing of memes tend to be as beneficial as therapy.

At the Annual World Wide Candle Lighting Ceremony in December, we will acknowledge this 20 year milestone with cake! Hope to see you there, December 8th, save the date

Our Children Remembered for September

Loved...Missed...Remembered on the Anniversary of their death

- X9/1 - Kevin Figanik**, son of Thomas & Valerie Figanik
- 9/1 - Justin Hunter**, brother of Crystal Hunter, son of Pat & Annette Hunter
- 9/2 - Jenna Nicole Burleigh**, daughter of Ed & Jaqui Burleigh
- 9/4 - Aaron Abud**, son of Susan Abud
- 9/4 - Ryan Heimerdinger**, son of Robert & Barbara Heimerdinger
- 9/5 - Charles Hartnett**, son of Barbara Hartnett
- 9/5 - John Jarema III**, son of Josephine Lenhart
- 9/5 - Tyler Mostek**, son of Kimm Mostek & Brendan Dorsa; grandson of Vick Bartakovits
- 9/6 - Richard Cantando**, son of Stephen & Kathryn Cantando
- 9/6 - Billy Klinedinst**, son of Michelle Klinedinst
- 9/6 - Jennifer Rose**, daughter of Michael & Donna Rose
- 9/6 - Farrald Lee III**, brother of Kendra Stenack
- 9/7 - Judy Besh**, sister of William Klinger
- 9/9 - Sullivan Burd**, son of Glenn & Jessica Burd
- 9/10 - John Ruch**, son of Christina Dunning
- 9/12 - Ben Smith**, son of Nick Wyllie,
- 9/14 - Cristina Ewers**, sister of Phillip & Linda Emery; Mark & Jacqueline Teufel
- 9/15 - Gregory Giachetti**, son of Lawrence & Wanda, sibling of Jeffrey & Susan Giachetti
- 9/17 - Sophie Burock**, granddaughter of Russ & Theresa Burock
- 9/17 - Cole Ferdock**, son of Kelly Ferdock
- 9/17 - Susan Sine**, daughter of Dorothy & Lynn Miller
- 9/20 - Ellen Crooke**, daughter of Annette & Daniel Crooke
- 9/21 - Geneva Doll**, daughter of Keith & Barbara Doll
- 9/21 - Justin Powis**, son of Jennifer and William Powis
- 9/22 - Christopher Fonder**, brother of Brittni Fonder
- 9/22 - Michael Vincent Schanbacher**, brother of Bill Schanbacher
- 9/23 - Tara Sciss**, daughter of Todd Sciss
- 9/24 - Petie Shultz**, son of Maria Shultz; grandson of Doreen Pettie
- 9/25 - Jean Marie Moyer**, daughter of Joe Siedlecki & Monica Siedlecki
- 9/26 - Matt Dille**, son of Patti & Joe Dille
- 9/27 - Nathaniel Rocque**, grandson of John & Marie Rocque
- 9/28 - Karen Murray**, sister of Nancy Perrin



THANK YOU



Our sincere thanks for the refreshments in August:

Cindy O'Donnell for her son Rourke O'Donnell
Craig Duvall for his son Kinsey Duvall
Diane Gurecki for her son Mike Gurecki
And thank you all for sharing your memories of your beloved sons with us!



If you would like to sponsor refreshments or bring some to a meeting in remembrance of your loved one, please call our Chapter Info Line 484-408-7314.



A special thank you to Diane Guerecki, Lisa Dechant and Crystal Hunter for the Remembrance cards that you receive. They do this in memory of their children/ siblings: An appreciated Thank You to our members for helping to set up and tear down for chapter meetings. Thank you to Linda Stauffer for doing our newsletter and website. She does this in memory of her daughter Katie. Thank you too, Betty and Charlie Hottenstein for addressing our monthly newsletters for mailing. They do this in remembrance of their daughter, Tracy.

And if I go, while you're still here...
Know that I live on,
Vibrating to a different measure
Behind a thin veil you cannot see through.
You will not see me,
So you must have faith.
I wait for the time when we can soar
together again,
Both aware of each other.
Until then, live your life to the fullest
And when you need me,
Just whisper my name in your heart,
...I will be there.

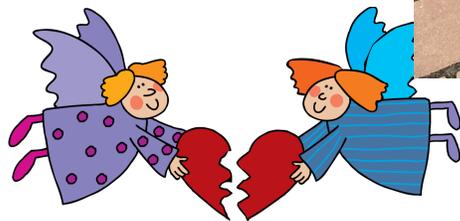
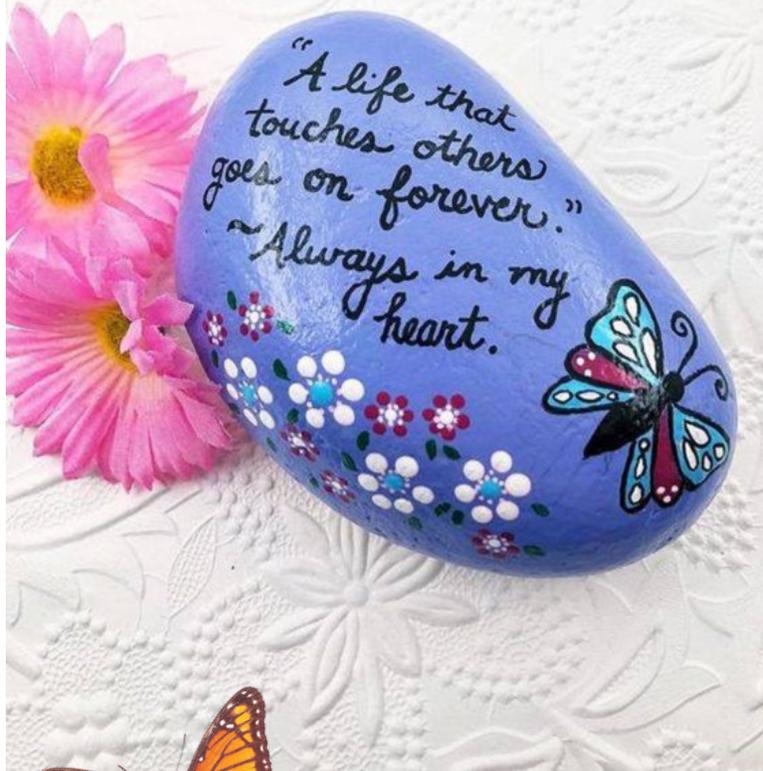
-Emily Dickinson

A red advertisement for the GIANT Giving Tag Program. At the top right is a globe icon and the text "GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY." Below this is a box of GIANT reusable bags with a "\$1 DONATION" tag. The text "ALL YOU KNEAD IS LOVE" is on the box. Below the box is the GIANT logo. To the right of the box, the text reads "USE THE TAG, SEND US A \$1 DONATION." At the bottom right, it says "GIVING TAG PROGRAM".

HELP US RAISE MONEY

Do you use the reusable (and super sturdy) bags for the grocery store? If so, go to GIANT and purchase some reusable **Bags 4 My Cause with the Giving Tag**. Go home, get online (website is provided on the Giving Tag) follow the directions and choose **The Compassionate Friends Quakertown Chapter** as the non-profit. You will have to scratch off and enter a code, but it literally takes less than 5 minutes to give us some cash! We get a check from Giant to add to our funds. It is SUPER easy. Tell your friends! If you don't use them, now is a good time to start! Thank you!





LOVE GIFTS

A Love Gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends. Love Gifts can be in memory of a child or sibling on their birthday or angel day, can honor a friend or relative, or can show support for the work of TCF. Love Gifts are the Chapter's main monetary support. Love gifts for August: David & Susan Hill In loving memory of their son, Eric Hill. Josephine Jarema Lenhart. In loving memory of her son, John Jarema. Thank you for your Love Gift.

Love Gifts are tax deductible – Chapter Non-Profit #2053



Circle One: *In Memory* or *In Honor* of (name of person) _____

Birth Date _____ Death Date (Angel Day) _____

Check One: Please use my gift for....

- Memorial Garden
- Special Events (i.e. speakers, community outreach)
- Candle Lighting Program
- Memorial Walk & Butterfly Release
- General operating expenses

Love Gift Message:

Your Name: _____

Email or Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Checks payable to
TCF Quakertown Chapter
PO Box 1013
Quakertown, PA 18951

Treasurer Use Only
Cash/Check # _____ Amount _____
D _____ Q _____ T _____ N _____

