



The Compassionate Friends

April 2020

Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

A Message to our Members

For everyone's health and safety with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Support Group Meeting on April 14th at St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital has been canceled.**

St Luke's Quakertown Hospital has closed their meeting rooms to the public until restrictions are lifted, so we are not sure about our May Support Group meeting. We will continue to monitor and communicate with you via email, Facebook, our website and our newsletter.

THE MEMORIAL GARDEN IS CLOSED for the duration of the COVID-19 restrictions.

MEMORIAL GARDEN PLAQUES have been ordered. Due to the current pandemic, we anticipate possible delays in receiving the finished items. As soon as they are delivered AND when the park reopens, the plaques will be installed. We will contact you when your plaque has been installed.

THE MEMORIAL WALK AND BUTTERFLY RELEASE is currently on hold. A final decision on whether we should proceed, reschedule or cancel will be made in

approximately 3 weeks. Again, we will communicate with you via email, Facebook, our website and our newsletter.

Sending all of you warm virtual hugs and wishes for continued good health.

Thank you all for your patience!

Ginny Leigh-Manuell
Brian's Mom



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123802347679381/>
[Our private facebook group](#)

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
contact@TCFQuakertownpa.org
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

Save the date! The Compassionate Friends Quakertown Chapter Annual Memorial Walk & Butterfly Release
Noon to 3pm ~ June 13, 2020 (rain or shine) Location: James Memorial Park; 1028 Ridge Road; Sellersville, PA



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties



About Our Chapter

Barbara Reboratti, Chapter Coordinator
& Chapter Delegate to National
Ginny Leigh-Manuel-Membership Outreach
Crystal Hunter, Social Media Coordinator &
Sibling Outreach
Sherri Albro, Chapter Treasurer
Gail Blase, Chapter Secretary
Mary Anne Macko, Assistant Secretary
Linda Stauffer, Chapter Newsletter &
Website Creator & Maintenance
Theresa Sitko, Memorial Garden Director
Lynette Lampmann, Hospitality
Mary Catherine Nederostek, Hospitality
Diane Guerecki, Remembrance Cards
Lisa Dechant, Remembrance Cards
Dianna Cox
Bob Albro
Carol Graham

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 Children Remembered for April Birthdays

4/1 - **Eric Ervin**, son of Linda & Rich Ervin

4/5 - **Benjamin Martin**, son of Kristine Fallows

4/7 - **Jonerik "EJ" Perullo**, grandson of Suzanne & Tom Kwan

4/8 - **Cole Ferdock**, son of Kelly Ferdock

4/11 - **Michael Johnson**, son of David & Donna Freeman; brother of Dorene Elwell

4/12 - **Steven Ketterer**, son of Steven & Gail Ketterer

4/13 - **Kelly Eisenhart-Schmittinger**, daughter of Nancy Eisenhardt, sister of Dana Hutchinson

4/14 - **Farrald Lee III**, brother of Kendra Stenack

4/15 - **Ben Smith**, son of Nick Wyllie

4/19 - **Benjamin Culton**, son of Mark & Barb Culton

4/25 - **Tony Kulp**, son of Mary Ann Kulp

4/29 - **Christopher Court**, son of Caroline & Tim Court

4/29 - **Jessica Roth**, daughter of Wilbur & Carol Roth



It wasn't My Choice To Survive Without You!

So, I Chose To Live and To Honor You!

Carissa Fowler Healing Hand



*The Moment
that you left me,*

my heart split in two. One side filled with memories, the other side died with you. I often lay awake at night when the world is fast asleep, and take a walk down memory lane with tears upon my cheek.

☞ REMEMBERING ☞

you is easy, I do it everyday; but missing you is a heartache that never goes away I hold you tightly within my heart and there you will remain.

You see life has gone on without you, but will never be the same



Grief in a Pandemic: Resources for Troubling Times

By Anna Sweat
Author and Evelyn's Mom

Currently, the world is facing a global health crisis as novel coronavirus seeds infection from one continent to the next. I'm not telling you anything you don't know. As an already grieving mother, I am all too familiar with the knot of panic that consumes me when my living children fall ill or I feel another life in our family is threatened in any way. So, as the grip of fear begins to fill lines at the pharmacy and empty supermarket shelves, I can't help but think of my fellow grieving parents, grandparents, and siblings, who have already lost so much, and may feel hit hardest by this wave of fresh anxiety.

I want to share a few reminders with each of you, as well as a very simple list of resources, as we all navigate this strange, new landscape we find ourselves in until this virus burns itself out.

First, hold yourself gently. You might be frantic at the idea that you will not be able to protect yourself or your living children. You might be triggered by coverage on the news of international and domestic cases and fatalities. It is likely, with what you have endured, that your biological alarm system is already working in overdrive. That is to be expected. If you find yourself shaken by this turn of events more than your non-grieving neighbors, know that you are experiencing a normal reaction in a non-normal situation. Be loving and tender with yourself. Reach for comfort. If you need to gather supplies or self isolate or turn off the television set or break from social media for a bit—do so. Please take care of your mental and emotional health even as you focus on your physical health and that of your family.

Second, honor your unique perspective—the world needs it. Even as everyone else erupts into arguments over the politicizing of a distinctly human experience, remember that you know what others don't. You know the cost of a life. You know what really matters. You know that compassion and kindness are required as we face times like these. You know that even if your family fairs well or our nation fairs well, there are real people who have lost real lives in the rest of the world, whose families are hurting. You know how to view this epidemic with your heart *and* your head, while so many others resort to angry ranting or me-first thinking. You understand the value of community, even in a time when we are called to keep apart. You know how to pull together, offer support, uplift and encourage and just listen when that's all that's possible. You know how to sit in the discomfort. You

have something to give.

Third, seek support. It's okay, even now, to ask for help. We have innumerable resources at our disposal. You are not alone. Avail yourself of the myriad Facebook groups, online blogs and publications, and national hotlines that are available to you. Stay connected even when you keep physical distance. Take advantage of Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, Marco Polo and other face-to-face communication technologies. Reach out. If you are feeling anxiety or depression or a fresh wave of grief, find somewhere to share your feelings where you can be listened to, validated, and understood.

Fourth, check in. Take a minute in the midst of the flurry of activity and news to check in with your grieving self. Can you name what you are feeling? Do you need some time to be with your deceased child's memory, away from the craziness of what's happening? Are you facing a birthday, anniversary, or other significant holiday that holds particular pain or importance for you? How can you still honor that? Are you reminded of your child's death in ways you normally wouldn't be? How are you sleeping, breathing, eating? Touch down and get a sense of where you are and what you need. Recognize if the world's collective grief is triggering your own personal grief. Care for yourself as a grieving person. Know that your grief journey continues even in the middle of a larger crisis.

Fifth, nurture yourself. It may sound odd when the grocery store is nearly empty and you're focused on counting to twenty every time you wash your hands. But this is not a time to withhold from yourself. What do you need to support your unique set of needs at this unique time? Whether it's hot tea or calming supplements or gentle music or a weighted blanket—find tangible ways to give to that part of yourself that needs oh-so-much reassurance. Consider coloring books, nutrition, curling up with your favorite read, board games with your family, yoga, warm baths, meditation. It can be anything. You know best how to comfort yourself. You have learned that the hardest way of all.

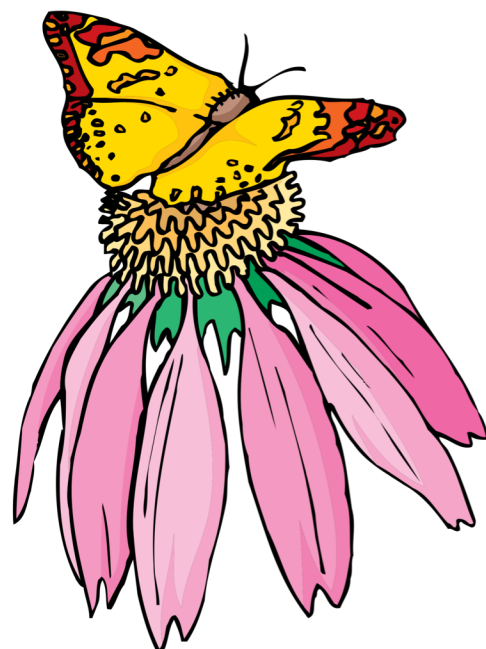
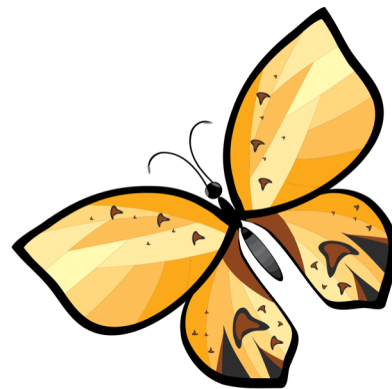
Sixth, check the facts. Panic often ensues when our minds begin swirling in the direction of countless negative possibilities. What if I can't protect my child?

(Continued on page 7)

Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of Their Death

Loved , missed and alway in our hearts

- 4/3 - **Tim DeCoursey**, brother of Kimberly Flagello
- 4/5 - **Kelly Eisenhart-Schmittinger**, daughter of Nancy Eisenhart; sister of Dana
- 4/5 - **Sherry Reiss**, daughter of Ray & Janet Popowitz; sister of Lisa Springer
- 4/6 - **Alexis Falcone**, daughter of Dominic & Carolyn Falcone
- 4/6 - **Liam Williamson**, son of Erin & Daniel Williamson
- 4/7 - **Kyle Smith**, son of David & Maria Smith
- 4/8 - **Eric Ervin**, son of Linda & Rich Ervin
- 4/10 - **Rich Hollabaugh**, son of Linda & the late Wayne Hollabaugh
- 4/10 - **Katherine Hurley**, daughter of Jennifer & Zachary Hurley
- 4/10 - **Joey Acker**, son of Anne Marie Acker
- 4/11 - **Jordan Campbell**, son of Marci Borits
- 4/13 - **Keith Heckler**, son of Emma & Lamar Heckler
- 4/13 - **Ryan Strauch**, son of Dave & June Strauch
- 4/14 - **Cynthia Cole**, daughter of Hugh & Marie Madden
- 4/14 - **Sarah Parvin**, daughter of Keith & Sandy Parvin
- 4/14 - **Liz Ann Whipple**, daughter of Liz Sullivan
- 4/15 - **Brooke Miller**, daughter of Beth Miller
- 4/17 - **Jason Reall**, son of Steven & Barbara Reall; brother of Jennifer
- 4/17 - **Cpl. Elliot Teisler**, son of Roberta & Daniel Teisler
- 4/19 - **Allan Afflerbach**, son of Herman & Janice Afflerbach
- 4/19 - **James Palatinus**, son of Susan & Nandor Palatinus
- 4/19 - **Michael Morgan**, son of Deb & Ray Vrtis
- 4/20 - **Frank Voce**, son of Frank & Anna Voce
- 4/20 - **Craig Zakeosian**, son of Mike Zakeosian
- 4/22 - **Donald Cass, Sr.**, brother of Brian & Trish Cass; Wendy & Scott Ramage
- 4/22 - **Adam Tomlinson**, son of Lynn Miller & John Tomlinson, Jr.
- 4/22 - **Douglas Minner**, son of Louise & Toby Minner
- 4/24 - **Sundai Marie Peters**, daughter of Arlene & Phil Peters
- 4/27 - **Kristy Bender**, daughter of Kathy & Frank Bender
- 4/27 - **Richard Carver, Jr.**, brother of Carla Clark
- 4/28 - **Scott Newell**, son of Carol Newell
- 4/28 - **Ronald Phillips**, son of Richard & Theresa Phillips
- 4/30 - **Krysta Henkin**, daughter of Martin & Kathleen Shea



AROUND THE CORNER TO SPRING

Heavy gray clouds, wet, cold rain - winters can be long and lonely. The promise of spring is a faraway thought. But just as winter subsides, spring is peeking around the corner. Daffodils will bravely break the hard ground, colorful tulip cups will catch spring showers, and slowly but surely, trees will bud, birds will sing and the sun will shine.

We have all encountered unspeakable pain in the loss of our child, and the seasons of recovery may also seem overwhelmingly dark and cold. Through this tremendous trauma, each of us finds a way to survive — a strength many could not imagine, yet here we are.

Each day, season, and year that we survive beyond that unforgettable day, I believe our children nurture the seeds of love they planted in our hearts. And it is this enduring love that helps us discover life again.

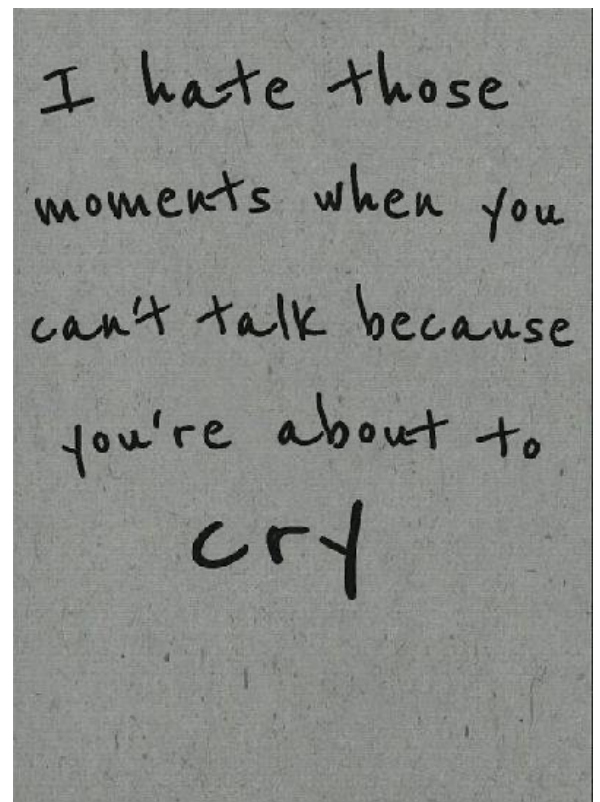
Spring is often known as the “season of hope.” Yes, there will still be spring showers (just as there will always be a tear for our loved ones), but is often punctuated by breathtaking rainbows stretching across



the heavens and the promise of blue skies once again. The air seems lighter and fresher, filled with floral aromas and the scent of ‘life.’

As we close out these last weeks of winter and look ahead to brighter days, my wish to all families is that you celebrate your strength, honor your tears, and share a word of hope and support to others who are newly bereaved. May we all find spring in our hearts!

By D. Barta,
From Portland, Oregon.



What if I can't feed my family or get them medicine? What if I can't go to work and make money? What if, what if, what if ... For those of us who have already lost a child, we know how real those possibilities can become. It's even easier for us to imagine such devastating ends. And that means it's even easier for us to panic. When you find yourself rushing down the worst possible road in your mind, pull back and check the facts. Are you ill? Is anyone in your house ill? What are the statistics around this disease? Have you prepared yourself and your family in whatever ways you were instructed? Is there actually anything else you can do? Are you in immediate danger? The facts will often ground you back in the reality of the present moment. And that's the only place where you can take any viable action if needed.

Seventh, keep it simple. Breathe in. Breathe out. As my beautiful girl put it, "This is the one thing, the one thing that you can do ... " Practice grounding yourself—where are you right now? What are you wearing? What are you seeing, hearing, smelling? Use your senses to bring you back. Remember that you can only take one step at a time. Focus on the immediate next step. When you've completed that, you can focus on the immediate next step after this one. What needs doing right now? What can wait? Narrow your focus down to single tasks. Narrow it down more to single breaths. Keep narrowing it down until you can relax.

Eighth, there's no shame. However you respond to this, there's no shame in it. If you are frightened. If you are ambivalent. If you are overstocked on supplies. If you haven't

bothered to visit the store. If you can't handle the store still. If none of it matters because your child is gone and you can't access enough space to care yet. Whatever it is, wherever you are, do not be ashamed of it. Take a genuine assessment of where you're at and where the authorities are saying you need to be, and see what you can do or what support you can find to cross that gap if there is one. Harvey drowned our home city only a week or two after we held Evelyn's memorial, and my husband and I barely knew it was happening. We couldn't lift our heads high enough to register the natural disaster over our personal one. It's okay. Our capacity was what it was. As is yours.

The Compassionate Friends [TCF] has private Facebook Groups that are moderated by trained volunteers who are bereaved parents. You can access the links to those groups here:

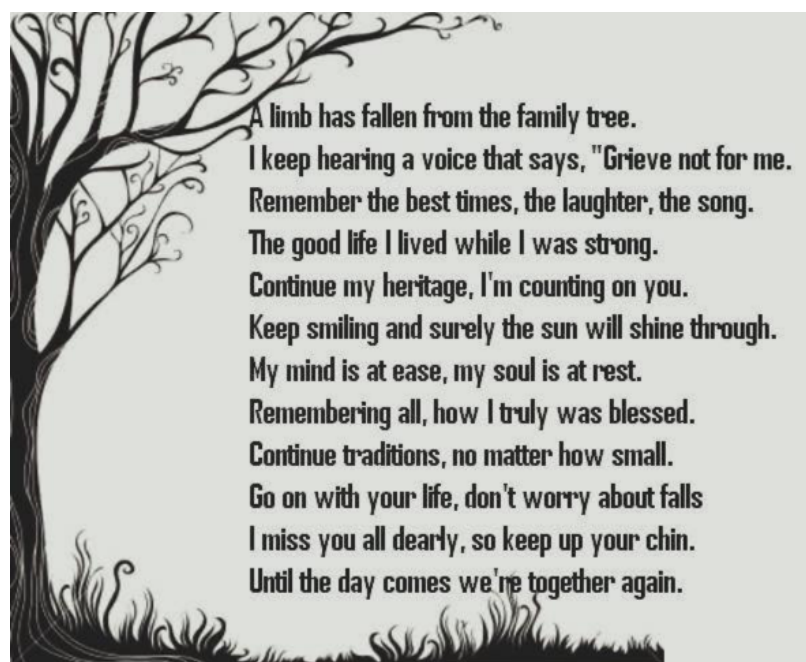
<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/private-facebook-groups/>

The Compassionate Friends online chat rooms can be accessed here:

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support/>

Our Quakertown Chapter has a private Facebook Group. You can access us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123802347679381/>



THANK YOU



Refreshments for March

We gratefully acknowledge the following families who provided refreshments for our March meeting.

Lisa Dechant for her son Eddie; Mary Anne Macko for her sons Chris and Matt Trauger; Frank & Claire Ciccarone for daughter Lillian; Carol Mikesell for her son Greg; Mike & Kathy Fluck for daughter Karisa Kade.

A special thank you to Diane Guerecki, Kasey Bradley Lisa Dechant, Jenifer Pini 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 to, Betty and Charlie Hottenstein for addressing our monthly newsletters for mailing. They do this in remembrance of their daughter, Tracy. Thanks to Barb and Bob Heimerdinger for applying the memorial Plaques to the wall in the memorial garden. They do this in remembrance of their son Ryan.

THANK YOU

MICHELLE LARRABEE AND ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR FUNDRAISER IN MEMORY OF YOUR SON, HUNTER'S 13th BIRTHDAY! Your generous donation of the funds, is very much appreciated. What an amazing gift of love.



Love Gifts

From Suzanne and Richard Panettieri in memory of Drew Panettieri;

You are always in our hearts. Much love, Mom and Dad

From Edith Cooper in memory of Joseph Cooper;

We love you and miss you, yesterday, today and tomorrow, Mom

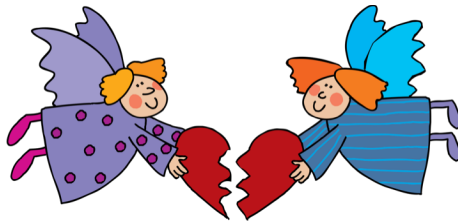
From Cathy Barton in memory of Shaun Barton

Miss you so much! Love always, Mom and Ann

From Marie Madden in memory of Cindy Cole

Miss you every day! Love forever, Mom

From Mary Catherine Nederosteck in memory of Joshua Sotak.



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. **Please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends Quakertown Chapter.** (Bank will not accept just TCF)

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

Treasurer Use Only

Cash/Check # _____ Amount _____
D _____ Q _____ T _____ N _____



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

Next Meetings : To be announced



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.

