



# The Compassionate Friends

April 2021

Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

## Time to "Spring Clean" Your Grief

By Megan Meade-Higgins LMSW

Winter is finally almost over! Trees are budding, animals are coming out of hibernation- even people are "thawing out" after the long, cold days of winter. It's time to get ready for spring!

### AFTER A LOSS

The death of a loved one can feel like the bitter days of winter. You go into hibernation, and turn inside yourself to cope with your pain and sorrow. It may be months before you pick your head up and look around and realize you've been immersed in your grief for so long that you've tuned out everything else- your family, your friends, even the change of seasons. You can only just now start to look around and move a little more outside yourself. This is what I call the heart and soul's "spring awakening." It is the time in your grief journey when your heart and soul begin to "bud" with little shoots of hope- where you can recall your loved one's death and still feel sorrow, but you also begin to remember the joy of your relationship.

### "SPRING CLEANING" YOUR HEART AND SOUL

You will feel a momentum inside you when it is time to start "spring cleaning" your grief. Many people in your life may think they know when it's best for you to start this process. Friends and family may tell you to "get over it and move on," often before you are ready. But only you will know when the time is right. Respect your



own timeline for grief; it will be different from everyone else's. One suggestion for everyone, however: DO NOT DO ANYTHING DRASTIC FOR ONE YEAR. The first year after a loved one dies is full of "firsts:" first holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Your loved one's death is often too new and the grief too overwhelming for you to make any major decisions such as moving, changing careers or beginning new relationships. Let yourself ease back into life. How you feel right after a death and how you will feel in a year will be different. Commit to the one-year rule, and when that is over, take a deep breath and take stock of your life. Where are you now?

### THE "STUFF" DOES NOT EQUAL THE PERSON

When you are ready to begin to "spring clean" your grief, you will begin to go through your loved one's "stuff," clothes, belongings, etc. It will be a sort of "life in review" for you. As you look through those papers and clothes and files and personal items, the things they loved

*(Continued on page 3)*

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



If you are reading this newsletter and do not receive emails from the chapter, and would like to, please email [contact@tcfquakertownpa.org](mailto:contact@tcfquakertownpa.org) to be included on the email list. Be sure to include your name!



As our membership grows costs are rising to mail paper copies of the newsletter each month. Please consider receiving the newsletter by email, or Facebook, or our website. Please contact us with your email address!!! Thank you for helping us SAVE funds!!! email or scan -----> [contact@tcfquakertownpa.org](mailto:contact@tcfquakertownpa.org)



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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.



# The Compassionate Friends

## Quakertown Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

#### Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties



#### About Our Chapter

Chapter Leader – Barbara J Reboratti  
Chapter Treasurer – Sherri Albro  
Chapter Secretary – Gail Blase  
Assistant Secretary -  
Mary Anne Macko  
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster –  
Linda Stauffer  
Membership Outreach-  
Ginny Leigh Manuel  
Social Media Coordinator & Sibling  
Coordinator – Crystal Hunter  
Memorial Garden Chairperson –  
Theresa Sitko  
Committee members – Bob Albro,  
Dianna Cox, Diane Gurecki, Lisa  
Dechant and Lynette Lampman

**TCF National Office:**  
877-969-0010

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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.

We were put on this earth *to love them*  
for as long as WE live...  
not for as long as THEY lived.

– Alan Pederson



#### 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. Re-member 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 meet-ing. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org)

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and used and cherished, don't be surprised if it opens up the sadness all over again. The intensity of this grief may take you by surprise, like an unexpected snow in April. This is normal! Remember: as you go through their belongings, you are NOT giving away the person; you are only giving away and throwing out the stuff. You can never give them away; your love for them will always be with you and comfort you. It is actually very healthy for you to reminisce and cry and daydream of your loved one. While you are literally cleaning out your house, you are also cleaning out your heart and soul... and that is healing.

### "SPRING CLEANING" TIPS

One really great way to do this "spring cleaning" is with someone who loves you and understands this bittersweet time. Reminisce about your loved one. As you go through their belongings, tell stories of the life you shared with that person. There is comfort in the shared joy and sadness this task will bring. Sometimes, knowing you are helping others can relieve some of the grief you are feeling. Many people give away some of the stuff they clean out to charities so that the gift of your loved one's life can go on. Keep your most treasured, favorite items to celebrate the life of the person who has died, and if you want, display them proudly!

Time by yourself can often be good for "spring cleaning" your heart and soul, too. Alone time gives you the chance to reflect on your life with your loved one, and to start thinking about where you are headed. Lots of people will tell you it will take time, but you'll get "back to normal." A very important thing to understand about losing a loved one is that you will never be "back to normal." Things can never be exactly the same as when your loved one was alive. Instead, you will have to go on without that person physically in your life and create a "new" normal. Your loved one will always be with you, but now, it will be in a different way as you learn to live in the world without them there. How will it all turn out? No one knows... you cannot control the future or plan too far in advance. Make small changes, lean on your friends and family for support, and take it one step at a time. You CAN do it.

### SEASONS CHANGE, BUT LOVE NEVER DIES

The death of a loved one is devastating. But death and loss are NOT the final word. Seasons change, and with death, relationships change, too. But in the circle of life, spring always follows winter, and new life grows from the greatest despair and loss. Embrace your pain, and when you are ready, do some "spring cleaning" and start letting it go. Your emptiness will be filled with new gifts and ways of loving your loved one, and you will be able to move on to the next season of your life.

###

Megan Meade-Higgins is a Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW) specializing

## April Support Group Meeting

The continuing pandemic as well as the cold weather prevents us from meeting in person so we're doing the next best thing, a virtual Support Group meeting using the Zoom videoconference application. Our March meeting will be Tuesday April 13 at 7:30 PM. We'll again have the opportunity to give and receive support in an audio visual way using Zoom. Chapter leadership will facilitate the meeting and you may talk or choose to simply listen.

You do not need to create an account and you can use your mobile device or computer. Even if you haven't attended an in-person support group meeting or a previous online meeting, we welcome you to our Zoom meeting for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings.

- Please be in a private area during this meeting so we can preserve confidentiality and not have background noise such as the TV or barking dogs. Using headphones are ideal but not required.
- 24 hours prior to the meeting, the zoom URL code and link will be sent via email and posted in our private Facebook group. If you are receiving a paper copy of this newsletter, please send an email to [contact@tcfquakertownpa.com](mailto:contact@tcfquakertownpa.com) so we can send the code and link to you prior to April 9.
- At 7:15 PM on April 13, you can click that link from your smartphone or computer and be admitted to the meeting once leadership can verify your identity. If you have any questions, please see our contact information below.  
484-408-7314  
Topic: April Support Group Meeting Zoom  
Time: April 13 2021 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)



FOR ALL THE LIVING I'VE DONE  
NOTHING HAS AGED ME

*like my child dying*

# Garden Planting Time

Spring has sprung , the winter snows that protected our garden have melted. We need to add some beautiful bright flowers!

As we haven't been able to have fundraisers , we would appreciate anyone who could donate .

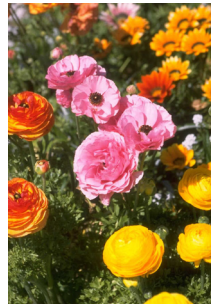
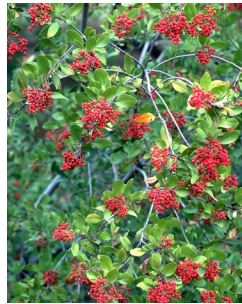
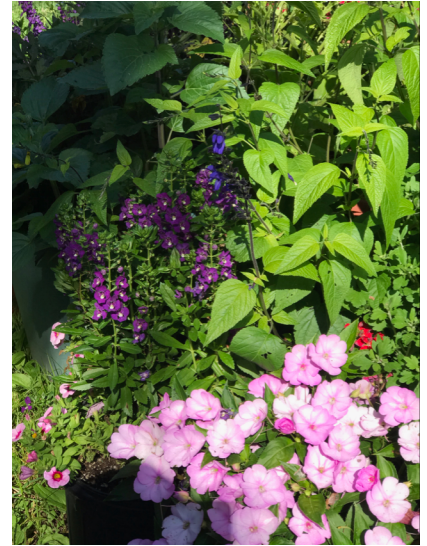
The flowers will be planted in memory of our children and siblings.

10 plants for \$25

25 plants for \$50

Please fill out the love donation form on page seven, check-for Memorial Garden. We will add your donation in our next newsletter.

Any donations will be greatly appreciated.



**Our Children Remembered on their April Birthdays  
Loved...Missed...Remembered on their Birthdays & Always**



- 4/1 - Eric Ervin**, son of Linda & Rich Ervin
- 4/5 - Benjamin Martin**, son of Kristine Fallows
- 4/7 - Joneric "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
- 4/15 - Ben Smith**, son of Nick Wyllie
- 4/19 - Benjamin Culton**, son of Mark & Barb Culton
- 4/19 - Dalton Hunsberger**, son of Charis Hunsberger
- 4/25 - Tony Kulp**, son of Mary Ann Kulp
- 4/29 - Christopher Court**, son of Caroline & Tim Court

Surviving grief isn't an *event*.

It's a *process*.

Take it *day-by-day*  
and welcome *comfort*  
wherever you find it.

~ author unknown



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

*Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of Their Death  
Loved, missed and always in our hearts*

- 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
- 4/7 - **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
- 4/11 - **Jordan Campbell**, son of Marci Borits
- 4/12 - **Thomas Water**, brother of Pamela Buda
- 4/12 - **Skye A. Gilbert**, daughter of Susan Gilbert
- 4/13 - **Keith Heckler**, son of Emma & Lamar Heckler
- 4/13 - **Ryan Strauch**, son of Dave & June Strauch
- 4/14 - **Liz Ann Whipple**, daughter of Liz Sullivan
- 4/19 - **Kaia DeCesare**, daughter of Kristina Robinson
- 4/20 - **Craig Zakeosian**, son of Mike Zakeosian
- 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



The journey made me hard and cynical, but when confronted with the shattering loss of my sibling, the armor fell away. I no longer hide from pain, I embrace it. It is my teacher. It transforms me. My heart seeks out others that are broken and our shared pain binds us. Together, we find strength, comfort and hope. In great loss, I found my purpose.

*Siblings Left Behind*

My dog died I know how you feel my dog died  
SO ARE YOU BACK TO NORMAL NOW  
It's better than losing a child you got to know  
You need to pick a date to be over it  
I would die if I was you  
EVERYONE HAS BURDENS TO CARRY  
Just be grateful for your other children  
She's in a better place  
God needed her more than you  
I know how it feels I lost my mom  
This won't always be as important to everyone else  
A death is a death  
You have to move on  
Be thankful you had him for 22 yrs  
YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY FOR YOUR FRIENDS WHOSE BABIES DIDN'T DIE  
Why do you have a photo of her up?  
I know how you feel I had an abortion, you'll be OK  
It's time to snap out of it  
He was only a year old when he died  
It's God's plan  
Find a new normal  
You're a black hole sucking everyone's good energy  
You were picked for this because you are strong  
You aren't the only ones that lost him  
We just want you to be you again  
It's been 3 years  
Get rid of his stuff & his ashes  
EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON  
You have your own angel in Heaven now  
Try not to dwell on the past  
YOU CAN HAVE ANOTHER ONE

# Love Gifts

Sending a very special thank you to those who sent in love gifts this month:  
Please help us continue our outreach to others who have lost a child or sibling. We need not walk alone!

Our member's love gifts continue to support our chapter's ongoing expenses as well as the maintenance and beautification of our chapter's magnificent Memorial Garden in James Memorial Park, Sellersville.

A special thank you to Diane Guerecki, 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 supplying the ink and paper and printing our newsletter and creating and maintaining our 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.

Donations made in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling are always welcome, but more so this year. Due to COVID restrictions we had to cancel our biggest fundraiser, the annual Memorial Walk and Butterfly Release.

Please help us help others. We Need Not Walk Alone.



## LOVE GIFTS

A Love Gift is a donation of money in support of our Quakertown Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. Donations can be in memory of a child, sibling, or grandchild on their birthday, angel day or anytime. Your Love Gift will be acknowledged in our newsletter. Love Gifts are our Chapter's main monetary support. Anyone can donate and we thank you for your support of our chapter.

***We are a 501(c) 3 nonprofit, chapter #2053. Donations are tax deductible.***

**In Memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Death Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

General Operating Expenses  Memorial Garden

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Love Gift Message** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable to:**

The Compassionate Friends, Quakertown Chapter

**Mail to:**

PO Box 1013

Quakertown, PA 18951





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

Zoom meeting April 13 see page 3



*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.

