



The Compassionate Friends

December 2020 *Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties*



Please join us Sunday evening Dec. 13 for our Annual Candle Lighting as we remember and honor our children, grandchildren, and siblings 'gone too soon.'

Due to the pandemic, our Quakertown Chapter is presenting a virtual Candle Lighting 'that their light may always shine' via this Zoom link.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3280248375>

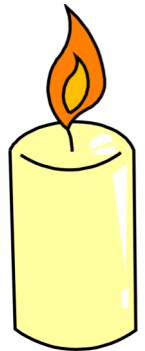
You may click the above link to join at 6:15 and our program will begin at 6:30 PM Dec. 13 with opening comments, special videos, readings and the slideshow of our children, grandchildren and siblings.

At 7 PM, please have a candle to light in the comfort of your own home. You will have an opportunity to type your child's [sibling, grandchild] name in the column space next to the viewing pane.

For members receiving this newsletter in the mail, go to Zoom.com. On the Zoom website, look at the top of the page for the blue text, "Join a Meeting." Click on it. You will then see a prompt to enter the "meeting ID number." Type **3280248375** in the space and click "join."

If you get a prompt to "launch Zoom," click okay or yes. There will not be any software download to your computer.

~ Chapter Leader Barbara J Reboratti and the Leadership Committee.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123802347679381/> Our private facebook group



If you are reading this newsletter and do not receive emails from the chapter, and would like to, please email 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



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 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

Sibling Coordinator – Crystal Hunter

Memorial Garden Chairperson –

Theresa Sitko

Committee members – Bob Albro,

Dianna Cox,

Diane Gurecki, Ginny Leigh-Manuel,

Lisa Dechant and Lynette Lampman

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. 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 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

We were put on this earth *to love them*

for as long as WE live... ○

not for as long as THEY lived.

– Alan Pederson

Coping during a BlueChristmas

It's the holiday season once again. Time to shop into the late evening hours, string colourful lights around your home, bake sweet goodies and be joyful. Let's face it. There's a lot of pressure to be happy at this time of year. It's near impossible to escape the holiday hype.

For those struggling with depression or dealing with difficult life events, the holidays can be a dark time – both literally and figuratively. The days are shorter, there's a chill in the air, and you're racked with emotional pain and anxiety – wondering how you will get through the next few weeks. These feelings of dread may be caused by any number of issues, including:

- The death of a parent, spouse or child
- A messy divorce or break-up
- The terminal illness of a loved one
- Relationship tension between you and your partner, ex-partner, troubled children, or parents
- Job loss and the stress of trying to afford the usual trappings of the holiday season

Your feelings are very real, and are not to be minimized. There may be no easy route to navigate through a blue Christmas, but here are some ideas that can help you cope:

1. Shift your focus to others in need

Volunteer at a women's shelter, a soup kitchen or a homeless shelter. If you have seniors in your neighbourhood, shovel their driveways, deliver a hot meal, or invite them in for coffee.

2. Zig instead of zag

If staying home is too painful, consider being somewhere else. If you can afford it, take a volunteerism trip (www.wearebamboo.com). Offer to house or dog sit for a friend who will be away for the holidays. The company and change of scenery will do you good.

3. Let yourself feel what you're feeling

Don't try to push away your blues – it's exhausting and counter-productive. Processing pain means acknowledging it. Accept that you're feeling low. Journal about it, draw, paint or find a way to express it to help you manage and heal.

4. Honour a lost loved one

If you're missing a loved one, honour that person by sharing positive stories, light a candle in his memory, or bake her favourite cookies. Out of concern for your feelings, friends and relatives may avoid mentioning a deceased parent or child during the holidays. But they will take their cues from you. If you find it helpful, let them know they should feel free to talk about that person.

5. Just say "no"

Perhaps you're simply not in the mood to entertain, or be entertained. If your Christmas day includes reading a good book by the fireplace and rotisserie chicken for dinner – that's just fine. Remember to be gentle to yourself, and don't do more than you feel you want to.

6. Avoid alcohol to manage depression

It is never a good idea. Alcohol just intensifies your emotions and you'll feel worse after the effects wear off.

7. Take advantage of benefits

If you have group benefits through your employer, ask about options such as talking to a professional or attending a support group during this challenging time.

8. Ask for help

Often those who know you're suffering don't know how to help. If you can't or don't want to fight the crowds at the mall, ask someone to do your shopping for you. Ask a friend to come over and wrap your gifts. Engage the help of young people to decorate your tree and home (and remove decorations after the holidays) in exchange for hot chocolate and cookies.

Find support when you need it, and allow yourself solitude when you simply wish to "be" with your pain. Above all, remember that the holidays are part of your healing journey, and someday you may even find joy in the season in your reshaped life.

Credit: Western Financial Group, Canada, Health blog.



Thanks for the offer, but I don't know what I need!

We've all heard it before, from the well-meaning people at the funeral and in the weeks to follow: *"Let me know what you need."* It is a kind and well-intentioned offer, but there is one fatal flaw: it assumes you know what you need. To be fair, on the surface, this isn't an unreasonable expectation. If a person hasn't experienced the depths of grief, it can be hard to imagine that you are so overwhelmed you can't figure out what you need.

The reality is, no one can meet the needs that may be most pressing in your mind or give you the things you want the most. You find yourself internally screaming the response, *"Yes, I need my child back!"* or *"Yes, I need you to take away this pain!"* every time someone asks you if there is anything you need or anything they can do. Thinking about any other needs can feel impossible. How do you figure out what you need when you have no idea what you need?

When a child dies, your life is shattered. One person disappears and it can feel like everything else falls out of place. We call those other things "secondary losses." Getting support from others is not always about that primary loss, often it is finding support for one of those secondary losses.

When you're feeling completely overwhelmed, it can be helpful to consider that you have needs in all the different areas of loss you are going through. In others, it may be emotional support – someone to let you cry, remember and listen without judgment. Finally, it may be just support related to your general well being — things and people who will help boost your mood and reconnect with yourself. As with many things in grief, it is helpful to take it step by step.

Each day we encourage you to increase your awareness around your greatest "pain points." These don't have to be grief specific. Anything in your life that is a stressor may be part of your grief or making it more difficult to cope with your grief, so it is important to consider any needs that can ease your overall suffering in a given day. Write them down during the day, either on your phone or on a sheet of paper.

Whether it is childcare, grocery shopping, filing taxes, mowing the lawn, etc, there are countless concrete needs we have. Knowing what these are can make it easier to ask people for the help or take them up on an offer.

Grief needs: though all needs may be connected to grief, some are more explicitly so. You may realize your need is for people who you can share memories with, or someone

to be comfortable with your tears. You may need someone who wants to help you memorialize your loved one or join you in advocacy work. Whatever the case, you may realize you are feeling very alone in honoring and remembering and it is time to reach out to others.

Well-being needs: These needs fall somewhere outside of just the grief experience, and are things that simply help with our overall well-being. This can be anything from needing that push to get off the gym to needing someone to be social with (or at the very least, grab a coffee). It can be anything from painting to writing to photography that you know would boost your mood and well being, but that you keep avoiding.

These are just a few examples. The important thing is to slowly begin increasing your daily self-awareness about what is difficult. At moments that you feel stressed or overwhelmed, make a note of what is creating that experience. At the end of a day, rather than just saying "this day is terrible," instead outline what has made it so challenging. As you do this over time, you may see trends emerging, areas big and small where some small help from others could make your days just a little bit easier.

Others are unable to provide support if you can't tell them what you need, so just knowing your needs is the first step to receiving support.

~ Submitted by Barbara j Reboratti with permission from "What's Your Grief."

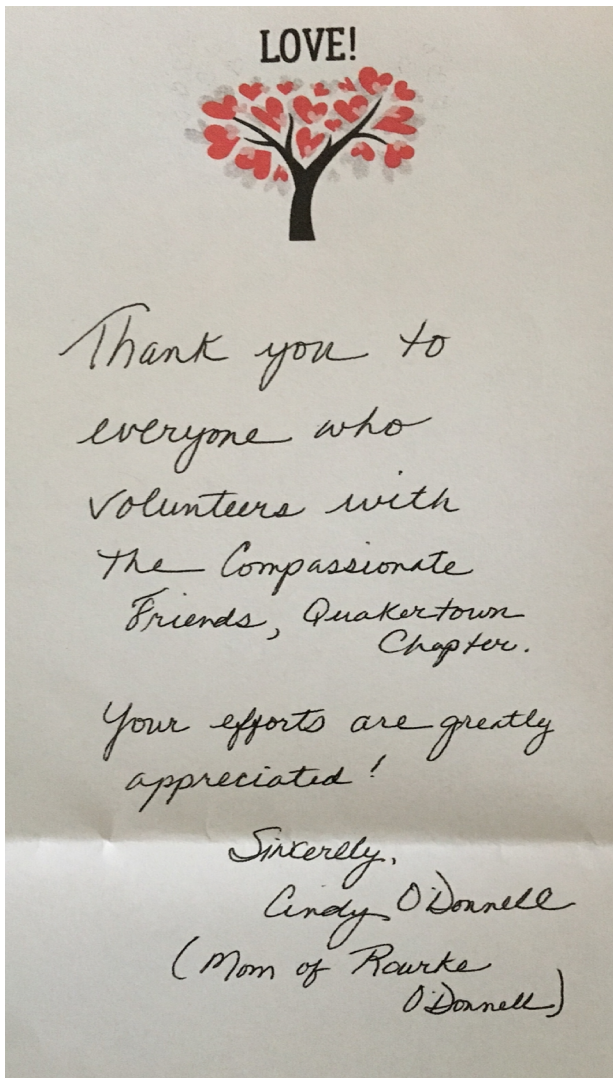


*Our Children Remembered on their December Birthdays
Loved...Missed...Remembered on their Birthdays @ Always*

- 12/3 - Sundai Marie Peters**, daughter of Arlene & Phil Peters
12/7 - Scott Smakula, grandson of Naomi Shaw
12/8 - Ashley Doyle, daughter of Brian Doyle
12/8 - Matthew James Stewart, son Rosemary Stewart
12/15 - Arthur Ucci, brother of Joan Ucci
12/17 - Ryan Strauch, son of Dave & June Strauch
12/19 - Thomas Onraet, son of Ruth & Maurice Onraet
12/19 - Andy Walnes, daughter of Kim Walnes
12/19 - David Curran, son of Barbara Santaniello
12/20 - Rich Hollabaugh, son of Linda & the late Wayne Hollabaugh
12/24 - Kiana Alvarenga, daughter of Tina & Jose Alvarenga
12/25 - Allison Fawcett, daughter of Anne & Bernie Smith
12/28 - Michael Bolan, son of Jennifer Bolan

Someone is Missing...

Every day since I lost my little girl Kimberly, I wake up with knowledge ... someone is missing
I go through my day and in the back of my mind I hear a whisper ... someone is missing
I sit down to dinner with my husband and son and in the back of my mind I hear a whisper ... someone is missing
I wake up and think ... there should be a birthday to celebrate today and I hear clearly ... Someone is Missing
I wake up and think ... this is the day my whole world changed and I hear clearly ... SOMEONE is Missing.
I try to get into the holiday spirit and I hear a whisper ... someone is missing
I gather with family to celebrate the holiday season and I look around the room and inside my head I hear screaming ... SOMEONE IS MISSING!!
Please understand I enjoy spending time with family but this voice that I hear squeezes my heart.
I love each and every one of you but please understand ... Someone Is Missing!
By Jennifer Matthews Malloch
The Compassionate Friends Chapter Leadership



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

12/2 – Matthew Detweiler, brother of Lesley & Phyllis Mikolon
12/5 – Chad Liles, son of Carl Liles; Susan & John Rowe
12/6 – Beverly Sue Otten, daughter of Mary Leuz
12/7 – Adrienne Heber, daughter of Anna & John Heber
12/7 – Randy Freed, son of Bonnie Freed
12/7 – Josiah Weigner, son of Keith Weigner
12/12 – Sean A. Ryer, son of Pat Ryer; grandson of Diana Adams
12/12 – Nicol Rush, daughter of the late Harold Conrad, Sr.
12/13 – Matthew James Stewart, son of Rosemary Stewart
12/13 – Michael Tondera, son of Maria & Steven Tondera; brother of Yvonne Perrucci
12/14 – Robert Kyle Rainey, son of Lynne Rainey
12/14 – Finnegan Ward, son of Carlee & Edmund Ward, Jr.
12/15 – Christopher Thomas, son-in-law of Barbara & Eduardo Reboratti
12/15 – Robert Dorman, Jr., brother of Donna & Greg Rowe
12/16 – Robert Marich, son of Michele Callon
12/17 – Joseph Vincente, son of Christine & Donald Vincente
12/18 – Brian Keim, son of Ronald & Joan Keim
12/19 – Dwayne Hager, son of Ruth & Stanley Hager, Jr.
12/19 – Billy Savage, son Bill & Blanche Savage; brother of Jennifer
12/20 – Russell Snyder, Jr., son of Sandra & Russell Snyder, Sr.
12/21 – Jacquelyn Dahms, daughter of Don & Lorraine Croisette
12/22 – Kim Biborosch, daughter of Diane Biborosch
12/23 – David Schaller, son of Raymond Schaller
12/24 – Jesse Miskovsky, son of David & Debra Miskovsky; brother of Courtney Covelens
12/25 – Amber Eisenstein, daughter of Ben Eisenstein
12/26 – Ryan Barr, son of Londonne & David Barr
12/27 – Christopher Dixon, son of Steve & Kim Dixon
12/29 – Peter Angstadt III, son of Lynette & Peter Angstadt

Next plaque order deadline Feb 15, 2021

The memorial garden is a serene place that you can sit quietly, read, or hide a rock for others to find. Most importantly, this memorial garden is for you and for your children and siblings gone too soon.

There are just over 80 spots left if your child, grandchild, or sibling does not have a space yet. The deadline is February 15, 2021 for this next order. There will be plenty of reminders.

You can fill out the form at this link <https://forms.gle/YWupAnu2gPVpjrA6> or scan the QR code to go to the website to fill out the form. You can send a check even if you order online.

The memorial garden was a large project and will always need care, donations, and love. Please keep your love gifts coming for the garden or the chapter in general. We rely on your donations, your time, and your love. If you have questions about the plaques, please email memorialgardenTCF@gmail.com.

Scan the QR code to go to order form



“
**Whenever I am
missing you, I also
remember how
fortunate I was that
you were in my life.
I wouldn't trade
those moments for
the world.**



Love Gifts

In loving memory of Michael Cox.

In memory of Sundai Marie Peters. "Our darling daughter and sister. We miss you and love you. Mom, Dad and Adam"

In memory of Rourke O'Donnell. "Missed more with each passing year, you are always in my heart."

In loving memory of Sarah Souder.

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 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

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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.

