



The Compassionate Friends

February 2021

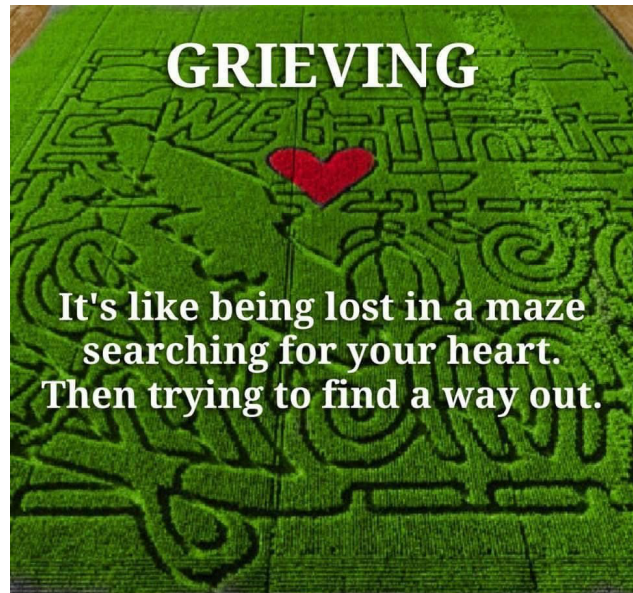
Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

The Maze of Grief

I've heard many bereaved parents say – and have said it myself – that when their child died their life turned upside down. Everything becomes mixed up; we are in unfamiliar territory. Vainly we seek for the familiar, for “normalcy”, for something to hold on to. Sometimes we even seem to lose our faith, as we may feel that God has let us down. We seek to reorient ourselves to our new surroundings.

This process of reorientation is called grieving. It may be like feeling our way through a dark labyrinth. Many times we come to dead ends and may have to feel our way back to a broader way. In this dark maze of grief we seek for someone to guide us. Those closest to us are no help. They too are lost in this labyrinth, searching for a way out, an escape from the pain. But all the avenues of escape – sleep, drugs, work, alcohol, avoidance – only leads us deeper into the maze where we feel even more disoriented and lost.

Conversely, the best way out of the labyrinth is through the pain. And the best guide is another bereaved parent, one who has walked the dark maze and knows all the blind alleys, the dead ends and the false promises of escape. The best way out is through talking; telling your story again and again to a friend who will listen, not judge you, and will understand. One who will not tell you to “forget about your child and get on with your life”, or “keep busy and don't think about it”, or that you “should be over it”. A friend who will let you say your child's



name, cry an ocean of tears and say all those “crazy” things that you think about after your child dies. In this way you become reoriented to this new life without the physical presence of your child – although he/she is always with you in your heart and memory. This is what Compassionate Friends is all about. Parents and siblings who are further along in their grief, reaching back and helping newly bereaved parents and siblings find their way through the maze of grief. Reach out and take a hand... you need not walk alone.

Peace,

Helen Bash

(as quoted in the Valley Forge TCF Chapter's January 2021

<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 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

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

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 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 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



The Blindsight Wipeout of Grief

A Sudden Temporary Upsurge of Grief (STUG) is intense and unexpected

By [Jackson Rainer](#)

On an ordinary afternoon walking through Wal-Mart in search of those affordable staples everyone finds at big-box stores, I passed a family having typical squabbles with each other — teens arguing with their parents, a young child begging for a sugary snack — all tense and irritated. I nodded, agreeing with myself that I was glad to be past that age and stage of life, acknowledging that this is what families normally do when they get in each other's hair. Then it hit: A wall of abject pain slammed into me, full of loss, longing, loneliness, and heartache.

The sense of agony was stunningly electric. I felt attacked. I could neither think nor talk. In terror and horror, I abandoned my shopping cart, staggered to the parking lot and managed to fall into my car, all while struggling to catch my breath. After about 20 minutes (which seemed like 20 years), the sensation receded, leaving me agitated by the vestiges and residuals of a hyper-aroused mind, body, and spirit. I had been hit with a blindsight wipeout of grief, known as a STUG.

A STUG is an unwelcome, unexpected tsunami to the natural tidal rhythms of grief.

Researchers call what I experienced a Sudden Temporary Upsurge of Grief, a term defined by grief expert Dr. Therese Rando in the early '90s. It is an intense, unexpected wave of emotionality that comes on occasion to someone who has experienced the loss of a loved intimate, sometimes long after the person's death.

As a psychologist with many years of clinical practice, I have held others through similar experiences. Because of my professional life, I smugly didn't expect to have this awful reality in my orbit. Silly me, thinking that I [was sufficiently removed from my wife Karen's death in 2016](#) to be immune from this kind of event.

Quite Alarming and Frightening

For each of us, an ordinary day is characterized by a mental scaffolding called the assumptive world, defined as the personal organization held of the way the world works. The assumptive world is a psychological structure, containing everything a person assumes to be true about the world, the self and others. It is our automatic, unconscious and generalized body of knowledge, learned through cumulative experience and history.

A STUG is outside of this scaffolding and comes as a threatening invasion. It happens unexpectedly and without warning when someone is fine and in the rhythm of a typical, ordinary day. There may be a trigger to the attack — or not. Innocuous memories or sensory experiences, such as a smell or a sound, can evoke this wave of juicy, raw emotions. After a substantive time has passed following the death, and the acute pain of grief subsides, the dramatic and unwelcome experience of a STUG can be quite alarming and frightening.

The Roadmap of Grief

The process of grief involves the survivor's new search and acquisition of experiences to live a healthy and full life in the new world without the loved one's physical presence. Grief helps a person to resolve — i.e., re-solve — the way the world works, requiring adoption of new ways of being in that world and reinvesting in it to compensate and adapt for the loved one's absence.

Grief guides a person toward revising the assumptive world and the way markers of self-identification are discerned and employed. A STUG is an unwelcome, unexpected tsunami to the natural tidal rhythms of grief.

'Sometimes When We Touch'

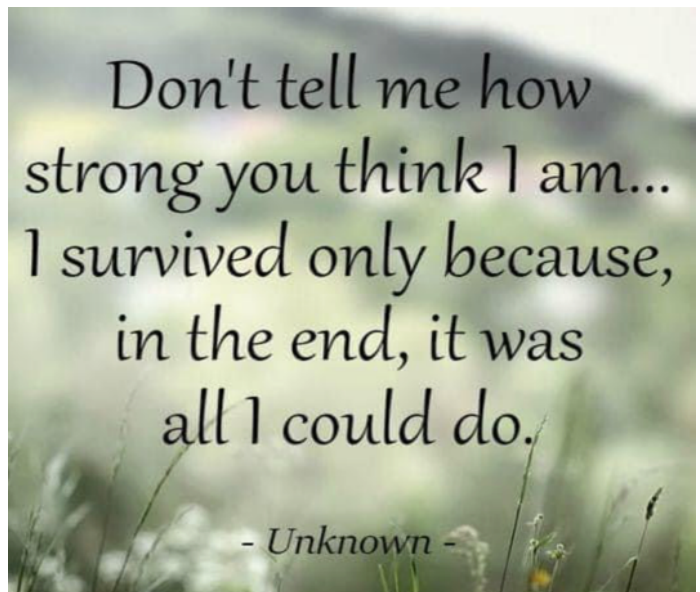
A fellow came to therapy, asking for help with a deeply personal narrative:

"I like listening to oldies music stations. Nearly ten years after my wife died, as I was driving down the interstate, I heard the Dan Hill song from 1994 'Sometimes When We Touch.' She and I used to sing it to each other in funny, pseudo-romantic ecstasy. Well, it came on the radio and I started singing it automatically, just like we had always done. I got through the first verse before my throat closed and I started crying tears as big as light bulbs. [I thought I would die.](#) I pulled over to the side of the road and thought, 'Now what?' I shook like a wet dog and nearly vomited.

Eventually it passed, but I don't know what in the world happened to me. There weren't any thoughts that went with the feeling. I believed I had managed to make sense out of her death; it was so long ago. What do you think is the matter with me? Was it a panic attack? Do I have to live with the possibility of this happening again? I was driving and could have been hurt."

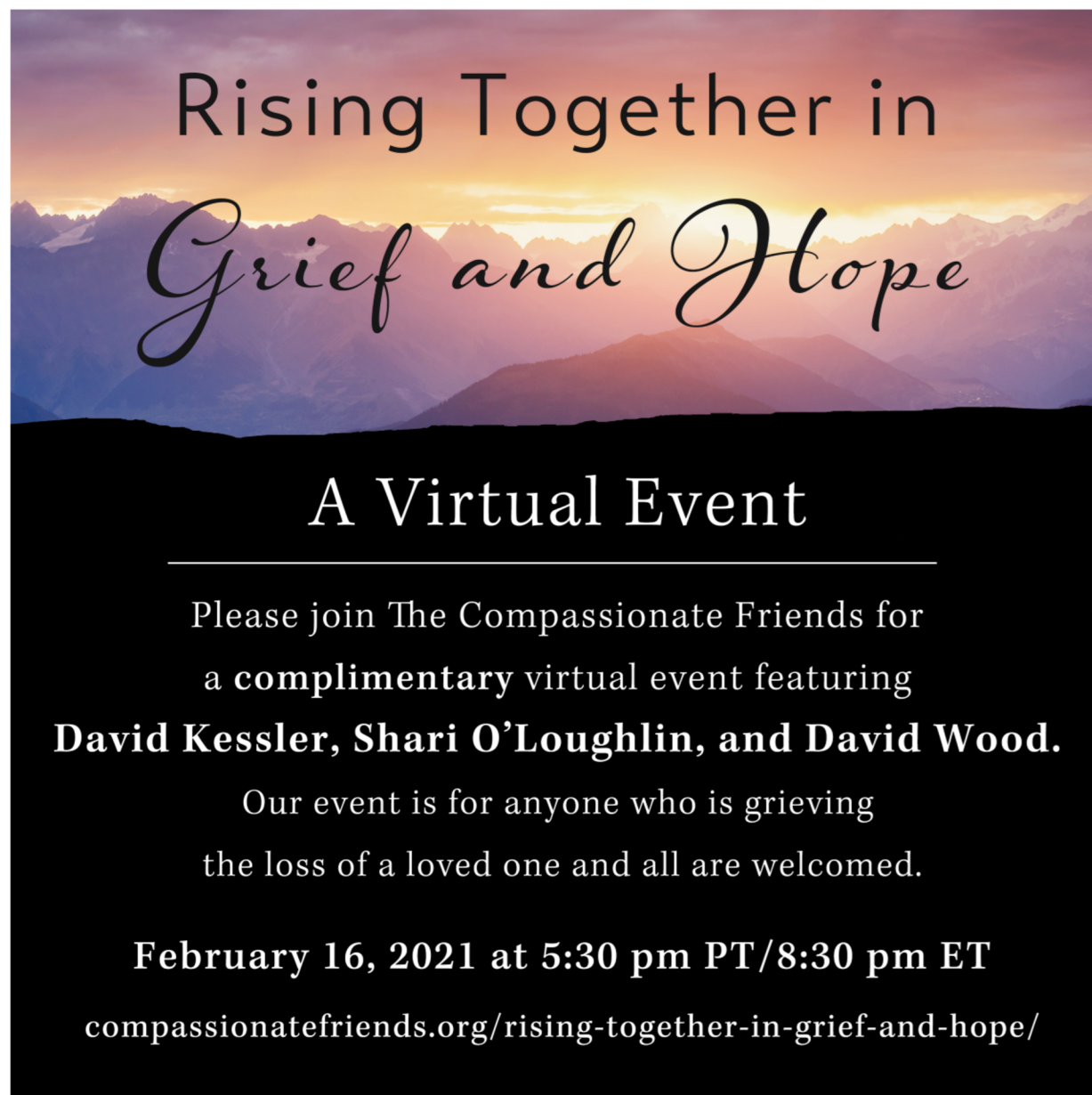
This gentleman was slammed by a STUG that profoundly and dramatically untied a psychological connection to his deceased wife, one that he did not even realize he continued to hold. The STUG, traumatic as the experience felt, ultimately brought deeper and more personal meaning to his marital relationship — in life and death. After the discharge of such intense emotionality, he was quickly able to gain context by attributing meaning to the trigger of the song. With a bit of perspective, he revisited one of the more pleasurable memories found in the history of his marriage.

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Register for this **free webinar featuring David Kessler**, one of the world's foremost experts on death and grief. Kessler is a public speaker, a bereaved Dad, and the author of six books, including the new bestseller, "Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief." Kessler co-authored two books with Elisabeth Kubler Ross. This is a free event but when you click to register, you'll see an optional "donate" button to the National organization of The Compassionate Friends. Our chapter does not receive any revenue from the National organization. We raise our own funds to sustain our Quakertown chapter. Please use the form in this newsletter to make any donations.

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/rising-together-in.../>.



Rising Together in
Grief and Hope

A Virtual Event

Please join The Compassionate Friends for
a complimentary virtual event featuring
David Kessler, Shari O'Loughlin, and David Wood.

Our event is for anyone who is grieving
the loss of a loved one and all are welcomed.

February 16, 2021 at 5:30 pm PT/8:30 pm ET

[compassionatefriends.org/rising-together-in-grief-and-hope/](https://www.compassionatefriends.org/rising-together-in-grief-and-hope/)

https://www.compassionatefriends.org/rising-together-in-grief-and-hope/?fbclid=IwAR1cb9WYtURWqcB1Dt9xP9_BoUwpDa3jyN5JUq4jCKBYRe6eO7bmQkSvlhQ

Our Children Remembered on their February Birthdays
Loved...Missed...Remembered on their Birthdays & Always

2/1 - Brian Dorsey, son of Mindy Dorsey
2/3 - Robert Kyle Rainey, son of Lynne Rainey
2/4 - Andrew Flath, son of Lori Jordan
2/4 - Lynda Mohlenhoff, daughter of Frank & Peggy Posivak
2/5 - Jonathan McCormick, son of Jacqueline & Bob Daniel
2/6 - Michael Pettie, son of Doreene Pettie
2/9 - Katey Blasé, daughter of Gail Blasé, sister of Hiliary Blasé
2/9 - Dario Datis, son of Sherie Datis
2/9 - Derick M. Lawley, brother of Tara Lawley-Bergey
2/10 - Jeffrey Broxteman, son of Roger & Janet Broxteman
2/10 - Shawn Lampmann, son of Lynette Lampmann
2/14 - Nici Grawonski, sister of Michelle McDaniels
2/14 - Joshua Sotak, son of Mary Catherine Nederosteck
2/16 - Alexandria Gasior, daughter of Linda & Dan Brophy
2/16 - Chris Guidotti, son of Nancy & Al Guidotti
2/18 - Tracy Elizabeth Hottenstein, daughter of Charlie & Betty Hottenstein
2/19 - Will Moyer, son of Sue Simon
2/19 - Thomas Water, brother of Pamela Buda
2/20 - Kinsey Duvall, son of Craig Duvall
2/25 - Tammy Moore, daughter of Tom & Sandra Moore
2/25 - Skye A. Gilbert, daughter of Susan J. Gilbert
2/26 - Jason Tyler Foulke, son of Mitzi & Dean Foulke
2/27 - Justina Sue Daniel Espinoza, daughter of Bob & Jacqueline Daniel

Continued from page 3

Surviving a STUG

What can you do after a STUG? Here are a few suggestions:

- Identifying the experience for what it is and calling it by name can help you stay in charge, even when feeling out of control.
- Remember that a STUG is a temporary, transitional experience. No one ever dies from a STUG, though many feel like the experience is deadly. The painful feelings will pass. The most effective strategy in the presence of a STUG is to ride it out. Find a safe place, as private as possible, breathe deeply and lean into it. Allow the pain until it passes. During a STUG, a person's body goes on hyper-alert, releasing endorphins because of the fight-flight response manifest in the perception of danger. After the STUG passes, a body needs several hours to absorb the hormones and brain chemicals and return to baseline.

THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile,
That first mile of no relief.
It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal.
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.
Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.
We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.

NANCY MYERHOLTZ

- Sleep on it. The day following a STUG, cognitive capacities return to normal, allowing more thoughtful consideration of the meaning of what triggered the memory. Take it as a matter of truth that the STUG signaled a reconsideration of a loving experience in the history of the relationship. Finally, remember that the word "closure" is never relevant in the loss of a loved one. If we have loved another intimately, grief does not lead us to forget. Rather, the process facilitates resolution, clarity and meaning, even in the presence of a blindside wipeout.

Jackson Rainer is a board-certified clinical psychologist practicing with CHRIS 180 Counseling Center DeKalb in Atlanta. He may be contacted at jacksonprainer@gmail.com

Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of Their Death

Loved, missed and always in our hearts

2/6 – Jonathan McCormick, son of Jacqueline & Bob Daniel
2/7 – Michael Pettie, son of Doreene Pettie
2/8 – Philip D. Calabrette, Jr., son of Lynn Calabrette
2/9 – Dawn Cannon, daughter of Joanne & David Cannon
2/10 – Lisa Kumiega-Lewis, daughter of Alan & Arlene Vogel
2/10 – Brenda Meehl, daughter of Patricia & Harold Hunsicker
2/10 – Jolene Wohlbach, daughter of Marie Fedorowicz
2/12 – James Monahan II, son of Kim Kleinsmith
2/12 – Lisa Dawn Weatherly, daughter of Norma Jean Weatherly
2/13 – Shawn Lampmann, son of Lynette Lampmann
2/15 – Tracy Elizabeth Hottenstein, daughter of Charlie & Betty Hottenstein
2/16 – Benjamin Michael Albro, son of Sherri & Bob Albro
2/21 - Natasha Michelle Dechant, daughter of Nancy Dechant
2/21 – Greg Mikesell, son of Carol & Don Mikesell
2/22 – Sarah Souder, daughter of Kay Souder
2/22 – Joey Reichman, son of Tacey & Stephen Reichman, brother of Tami
2/24 – George Davish, son of Sheryle & George Davish
2/24 – David Grebe, brother of Sue Grebe
2/27 – Donnie Daniels, Jr., son of Don & Kelly Daniels
2/27 – Christopher Ulmer, son of James & Patricia Ulmer

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/YWupAnu2qPVpjrA6> or scan the QR code to go to the website to fill out the form. Please send a check. When check is received we will place the order.

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



February 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 February meeting will be Tuesday Feb. 9 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.

Our topic will be grief ambushes and we suggest your read the article, "The Blindside Wipeout of Grief," on page 3 in this newsletter.

If you haven't used Zoom before, please download the video conference app **ZOOM** (zoom.us)

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 so we can send the code and link to you prior to Feb. 9.
- At 7:15 PM on Feb. 9 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

Love Gifts

Sending a very special thank you to those who sent in love gifts this month:

To Charles and Elizabeth Hottenstein , in loving memory of their beloved daughter, Tracy:
"Gone but never forgotten. In our hearts forever!"

To Pat and Harold Hunsicker , in loving memory of their daughter Brenda Meehl:
"In loving memory of our daughter, Brenda Meehl."

To Susan J. Gilbert, in loving memory of her daughter Skye J. Gilbert:
"Mom, You are forever in our hearts and missed. Love, Jaylee & Lucas"

To Mary Smith, in loving memory of her dear son Eric Smith; for the memorial garden

To Lynne Rainey, in loving memory of her dear son Robert Kyle Rainey's birthday this month.

To Lynette Lampmann, in loving memory of her precious son, Shawn W. Lampmann:
"To my son, I love and miss you and you are forever in my heart. Love, Mother "Dear", as you always called me."

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 February 9 -see page 6



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.

