



The Compassionate Friends

January 2018

Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

Resolutions

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better. Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions.

Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.



Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs. Have a happier New Year!

The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Next meeting January 9

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: (267)380-0130

contact@TCFQuakertownpa.org

website: www.tcfquakertownpa.org

"The world loves closure, loves a thing that can, as they say, be gotten through. This is why it comes as a great surprise to find that loss is forever, that two decades after the event there are those occasions when something in you cries out at the continual presence of an absence."

—Anna Quindlen



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties

About Our Chapter

Chapter Leader:

Ginny Leigh-Manuell

Treasurer: Crystal Hunter

Secretary: Gail Blase

Chapter Librarian: Theresa Sitko

Newsletter : Linda Stauffer

Steering Committee:

Mary Anne Macko

Linda Stauffer

Theresa Sitko

Carol Graham

Lynette Lampmann

Barbara Reboratti

Gail Blase

Mary Catherine Neiderstock

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

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



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 are 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.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Loved...Missed...Remembered on their
Birthdays and Always

January Birthdays

1/1 - Joseph Cavataio, son of Libby Cavataio

1/1 - Pamela Minnichbach, daughter of Paul & Dolly Cell

1/2 - Stephanie Kissel, daughter of Barbara & Bob Krantz

1/2 - Beverly Sue Otten, daughter of Mary Leuz

1/3 - Bobby Rolph, son of Judy and Bob Rolph

1/4 - Marc Landis, son of Anne & Craig Landis

1/5 - Anthony Bonino, son of Robert & Susan Bonino

1/5 - Lisa Kuniega-Lewis, daughter of Arlene & Alan Vogel

1/9 - Christopher Accardi, son of Anthony & Mary Ellen Accardi

1/9 - Dominic DeBlasio, son of Jeannine DeBlasio

1/10 - Peter Graham, son of Albert & Carol Graham

1/10 - Ryan Mitman, son of Victoria & James Weisbrod

1/11 - Sean A. Ryer, son of Patricia Ryer; grandson of Diana Adams

1/12 - Chris Inscho, son of Peggy Daggitt; brother of Diane Anderson

1/12 - Ellen Crooke, daughter of Annette & Daniel Crooke

1/12 - Deborah Hornberger, daughter of Eleanor Morrow

1/13 - Kevin Figanial, son of Thomas & Valerie Figanial

1/13 - Gregory Hallman, nephew of Mary Pat Hallman

1/13 - Jason Pini, brother of Jennifer Pini

1/14 - Geneva Doll, daughter of Keith & Barbara Doll

1/18 - Cynthia Benge, daughter of Robert & Cheryl Benge

1/19 - Karen Graham, daughter of John & Barbara Graham, Jr.

1/20 - Stormy Weaver, daughter of Nathan & Amber Weaver

1/23 - Nick Umberger, son of Nina & Jeff Wolfinger; nephew of Bev Pearson

1/24 - Austin Jacobs, son of Penny Jacobs

1/25 - Allison Reboratti, daughter of Barbara & Eduardo Reboratti

1/27 - Megan Eschenburg, daughter of Gary & Peggy Eschenburg

1/27 - Ross Van Houten, son of Brenda Van Houten

1/28 - Karen Salmanson, daughter of Betty & Frederick Schwenk

1/29 - Matthew Lincul, son of Linda & Ed Lincul

1/30 - Michael Cox, son of Dianna Cox

Perhaps they are not Stars
in the sky, but rather
openings where our loved
ones shine down to let us
know they are happy.

Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of their Death

1/1 – Nick Campellone, son of Johanna Goodwin

1/1 - Lisette Martin, daughter of Luke & Amanda Martin; granddaughter of Evelyn & Nelson Martin, Jr.

1/2 - Joseph Harper, son of Chris & Janeen Harper; grandson of Rosemarie & Francis Salamone

1/2 - Joseph Oglialoro, son of Mike & Becky Oglialoro; grandson of Rose & Joseph Oglialoro; Gary & Vickie Shoudt

1/5 - Philip Gold, son of Alan & Frances Gold

1/5 - Jessica Roth, daughter of Wilbur & Carol Roth

1/5 - Eric Santayana, son of Debi & Walt Schimpf

1/9 - Anthony DelConte, son of John & Marie DelConte, Jr.; brother of Dana Turock

1/9 - Jason Heuckeroth, son of Debbie & Mark Heuckeroth; brother of Jaime

1/9 - Stephen Stalheim, son of Barbara & Gabriel Mertens; brother of Daniel & Barbara Stalheim

1/10 - Eric Gorman, son of Butch & Marianne Gorman, Jr.; brother of Patrick & Jennifer Gorman

1/11 - Karen Salmanson, daughter of Betty & Frederick Schwenk

1/12 - Kiana Alverenga, daughter of Tina & Jose Alvarenga

1/12 - Daniel Attilio, son of Patrick & Ann Marie Attilio

1/12 - Morgan Mysza, son of Dean & Jill Mysza

1/13 - Brett Stebulis, son of Barbara & Leonard Stebulis

1/15 - Ken Trauger, brother of Jim Trauger & Donna Gibson

1/16 - William Mindler, son of Kathryn Mindler

1/16 - David Roscilo, son of Barbara Frojan

1/17 - Karin Haughey Adair, sister of Martha Stoler

1/18 - Curtis Anthony, son of Paul Anthony & Donna Kapper; grandson of Charlie & Nancy Kapper

1/19 – Peter Graham, son of Albert & Carol Graham

1/19 - Jacob Burkett, son of Kathleen & Jim Hardgrove

1/20 - K. Scott Frey, son of Ken & Roberta Frey

1/20 - Clayton Sitko, son of Henry & Theresa Sitko

1/21 - Robert Toft, Jr., son of Robert & Joy Toft

1/21 - Margaret Welhaf, sister of George Blood, Jr.

1/22 - Eric Martin, son of Daniel Martin; brother of Mikaela Martin

1/23 - Matthew DiNicola, son of Ron & Myra DiNicola

1/23 - William Ingelido, Jr., son of William Ingelido, Sr. & Rosann Smiley

1/23 - Jacob Jones, son of Elaine & Paul Barndt

1/23 - Michael Macko, brother of Mary Anne Macko

Garden News



Visit the James Memorial Park
1027 Ridge Rd., West Rockhill
Twp., PA (Sellersville)

Aniversaries continued

1/23 - Susan MacNamee, daughter of Ruth MacNamee

1/25 - Nathan Rodosky, son of Dean Rodosky; grandson of Sandra & Warren Madison

1/26 - Michael Cox, son of Dianna Cox

1/27 - Julie Hartwich, daughter of Donna & Dave Hartwich

1/27 - Hector Valle, son of Hector Valle

1/29 - Karen Slotter, daughter of Dolly Bibic

1/30 - Dan Bardsley, son of Emma Bardsley; brother of John & Anita Bardsley

1/31 - Stephen Lees, son of Gregory Lees

1/31 - Kristin Statuti, daughter of Henry & Maryann Statuti

1/31 - Linda Toland, sister of Andrea Dunning & Valerie Schulz

Memorial Garden Plaque Update

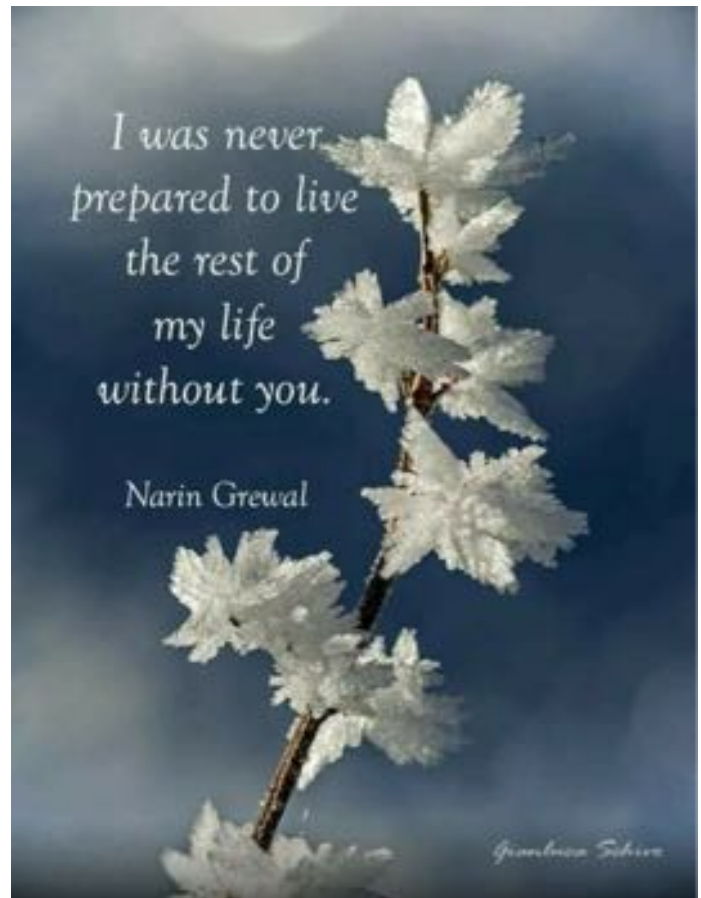
Plaque ordering is open! The ordering is completed online and is due by February 2. The link was emailed on January 2 and is posted in our discussion group on Facebook. On January 9, before the Support Meeting, you can come to the Conference Rooms to order your plaque with Crystal. Simply bring a check! Orders will begin around 6:45 and continue during social time after the meeting concludes.

ALL QUESTIONS concerning the plaques must be emailed to MemorialGardenTCF@gmail.com or you may call Crystal Hunter at [614-746-8076](tel:614-746-8076). Please allow 2 days for her to return calls and emails.

General Plaque Info:

- 16 characters per line
- up to 4 lines
- \$125 per plaque
- only one plaque per child's name
- only members of Quakertown chapter may purchase a plaque
- Pay via PayPal friends and family OR mail a check

Plaques will be applied to the garden before the dedication in the spring.



Love never dies.

There will never come a day, hour, minute or second I stop loving or thinking about my son. Just as parents of living children unconditionally love their children always and forever,

so do bereaved parents. I want to say and hear his name just the same as non-bereaved parents do.

I want to speak about my deceased child as normally and naturally as you speak of your living ones.

I love my child just as much as you love yours— the only difference is mine lives in heaven and talking about about him is unfortunately quite taboo in our culture. I hope to change that.

Our culture isn't so great about hearing about children gone too soon, but that doesn't stop me from saying my son's name and sharing his love and light everywhere I go. Just because it might make you uncomfortable, doesn't make him matter any less. My son's life was cut irreversibly short, but his love lives on forever. And ever.

2). Bereaved parents share an unspeakable bond.

In my seven years navigating the world as a bereaved parent, I am continually struck by the power of the bond between bereaved parents. Strangers become kindreds in mere seconds— a look, a glance, a knowing of the heart connects us, even if we've never met before. No matter our circumstances, who we are, or how different we are, there is no greater bond than the connection between parents who understand the agony of enduring the death of a child. It's a pain we suffer for a lifetime, and unfortunately only those who have walked the path of child loss understand the depth and breadth of both the pain and the love we carry.

3). I will grieve for a lifetime.

Period. The end. There is no "moving on," or "getting over it" There is no bow, no fix, no solution to my heartache. There is no end to the ways I will grieve and for how long I will grieve. There is no glue for my broken heart, no exilir for my pain, no going back in time. For as long as I breathe, I will grieve and ache and love my son with all my heart and soul. There will never come a time where I won't think about who my son would be, what he would look like, and how he would be woven perfectly into the tapestry of my family. I wish people could understand that grief lasts forever because love lasts forever; that the loss of a child is not one finite event, it is a continuous loss that unfolds minute by minute over the course of a lifetime.

Every missed birthday, holiday, milestone— should-be back-to-school school years and graduations; weddings that will never be; grandchildren that should have been but will never be born— an entire generation of people are irrevocably altered *forever*. This is why grief lasts forever. The ripple effect lasts forever. The bleeding never stops.



4). It's a club I can never leave, but is filled with the most shining souls I've ever known.

This crappy club called child loss is a club I never wanted to join, and one I can never leave, yet is filled with some of the best people I've ever known. And yet we all wish we could jump ship— that we could have met another way— *any* other way but *this*. Alas, these shining souls are the

most beautiful, compassionate, grounded, loving, movers, shakers and healers I have ever had the honor of knowing. They are life-changers, game-changers, relentless survivors and thrivers. Warrior moms and dads who redefine the word brave.

Every day loss parents move mountains in honor of their children gone too soon. They start movements, change laws, spearhead crusades of tireless activism. Why? In the hope that even just one parent could be spared from joining *the club*. If you've ever wondered who

some of the greatest world changers are, hang out with a few bereaved parents and watch how they live, see what they do in a day, a week, a lifetime. Watch how they alchemize their grief into a force to be reckoned with, watch how they turn tragedy into transformation, loss into legacy. Love is the most powerful force on earth, and the love between a bereaved parent and his/her child is a lifeforce to behold. Get to know a bereaved parent. You'll be thankful you did.

5). The empty chair/room/space never becomes less empty.

Empty chair, empty room, empty space in every family picture. Empty, vacant, forever gone for this lifetime. Empty spaces that should be full, everywhere we go. There is and will always be a missing space in our lives, our families, a forever-hole-in-our-hearts. Time does not make the space less empty. Neither do platitudes, clichés or well-wishes for us to "move on," or "stop dwelling," from well intentioned friends or family. Nothing does. No matter how you look at it, empty is still empty. Missing is still missing. Gone is still gone. The problem is nothing can fill it. Minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after heartbreaking year the empty space remains.

The empty space of our missing child(ren) lasts a lifetime. And so we rightfully miss them forever. Help us by holding the space of that truth for us.

6). No matter how long it's been, holidays never become easier without my son.

Never, ever. Have you ever wondered why *every* holiday season is like torture for a bereaved parent? Even if it's been 5, 10, or 25 years later? It's because they really, truly are. Imagine if you had to live every holiday without one or more of your precious children. Imagine how that might feel for you. It would be easier to lose an arm, a leg or two— *anything*— than to live without your flesh and blood, without the beat of your heart. Almost anything would be easier than living without one of more of your precious children. That is why holidays are *always and forever* hard for bereaved parents. Don't wonder why or even try to understand. Know you don't have to understand in order to be a supportive presence.

Consider supporting and loving some bereaved parents this holiday

season. It will be the best gift you could ever give them.
7). *Because I know deep sorrow, I also know unspeakable joy.* Though I will grieve the death of my son forever and then some, it does not mean my life is lacking happiness and joy. Quite the contrary, in fact, though it took awhile to get there. It is not either/or, it's both/and. My life is more rich now. I live from a deeper place. I love deeper still. Because I grieve I also know a joy like no other. The joy I experience now is far deeper and more intense than the joy I experienced before my loss. Such is the alchemy of grief.

Because I've clawed my way from the depth of unimaginable pain, suffering and sorrow, again and again— when the joy comes, however and whenever it does— it is a joy that reverberates through every pore of my skin and every bone in my body. I feel all of it, deeply: the love, the grief, the joy, the pain. I embrace and thank every morsel of it. My life now is more rich and vibrant and full, not despite my loss, but *because* of it. In grief there are gifts, sometimes many. These gifts don't in any way make it all “worth” it, but I am grateful beyond words for each and every gift that comes my way. I bow my head to each one and say *thank you, thank you, thank you.* Because there is nothing— and I mean absolutely *nothing*— I take for granted. Living life in this way gives me greater joy than I've ever known possible.

I have my son to thank for that. Being his mom is the best gift I've ever been given. *by Angela Miller*

When You Were Small

© Linda D. Cope

Published: May 2008

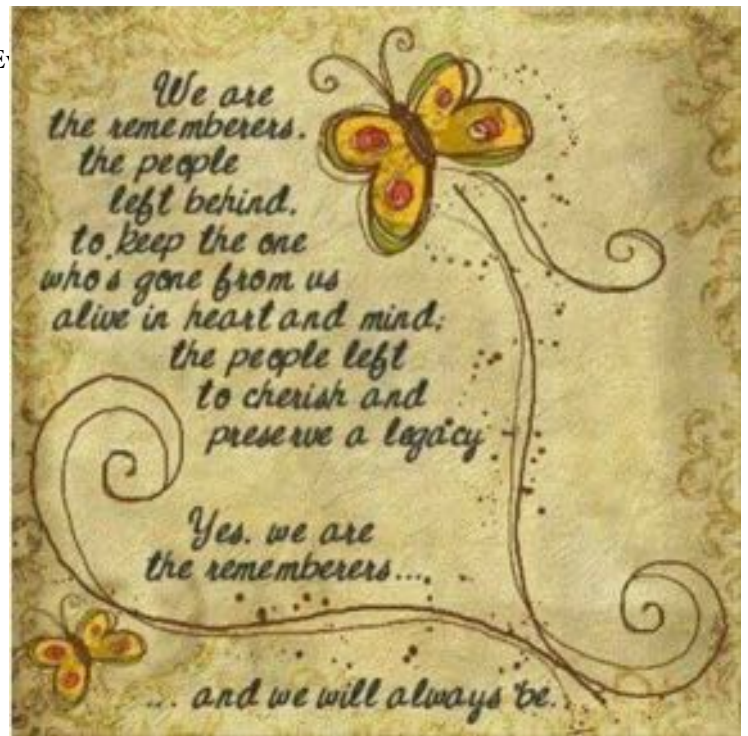
I often think of you
When you were very small.
You left your fingerprints
On almost every wall.

Back when you were growing up
They were such happy years.
How you would smile and make up games
I remember through my tears

Some day we will be together
In heaven up above.
But for now my little girl
I send you all my love.



E



If I Could Hear Her

© Carolyn Ferreira

Published: November 2013

I see your teardrops falling
I hear you cry my name
I know you can not see me
but I hold you just the same

I watch as you lie abed
as restless as can be
I hear your whispered words
as you pray for dreams of me

every day for you is painful
each breath, each step you take
but as the wise mom I know
a future you will make

I envelope you in my love
as for me you use to do
it's hard to see you in such pain
forever the strong one's been you

although our lives' journeys
have bid us to be apart
I am with you, you are with me
always in our hearts



Dear 2018,

Will you please go a little easier with me this year?

My heart has broken into a million little pieces.

Bring sunshine to those of us who are grieving.

Shower us with peace and healing

and let the rainbows shout joy.

Another year...

missing a piece of my heart...

I can do this - I have hope.

- Shirley Tripp Johnson



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

Next Meeting January 9, 2018



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.

