



# The Compassionate Friends

January 2021

Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

## 8 Reasons why Winter is the Worst (for grievers)

by **ELEANOR HALEY**

Gosh darn winter, that's what. You can spare me your affinity for skiing, freshly fallen snow and curling up by a warm fire because I will swiftly counter with wet socks, slush, and lack of sunlight. Sure winter has its moments, but I find that its short days and bone-chilling temperatures are enough to push me over the edge. This may be especially true for many of you who have to suffer the indignities of winter while also trying to cope with your grief. Grief is an emotional tundra as it is, then winter comes along and paints the landscape frigid and grey to match your mood. Winter can also exacerbate the problems grievers are vulnerable to, like isolation, depression and poor self-care. Perhaps I'm negatively biased because I've lived through winter in cities like Syracuse, NY and Erie, PA. However, I prefer to think this makes me an expert, which is why I'm going to take the next few minutes to espouse all the reasons why winter is the worst, especially for grievers.

*(continued on page 3)*

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

You can shed tears because they are gone, or you can smile because they lived. You can close your eyes and pray they will come back, or you can open your eyes and see all that they left for you. Your heart can be empty because you can't see them, or you can be full of the love you shared. You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday. You can remember only that they are gone, or you can cherish their memory and let it live on. You can cry and close your mind and feel empty, or you can do what they would want. Smile, Open your heart, Love... and go on.

—Elizabeth Ammons



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

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](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.

#### 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](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)

We were put on this earth *to love them*

for as long as WE live... ○

not for as long as THEY lived.

– Alan Pederson

# 8 Reasons why Winter is the Worst (for grievers)

by ELEANOR HALEY

## 1. Lack of Sunlight

A lack of sunlight, or the length of the night in some cases, can cause an increase in melatonin and a drop in the neurotransmitter serotonin and Vitamin D. All of this can throw your mind and body out of whack and leave you feeling tired, irritable and blue. Tip:

Do what you can to get outside, open the blinds, and hold on until daylight savings time.

## 2. Cabin Fever

Cabin fever is not a technical diagnosis but it is a well-documented phenomenon (think early US settlers who spent long winters alone in their cabins). Cabin fever describes a state of restlessness, depression, and irritability brought on by spending time in a confined space or remote area. Where grief is concerned, being stuck inside provides you with ample time to ruminate on difficult thoughts and emotions, and to replay unpleasant memories with little distraction. Tip: It's good to spend time focused on your grief, but also find constructive ways to occupy your mind like puzzles, movies, games, organizing, home repairs, calling a friend, creating art, or writing in your journal.

## 3. Social Isolation

The predisposition for grievers to withdraw combined with cancellations, problems with transportation, and a desire to avoid the cold and snow can amplify your risk of falling into a cycle of emotional and social isolation. Isolation and loneliness can have a negative impact on your physical and emotional health. Tip: Get out and go to a mall, store, support group, or place of worship. When possible, push yourself to keep plans even if it means braving the cold.

## 4. Not moving enough

You already know that [even a small amount of exercise can have a marked impact on your physical and emotional health](#). Obviously, in winter your options for getting out and moving around are limited. Snowy roads, icy sidewalks, and the cold make it virtually impossible to find many opportunities for exercise. Tip: Even though taking an hour-long walk outside might not be possible, look for alternative opportunities to get at least 20 minutes of exercise a day. Try walking outside for shorter intervals, do exercise videos on YouTube, plan an indoor workout routine, or join a gym.

## 5. Food and mood

[Studies show](#) out eating habits change this time of year. The rationale behind this increase is debatable as some researchers believe primitive impulses drive humans to stockpile calories in anticipation of short days and cold weather, while others think there's just more opportunity to indulge in the winter (holidays, time spent inside, and the nostalgic connections associated with food). Regardless of why you eat, certain foods can have a real impact on mood – for better or worse. Foods that supply our vitamin and nutrient needs and minimize our blood sugar spikes are important to our mental wellbeing. Tip: Remember that food is what fuels our bodies and brains. You know your body and brain best, so focus on getting the nutrient-rich foods that make you feel good. And remember that food and health is not about size. We can be healthy and eating for our mental wellbeing at any size. Many of us have internalized feelings about weight and those can be tough to shake and can make thinking about food and mood complicated.

## 6. It's cold

That's all. Being cold is torture.

## 7. You're sad

For some, the holidays present a storm of grief triggers followed by months of feeling blah (see all of the above). It's possible that the events of November and December have set you adrift on a long grief wave that won't recede until the spring thaw. Tip: Believe that things will get better.

## 8. You're SAD

Winter-onset seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a subtype of major depression that is characterized by symptoms that emerge in fall or early winter and recede during the spring. These symptoms may start out mild and become more severe and include things like irritability, tiredness or low energy, problems getting along with others, hypersensitivity to rejection, heavy feeling in the arms or legs, oversleeping, and appetite changes (craving carbs). It goes without saying that SAD can complicate one's ability to cope with grief and other hardship. Tip: If you think you might suffer from SAD talk to your doctor about your concerns.



# Hygge & Grief: Coping Through the Long Hard Winter

By, Grief in Common ([www.griefincommon.com](http://www.griefincommon.com))

Grieving in winter is no easy thing, and for those of us who live in the cold and snowy parts of the country, we may dread the forced isolation winter weather brings. The Danish (who themselves can suffer very long and dark winters) have adopted an idea that I think could apply well to those who are grieving this time of year. It's called hygge.

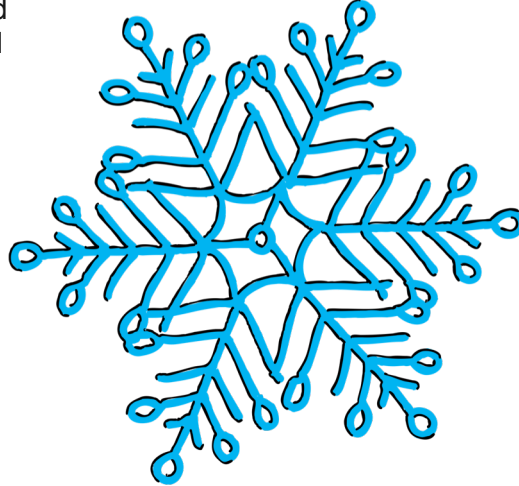
The origin of the word is disputed, but most agree that it's derived from a Danish word meaning, "to give courage and comfort". Some say it's simply rooted in the word "hug".

Whatever the origin, the idea behind hygge is simple. Rather than dreading the cold winter days, we view this as a time of respite and relaxation instead. Cozy blankets, fuzzy socks, fireplaces, dim lights, and mugs of tea so big you need both hands to hold them...these are some of the images that come to mind when Danes are describing hygge.

Now to the griever feeling just a bit raw, this may all sound a little too cute, like something you'd see in the pages of "Country Living" magazine (in fact I'm pretty sure I did see an article about hygge there at one time). So why and how would this apply to grief?

Because hygge isn't actually about stuff. It's a state of mind, and it's a reminder that at some point we all need to slow down, turn inward, and give ourselves a little time to rest. It's not about what you have or what you don't have...

1. It's about taking care of yourself
  2. It's about taking a break from the hustle of a hectic routine
  3. It's about a shift in perspective and trying to find small comforts in difficult times
- And it's the bigger lesson of taking what we have and doing what we can to find just a little joy, however small, in our daily lives.



Reconnect with someone you've lost touch with. Get all the ingredients and take an afternoon to make **YOUR favorite meal**. Pick up an old hobby or find something to do with your hands like puzzles, knitting, crafts. Listen to music, read a good book, spend a day on the couch watching old movies...

You get the idea.

In the end, hygge is just a fancy and hard to pronounce word for taking care of yourself in tough times. Grief is exhausting and some days it may feel like your full time job. Yes, winter is hard. Icy roads and bitter cold can cut us off from our normal activities and the outside world, and for the griever already **feeling isolated** by their loss, the prospect of even more quiet and seclusion may not seem all that appealing.

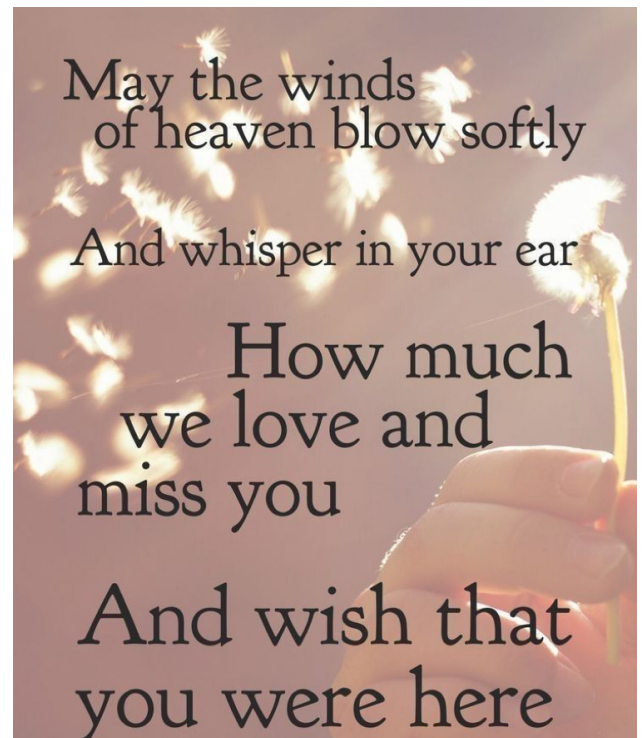
So we find small ways to make the best of our forced hibernation, and remember that some day the sun will shine, and Spring will come again...





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

- 1/2 - **Stephanie Kissel**, daughter of Barbara & Bob Krantz  
1/4 - **Marc Landis**, son of Anne & the late Craig Landis  
1/5 - **Lisa Kuniega-Lewis**, daughter of Arlene & Alan Vogel  
1/9 - **Dominic DeBlasio**, son of Jeannine DeBlasio  
1/10 - **Peter Graham**, son of Al & Carol Graham  
1/12 - **Christine Inscho**, son of Peggy Daggitt; brother of Diane Anderson  
1/13 - **Kevin Figanik**, son of Thomas & Valerie Figanik  
1/13 - **Jason Pini**, brother of Jennifer Pini  
1/18 - **Kyle Smith**, son of David & Maria Smith  
1/20 - **Dorinne Buda**, daughter of Pamela Buda  
1/24 - **Austin Jacobs**, son of Penny Jacobs  
1/24 - **Peter Smith**, son of Angela & Richard Smith  
1/25 - **Allison Reboratti**, daughter of Barbara & Eduardo Reboratti  
1/28 - **Denise Layton**, daughter of Edward & Gloria Layton  
1/28 - **Liz Ann Whipple**, daughter of Liz Sullivan  
1/29 - **Matthew Lincul**, son of Linda & Ed Lincul  
1/29 - **Kaia DeCesare**, daughter of Kristina DeCesare Robinson



I have lost a life  
-not my own,  
But it would  
have been easier  
to have lost my own life  
than to have lost  
the life I loved more  
than my own.





# *Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of Their Death*

*Loved, missed and always in our hearts*

- 1/1 - **Nick Campellone**, son of Johanna Goodwin
- 1/2 - **Julia Smith**, daughter of Deborah Heatherington
- 1/7 - **Stephanie Kissel**, daughter of Barbara & Bob Krantz
- 1/9 - **Jason Heuckeroth**, son of Debbie & Mark Heuckeroth; brother of Jaime
- 1/10 - **Corbin Christopher Snider**, son of Chris Snider
- 1/12 - **Kiana Alvarenga**, daughter of Tina & Jose Alvarenga
- 1/12 - **Daniel Attilio**, son of Patrick & Ann Marie Attilio
- 1/12 - **Morgan Mysza**, son of Dean & Jill Mysza
- 1/17 - **Karin Haughey Adair**, sister of Martha Stoler
- 1/19 - **Peter Graham**, son of Albert & Carol Graham
- 1/19 - **Jacob Burkett**, son of Kathleen & Jim Hardgrove
- 1/20 - **Clayton Sitko**, son of Henry & Theresa Sitko
- 1/21 - **Adriana Toro**, daughter of Israel Toro
- 1/23 - **Michael Macko**, brother of Mary Anne Macko
- 1/24 - **Justina Sue Daniel Espinoza**, daughter of Bob & Jacqueline Daniel
- 1/26 - **Michael Cox**, son of Dianna Cox
- 1/29 - **Karen Slotter**, daughter of Dolly Bibic
- 1/30 - **Dan Bardsley**, son of Emma Bardsley; brother of John & Anita Bardsley
- 1/31 - **Linda Toland**, sister of Andrea Dunning & Valerie Schulz

**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/YWupAnu2gPVpjrrA6> 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](mailto:memorialgardenTCF@gmail.com).

Scan the QR code to go to order form





# Love Gifts

From Josephine Lenhart in loving memory of her son John Jarema

From Steven Tondera, for Michael Tondera: "Let good spirits shine on all loved ones we lost."

"In loving memory of my son, Scott Silver and my grandson, Kyle Silver" from Jeanne Hofmann.

Special Thank-you to Crystal Hunter

for her work coordinating and creating the Candle Lighting Zoom Program. Her hard work and long hours devoted to the program and slide show are much appreciated. It turned out wonderful. What a blessing to have such talent within our committee to figure out a way to make our annual Candle Lighting possible, even during a pandemic.

Thanks also to the following members who worked hard to bring the Candle Lighting to us this year. Barbara Reboratti, Lynette Lampmann, Mary Anne Macko, Gail Blase, Mandy Sitko and Theresa Sitko.

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

TBA



### *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.

