



Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter January 2022

A Personal Evolution Through Grief

I have been a bereaved parent now for three and half years. I have learned a few things during that time, and I have much to learn in the future. I am evolving. Evolving from what I once was.....a person who had reasonable expectations of a life that included my son, his children, graduations, holidays, birthdays and special occasions. Now I have become a person who has virtually no expectations that are similar to the ones I had before my son died.

I have evolved into a more sensitive person. I know what some people are thinking before they even say the words. I feel others' joy as if it were my own. I cheer for the success of others. I feel their sorrow, their failures, their missteps. I watch children play and remember my childhood, my son's childhood and I think of the joy that is childhood. I sit for hours watching birds at our feeders, marveling at the beauty of the natural world.

I have slowed down the pace. I no longer feel the pressure to be here or there, to do this or that, to call this one or that one, to wear certain clothes, to "put on the best face" for strangers. I have liberated myself from the mundane and the materialistic. Instead, I simply feel deeply about others. I have become extremely sensitive to all that surrounds me.

I believe the loss of my child has changed me in many different ways. I see this in the attitudes of those who are in the Compassionate Friends as well. While few of us will broach no nonsense in our lives because it is meaningless

compared with our experiences, we will listen intently for long periods to the weeping, hysterical cries of a newly bereaved mother. Or we will nod quietly as a parent who is far into grief has a sudden flash of sorrow that is overwhelming. We have a heightened sensitivity to others through no choice of our own. It came with the loss of our beautiful children.

I wonder about what my son would think of events that have unfolded since his death. I have come to conclusions about others that aren't, quite frankly, flattering. Yet, he had come to these conclusions before he died. While I tried to mollify his perception of the dysfunctional people with whom he was burdened, he just said, "that's how it is, mom." And he was right. That's how it is. I have learned to accept people for what they are. If I can help, I will certainly do so. If I can't help, I accept that some things can't be changed, and some people won't change. There is no magic here. It's a simple fact of life. "That's how it is, mom."

I volunteer more these days. I give of myself, my knowledge, any wisdom I may have acquired on life's path to others who are in need. I give of my time, my talents and my labors to those who don't ask as well as those who do. I am comfortable with this.

I have less appreciation for money than I once had. Perhaps that is the best thing to come out of this. What was I chasing? What was my son chasing? What was the point? Bigger, better, faster, farther, more,



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



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Please give some thought to volunteering with The Compassionate Friends. Our Chapter is growing and we need helping hands to continue to help others that are new to this path of grief. We need not walk alone.



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties



About Our Chapter

Chapter Leader – Barbara J Reboratti

Chapter Treasurer – Sherri Albro

Chapter Secretary – Gail Blase

Assistant Secretary -

Mary Anne Macko

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster –

Linda Stauffer

Membership Outreach-

Ginny Leigh Manuel

Social Media Coordinator & Sibling

Coordinator – Crystal Hunter

Memorial Garden Chairperson –

Theresa Sitko

Committee members – Bob Albro,

Dianna Cox, Diane Gurecki, Lisa

Dechant and Lynette Lampman

TCF National Office:

877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

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

We were put on this earth *to love them*

for as long as WE live... ○

not for as long as THEY lived.

- Alan Pederson



Self-help Program

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they go through the grieving process. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.

To Our New Members

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain!. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

To our Members who are further down the "GRIEF ROAD"

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK - what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

Information Regarding Our Meetings

PLEASE don't stay away from a meeting because the topic scheduled does not interest you. We are here to discuss whatever is on your mind, we don't stay on the topic only. This is YOUR group and we are here for each other. You do not have to talk at meetings. We welcome your participation in our group but it is not a requirement. Coming to listen to the others is Okay too. Re-member also that our meeting is open to adult siblings, grandparents, or adult family members such as aunts or uncles.

Support Group Meetings

We are so sorry for the cause that brings us together. It takes courage to attend a Compassionate Friends support group meet-ing. We understand how it feels to walk into a room of strangers and share personal feelings, especially when you are in so much pain. At your first meeting, we hope you find care, support, understanding and a group of friends to share with. Truly, there are no strangers among compassionate friends.

As a reminder to families that would like to attend a support meeting. Please allow yourself at least 3 or 4 meetings of attendance to determine if they are for you. It may take a few meetings before you're able to talk about your loved one and that is understandable. What you say at our meetings is kept in the meeting, you can cry, hug, talk about how you are feeling freely. Our meetings are for parents, grandparents and siblings in grade 9 or above and adult siblings.

Your Friends at TCF Quakertown Chapter

Library Books

We have a nice library of books for our members to check out and read and return them back to our library. A problem we currently have is that some books have not made their way back to our library and our library is shrinking. If you have checked out a book or magazine from our library and are done reading it won't you PLEASE return it to us at our monthly meetings. If you are not able to make the meeting you may mail it back to us or have someone else return it to us. Also, if you have any books that would help other grieving families through their journey and would like to donate them to our library please give them to our librarians.

Newsletter Errors and Omissions

For any errors or omissions please contact Linda via email at kt4ever@mac.com 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

New Year's Resolutions for Grieving

This time of year, we are inundated with suggestions for changes we can make to greatly improve our lives in the new year.

New Year's resolutions to improve our health and surroundings may be useful and even beneficial. However, if you are among those who have experienced the loss of a loved one during this past year, the typical sentiments may ring hollow for you as the calendar turns. (How can it possibly be so important to eat more broccoli or walk 10,000 steps a day when there is an empty chair at the dinner table and a pair of sneakers by the back door waiting for a loved one who isn't returning?)

Perhaps it would be fitting to consider a different sort of New Year's resolution—a set of suggestions suited especially for those who are entering a season of their lives grieving someone whom they loved.

Such a set of resolutions might look like this:

I resolve to not place time limits on my grief; it will take as long as it takes. **I resolve to** acknowledge my grief as my own—that it is as individual as I am—and will take shape in its own unique way.

I resolve to be mindful of the need for flexibility when it comes to the expectations of others (and myself).

I resolve to not be pressured by “shoulds.”

I resolve to cut myself some slack when I am not as productive as I might like, behave in ways uncharacteristic of my usual self or simply “don't care.”

I resolve to accept that others may not understand my pain, and it is probably not realistic to expect that of them. (Until one has walked the path, how can one know the terrain?)

I resolve to express my feelings without guilt, and not apologize for tears.

I resolve to be grateful for concerned others who willingly just listen.

I resolve to recognize that my acceptance of assistance and support of others allows them the blessing of giving.

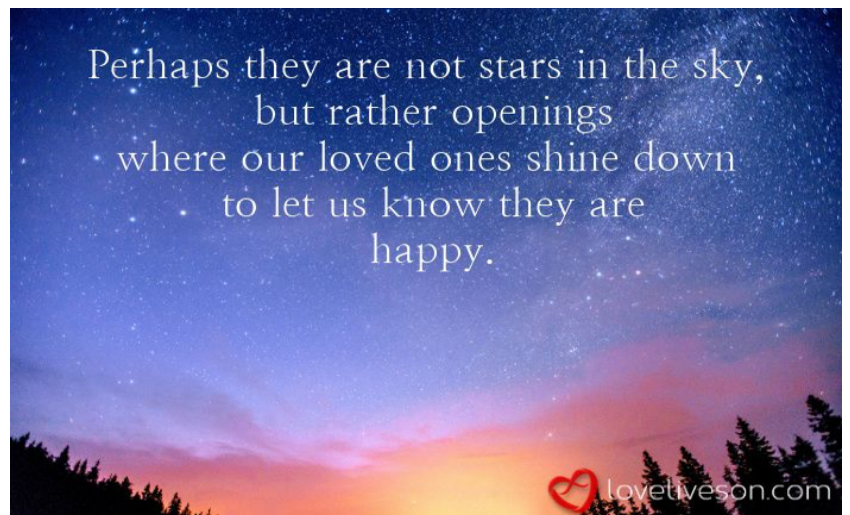
I resolve to forgive those who say or do that which feels hurtful, recognizing that unkindness is not intended.

I resolve to extend to myself the same grace and patience I would to others, were they in my situation.

I resolve to find some little way each day to begin to reinvest in life, in an effort to move toward hope and a sense of purpose.

I resolve to continue to speak my loved one's name, tell our stories and embrace my memories.

Whether or not you are one to make resolutions, it is our hope that one or more of these thoughts will resonate with you. Turning the page to begin a new year, you can be resolute as you move forward in your season of grief.



Evolution of grief continued from page 1

more, more. It's a shallow existence when one is so focused on the material things that one is defined by materialism. I have learned to let go of preconceptions, and in that letting go, I have been pleasantly surprised by many people.

How did I get to this place? One minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month at a time. It is a slow journey from crawling through the pits of hell in deep grief to coming back to the reality of here and now. It's as close to a near death experience as I can imagine. Instead of great epiphanies, there are moments of clarity. Instead of instant gratification, there is much work to achieve tiny steps forward. But the effort is well worth making. When I came out from the pits of hell, I realized that my reality was changed; I realized that I was a different person. I discovered that the world doesn't run on the dollar. I found that all people have a capacity for goodness, but that many will never use this capacity. But most importantly, I discovered that after leaving the pits of hell, there is a road toward hope that is traveled

by each of us. Some walk more quickly, some more slowly. But we each walk that road to hope. Hope represents a life that is tolerable once again. Hope represents the acceptance of our child's death and the acknowledgement that we will keep our children alive in our hearts for all eternity as we continue into our tomorrows. Hope is reconciling those two elements: yesterday and tomorrow.

I have learned to adjust to change, because change is inevitable. I have learned to stand up for what is right because that is our duty as human beings. I have learned much about the fears of others and even more about my own fears. I have conquered my phobias as a result of my son's death. Nothing my imagination could conjure would equal that gripping pain, the ache that hangs in my heart forever because my child has died.

But most of all, I have learned that my son was right. "That's the way it is, mom." Shortly before he died, he said he wanted to give me a copy of *Who Moved My Cheese?* He never had the opportunity. But I will read it. I have a feeling I know what it will say. Perhaps Todd gave me the plot line when he died. I'd like to think that he was subconsciously preparing me.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

TCF, Katy, TX



Last Call to order Garden Plaque

**Deadline the 15th
of Next Month**

*Scan here with your
Smartphone camera
for order form*



*Questions can be sent to
memorialgardentcf@gmail.com*

*“Our Children Remembered on their January Birthdays
Always Loved, Missed and Forever in Our Hearts.”*

- 1/2 - **Stephanie Kissel**, daughter of Barbara & Bob Krantz
1/4 - **Marc Landis**, son of Anne & the late Craig Landis
1/5 - **Lisa Kuniaga-Lewis**, daughter of Arlene & Alan Vogel
1/9 - **Christopher Accardi**, son of Anthony & Mary Ellen Accardi
1/10 - **Peter Graham**, son of Al & Carol Graham
1/11 - **Sean Ryer**, son of Pat Ryer
1/12 - **Christine Inscho**, son of Peggy Daggitt; sister of Diane Anderson
1/13 - **Kevin Figanik**, son of Thomas & Valerie Figanik
1/13 - **Jason Pini**, brother of Jennifer Pini
1/14 - **Geneva Doll**, daughter of Keith & Barbara Doll
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
1/30 - **Michael Cox**, son of Dianna Cox



Thank you to those who participated with us for the candle lighting on December 12. We hope those who could not make it to the zoom found peace in their own way and were able to light a candle that night. This collage is a small number of our loved ones gone too soon. We will remember them always and forever.



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
1/9- **Stephen Stalheim**, son of Barbara Mertens
1/10 - **Corbin Christopher Snider**, son of Chris Snider
1/10 - **Andrew Justin Campbell**, son of Elisabeth Campbell
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
1/19 - **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



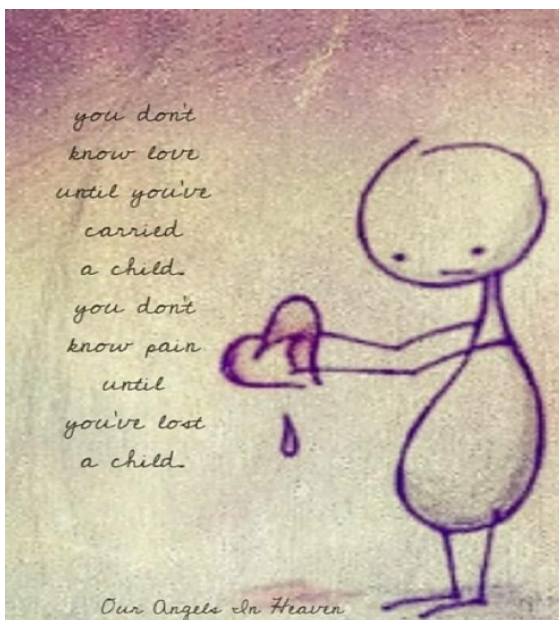
Love's Lasting Touch

Don't weep for me when I'm gone,
Because I'll always be there.
My spirit will exist in all the earth,
In the water, trees, and air.
You'll hear me say, "I love you",
In the whisper of a breeze.
You'll know that I'm beside you,
With the rustling of the leaves.
You'll feel my arms caress you,
In the warmth of each sunrise.
The moon will be my goodnight kiss,
The stars my watchful eyes.
Your life will be my legacy,
Your memories my epitaph.
These ties will bind us together,
Till we meet on heaven's path.
I'll not ever desert you,
We'll never be far apart.
I'll live within you always,
Nestled deep inside your heart.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
In Memory of My Angels...
Michelle, Jerry & Danny
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Special Thanks

A special thank you to Diane Guerecki, Lisa Dechant, Jenifer Pini, Michelle Argue Larrabee, Rosemary Stewart 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 Dianna Cox for addressing our monthly newsletters for mailing. She does this in remembrance of her son Michael. 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.



Love Gifts

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

To Beth Campbell, in loving memory of her dear son, Andrew Justin Campbell.

To Curtis Johnson, in loving memory of Faye Johnson.

To Josephine Jarema Lenhart, in loving memory of her dear son, John Jarema.

To Steven Tondera, in loving memory of his dear son, Michael Tondera.

To Ed & Linda Lincul, in loving memory of their dear son, Matthew Lincul.

To Jon & Sylvia Holznagel, in loving memory of their precious daughter, Genine Elizabeth Holznagel-Leary.

Please feel free to use the Love Gift Form in the newsletter to include your special message.

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are messengers of overwhelming grief...and unspeakable love."

Washington Irving

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

Support Group Meeting is January 11th 7-8:30 at the Gathering Place



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.

