



The Compassionate Friends

July 2020

Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

43RD TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Save the Date: Friday, July 31 - Sunday, August 2, 2020

TCF National is working diligently to present a virtual conference and provide an important opportunity for parents, siblings, and grandparents to connect since the in-person conference was canceled. This also offers the opportunity for you to attend who may not have been able to do so in the past for a variety of reasons.

The three-day conference will include Keynote Sessions, 70 plus workshop choices, Sibling Sunday, Candle Lighting Ceremony, Sharing Circles, Silent Auction, and Entertainment.

The conference will take place on a Zoom platform with an online registration system. Registration fees for the three-day event will be \$65 per person (early bird registration) and \$85 per person after July 17th, 2020.

Information about the TCF Walk to Remember along with more conference details will be shared in the coming weeks. Training and orientation will be offered prior to the conference for attendees who may need some extra technology support in order to participate.

Although we would all love to be together in person, we can still connect, support, and gather as a community through a virtual event. We will continue to navigate this new environment we're in and we hope you will join us! Registration will open soon. Please visit this website <https://rb.gy/gkdn9x> for updated information.



We are skipping our July virtual meeting and will have an in-person meet up on Sunday, July 12 at the Memorial Garden!

Come any time between Noon and 2pm. Wearing a mask is strongly encouraged. Come see each other with 6 foot distancing. Bring your chair, bug spray, sunscreen, water, and a lunch! We will have garden flags for sale! Flags \$15. Stakes \$5 Accepting exact cash or checks. .

We hope to see you at the garden!
James Memorial Park at 1079 Ridge Road, Sellersville, PA.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123802347679381/>
[Our private facebook group](#)

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: 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.

In-person meet up on Sunday, July 12 at the Memorial Garden!



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties



About Our Chapter

Barbara Reboratti, Chapter Coordinator & Chapter Delegate to National
Ginny Leigh-Manuel-Membership Outreach
Crystal Hunter, Social Media Coordinator & Sibling Outreach
Sherri Albro, Chapter Treasurer
Gail Blase, Chapter Secretary
Mary Anne Macko, Assistant Secretary
Linda Stauffer, Chapter Newsletter & Website Creator & Maintenance
Theresa Sitko, Memorial Garden Director
Lynette Lampmann, Hospitality
Mary Catherine Nederostek, Hospitality
Diane Guerecki, Remembrance Cards
Lisa Dechant, Remembrance Cards
Dianna Cox
Bob Albro
Carol Graham

TCF National Office:

877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

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



Self-help Program

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

To Our New Members

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

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

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

Information Regarding Our Meetings

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

Support Group Meetings

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

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

Your Friends at TCF Quakertown Chapter

Library Books

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

Newsletter Errors and Omissions

For any errors or omissions please contact Linda via email at kt4ever@mac.com with the error and the correction for the next month newsletter. Please remember we are all volunteers and grieving

About This Newsletter

This newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Quakertown Chapter with the hope that it will be a helpful resource for you on your grief journey.

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter please contact the newsletter editor by email: newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org

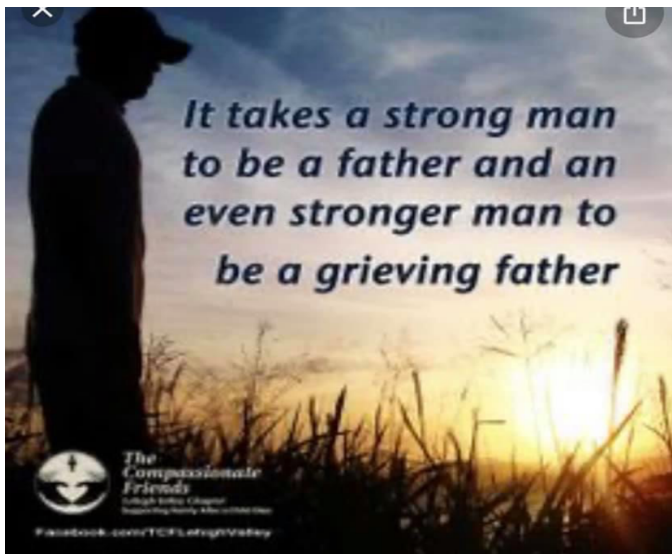
PLEASE NOTE: If you are moving or your email has changed please notify the newsletter editor so that we can update your information and you continue to receive the newsletter. If the newsletter is returned to us either via mail or your email bounces back and you have not notified us you will be removed from the mailing list.

Newsletter submissions:

Submit articles and poetry to the editor by the 15th of the preceding month. Include the author's name & your contact information. You may mail to our PO Box 1013, Quakertown PA 18951 or email as a pdf file or word document to: newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org

Our Children Remembered for July Birthdays

7/1 - Karen Slotter, daughter of Dolly Bibic
7/1 – Gabriel Krotzer, son of Steven & Heather Krotzer
7/3 - Shane Bowen, son of Agnes & Robert Bowen
7/5 - Bobby Cloud, son of Richard & Diane Cloud
7/5 - Andrew Keegan, son of Karen & Mark Keegan
7/6 - Morgan Basciano, daughter of Sharon & Nicholas Basciano; sister of Olivia Basciano
7/6 - Ryan McMullen, son of Kathleen & John McMullen
7/7 - Jarrod Nordland, son of Craig & Lisa Nordland
7/9 - Michele Lyn Murray, infant daughter of Kevin & Amy Murray
7/9 – Kyle Silver, grandson of Jeanne Hofmann
7/12 – Demetrios “Jimmy” Asprakis, son of Joan Asprakis
7/13 – Lorraine Corbo, daughter of Deb Goodman
7/13 - Scott Silver, son of Jeanne Hofmann
7/16 - Matt Barber, son of Noel & Tim Barber
7/17 - Dan Slaughter, son of Lori Slaughter
7/18 - Brian Michael Leigh-Manuell, son of Ginny Leigh-Manuell; brother of Jennifer Wills
7/20 - Thomas Hamilton, sister of Jessica Green
7/20 - Katie Leck, daughter of John & Anita Bardsley
7/20 – Adriana Toro, daughter of Israel Toro
7/20 – Alycia Pinkowski, daughter of Patty Rugulo
7/21 - Lisa Dawn Weatherly, daughter of Norma Jean Weatherly
7/23 – Alexis Quay, daughter of Mary Dickinson
7/24 - Lisa Koletty, daughter of Barbara & Dietrich Koletty
7/25 - Joe Discher, son of Martha & Art Discher; sister of Wendy Park
7/28 - Adam Sautner, son of Bonnie & Alfred Sautner, Jr.
7/28 - Gregory Teufel, son of Mark & Renee Teufel
7/29 - Donald Dolan, Jr., son of Don & Tina Dolan
7/29 - Jonathan Jason Orlick, son of Teri Orlick
7/30 - Robert Marich, son of Michele Callon
7/30 - Douglas Minner, son of Louise & Toby Minner
7/30 - Jean Marie Moyer, daughter of Joe Siedlecki & Monica Siedlecki



I found a picture of you
One that I had not seen in awhile
I held it gently in my hands
Lost for a moment in your smile.

I found a card from you
Written in your own special way
I held it gently in my hands
Lost for a moment in that day.

Memories, sweet gifts from you
To allow my heart a breath
To let me be lost for a moment
To remember life not just death.

- Author Unknown -



The Evolution of Grief: my thoughts at 38 months out

At first your loss will be at the forefront of your mind all day. You will wake up with it and fall asleep with it. It will consume you.

After a time, you may occasionally catch yourself not thinking of your child. You might feel guilty when you laugh or smile, thinking it means you don't care or miss them. But that is not true. The loss will still take your breath away and that sinking feeling will cut through you when you think about being a parent who has outlived their child. But you'll find yourself at times being able to focus on, and even find joy, in other things.

It takes time and work to move through this phase and accept your New Normal. Be patient with yourself and surround yourself with people who will embrace you as you evolve. Give yourself permission to discontinue the relationships that starve rather than feed you.

When the acceptance of the loss is earned, you'll start to think of your child less often, but, when you do, there will be the same intensity of both love and grief. There will still be unexpected tears, but the loss won't be the centerpiece of your day or your life anymore.

I'm told by others who have experienced this loss, years later we will be able to think of our children, and although the emptiness and grief will still exist, so will the depth of love. They say the pain softens so the tears only occasionally fall.

(C) 2018 Kimberly A. Starr, Tom's Mother

submitted by Barbara J Reboratti, TCF Quakertown Chapter

A Letter from Your Child to You



Dear Mom,

I wish you could see your own brilliance. I want you to know how bright you truly are. When I left my body your heart broke open, all colors turned to shades of gray, and you felt like an empty shell. You no longer believed you fit in anywhere. You felt like an alien on a planet where no one understood you. The world kept spinning so very fast and you could not figure out how that was happening. How can things move forward when all you want is to go back?

Little by little, you gathered your shattered pieces. One step in front of another and one deep breath at a time. You felt all the pain, shame, regret, guilt, anger, doubt, fear...and then...you bravely let it all go when you realized it was not serving your highest good. You cried out in surrender in order to allow healing to begin to take place. You realized you did the very best you could with what you knew at the time. And you continue to do your very best with what you know now. Rest, release, recuperate, honor your emotions, and show yourself grace and compassion. Give yourself the love that you gave me and continue to give me.



I am still right there, in your heart and soul, and alive in a realm your human eyes cannot see but is very real. My light now shines through you and you are so very bright. You stun people with your strength and courage and faith. You encourage others to keep going even when you don't realize it. You, just being YOU, is helping others. You are using your pain and lessons and growth to help another. You are embodying a message through your mess and showing others it can be done.

I love you. I have always loved you. I will always love you. Love never dies and neither do we. We are eternal beings of light with our energy continuously circling each other in harmony and resonance. We are magnets with an attraction that can never be pulled apart. Our bond is one of eternity, not one of earth. Continue moving through your journey, feeling all your human emotions, with your heart wide open to my enduring love, support, and guidance. Trust that our relationship continues and our love only grows as you carry on.

We will be together again, in the same dimension, so very soon. The human lifetime truly is just a blink in eternity. I can see the bigger picture from the Perfect Place I now reside and know my "death" was not in vain. We are working together, as planned, for our united soul mission. We are a team, in this together forever. I am so very proud of you and want you to feel my love, always and in all ways. Shine bright and let my love fuel you forward as you walk your way Home. I am right here with you every step of the way.

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.

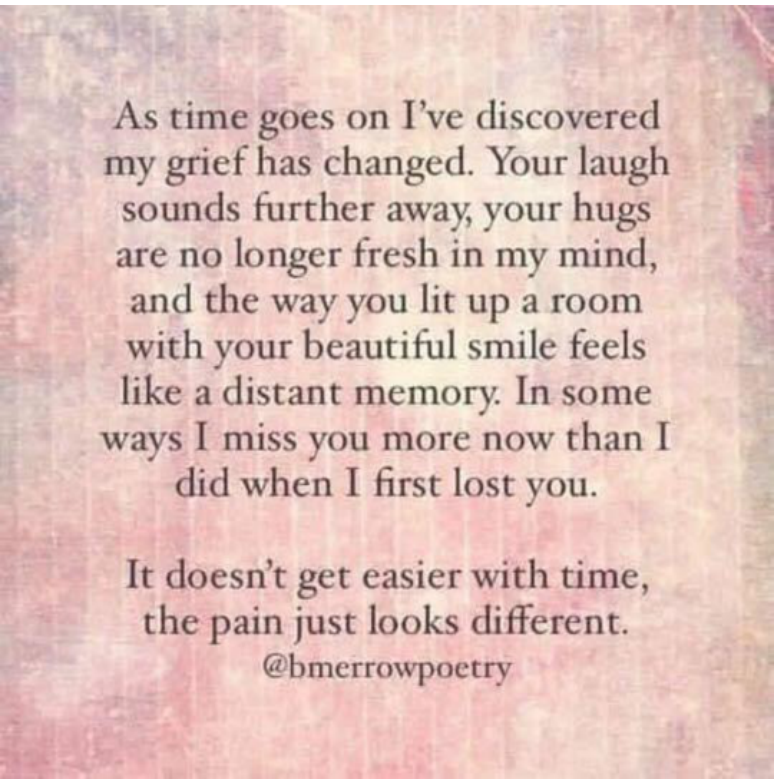
—Elizabeth Ammons



Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of Their Death

Loved , missed and always in our hearts

7/1 – Matthew Hoffa, son of Dennis & Marcia Hoffa
7/1 – K. Michael Humlhanz, son of Mary Lou Humlhanz
7/1 – Gabriel Krotzer, daughter of Steven & Heather Krotzer
7/2 – Peter Smith, son of Angela & Richard Smith
7/3 – Lynda Mohlenhoff, daughter of Frank & Peggy Posivak
7/4 – CalliMae Derstine, daughter of Lucy & Mike Derstine
7/4 – Brandon Leathers, son of Jim Leathers
7/4 – Andy Walnes, daughter of Kim Walnes
7/5 – Derek Brown, son of Matthew Brown
7/5 – Adam Graham, son of Albert & Carol Graham
7/5 – Dominic DeBlasio, son of Jeannine DeBlasio
7/6 – Joshua Woods, brother of Jenn Kroll, Eliot Woods, Tricia Woods
7/6 – Alex Shiloh, son of Irena Shiloh
7/7 – Michael Bolan, son of Jennifer Bolan
7/9 – Joey Siedlecki, son of Joe Siedlecki & Monica Siedlecki
7/9 – Michele Lyn Murray, daughter of Amy & Kevin Murray
7/9 – Jonathan Parker, son of Susan Parker
7/9 – Steven Ketterer, son of Steven & Gail Ketterer
7/10 – Earl Colella III, son of Jaynee & Earl Colella
7/10 – Heather Wagonseller Ash, daughter of Janet Wagonseller
7/11 – Emmalee Ingrid Bryan, daughter of Terri Bryan
7/12 – Hunter Larrabee, son of Michelle Larrabee
7/13 – Joshua Sotak, son of Mary Catherine Nederosteck
7/15 – Mike Hicks, brother of Kathy Hicks
7/17 – Melinda Daniel, daughter of Jacqueline & Bob Daniel
7/17 – Scott Silver, son of Jeanne Hofmann
7/18 – James Reilly, brother of Maureen Elliott, John & Michelle Finegan
7/20 – Jana Lee Snedeker, daughter of Dave Snedeker
7/21 – Michael Fayewicz, brother of Sandra Ligowski
7/22 – Bobby Rolph, son of Judy & Bob Rolph
7/22 – Donald Vincente, son of Christine & Donald Vincente
7/24 – Laura Smith, daughter of Valerie Smith
7/24 – Eric Stillings, son of Kirt & Joyce Stillings
7/25 – Denise Layton, daughter of Edward & Gloria Layton
7/26 – Eric Hill, son of David & Susan Hill
7/28 – Eric Gotwals, son of Gary & Anne Gotwals
7/28 – James P. Ryer, son of Diana M. Adams, brother of Pat Ryer
7/29 – Chris Guidotti, son of Nancy & Al Guidotti
7/30 – Morgan Basciano, daughter of Sharon & Nicholas Basciano; sister of Olivia Basciano
7/30 – Chris & John Inscho, sister & brother-in-law of Diane Anderson



As time goes on I've discovered my grief has changed. Your laugh sounds further away, your hugs are no longer fresh in my mind, and the way you lit up a room with your beautiful smile feels like a distant memory. In some ways I miss you more now than I did when I first lost you.

It doesn't get easier with time, the pain just looks different.

@bmerrowpoetry

Other Ways to Connect

While you may not have a Facebook account, it may be something to look into just for this time being to connect socially with people. In addition to our private Facebook group (specifically for people who live near Quakertown, PA), TCF National supports dozens of Facebook groups. You can find one specific to your need-- sibling, parent, grandparent, only child, cause of death, etc.

The groups have moderators to oversee discussions. In addition, there are live chats (in real time→ click here <https://rb.gy/r0bujuw>). In all the cases, you will realize you are not alone and people have similar stories and/or UNDERSTAND you!

To find a group or two, sign into your Facebook account and then click here <https://rb.gy/9rfslt> to find the Facebook groups. It will list them all. Since you are signed into your Facebook account (make sure you use YOUR account), when you click it will go right to the group. There will be a few questions for you to answer. The moderators will check those answers and accept you in. Once there, remember to be gentle because you will see stories and posts-- similar to a meeting. You need to be kind to yourself and take a break when needed. (Facebook offers MANY ways to snooze and unfollow to help you do that.)

We hope this helps you connect socially with others during this time of distancing!

5 Ways Loss Attacks Your Identity

by [Gary Roe](#)

"I'm not the same person. Neither is Dave. Who am I now? Who are we?" asked Alexandra.

Alexandra and Dave's son Duke was their only child. He was a talkative kid, with an active imagination. He was the superhero of the neighborhood, with a strong preference for Batman and Thor.

Despite watchful and involved parents, Duke began to run with a questionable crowd. In high school, he got into drugs. He pursued some college, but never followed through consistently. He had trouble holding down a job. One morning, Duke's roommate found him unconscious on the floor. His death was ruled an accidental overdose. Duke was 25.

"Duke's death was complicated. So is our grief. I miss him. I miss me. I miss our family," Alexandra shared.

Loss can create an identity crisis

"I miss me." I've heard that many times from grieving hearts. I've felt it myself.

Here are 5 reasons why intense grief can cause us to question our own identity.

1. The loss strikes you at the core of your being.

It's as if part of us has been suddenly, perhaps forcefully, stolen away. What happened? Where did they go? Your heart has been struck. Perhaps even your soul is shaking.

2. Your loved one's absence permeates everything.

You're used to our loved ones' presence. Now, they're gone. Their absence changes everything – every dynamic, every relationship. You feel yourself changing too.

The person you were, along with the life and family you knew, has been altered forever. Who are you now?

This can throw us into an identity crisis. Part of us has disappeared. What do we do with that?

3. Secondary losses emerge and begin to multiply.

Like waves on a beach, the unwanted changes keep rolling

in, continual and relentless. The after-shocks pound you. Collateral damage piles up. Who knew so many little deaths could come from one big one?

You're stunned and reeling. It feels like you're in a free fall with no safety net.

4. Fear of even more loss comes knocking.

You brace ourselves and wonder what will happen next. You go into fortress-mode, trying desperately to control the damage and protect who and what you have left.

You sense your heart and life changing, shifting. You hold your breath, hoping that all this will soon stop and be over somehow. You have dreams about the way things were.

5. The unwelcome reality sets in.

Finally, reality sets in. They're not coming back. The world seems empty. Everything has changed.

You gaze into the mirror. Who is that? You look different. You are different. Perhaps you barely recognize yourself.

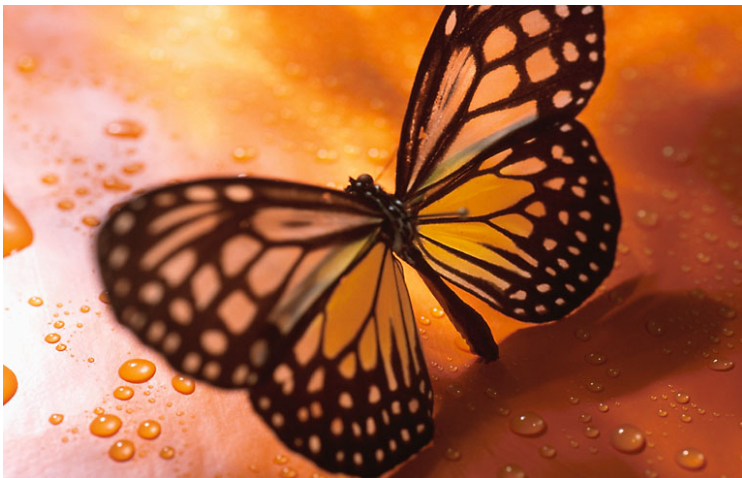
This identity crisis is a natural and common experience for those suffering a heavy loss. Weathering this storm takes guts. You're in uncharted waters with almost no idea where this violent wind might drive you.

In most cases, this identity crisis will be temporary. As you process the grief, you will adapt, adjust, heal, and grow (though any and all of these might seem impossible on any given day). But you will not go back to who you were. That's impossible. You walk now with a pronounced limp. Every step reminds you of the shattering blow you've experienced.

Take heart. You are not alone. You're not crazy. You will get through this.

"I don't know who I am or who I'll become, but I'll never be the same. I don't want to be."

Adapted from the award-winning bestseller, [Shattered: Surviving the Loss of a Child](#).

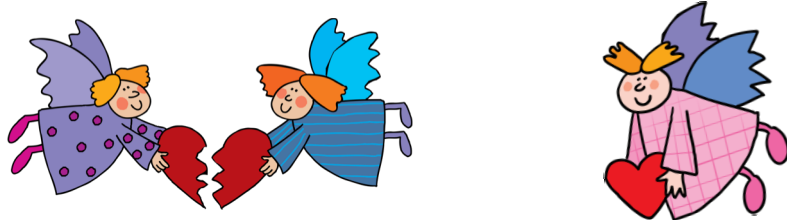


Love Gifts

In loving memory of our son, **Christopher Ulmer**. You are loved beyond measure and missed beyond words. Love always ~ Mom Trish and Dad Jim Ulmer.

In loving memory of my son, **Scott Silver**, and my grandson, **Kyle Silver**. Never forgotten. Always loved. Truly missed. ~ Mom and grandmother, Jeanne Hofmann.

In loving remembrance of our son, **Greg L. Mikesell**. We miss and love you so much. ~ Mom Carol and Dad Don Mikesell



A special thank you to Diane Guerecki, Kasey Bradley Lisa Dechant, Jenifer Pini and Crystal Hunter for the Remembrance cards that you receive. They do this in memory of their children/ siblings: An appreciated Thank You to our members for helping to set up and tear down for chapter meetings. Thank you to Linda Stauffer for doing our newsletter and 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.

LOVE GIFTS

A Love Gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends. Love Gifts can be in memory of a child or sibling on their birthday or angel day, can honor a friend or relative, or can show support for the work of TCF. Love Gifts are the Chapter's main monetary support. **Please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends Quakertown Chapter.** (Bank will not accept just TCF)



Love Gifts are tax deductible – Chapter Non-Profit #2053

Circle One: *In Memory* or *In Honor* of (name of person) _____

Birth Date _____ Death Date (Angel Day) _____

Check One: Please use my gift for....

- Memorial Garden
- Special Events (i.e. speakers, community outreach)
- Candle Lighting Program
- Memorial Walk & Butterfly Release
- General operating expenses

Love Gift Message:

Your Name: _____
Email or Telephone: _____
Address: _____

Checks payable to
The Compassionate Friends
Quakertown Chapter
PO Box 1013
Quakertown, PA 18951

Treasurer Use Only

Cash/Check # _____ Amount _____
D _____ Q _____ T _____ N _____

