



The Compassionate Friends

March 2021

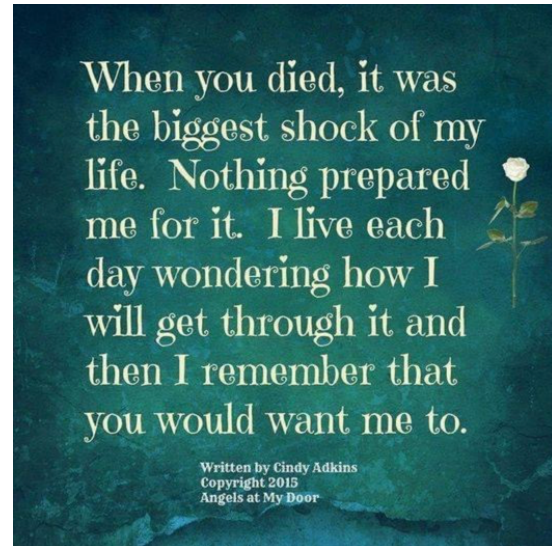
Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

The Myth of Closure

When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure? Grievors often ask these questions. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one's room, or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps, after the first anniversary comes and goes – "Surely then, we will have closure" we think. We pray this is so.

The reason that we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of the pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us. Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could really close the door on pain – turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course. Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings or for people we love. Closure simply does not exist emotionally; not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn't exist because after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love that we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with loss, to integrate it into our new reality.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those that we love. If we really found



closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us – the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out. Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again. But, let's not ever think that we'll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

As read in the former Peace Valley TCF Chapter's Newsletter, "Borrowed from the TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter, Sept/ Oct 2005

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



If you are reading this newsletter and do not receive emails from the chapter, and would like to, please email contact@tcfquakertownpa.org to be included on the email list. Be sure to include your name!



As our membership grows costs are rising to mail paper copies of the newsletter each month. Please consider receiving the newsletter by email, or Facebook, or our website. Please contact us with your email address!!! Thank you for helping us SAVE funds!!! email or scan -----> contact@tcfquakertownpa.org



Quakertown Chapter
PO Box 1013
Quakertown, PA 18951
Chapter Info Line: 484-408-7314
contact@TCFQuakertownpa.org
website: www.tcfquakertownpa.org

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



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties



About Our Chapter

Chapter Leader – Barbara J Reboratti

Chapter Treasurer – Sherri Albro

Chapter Secretary – Gail Blase

Assistant Secretary -

Mary Anne Macko

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster –

Linda Stauffer

Membership Outreach-

Ginny Leigh Manuel

Social Media Coordinator & Sibling

Coordinator – Crystal Hunter

Memorial Garden Chairperson –

Theresa Sitko

Committee members – Bob Albro,

Dianna Cox, Diane Gurecki, Lisa

Dechant and Lynette Lampman

TCF National Office:

877-969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

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

Self-help Program

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

To Our New Members

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

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

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

Information Regarding Our Meetings

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

Support Group Meetings

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

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

Your Friends at TCF Quakertown Chapter

Library Books

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

Newsletter Errors and Omissions

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

About This Newsletter

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

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter please contact the newsletter editor by email: newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org
PLEASE NOTE: If you are moving or your email has changed please notify the newsletter editor so that we can update your information and you continue to receive the newsletter. If the newsletter is returned to us either via mail or your email bounces back and you have not notified us you will be removed from the mailing list.

Newsletter submissions:

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

We were put on this earth *to love them*

for as long as WE live... ○

not for as long as THEY lived.

- Alan Pederson

Grief: Coping with reminders after a loss

Grief doesn't magically end at a certain point after a loved one's death. Reminders often bring back the pain of loss. Here's help coping — and healing.

When a loved one dies, you might be faced with grief over your loss again and again — sometimes even years later. Feelings of grief might return on the anniversary of your loved one's death or other special days throughout the year.

These feelings, sometimes called an anniversary reaction, aren't necessarily a setback in the grieving process. They're a reflection that your loved one's life was important to you.

To continue on the path toward healing, know what to expect — and how to cope with reminders of your loss.

Reminders can be anywhere

Certain reminders of your loved one might be inevitable, such as a visit to the loved one's grave, the anniversary of the person's death, holidays, birthdays or new events you know he or she would have enjoyed. Even memorial celebrations for others can trigger the pain of your own loss.

Reminders can also be tied to sights, sounds and smells — and they can be unexpected. You might suddenly be flooded with emotions when you drive by the restaurant your partner loved or when you hear your child's favorite song.

What to expect when grief returns

The course of grief is unpredictable. Anniversary reactions can last for days at a time or — in more extreme cases — much longer. During an anniversary reaction you might experience the intense emotions and reactions that you first experienced when you lost your loved one, including:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Crying spells
- Depression
- Fatigue, or lack of energy
- Guilt
- Loneliness
- Pain
- Sadness
- Trouble sleeping

Anniversary reactions can also evoke powerful memories of the feelings and events surrounding your loved one's death. For example, you might remember in great detail where you were and what you were doing when your loved one died.

Tips to cope with reawakened grief

Even years after a loss, you might continue to feel sadness when you're confronted with reminders of your loved one's death. As you continue healing, take steps to cope with reminders of your loss. For example:

- Be prepared. Anniversary reactions are normal. Knowing that you're likely to experience anniversary reactions can help you understand them and even turn them into opportunities for healing.
- Plan a distraction. Schedule a gathering or a visit with friends or loved ones during times when you're likely to feel alone or be reminded of your loved one's death.
- Reminisce about your relationship. Focus on the good things about your relationship with your loved one and the time you had together, rather than the loss. Write a letter to your loved one or a note about some of your good memories. You can add to this note anytime.
- Start a new tradition. Make a donation to a charitable organization in your loved one's name on birthdays or holidays, or plant a tree in honor of your loved one.
- Connect with others. Draw friends and loved ones close to you, including people who were special to your loved one. Find someone who'll encourage you to talk about your loss. Stay connected to your usual support systems, such as spiritual leaders and social groups. Consider joining a bereavement support group.
- Allow yourself to feel a range of emotions. It's OK to be sad and feel a sense of loss, but also allow yourself to experience joy and happiness. As you celebrate special times, you might find yourself both laughing and crying.

When grief becomes overly intense

There's no time limit for grief, and anniversary reactions can leave you reeling. Still, the intensity of grief tends to lessen with time.

If your grief gets worse over time instead of better or interferes with your ability to function in daily life, consult a grief counselor or other mental health provider. Unresolved or complicated grief can lead to depression, other mental health problems and other medical conditions. With professional help, however, you can re-establish a sense of control and direction in your life — and return to the path toward healing.



Chris and I were night people, talking for hours at the kitchen table sometimes until sunrise. He ended his life after returning from his 3rd deployment to Iraq. Feeling so alone in the middle of the night, I sat on the porch with tears streaming down my face. To be honest, it was that ugly cry of a shattered heart.

Suddenly one night, a huge moth that whisked by startled me. I had never seen a green moth and I watched intently as it danced back and forth as if to convince me such a creature existed. Then it landed on my knee, gracefully and seemingly forever pumping its wings. It even allowed me to touch it and I was awestruck by its beauty.

When it took flight, lingered, and eventually danced away into the night, I realized my tears had dried and my loneliness dissipated. Sorrow was replaced by the wonderment of this experience.

I discovered it was a Luna moth and only lives for seven days after emerging from its caterpillar form. In its brief seven days, that moth brought beauty, wonderment, love, and gratitude to me.

And then I realized that while Chris only lived 22 years, like that of the Luna moth, he too brought beauty, wonderment, love, and gratitude into my life.

As we feel the sorrow of their death, can we also weave the beauty, wonderment, love, and gratitude for their lives into the fabric of our grief as it evolves during the course of our own life?

I thank each of you for being in my life and I hold space for you in my heart.

By Barbara J. Reboratti
TCF Quakertown Chapter Leader

March Support Group Meeting

The continuing pandemic as well as the cold weather prevents us from meeting in person so we're doing the next best thing, a virtual Support Group meeting using the Zoom videoconference application. Our March meeting will be Tuesday March 9 at 7:30 PM. We'll again have the opportunity to give and receive support in an audio visual way using Zoom. Chapter leadership will facilitate the meeting and you may talk or choose to simply listen.

You do not need to create an account and you can use your mobile device or computer. Even if you haven't attended an in-person support group meeting or a previous online meeting, we welcome you to our Zoom meeting for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings.

- Please be in a private area during this meeting so we can preserve confidentiality and not have background noise such as the TV or barking dogs. Using headphones are ideal but not required.
- 24 hours prior to the meeting, the zoom URL code and link will be sent via email and posted in our private Facebook group. If you are receiving a paper copy of this newsletter, please send an email to contact@tcfquakertownpa.com so we can send the code and link to you prior to March 9.
- At 7:15 PM on March 9, you can click that link from your smartphone or computer and be admitted to the meeting once leadership can verify your identity. If you have any questions, please see our contact information below.

484-408-7314

Topic: March Support Group Meeting Zoom

Time: Mar 9, 2021 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Self care isn't just drinking water and going to sleep early. Self care is taking a break when things become overwhelming, saying no to things you do not want to do, allowing yourself to cry, asking for help from those around you, doing things that make you happy.

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



3/5 - **Jacquelyn Dahms**, daughter of Don & Lorraine Croisette

3/5 - **Genine Leary**, daughter of Jon & Sylvia Holznagel

3/5 - **Leslie Ann Kobzina**, daughter of Randy & Lori Ann Kobzina

3/11 - **George Davish**, son of Sheryle & George Davish

3/15 - **Kristy Bender**, daughter of Kathy & Frank Bender

3/15 - **Donnie Daniels, Jr.**, son of Don & Kelly Daniels

3/16 - **Pat Cornell**, sister of Kathy & Frank Bender

3/18 - **Joseph Cooper**, son of Edith Cooper

3/18 - **Ryan Heimerdinger**, son of Robert & Barbara Heimerdinger

3/19 - **Billy Klinedinst**, son of Michelle Klinedinst

3/20 - **Amber Eisenstein**, daughter of Ben Eisenstein

3/21 - **Chris Trauger**, son of Mary Anne Macko & Mike Hamilton; Jim Trauger; grandson of Dolly Bibic

3/22 - **Ryan McGuinness**, son of Tim McGuinness

3/26 - **Joshua Adair**, grandson of Lois Harner

3/26 - **Hunter Larrabee**, son of Michelle Larrabee & Steve Argue

3/26 - **Karisa Kade**, daughter of Kathy & Mike Fluck

3/28 - **Alexis Falcone**, daughter of Dominic & Carolyn Falcone

3/28 - **Jason Heuckeroth**, son of Debbie & Mark Heuckeroth

3/28 - **Eric Hill**, son of David & Susan Hill

3/31 - **Justin Hunter**, brother of Crystal Hunter; son of Pat & Annette Hunter

The Birthday Table

No rustling tissue paper,
scattered ribbons or burst balloons.

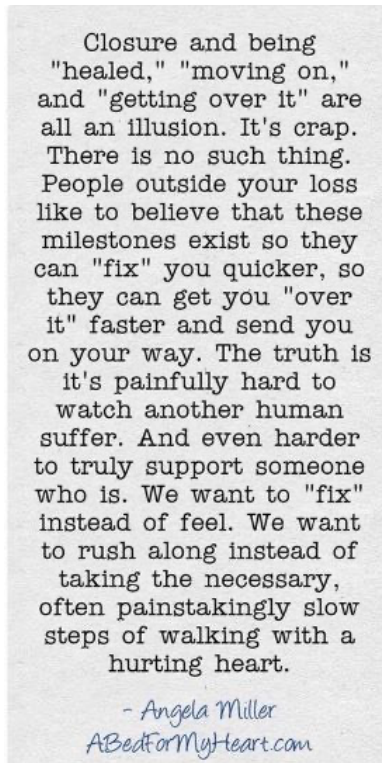
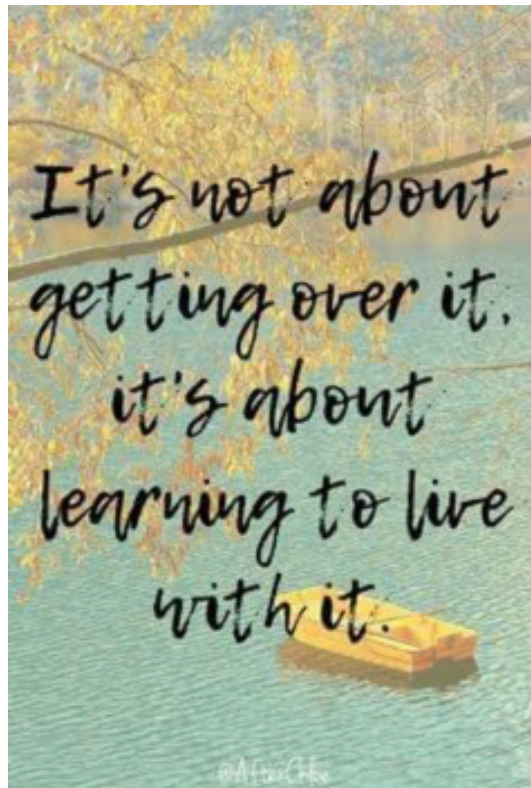
No shouts of Happy Birthday
break the silence in this room.

Nonetheless, a birthday has rolled around again,
though the beloved children who reveled
in the cheer no longer blow the candles out
at the turning of the year.

Loving hands may bring a photograph
of that precious life to share
and place it on the Birthday Table
with utmost tenderness and care.

For though the world may not recall
the laughter or the joys,
we treasure every memory
of our birthday girls and boys.

By Frankie Wilford, TCF,
Carrlonton-Farmers Branch, TX
As quoted in Peace Valley Chapter's newsletter



Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of Their Death Loved, missed and always in our hearts

- 3/2 - **Jamie Frick Standish**, daughter of Terry Frick
- 3/2 - **Patrick Pettie**, son of Doreene Pettie
- 3/4 - **Ardyth Cope**, daughter of Carol Cope
- 3/5 - **Ryan Kintzly**, son of Tammy Devine
- 3/5 - **Genine Leary**, daughter of Jon & Sylvia Holznagel
- 3/7 - **Wendy Croisette**, daughter of Marvin & Ellen Croisette; sister of Todd, Terri-Lynn, & Jeffrey
- 3/7 - **Jamie Stewart**, son of Jim & Beverly Stewart, brother of Sherrie
- 3/8 - **Marc Bannon**, son of Jan & Kevin Bannon, brother of Aimee
- 3/8 - **Katie Stauffer**, daughter of Carl & Linda Stauffer; sister of Chrissy
- 3/11 - **Shaun Barton**, son of Catherine Barton
- 3/12 - **Walter Pettie, Jr.**, son of Doreene Pettie
- 3/12 - **Erick McBeth**, son of Marie Fedorowicz
- 3/14 - **Marc Falcone**, son Dominic & Carolyn Falcone
- 3/16 - **Adam Sautner**, son of Bonnie & Alfred Sautner
- 3/17 - **Demetrios "Jimmy" Asprakis**, son of Joan Asprakis
- 3/18 - **Christine McGhee**, daughter of Dawn McGhee
- 3/19 - **David Curran**, son of Barbara Santaniello
- 3/21 - **Captain Laura Eberts**, daughter of Joseph & Karen Matejik
- 3/22 - **Justin Landis**, son of Amy & David Landis
- 3/24 - **Jesse Swindell**, son of Ronald & Tina Jackson
- 3/24 - **Abigail Schumer**, daughter of Mike & Meg Schumer
- 3/29 - **Matt Barber**, son of Noel & Tim Barber
- 3/29 - **Rennis Reitz II**, son of Barbara Reitz

The Anniversary Date

The Anniversary Date of a loved one's death is particularly significant.

You will have done something you thought was impossible a few months earlier.

You will have survived an entire year without someone who was as important to you as life itself.

-Bob Diets, *Life After Loss*
(Published in *Journeying Through Grief*, 2006)

PLEASE BE GENTLE An After Loss Creed

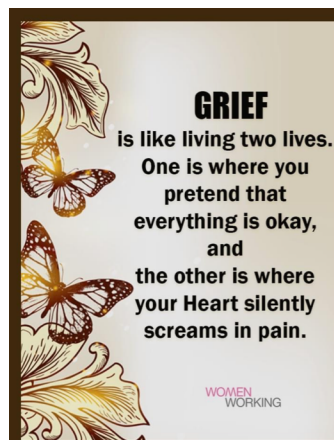
Please be gentle with me, for I am grieving. The sea that I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow. I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my

heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path. Please, will you walk beside me?

By Jill Englar
Westminster, Maryland
As seen in *Bereavement Magazine*



She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Love Gifts

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

To Edith Cooper for her beloved son, Joseph Cooper:

“Son, you are forever in my heart. Miss you! Love, Mom”

To Donald and Lorraine Croisette, for their love gift in loving memory of their beloved daughter, Jacquelyn Dahms, and her March birthday.

To Trish and Jim Ulmer, in loving memory of their beloved son, Christopher S. Ulmer:

“Not a day goes by without the thought of you. Missing you till the end of time.” Love, Mom and Dad

To Mary Anne Macko and Michael Hamilton, and his siblings Josh Trauger & Jake Hamilton, for their love gift in memory of their beloved son and brother, Christopher J. Trauger:

“This is the 20th year we’ve had your birthday without you – impossible to believe that much time has passed – but we will always remember the gift of your life and your love, on that special day!”

Our member’s love gifts continue to support our chapter’s ongoing expenses as well as the maintenance and beautification of our chapter’s magnificent Memorial Garden in James Memorial Park, Sellersville.

A special thank you to Diane Guerecki, Lisa Dechant, Jenifer Pini and Crystal Hunter for the Remembrance cards that you receive. They do this in memory of their children/ siblings: An appreciated Thank You to our members for helping to set up and tear down for chapter meetings. Thank you to Linda Stauffer for supplying the ink and paper and printing our newsletter and creating and maintaining our website. She does this in memory of her daughter Katie. Thank you to, Betty and Charlie Hottenstein for addressing our monthly newsletters for mailing. They do this in remembrance of their daughter, Tracy. Thanks to Barb and Bob Heimerdinger for applying the memorial Plaques to the wall in the memorial garden. They do this in remembrance of their son Ryan.

Donations made in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling are always welcome, but more so this year. Due to COVID restrictions we had to cancel our biggest fundraiser, the annual Memorial Walk and Butterfly Release.

Please help us help others. We Need Not Walk Alone.



LOVE GIFTS

A Love Gift is a donation of money in support of our Quakertown Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. Donations can be in memory of a child, sibling, or grandchild on their birthday, angel day or anytime. Your Love Gift will be acknowledged in our newsletter. Love Gifts are our Chapter's main monetary support. Anyone can donate and we thank you for your support of our chapter.

We are a 501(c) 3 nonprofit, chapter #2053. Donations are tax deductible.

In Memory of: _____

Birth Date _____ Death Date _____

Check One: Please use my gift for:

General Operating Expenses Memorial Garden

Your Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Love Gift Message _____

Please make check payable to:

The Compassionate Friends, Quakertown Chapter

Mail to:

PO Box 1013

Quakertown, PA 18951





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

Zoom meeting March 9 see page 4



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.

