



The Compassionate Friends

November 2020 *Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties*

Choosing Life

"It will never be the same; Never." As a bereaved parent, you have often heard or said these words to express grief's profound feelings of sorrow and disorientation. Your life has suddenly taken an unexpected course that appears both uncharted and endless. Bewildered, you vainly search for pathways back to your former life, until you confront the reality that there is no way back. Your child is dead forever. It is then that you may say, "...never the same." This is the aspect of grief that Simon Stephens calls, "The Valley of the Shadow." It is that very long time between the death of your child and your reinvestment in life, Between. It is not supposed to be a permanent resting place. Although some people do take up residence in the valley, it is a transition from the death of your child to life with renewed purpose. The key to this transition is yourself. You must choose between life and the valley. You and only you can decide. And you must make that decision again and again, each day. Giving in to the hopelessness of the valley is tempting. Choosing to move on toward life requires a great deal of work. You must struggle with the pain of grief in order to resolve it. It is a daily struggle full of tears, anger, guilt and self-doubt, but it is the only alternative to surrendering yourself to the valley.

Little by little you choose to move on. Little by little you progress toward the other side of the valley. It takes a very long time, far longer than your friends or relatives suspected. Far longer than you had believed – even prayed – that it would be. When one day you

find yourself able to do more than choose merely to live but also how to live, you will know you are leaving the valley of the shadow. There will still be more work to do, more struggle and choosing. The valley, however, stretches behind rather than in front of you. When you have resolved your grief by reinvesting in life, you will be able to realize that nothing is ever "the same." Life is change. We would not have it be otherwise, for that is the valley of the shadow. Change has the promise of beginning and the excitement of discovery. Life is never the same. Life is change. Choose life!

~ Marcia F. Alig TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey



Due to the chill in the air, our chapter will not be gathering at the garden in November. We will send another email and post on Facebook about a zoom chapter meeting for November. Until then, please reach us via Facebook groups, contact@tcfquakertownpa.org or 484-408-7314 should you need support.

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.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123802347679381/> Our private facebook group



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.

THANKSGIVING

You may ask, "What do I have to be thankful for now that my child is dead?" After the death of a child, where is the joy in a day off from work? What pleasure can we derive from sitting around a table when someone is missing, and an uttered prayer of thanksgiving echoes hollow in our hearts?

Maybe we have been concentrating on the loss which has brought the overwhelming sorrow of death, and have forgotten the complete joy of life. When I remember laughing brown eyes, a mischievous grin, a scraped knee that Mommy could fix, a new word learned, even the memory of the realization that I had a baby boy, I have a great deal to be thankful for. I had 1 1/2 years of a dream come true, and I'm truly thankful I had my child.

Sure, the agony of grief, the anguish of losing my precious child to death, the torture of wanting to see that child grow and mature and the pain of never knowing, rips me up.

There is no Thanksgiving in entertaining these thoughts, so this month I am going to concentrate on the Living of my child, the Life that brought me so much joy. In this I am thankful that Evan was born, thankful that he lived, thankful that even for those short 30 months – I lived them too. Even so, as he lived once, I live now and want a productive life.

I am thankful I have come that far in my grief work to know I want to live and remember the good times without sorrow. And I am thankful for my husband, who stood by me during the rough times, the husband who is the father of the child of our love. In him I have found my child, in our marriage I have found love, and that love taught us how to love that child. I am also thankful for you, my real friends – Compassionate Friends.

Edie Kaplan – TCF, Ft. Lauderdale, FL



First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful fills my heart with dread. They'll all be feigning gladness, not a word about her said. These heavy shrouds of blackness enveloping my soul, pervasive, throat-catching, writhe in me, and coil.

I must, I must acknowledge, just express her name,

so all sitting at the table, know I'm thankful that she came. Though she's gone from us forever and we mourn to see her face, not one minute of her living, would her death ever replace. So I stop the cheerful gathering, though my voice quivers, quakes, make a toast to all her living. That small tribute's all it takes.

- Genesse Bourdeau Gentry from Stars in the Deepest Night – After the Death of a Child

GIVING THANKS -

Sascha

I can not hold your hands today, I can not see your smile.

I can not hear your voices now, My children, who are gone.

But I recall your faces well,

The songs, the talks, the sighs, And storytimes, and winterwalks, And sharing secret things.

I know you helped my mind to live Beyond your time with me.

You gave me clearer eyes to see – You gave me finer ears to hear –

What living means, what dying means, My children, who are gone.

So here it is Thanksgiving Day, And you are not with me.

And while I weep a mother's tear, I thank you for the gift you were, And all the gifts you gave to me, My children, who are gone.



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
Diane Guerecki, Remembrance Cards
Lisa Dechant, Remembrance Cards
Dianna Cox
Bob Albro

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

Dealing With the Holidays

Alan Pedersen

1 Define your own strategy first – Just as the airlines tell you in the event of an emergency to put your own oxygen mask on first before trying to help others, you will be more effective at supporting others when you have made your own plan for how you will handle the season. This may mean that you ask veteran members of your Chapter or steering committee to take on additional tasks to help you. Having a discussion with your leadership team about the potential need for additional support for new members this time of year will help your Chapter be more prepared and will lessen the load for any one individual.

2 Practice What You Preach – There are some basic rules of thumb for handling the holidays which have proven to be of great benefit. In addition to suggesting them to your members, make sure you apply them to your own journey.

▪ **No rules on rituals and traditions** – Give yourself the freedom to try completely new rituals, alter your rituals or follow all the traditional things you have done in the past. No two people grieve alike; some find comfort in what they have always done and others find what they have done in the past to be excruciating. Give yourself permission to tinker with tradition in whatever manner necessary to help you survive the season.

▪ **Insist on flexibility** – Don't let others dictate how you celebrate or don't celebrate the season. Only participate in what you feel you can handle and leave open the option of canceling events you may have committed to. If those inviting you need an RSVP, let them know you need flexibility, as you may not know in advance how you will feel on any particular day.

▪ **Always have an exit plan** – If you do attend holiday events, if possible drive yourself or have a ready exit plan. Most seasoned grievers have learned this lesson the hard way,

where we were stuck at somebody's event when we were hit with a massive grief wave in the middle of the party and had no way out. Often times you can tell the host that you may be overcome with emotion and, if so, to please allow you to step outside, into another room or to leave. You do not want to ruin the party but you also need the space to roll with whatever you are feeling.

▪ **Ask others for help** – Especially for those early in grief, going to the mall or other stores can be overwhelming. Tell those around you what you need. Maybe they can shop for you, wrap gifts for you, or escort your children or others in your family who may need to shop or attend holiday events. People do want to help; they just sometimes need us to let them know how best to support us.

▪ **Help others** – One of the most suggested tips I hear about the holidays is from those who reached out to others even in their earliest years of grief; that there is something healing about a parent who has no child giving a gift to a child who may have no parent to receive a gift from. Helping others can give us a purpose and make us feel needed and this can be especially helpful during the holidays.

3 Always offer hope – As difficult as the holiday season is, it is especially critical that we offer hope to all we serve. Most of us look back at our first couple of years and wonder how on earth we survived; however, the fact is we did survive. Many of us have found our footing and discovered what works for us. It is so important that those new in grief share in our hope; that we convey to them that as difficult as it seems there can still be good moments. There is also the hope that we can even find joy in the memories of the past and the experiences of the future, if we continue to share their life and honor the love that still remains planted firmly in our hearts.

24th Annual World Wide Candle Lighting

Hosted by the Compassionate Friends Quakertown Chapter

WHAT: a time to remember our loved ones who have died. It is sponsored by the local Compassionate Friends chapter, which supports parents, grandparents, and siblings who have had a child, grandchild, or sibling die.

WHEN: December 13, 2020 @ 6:30p.m. from your warm home on Zoom. The link will be sent out closer to the date. You will light a candle in your own home at 7pm, with the whole world lighting at 7pm local time.

SLIDESHOW If you opted out of submitting photographs in previous years, you may submit **up to 3 photos** that highlight your child, grandchild or sibling. If you did this previously, do not re-submit for the same person.

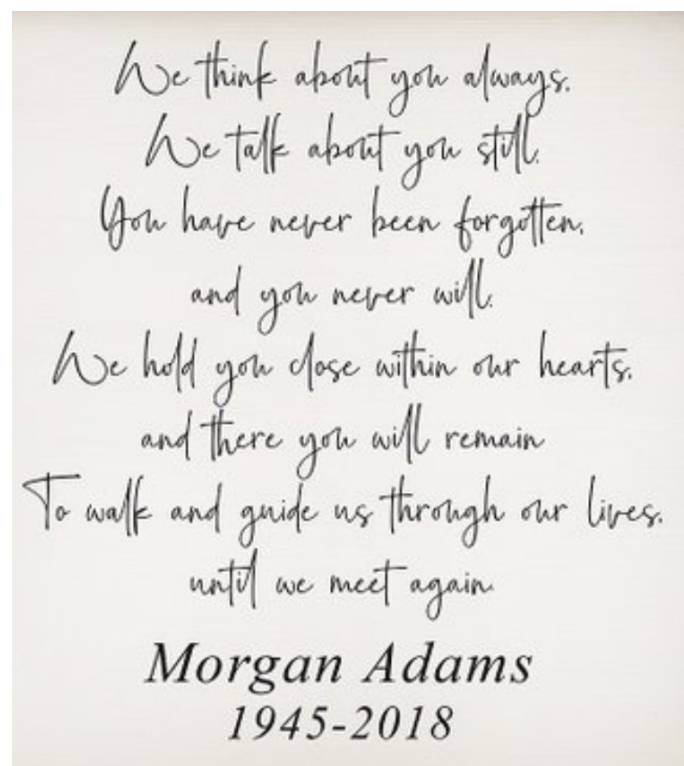
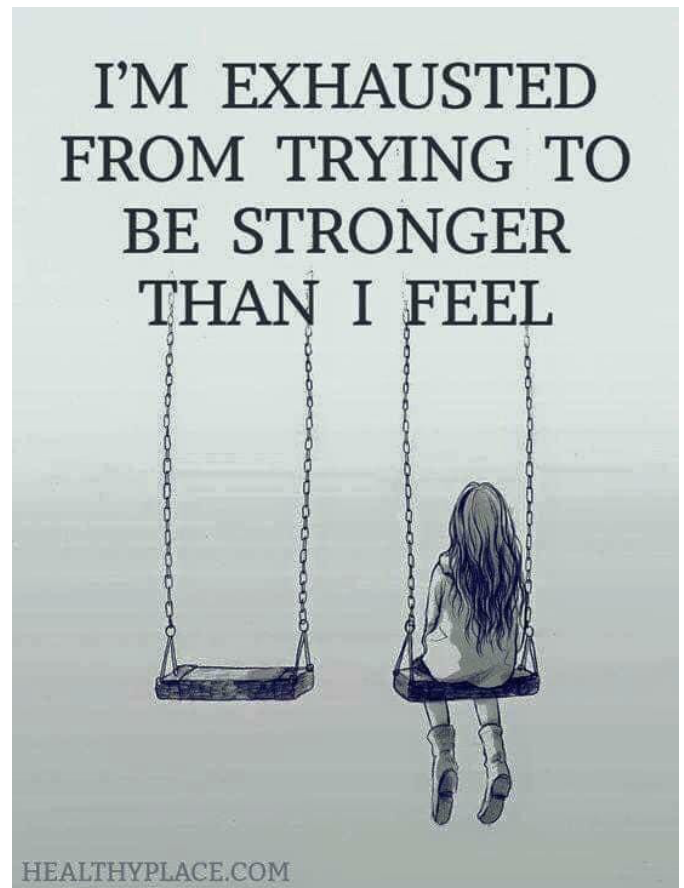
How to Submit Photos: Email the photos to



candlecfquakertown@gmail.com - due to Covid, all photos must be scanned. Include the **FIRST and LAST name of the child in the email subject line**. You **will receive an email back** confirming they were received and that they work for the slideshow [Sometimes they are too small or grainy to be included and we will work with you to re-submit]. Photos must be **emailed by Nov. 15**, no exceptions.

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

- 11/4 – **Jenna Nicole Burleigh**, daughter of Jaqui & Ed Burleigh
11/5 - **Dwayne Hager**, son of Ruth & Stanley Hager, Jr.
11/7 - **Daniel Attilio**, son of Patrick & Ann Marie Attilio
11/12 - **Lisette Martin**, daughter of Luke & Amanda Martin; granddaughter of Evelyn & Nelson Martin, Jr.
11/12 - **Rourke O'Donnell**, son of Cindy O'Donnell
11/14 - **Aaron Abud**, son of Susan Abud
11/14 - **Benjamin Michael Albro**, son of Sherri & Bob Albro
11/15 - **James P. Ryer**, son of Diana M. Adams & sister of Patricia Ryer
11/16 - **Melinda Daniel**, daughter of Jacqueline & Bob Daniel
11/16 - **Rennis Reitz II**, son of Barbara Reitz
11/17 - **Jaime Scheck**, daughter of Rebecca & Ed Scheck
11/18 - **Michael Macko**, brother of Mary Anne Macko
11/18 - **Tyler Mostek**, son of Kimm Mostek & Brendon Dorsa; grandson of Vicki Bartakovits
11/18 - **Meagan Sands**, daughter of Bernadine & Anthony Buccafuri, granddaughter of Edward & Gloria Layton
11/19 - **Adam Graham**, son of Albert & Carol Graham
11/19 - **Racheal Whiteley**, daughter of Kristine Fallows
11/20 - **Philip D. Calabrette, Jr.**, son of Lynn Calabrette
11/21 - Matthew Grabowski, son of Constance Grabowski, brother of Andrea Grabowski
11/23 - **Heather Wagonseller**, daughter of Janet Troupe Wagonseller
11/24 - **Joseph Bello, Jr.**, son of Gloria Bello; sibling of Sharon Kronmiller
11/26 - **Lindsey Laverty**, daughter of Jim & Wendy Laverty
11/27 - **Dan Bardsley**, son of Emma Bardsley; brother of John Bardsley
11/27 - **Carly Bradley**, sister of Kasey Bradley
11/27 - **Selena Gebert**, daughter of Donna Gebert
11/27 - **Richard "Drew"**, Panettieri, son of Richard & Suzanne Panettieri
11/28 - **Chad Statuti**, son of Henry & Shirley Statuti



Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary of Their Death

Loved, missed and always in our hearts

- 11/1 - **Lindsey Laverty**, daughter of Jim & Wendy Laverty
- 11/2 - **Lillian Claire Ciccarone**, daughter of Claire & Frank Ciccarone
- 11/2 - **Dillon Andrew Godwin**, son of Karen Godwin & Ray Gintowt
- 11/3 - **David Neider**, son of Celeste Neider Nice; brother of Lexi Hull
- 11/4 - **Dario Datis**, son of Sherie Datis
- 11/4 - **Christopher Rhudy**, son of Beth Ruch
- 11/5 - **Rebecca Yeager**, daughter of David & Nancy Yeager
- 11/7 - **Alison Gilmore**, daughter of Susan Slawek
- 11/8 - **Jaime Scheck**, daughter of Rebecca & Ed Scheck
- 11/9 - **Shari Gelb**, sister of Lisa Cohen
- 11/10 - **Adrian Conrad**, son of Sarah Borolla & Adam Conrad; grandson of Barbara & Ronald Borolla, Sr.; grandson of Pamela Anderson
- 11/10 - **Donald Dolan, Jr.**, son of Donald & Tina Dolan
- 11/12 - **Kathleen "Tia" Conn**, daughter of Kathy & Robert Smith
- 11/12 - **Andrew Lister**, son of Jennifer & Kevin Lister
- 11/13 - **Kimberlee Godshall**, daughter of Terry & Fairlie Godshall
- 11/13 - **Michael Leach**, son of Beth Horwin
- 11/15 - **Benjamin Culton**, son of Mark & Barb Coulton
- 11/17 - **Jeffrey Harbison**, son of Donald & Joanne Harbison
- 11/17 - **Kevin O'Donnell**, son of Doris & Steve Yurchak
- 11/17 - **Erika Thomas**, daughter of Thomas & Peggy Delpopolo
- 11/18 - **Edward (Eddie) Ulanowski, III**, son of Lisa Dechant
- 11/18 - **Andrea Clutter**, daughter of Alyssa Sandt
- 11/19 - **Marc Daniel Landis**, son of Anne & the late Craig Landis
- 11/21 - **Jenny Bender**, daughter of Clarke & Dawn Fulton
- 11/21 - **Matthew Grabowski**, son of Constance Grabowski; brother of Andrea Grabowski
- 11/22 - **Christopher Accardi**, son of Anthony & Mary Ellen Accardi
- 11/22 - **Jeffrey Broxteman**, son of Roger & Janet Broxteman
- 11/22 - **Edward "Eddie" Myers**, son of Diane Daneker
- 11/24 - **Dennis Harris**, son of Linda Lepo
- 11/24 - **Rachel Sands**, daughter of Charlotte Tatu, sister of Christian, mother of Tommy
- 11/25 - **Karisa Kade**, daughter of Kathy & Mike Fluck
- 11/27 - **Matthew Lincul**, son of Linda & Ed Lincul
- 11/28 - **Jason Miller**, son of Phil & Pam Miller
- 11/28 - **Pamela Minnichbach**, daughter of Paul & Dolly Cell; sister of Paul & Lauren Cell
- 11/30 - **Samantha Grosse**, daughter of Jeffrey & Hope Grosse; granddaughter of John & Jeanette Hoy

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/YWupAnu2qPVpjrA6> or scan the QR code to go to the website to fill out the form. You can send a check even if you order online.

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.

Scan the QR code to go to order form



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 -



Love Gifts

Ann Marie Attilio in loving memory of a beautiful son and brother, **Danny Attilio** on his 32nd Birthday. You are Forever in our hearts. Love, Mom, Dad, Michael and Patrick.

Gail Blase in loving memory of daughter, **Katey Blase**. We loved you. We love you. We will always love you, our sweet Katey.

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 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

Next Meeting : see page 1



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.

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