



# The Compassionate Friends

June 2018

Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

## 2018 Annual Memorial Walk and Butterfly Release

The TCF Memorial Walk and Butterfly Release will be held on Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at James Memorial Park, Ridge Road, Sellersville. 1 pm – 4:30 pm. Rain or Shine. The actual walk begins at 2 pm with the ceremony following. Please bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on as there is limited seating available. Remember your sun screen too. The main program will be held in the Derstine Pavilion, with the reading of names and releasing butterflies held at the Memorial Garden near the Markley Pavilion. Bring your cameras! Tell your family and friends.

Another reminder please bring a picture of your loved one to post on our Memory Board and remember to take them with you when you leave as we can't guarantee that we will get them back to you. Please keep the pictures on the small side so everyone has room to post a picture.

Due to this year's crazy spring weather, we will be releasing 750 Painted Lady Butterflies instead of the usual Monarchs. Everyone will find 2 Painted Ladies in their purchased envelopes. We will have extra butterflies and shirts to sell at the walk if you missed the deadline to pre-order them. Cash or checks only.



There will be hot dogs and water for sale, \$1 each. Also offering an array of home baked goodies. These will not be priced but we suggest a donation.

To all you bakers out there, please bring baked goods (wrapped individually). Thank you!

See you all at the Memorial Walk!

*The mission of The Compassionate Friends: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.*

## Next meeting June 12, July 10

**We talk. We listen. We share. We care.**

Our Support Group Meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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: (267)380-0130

[contact@TCFQuakertownpa.org](mailto:contact@TCFQuakertownpa.org)

website: [www.tcfquakertownpa.org](http://www.tcfquakertownpa.org)

"The world loves closure, loves a thing that can, as they say, be gotten through. This is why it comes as a great surprise to find that loss is forever, that two decades after the event there are those occasions when something in you cries out at the continual presence of an absence."

—Anna Quindlen



# The Compassionate Friends

## Quakertown Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

### Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties

#### About Our Chapter

##### **Chapter Leader:**

Ginny Leigh-Manuell

**Treasurer:** Crystal Hunter

**Secretary:** Gail Blase

**Chapter Librarian:** Theresa Sitko

**Newsletter :** Linda Stauffer

**Website:** Linda Stauffer

##### **Steering Committee:**

Mary Anne Macko

Linda Stauffer

Theresa Sitko

Carol Graham

Lynette Lampmann

Barbara Reboratti

Gail Blase

Mary Catherine Neiderstock

Celeste Nice

Sheri & Bob Albro

##### **Remembrance & Thank You Cards:**

Lynette Lampmann

Kelly Logan

Mary Catherine Neiderstock

Jennifer Pini

##### **TCF National Office:**

877-969-0010

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

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

##### Newsletter submissions:

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



##### 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. Remember 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 are able to talk about your loved one and that is understandable. What you say at our meetings is kept in the meeting, you can cry, hug, talk about how you are feeling freely. Our meetings are for parents, grandparents and siblings in grade 9 or above and adult siblings.

##### Your Friends at TCF Quakertown Chapter

##### Library Books

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

##### Newsletter Errors and Omissions

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

##### About This Newsletter

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

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

# OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Loved...Missed...Remembered on their  
Birthdays and Always

## June Birthdays

**6/2 – Destani Danae Osborne**, daughter of Sabrina Snyder

**6/2 – Dennis Harris**, son of Linda Lepo

**6/2 – Matt Trauger**, son of Mary Anne Macko & Mike Hamilton; son of Jim Trauger; grandson of Dolly Bibic.

**6/3 - Jessica Gallagher**, daughter of Robyn & Ron Gallagher; sister of Ronnie & Jaclyn Gallagher

**6/6 – Ashley Nemec**, granddaughter of Margo Staats

**6/7 – Michelle Dusza**, daughter of Steve Dusza; sister of Jenn Geib

**6/7 – Christopher Harrison**, son of Betty Harrison

**6/9 – Adrian Paul**, son of Joyce Mann & Kurt Pfitzer

**6/9 – Sean Dawson**, son of Roger & Becky Dawson

**6/10 – Crystal Cordero**, daughter of Linda & Rich Ervin

**6/10 – James Donnelly, Jr.**, son of James & Alice Donnelly

**6/10 – Christine McGhee**, daughter of Dawn McGhee

**6/11 – Bobby McCans**, son of Dorothy & Charles McCans

**6/12 – Natasha Michelle Dechant**, daughter of Nancy Dechant

**6/13 – Wyatt Gansz**, son of Marc & Melissa Gansz

**6/14 – Skylar Kauffman**, daughter of Heather & Eric Kauffman; granddaughter of Pam Gebhard, Carol & Spencer Kauffman

**6/14 – Joey Acker**, son of Anne Marie Acker

**6/15 – James Gabriel Geib**, son of Jim & Helen Geib

**6/15 – Keith Heckler**, son of Emma & Lamar Heckler

**6/15 – Courtney Isabella**, daughter of Anthony & Michelle Isabella

**6/15 – Colleen O’Connell**, daughter of Jay & Barbara Keeley

**6/16 – Anna Nicole Fowler**, daughter of Rita Armstrong; sister of Nick Penecale

**6/16 – Eric Stillings**, son of Kirt & Joyce Stillings

**6/17 – Nick Campellone**, son of Johanna Goodwin

**6/17 – John Patrick Sharkey**, son of Maggie O’Donnell

**6/19 – Kevin Marc Bannon**, son of Jan & Kevin Bannon, brother of Aimee Bannon

**6/23 – Joseph Vincente**, son of Christine & Donald Vincente

**6/23 – Donald Vincente**, son of Christine & Donald Vincente

**6/24 – Randy Angstadt**, son of Paul & Barbara Angstadt

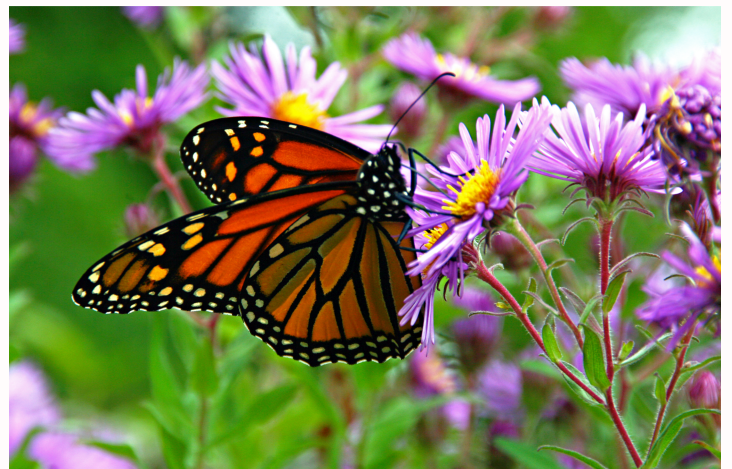
**6/24 – Brandon Gilbert**, son of Susan Gilbert

**6/24 – Katie Stauffer**, daughter of Carl & Linda Stauffer; sister of Chrissy Stauffer

**6/26 – Brett Stebulis**, son of Barbara & Leonard Stebulis

**6/27 – CallieMae Derstine**, daughter of Lucy & Mike Derstine

**6/29 – Peter Angstadt III**, son of Peter & Lynette Angstadt





# OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED FOR JUNE

Our Beloved Children...In Our Hearts Always...  
Remembered on the Remembrance Day of their Death

**6/2 - Christopher Bennetsen**, son of Catherine & Steven Bennetsen, grandson of Hilda Bennetsen  
**6/2 - Jake Guzewicz**, son of Bill & Rhonda Guzewicz  
**6/2 - Peter Plant**, son of Steven & LouAnn Wilkinson, brother of Rachael  
**6/4 - Aaron Young**, son of Perry & Susan Young  
**6/4 - Joneric "EJ" Perullo**, grandson of Suzanne & Tom Kwan  
**6/9 - Joani Freeman**, David & Donna Freeman  
**6/10 - Scott Naber**, son of Anje Naber  
**6/10 - Anthony Perno**, son of Cathy Perno  
**6/11 - Kevin Cannon**, son of Barb Cannon  
**6/11 - Steffan Orazewski**, grandson of Crystal Kay  
**6/12 - Eric Smith**, son of Ross & Mary Smith, brother of Ashley  
**6/13 - Katey Blase**, daughter of Gail Blase, sister of Hillary Blase  
**6/14 - Wyatt Gansz**, infant son of Marc & Melissa Gansz  
**6/14 - Roger Jones**, brother of Sara & Bert Jones  
**6/16 - Scott Smakula**, brother Shawn Smakula; grandson of Naomi Shaw  
**6/17 - Donald Hockenberry**, son of Richard & Sharon Hockenberry, brother of Richard & Jill Hockenberry, Susan & Tim Buehrle  
**6/18 - Benjamin Martin**, Kristine Fallows, brother of Rachel Whitely  
**6/18 - Steven Schrader**, son of Michele & Gary Schrader  
**6/20 - David Bentz III**, son of Kimberly Geonnotti  
**6/21 - Jason Roeder**, son of Shirley Roeder, brother of Jessica Youtz  
**6/22 - Joshua Adair**, grandson of Lois Harner  
**6/22 - Paul Fowler**, son of Matilda Hamilton  
**6/22 - James Gabriel Geib**, son of Jim & Helen Geib  
**6/22 - Brandon Gilbert**, son of Susan Gilbert  
**6/22 - Michael Patzuk Jr.**, son of Mike & Joesphine Patzuk  
**6/22 - Mario Pontecorro**, son of Ellen Pontecorro  
**6/22 - William R. Wilson, Jr.**, son of William & Genevieve Wilson  
**6/23 - Kevin Moran**, son of James Moran  
**6/23 - Ashley Nemec**, granddaughter of Margo Staats  
**6/23 - Lorraine Corbo**, daughter of Deb Goodman  
**6/24 - James Friendly, Jr.**, son of Petra & James Friendly, Sr.  
**6/24 - Jamie Place**, son of Kathleen Place  
**6/25 - Anthony Lounolo**, son of Anthony Lounolo  
**6/25 - Danielle Mesaros**, daughter of Sheila Haub

**6/25 - Christopher Parker**, son of John Parker, Jr.  
**6/26 - Donald Simpson**, son of Judy Kostenbauder, grandson of Harold & Joyce Miller  
**6/26 - Elena Wenger**, daughter of Dale Wenger  
**6/27 - Adian Bacchus**, grandson of MaryLou Miller  
**6/27 - Christopher Trauger**, son of Mary Anne Macko & Mike Hamilton, son of Jim Trauger, grandson of Dolly Bibic  
**6/28 - Glen German**, son of Albert & Betty German  
**6/28 - Victoria Lieb**, daughter of MaryJo & Tim Lieb  
**6/29 - Ashley Doyle**, daughter of Brian Doyle  
**6/29 - Thomas Onraet**, son of Ruth & Maurice Onraet  
**6/30 - Kareem Mitchell**, son of Jacquie Mitchell  
**6/30 - Bradley Rapp**, son of Robert Rapp Jr.

And all the children that will never be forgotten  
as we celebrate their lives and memories.





# You Are Always a Dad

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father's Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday. Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son's life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan's arrival, but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die. Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child's death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex's memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might. So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother's needs on Mother's Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husbands this Father's Day as well. It is frequently said that we males don't often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and 'warm fuzzies' when we hurt also. Please remember us on Father's Day Sunday, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonalds, Hallmark, and AT&T. Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.  
Doug Hughes TCF Cincinnati, OH In Memory of my son, Alex



# Father's Day Grief

By Greg Laurie

As we look to our annual celebration of Father's Day this Sunday, I know there are many dads out there, like me, who may experience a fresh wave of grief on this occasion, as a result of no longer having one of our children here on earth to mark the day with us. The pain can seem as overwhelming as it ever was, so I wanted to share my heart with parents who may find themselves walking that path for the first time this year, in hopes that it will provide some measure of comfort.

When my son Christopher died unexpectedly five years ago, I have to say it was the worst day of my life. I was completely overcome with grief. I knew he was in heaven, not because he was my son, but because he put his faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

But he was no longer here with me, and that hurt, much more than I could ever have imagined.

I know many parents in our country may find themselves on this journey with me as a result of the recent violence and tragedies our nation has suffered. I want to share some things that have helped me to endure what no parent should ever have to: outliving one's own child. People like to commiserate and say they know what you're going through. Most likely, they don't know. I don't even necessarily know what my wife is going through, and we are together all the time. Her grieving process is different than mine.

Someone said to me, "I know what you're going through; my grandmother just died." With all due respect, though I am sorry for that person's loss, the loss of a grandmother is not the same as the loss of a child. As hard as it may be, everyone's grandparents, and even parents, will eventually die. Unfortunately, this is the way life and death work. But children are not supposed to die before their parents. That is not the natural order.

Some people seem to expect us to "recover" at some point. As someone who lost three family members in a car crash wrote, "We recover from broken limbs, not amputations. Catastrophic loss, by definition, precludes recovery. It will transform us or destroy us, but it will never leave us the same. There is no going back to the past, which is gone forever; only going ahead to the future, which is yet to be discovered."

I will never "recover" or "go back to normal," because that would imply going back to life the way it was before. Life will not be the same without my son.

So now, I am living a new kind of normal.

Others have asked if I am "at peace" with my son's death. Of course not! We should never be at peace with anyone's death. Death is an enemy. The Bible says that "the last enemy that will be defeated is death." I am at peace with God, and I trust Him for the future, but we will never be at peace with this thing that we call death. Death is an enemy, but God is a friend.

While there are moments of laughter and joy in our lives today, as anyone who has lost a loved one knows, we have times of deep, deep sadness. But we know God is

*continued on next page*



## RAFFLE BASKET UPDATE

This year's Raffle Baskets will include about 20 baskets. Tickets (cash or check) are *1 ticket for \$1; 6 tickets for \$5; or our arm's length for \$10*. Please visit the staff members at the raffle basket table to purchase tickets.

Baskets are arranged around themes! Do you want to try and win the **Treat Yourself** basket (hour massage, lotions, Jamberry nails)?! Perhaps you would rather have the **Never Grow Up** basket (admission for 4 to Bucks County Children's Museum; Triumph Brewery gift card; children's books). We also have, once again, the infamous **MY PILLOW** set (two brand new, fluffy pillows). Other goodies include paint night at Fiddlestix, gift certificates for area restaurants, unique butterfly items, and so much more!

In addition, a **SPECIAL MEMORIAL GARDEN** collection will be separate from the general raffle baskets. This basket will include a gift card for Lowe's, flower seeds, all the memorabilia from the dedication, and more! Tickets (check or cash only) are *1 for \$3; 2 for \$5; 5 tickets for \$10*. Proceeds from **this basket** go directly to our Garden fund for maintenance.

All tickets will begin being sold at noon and will be sold until the start of the walk. Basket entries close when we begin walking the lap around the park. Winners must be present to win and will be announced after the butterflies are released.

with us, and there is a blessedness in mourning. Jesus said in Matthew 5, "Blessed are those who mourn." Another way to translate the word blessed is "happy." So, in effect, Jesus is saying, "Happy are the sad." How is such a thing even possible?

It is possible when you realize that, as a follower of Jesus Christ, you will see again your loved ones who have passed on. That is, if they too have put their faith in Christ. Jesus said, "Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

The Christian is never alone, no matter how deep their pain. David, in Psalm 23 said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." There are things you learn in this valley that you will not learn anywhere else. Now, if we had our say in the matter, we wouldn't be in the valley. But we are here, so we want to learn what we can.

So why does God take choice servants "before their time"? Why does He allow torment for some and triumph for others? No one can say, this side of heaven. The fact is, life just doesn't make sense a great deal of the time. God's purposes often remain a mystery to us.

When we say someone "died before his or her time," we are making a false assumption. What we are assuming is that there's an unwritten promise of a long life. We somehow think that everyone, in the words of Spock from Star Trek, is entitled to "live long and prosper"! But we have no such guarantees. We really have nothing to say about the date of our birth or death. But we should remember we do have a lot to say about the space in the middle, and we need to focus on making that time count. Here are my suggestions for this:

- 1 Don't take any of your loved ones for granted.
- 2 If there's someone who needs to hear you say, "I love you," say it now!
- 3 If there's a change you need to make in your life, do it now!

In the final analysis, it's not a matter of if you will die, but only when. So do what you need to do now, and then you can live with a clear conscience, ready to meet God at the time He appoints, whether it be today or 80 years from now. My son Christopher was walking with God when he was called home. I was proud of him then, and I am proud of him now.

Why do some die young, while others live long lives? We can come up with all of our fanciful ideas as to why God lets one live and takes another. I've heard them all, regarding my own son. People will say things like, "Maybe God was saving him from something bad," or "It's just that God wanted another angel in heaven," or "flower in His garden," etc.

I simply fall back on the fact that I will probably never know why. And even if I did, I seriously doubt I would understand. I look forward to the fact that one day, however, I will know.





We the parents and families of the Quakertown Chapter of Compassionate Friends would like to send a special Thank You to the following donors.

- Susan Gilbert** - In memory of **her son Brandon S. Gilbert** - You are always with us. Love Mom and Skye
- Chris Snider** - In memory of his son **Corbin Snider** -

Love and miss you so much

Without their generosity in giving to a good cause we would not be able to continue reaching out to newly bereaved parents and families with our Outreach packet and newsletters.

Thank you for your  
Love Gifts and  
Support

**Refreshments for April**

- Pam Gebhard in memory of her granddaughter Skylar.
- Ginny Leigh-Manuell in memory of her son Brian.
- Kasey Bradley in memory of her sister Carly.
- Patti Dille in memory of her son Matthew.
- Lynette Lampmann in memory of Bill Lampmann.

*If you would like to sponsor refreshments or bring some in remembrance of your loved one at a meeting please call Carol Graham at 215-538-3651.*

A special thank you to Lynette Lampmann, Kelly Logan, Jennifer Pini and Mary Catherine Neiderstock for the Remembrance that you receive. They do this in remembrance of their children/ siblings, Shawn (Lynette), and brother, Jason (Jennifer), Kelly does it in remembrance of all those who have gone too soon. 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 taking on the monthly task of addressing our monthly newsletters for mailing, they do this in remembrance of their daughter, Tracy..



**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. Thank you for your Love Gift.

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

**Circle One:** *In Memory or In Honor of* (name of persc

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

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email or Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to: TCF Quakertown Chapter  
Mail to: PO Box 1013, Quakertown, PA 18951

*Love Gift Message:*

Treasurer Use Only  
Cash/Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_ Q \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_



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

Next Meetings June 12, July 10



### *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.

