



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Serving Upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties

August 2016

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

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.

The Five H's of Healing and Processing Guilt

At The Compassionate Friends National Conference last month, I attended the workshop, "Healing Guilt and Regret," presented by Alan Pedersen, the Executive Director of TCF. I asked if I could share my notes with you. Alan said yes. They're not complete by any means, but these were my "A-Ha" moments.

A To Do List for Grief:

- 1) Educate yourself
- 2) Find support

The Five H's of Grief:

Hurt (for a lifetime)

Hope (faith, belief that life is still worth living)

Helping (asking for help, or helping others which helps us)

Honor (memories, creating/continuing the legacy)

Healing (sometimes a "dirty word" in grief because we can't imagine healing)

- *Guilt* is the, "gift that keeps on giving," if you don't process it and learn to let it go.

- My guilt is MINE, even if it isn't rational.

- Guilt isn't suddenly healed like a light bulb going on. Let go of it a little piece at a time for as long as it takes.

Suggested steps for letting go of guilt:

- What do I feel? Write it down. Be specific.

- Take ownership. You can't heal what you refuse to feel. You can't let go of what you won't own.

- Forgiveness: Them to you, You to them, You to yourself .

- Tell your child about your guilt feelings, by writing a letter, or out loud, maybe at the cemetery or in a place you feel your loved one's presence.

- Ask your child for forgiveness.

- Tell your story and your guilt feelings to a trusted listener. This may need to happen many times through your grief journey. What we need is validation. Someone willing to listen and not trying to fix it. A TCF support group meeting is a good place to tell your story and feelings of guilt.

- Talk to your guilt: Ask it, "what do you want?" If there is a lesson you learned, share it with others. Then feel free to tell guilt to leave.

~ *By Leanna Leyes of TCF Oregon and Barbara Reboratti of TCF Quakertown Chapter.*

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.

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 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 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

Quakertown Chapter

PO Box 1013

Quakertown, PA 18951

Chapter Info Line: (267)380-0130

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website: www.tcfquakertownpa.org

Dear Kisha,

10 years... 10 years since I heard your laugh, saw your smile, got to see you change outfits many times before going out. Seeing your little red Honda pulling out of the driveway, having your friends come over at any time of the day or night.

10 years since the police knocked on my door and told me you were killed in a car accident. What was supposed to be a fun day, a last hurrah before you started college. But you never made it to ride the roller coasters, which was one of your favorite things to do.

These last 10 years have been an emotional nightmare, almost to the point of being a blur. The grief I have for you is so all consuming I have moments of happiness but I never really feel total joy. I've been blessed with six of the most wonderful grandchildren I could ask for. Nieces and nephews who have never met you but they do know who you are and speak of you as if they know you! And I think they do. Nana and granddad are with you now. Your death was so difficult for them they missed you so much, but hurting for me. Ryan and Brienne have dealt with the loss of you so differently. I feel as if perhaps I have let them down, to fend for themselves in handling not having their little sister.

I go through the motions just sometimes I am lost, so lost. I will love you forever, Kisha.

Love, Mom



First Encounter

~ by *Sascha*

When grief first enters our life,
it tends to invade us –
completely and relentlessly.
We are without comfort, we do not feel pleasure,
we find no joy.
We ache in mind and body.
We feel weak and numb.
in the deepest core of our being,
we are ready to accept
that we will never know happiness again.
What's more, we feel that this state
is entirely appropriate, natural and irreversible.
Nothing can convince us that,
given time,
we can learn to live again.

But we will.

Angels Among Us

Our Angels are among us
We see them everyday
In all the forms that God created...
They are with us along life's way.

We see them in the sunrise,
That brightens and warms our soul.
We feel them in the summer breeze
That chases away our cold.

They are there among the flowers...
Their sweet scent a memory of love.
They soar with the eagles,
As they fly so high above.

The night will find them in the stars,
Lighting our path below.
And even in our dreams,
Their presence we'll still know.

As the snow melts with the sun,
And spring flowers peek through their beds,
They come on the wings of butterflies,
And flutter about our heads.

They are telling us they are with us,
And will be forever more...
Until it's time for us to meet again,
As we pass through heaven's door.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
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Vacations After a Loss



When we think of summer we almost automatically think of vacations. But for families who have lost a child or sibling there can be dread and unfulfilled expectations associated with summer vacations. Sometimes vacations bring to mind time spent together as a family. After losing a child or children, vacations — especially the first ones after loss — may only remind us of their absence. Some bereaved parents place a higher expectation on the vacation than can be fulfilled. You may assume that getting away from home and the stress of work might help family members talk about their loss by reliving memories together. But because we all grieve differently, other family members may be thinking that it would be good to get away from all these memories and stress, relax and forget the pain of grieving. Someone else in the family might think the vacation will give some relief from the grief work.

Because everyone has their own expectations for the vacation, and they could be very different, it is important to talk about what you are expecting. If vacations usually include trips to relatives or family camps, seeing everyone after your loss can be bittersweet. Memories as well as remembrances of what you'd planned for your child to do with others flood your mind. Some people will want to talk about your child or sibling, while others may be cautious to say their name. If you want to talk about your child, don't wait for others to bring up his/her name they're uncertain if you're comfortable talking about them so are waiting for you to make the first move. It may be difficult to find the enthusiasm and energy needed to plan a vacation. For others, the fear of coming home may cause stress. Taking a block of time, perhaps a week or two, might be helpful but for some people, short day trips might be more suited to the different grieving styles of family members.

Some bereaved parents experience fear of going too far from home or fear of being too far away from the mementos that remind them of their precious child. Various fears (some irrational), may make thoughts of a vacation too painful to consider. In such a case, it would be good to try to define these fears. Just realizing what the fear pertains to helps you deal with it. If fear seems to be a problem with

any member of the family, it would be good to make a list of what things they are fearful of happening, then calmly discuss these fears in a support group, with a therapist or a good friend.

Many recently bereaved people find that too much free time allows more time for painful remembrances than they welcome, so it's important to be flexible and willing to change plans midway through the vacation if it's agreeable with the majority of the family.

Remember grief depletes your energy levels so you may tire more quickly. Take this into consideration when planning reasonable distances to be driven daily.

Bereaved people need exercise but if you're planning to hike or do other strenuous exercise, don't forget your energy levels are not the same as they were before your child's death. Exhaustion and disappointment with your capabilities (thus frustration) will come much sooner than it previously did.

Whether you leave town or stay home, remember working through grief is the hardest work you'll ever do. Be kind to yourself as it's physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting. Allow yourself the time to re-energize your own depleted reserves.

Stacey Careri



Thank you, Thank you, Thank you

Thank you to Ginny Leigh-Manuell for providing our June refreshments. She does this in memory of her son Brian. Nancy Eisenhart for her delicious cake in memory of her daughter Kelly. *If you would like to provide refreshments in remembrance of your loved one at a meeting please call Carol Graham at 215-538-3651.*

You may also sponsor refreshments for a meeting for a fee of \$40 or more depending on what you would like and the hospital's catering service will set up and provide the drinks and refreshments for the evening. This can be split between more than one family each month.

A special thank you to Mary Ann Kulp, Nancy Eisenhart, Lynette Lampmann, Ginny Leigh-Manuel I, Kelly Logan and Jennifer Pini for the Remembrance and Thank you cards that you receive. They do this in remembrance of their children/ siblings, son, Tony (MaryAnn), daughter, Kelly (Nancy), son, Shawn (Lynette), son, Brian (Ginny), 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 our meetings, they do this in remembrance of their children and siblings. A special thank you to St. Luke's Hospital for providing us with our meeting rooms each month.

Thank you to Linda Stauffer for doing our newsletter. 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 Hottenstein.

Thank you for your Love Gifts and Support We the parents and families of the Quakertown Chapter of Compassionate Friends would like to send a special Thank You to the following donors. 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.



Love Gifts for August

In memory of son Adam Graham 11/19-7/5 from Carol & Albert Graham Remembering and loving you always.

In loving memory of son Joseph Cooper 3/18-8/2 from Edith Cooper. Also her father and brother. You are loved , missed and remembered always & forever!

LOVE GIFTS

A LOVE GIFT is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died; either on his/her birthday or anniversary of the death. It can also be from someone who wants to honor a friend or relative who has died, or anyone who wants to help support the work of TCF. Your LOVE GIFTS are TAX DEDUCTIBLE, and are the Chapter's main monetary support. Chapter Non-profit #2053

I wish to make a donation in memory _____ honor _____ of _____ **Birth date
_____ Death date _____

Love gift message

Please send your check payable to: TCF Quakertown Chapter and mail to: TCF Quakertown Chapter, PO Box 1013, Quakertown, PA 18951

I / We would like our Love gift to be used for: _____ Special Events /Speakers/community outreach _____ Memorial Garden
_____ Candle Lighting Program _____ Memorial Walk & Butterfly Release _____ General operating expenses

Your Name _____ email _____

Address _____

_____ Telephone _____



Our Children Remembered on their August birthdays

David Bentz III, son of Kimberly Geonnotti, 8/1

Jennifer Wenhold, daughter of Jeff & Wendy Wenhold, 8/2

Eric Gotwals, son of Gary & Anne Gotwals, 8/4

James Monahan II, son of Kim Kliensmith, 8/4

Daniel Murphy, son of Merry Murphy, 8/7

Jeremy Nase, son of Carol Nase, 8/7

Jamie Stewart, son of Jim & Beverly Stewart; sibling of Sherrie, 8/8

James Bowen III, son of Catherine & James Bowen, Jr., 8/10

Barton Carroll, son of Liz & Mike Carroll, 8/10

Brenda Meehl, daughter of Patricia & Harold Hunsicker, 8/10

Tom O'Donnell, son of Thomas & Susan O'Donnell, 8/10

Ronald "Petie" Shultz, son of Maria Shultz, 8/10

Christopher Thomas, son in law of Barbara & Eduardo Reboratti, 8/12

Tara Sciss, daughter of Todd Sciss, 8/12

Trevor Baelz, son of Marsha Leary, 8/13

Derick Schubert, son of Anne & John Schubert; sibling of Marie, 8/13

Austin Jacob Fenstermacher, son of Lori Ann Kramer & David Fenstermacher, 8/14

Jana Lee Snedeker, daughter of Dave Snedeker, 8/15

Christopher Ulmer, son of James & Patricia Ulmer, 8/16

Michael Morgan, son of Deb & Ray Vrtis, 8/17

Zachery Roessler, son of Chuck Rossler, 8/18

Amy Cyan-Spier, sibling of Thomas & Susan O'Donnell, 8/18

Eric Smith, son of Mary & Ross Smith, 8/21

Erika Thomas, daughter of Thomas & Peggy Delpopolo, 8/22

Alison Gilmore, daughter of Susan Slawek, 8/24

Jim Roberts III, son of Sue & Jim Roberts, 8/25

Mike Hicks, sibling of Kathy Hicks, 8/26

Douglas Hofmackel, son of Marie & Ken Hofmackel, 8/27

Kimberlee Godshall, daughter of Terry & Fairlie Godshall, 8/29

Eric S. Moyer, son of Ray & Linda Moyer, 8/29

Our Children Remembered on their August Anniversaries

Remembered on the Remembrance Day of their Death

Joseph Cooper, son of Edith Cooper, 8/2

James D. Layton, son of James & Barbara Layton, Sr., 8/2

Ryan McGuinness, son of Tim McGuinness, 8/2

Sarah Sylvester, daughter of Paul & Lenore Darkes, 8/2

Bobby McCans, son of Dorothy & Charles McCans, 8/4

John Roeder, son of Don & Joan Roeder, sibling of Kerrie Garges, 8/4

Jim Roberts III, son of Sue & Jim Roberts, 8/8

Dustin Stauffer, son of Glenn & Sandra Stauffer, 8/8

Kevin Kuestner, son of Keith & Tammy Kuestner, 8/9

Wayne Stokes, son of Scott & Ellen Stokes, 8/9

Cynthia Benge, daughter of Robert & Cheryl Benge, 8/12

Bradford Krenitsky, son of Deborah & Donald Krenitsky, 8/12

Jason Pini, sibling of Jennifer Pini, 8/12

Robert Tarr, son of Robert & Susan Tarr, 8/12

Sean Buehrle, son of Kathy Buehrle, 8/12

Alexndria Gasior, daughter of, Linda & Dan Brophy; Ellen & Duke Misnik, 8/13

Todd Iatarola, son of Ronda Iatarola, nephew of Sandy Bittenbender, 8/13

Brian Wensel, Jr., son of Brian Wensel, Sr., grandson of Leroy & Dawn Wensel, 8/13

Austin Jacob Fenstermacher, son of Lori Kramer & David Fenstermacher, 8/14

William Scott III, son of Ruth Scott, 8/15

Lynn Gross, daughter of Jean Werst, sibling of David Werst, 8/17

James McKale, grandson of John & Winifred McKale, 8/17

Thomas Richards, grandson of Jean Hellerman, 8/17

Jonathan Jason Orlick, son of Teri Orlick, 8/18

David Trump, son of Laura Trump, 8/18

Daniel Lavery, son of Karen Kovac, son of Daniel Lavery, sibling of Meghan Lavery, 8/19

Kinsey Duvall, son of Craig Duvall, 8/21

Our Children Remembered on their August Anniversaries

- Kisha Hesse**, daughter of Donna Hesse, 8/21
- Ryan Mitman**, son of Victoria & James Weisbrod, 8/21
- Justin Hawkes**, son of Norm & Dorrie Hawkes, 8/22
- Kevin McFadden**, son of Phillip & Kathleen McFadden, 8/25
- Kevin Villante**, son of Joseph & Cecilia Villante, 8/25
- Cpl. Barton Humilhanz**, son of Michele & Don Carey, 8/26
- Crystal Cordero**, daughter of Linda & Rich Ervin, 8/26
- Austin Jacobs**, son of Penny Jacobs, 8/27
- Paul Swope**, son of Marge Swope, 8/27
- Peter Hallinan**, son of Carol & Tom Hallinan, 8/28
- Rachel Whiteley**, daughter of Kristine Fallows, 8/28
- Robert Kalbfleisch**, son of Deb & Kurt Kalbfleisch, sibling of Rebecca, grandson of Joan & Donald Kalbfleisch, 8/28



The Paradigm Shift

Bereaved parents often recant with sorrow that the most calloused, harsh, and even cruel comments made to them regarding the loss of their child often comes from their nearest friends and family members. The reason for this is because these are the very people in our lives who have known us the longest and who think that they know us better than anyone. They have built a paradigm in their minds of who they think that we are based on our past relationship with them. We fit neatly into a box in their minds that tells them things like; "He has a great sense of humor," or "She loves to go the movies," etc. Based on our history with them, they have developed a long list of descriptive terms based on their memories about us that forms the framework of what they perceive us to be.

When our child dies, the components that served to build the models in the minds of those we love folds like a house of cards. Suddenly, and irrevocably we are changed forever. This makes those closest to us very uncomfortable. To them we may look and sound like we used to, but we behave very differently now. Their uneasiness with this dramatic change causes them to pressure us into changing back to the way that we used to be in order for us to continue to fit the mold that they have conceived in their minds of how we should be. They want us to "Hurry-up and change back... now!"

Sadly, this is the reason why some families grow distant and many friendships end. However, this is also one of the reasons that it is so easy to open up and connect with others at a Compassionate Friends meeting. No one there has any preconceived expectations or ideas of how we should act or behave. We are embraced and accepted in our grief and brokenness just as we are. One thing that we can do is to reach out to our loved ones and let them know that although we may never again be the person that we use to be before our child died, if they will bear with us and not abandon us, with time and effort we may regain some of the traits and characteristics that we were most loved and remembered for.

Janet G. Reyes

Collection of Redners Save-A-Tape program

Mail your register save-a-tape slips to our PO box to help our chapter. You may black any debit / credit card numbers, but do not black out the dollar amounts. Remember to use your Pump Perks card for the save-a-tape program. Send complete sales receipt.

PRINTER INK CARTRIDGES

STOP don't throw them away... Save your empty ink cartridges and give to our chapter for recycling. We earn rewards for recycling them and can purchase paper and other items to help cut the costs of printing the newsletters, programs for events etc... Bring to a meeting or an event in a plastic bag and give to Ginny



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

Next Meeting August 9, 2016



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.

