



The Compassionate Friends

Pittsburgh Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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Dec/Jan/Feb 2017/2018 Winter Issue

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide knowledge to help others to be supportive.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is an international non-profit, self-help support organization which offers friendship and understanding and hope to families who are grieving the death of a child of any age from any cause. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership fees or dues, and all bereaved family members are welcome.

The Compassionate Friends was originally founded in England in 1969. The first U.S. Chapter was organized in 1972. The Pittsburgh Chapter began in 1978.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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PITTSBURGH PA CHAPTER

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Website: www.tcfpittsburgh.org

PITTSBURGH CHAPTER CO-LEADERS

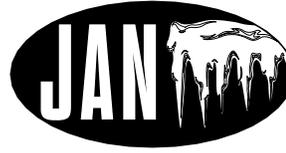
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REGIONAL COORDINATOR

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United Way #2647



Winter Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held at **Bower Hill Community Church**

from **2:30 - 5:30 p.m.**

70 Moffett St, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15243 (off of Bower Hill Road)

Please sign in at the welcome table on the lower level of the church.

PLEASE NOTE!! ALL NEW MEMBERS WHO ARE ATTENDING A MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME, PLEASE ARRIVE BEFORE 1:30 PM TO SIGN IN.

You will then join the regular meeting at 2:30.

Sunday, December 10, 2017

Our program will be our

29th Annual Remembrance

Candlelight Service

Please see page 7 for more information about this special event.

A catered luncheon will be provided in the church's Fellowship Hall after the service.

There will be no sharing sessions.

Sunday, January 28, 2018

Our program will be

Ask in a Basket

TCF members will be able to anonymously submit their written questions or comments about grief, which will then be read to the audience for their thoughts and advice.

Regular Sharings

1st time attending, Newly Bereaved Up to One Year, Grief 1-2 years, 3-5 years, over 5 years and Siblings Over 16 Years

Sunday, February 25, 2018

Our speaker will be

Mark Beuger, MD

a psychiatrist with a local behavioral health care provider. Dr. Beuger will speak about grief and depression, and how to determine when professional help may be needed as one progresses through the grief process.

Regular Sharings

1st time attending, Newly Bereaved Up to One Year, Grief 1-2 years, 3-5 years, over 5 years and Siblings Over 16 Years

DIRECTIONS TO BOWER HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH:
70 Moffett Street, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15243

Downtown: through Fort Pitt Tunnels. Exit 5A Banksville Rd. (Rte 19S), bearing right onto Banksville Rd. for 2.3 miles. The last few blocks of Banksville Rd. become McFarland Rd. before you bear right on to Beverly Rd. Go 0.6 miles to Cochran Rd., turn left and go 0.2 miles to Bower Hill Rd. Turn right and go 0.5 miles and turn right on to Moffett St. Bower Hill Community Church is on the right.

From Rt. 19: when you enter Mt. Lebanon, follow signs for Washington Rd. At light turn on Bower Hill Rd. Continue 1.7 miles on Bower Hill Rd and turn right on to Moffett Street. Parking available in the North Parking Lot of the church.

From Airport: East on I-376 to I-79S/Pittsburgh (Exit 64A). Take Exit 55 (Heidelberg/Collier). Take the Washington Pike ramp toward Bridgeville, then slight right onto Washington Pike/PA-50. Turn left onto Vanadium Road. Go about 1.5 miles, turn left onto Bower Hill Road. Go straight about 2.5 miles, then turn left onto Moffett St. Church is on the right.

— INSIDE THIS ISSUE —

Home Meetings, New Members,
Loving Listeners
Birthdays and Anniversaries
Poems & Remembrances
Seasonal Articles
Love Gifts and Love Gift Form



TCF Pittsburgh Chapter notes

- New PA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends – A new TCF chapter, TCF of Southern Huntingdon County, has recently been chartered in Pennsylvania. Address: 21836 Dug Hill Rd, Three Springs, PA 17264; phone: (814) 448-3184; email: tcfshc@gmail.com; chapter leader: Donna Clark. Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the United Methodist Church of Orbisonia Outreach Center in Orbisonia, PA. Please pass this information along to anyone you may know in that area who may benefit from The Compassionate Friends.
- Submission of poems and remembrances – If you are able, please email any poems or remembrances in memory of your loved ones to editor@tcfpittsburgh.org. You can either attach the documents to the email, or just type what you'd like to include in the newsletter in the body of the email. Submitting your remembrances electronically eliminates the need for re-typing them. Thank you!
- Meeting dates in 2018 – Calendars of the 2018 monthly meeting dates are now available at our meetings. Be sure to pick one up the next time you join us! The dates of our meetings throughout 2018 are:

January 28	July 29
February 25	August 26
March 25	September 9
April 29	October 28
May 27	November 18
June 24	December 9

29th Annual Remembrance Candlelight Service

The Compassionate Friends - Pittsburgh, PA Chapter

Invites you to join us on

Sunday, December 10, 2017 from 2:30 – 5:00 PM

At Bower Hill Community Church - 70 Moffett St., Pittsburgh, PA 15243

The Pittsburgh Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is part of an international organization that remembers our deceased children, siblings, and grandchildren in a special way on the second Sunday of every December. Our remembrance will take place on Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 2:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of Bower Hill Community Church. During our Candlelight Memorial Service, our members will honor their loved ones through song, poetry, and readings. Members will also receive candles to light as they approach the microphone and share the name(s) of their loved one(s). The service will be followed by a catered meal in Fellowship Hall. Each year, the day comes to a close with the burning of a candle from 7 – 8 p.m. in our homes to add light to the 24-hour, worldwide recognition of life and love that never dies.

The Steering Committee invites you, along with your family and friends, to attend this special memorial in honor of your loved ones. We also invite you to bring an ornament in remembrance of your loved one to decorate the tree that will adorn the sanctuary during the candlelight service and/or a favorite dessert to share at the meal following the service. Members are also invited to bring a picture of their loved one(s) to display during our luncheon.

We recognize that the holidays can be a difficult time for families who have experienced a loss like ours. Times that were once filled with excitement and joy may now be filled with anxiety, sadness, and trepidation. At TCF, we understand these emotions better than most, and it is our hope that our candlelight service and luncheon will give you an opportunity to express your feelings of loss and longing, share a meal with family and friends, and help you experience some moments of peace with those who best understand what you are going through.



21st Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 pm local time (Sunday, December 10, 2017), hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 21st annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WWCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

Every year you are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website www.compassionatefriends.org.



As the Holidays Approach

Jackie Wesley

TCF, East Central Indiana and
Miami-Whitewater Chapters

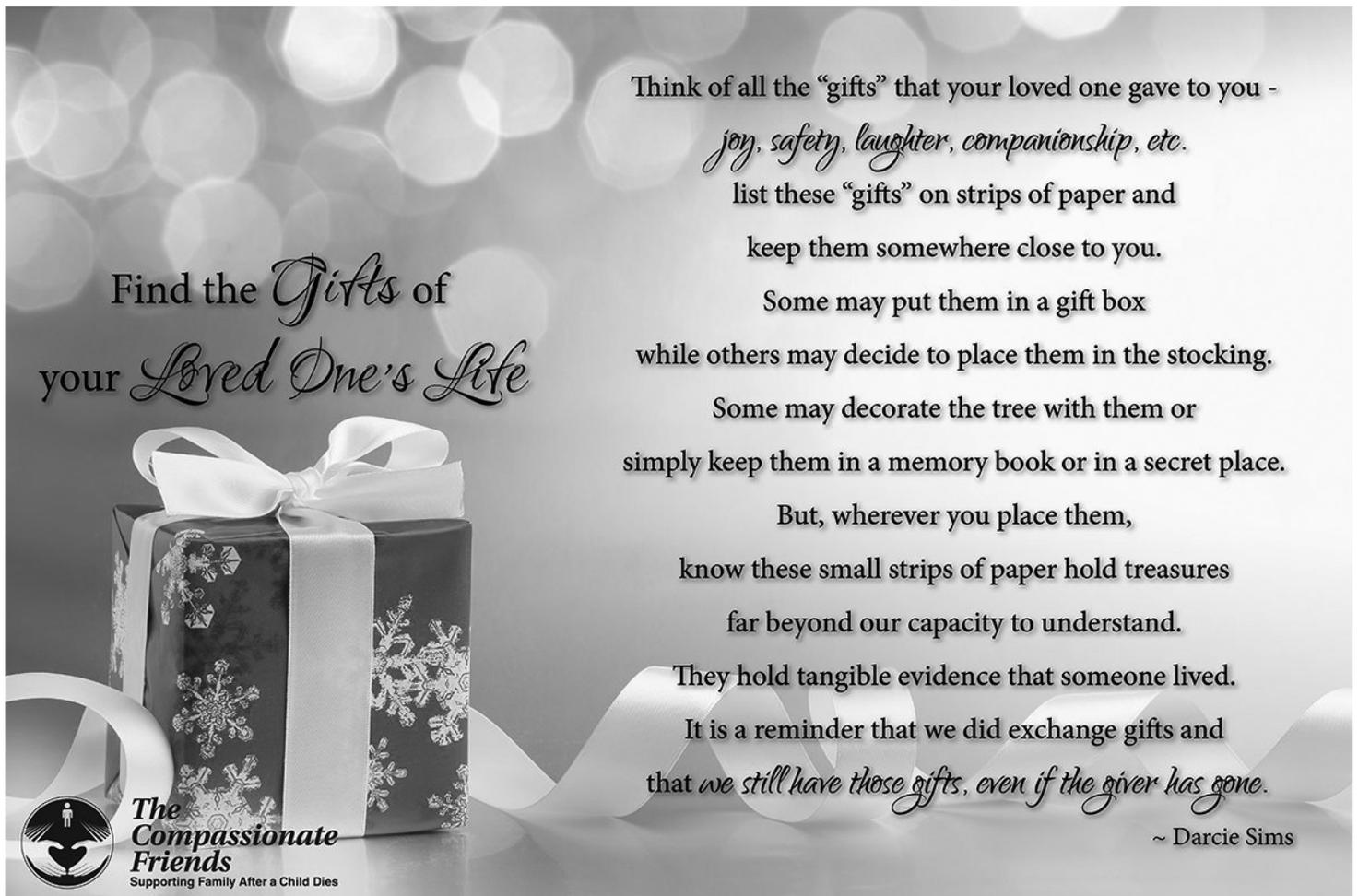
When the holidays are fast approaching, we who are bereaved always have mixed emotions about having a nice holiday when our child or loved one is no longer with us. We wonder if we will ever be as happy and if we can ever again celebrate the holidays or any meaningful family occasion, especially the first birthday, first thanksgiving, or first Christmas since our loss. We try to look ahead to how we are going to feel when the time arrives, but it is usually not as hard as we had anticipated. Still, the occasion may not be as enjoyable as we'd like it to be or as we remember it from the past.

I would like to offer a few ideas for what we can do to make our holidays a little better. Consider buying gifts for less fortunate children, adopting a child/family at Christmas time, or inviting a lonely person to share your holiday meal. Make your child's favorite foods and discuss your loved one as you share the meal. Some people like to volunteer to serve holiday dinners for the homeless. Some bereaved

parents want to visit familiar places their child loved to go, while others want to travel where their child had never been.

Several of our Compassionate Friends members put a small Christmas tree at the cemetery and decorate the graves with Christmas flowers and/or a grave blanket. Making a grave blanket is very fulfilling; we did that for 10 years after our daughter Teresa died. Attending a candle light program is a wonderful way to honor your child or loved one.

These suggestions are things we feel we can still do for our child, but they are not reserved for bereaved parents only. All of them can be done for any member of a family or a friend who has died. After someone dies we must keep going and doing things that lift us up. We can't always try to please any people who feel we should act in a certain manner.



Find the *Gifts* of
your *Loved One's Life*

Think of all the "gifts" that your loved one gave to you -
joy, safety, laughter, companionship, etc.
list these "gifts" on strips of paper and
keep them somewhere close to you.
Some may put them in a gift box
while others may decide to place them in the stocking.
Some may decorate the tree with them or
simply keep them in a memory book or in a secret place.
But, wherever you place them,
know these small strips of paper hold treasures
far beyond our capacity to understand.
They hold tangible evidence that someone lived.
It is a reminder that we did exchange gifts and
that *we still have those gifts, even if the giver has gone.*

~ Darcie Sims

 **The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Chanukah

At this season of life, we remember the light you brought into our lives:
 The light of your laughter
 The light of your wit and intelligence
 The light of your love
 May the time not be distant when the memory of these lights will illumine our hearts and minds and eradicate the darkness therein.

Stephanie Hesse

TCF Rockland County, NY/ TCF North Palm Beach County, FL

Valentines in Heaven

Are there Valentines in Heaven?
 Are there Red Hearts everywhere?
 Do they line the golden streets,
 Or is that very rare?
 I wish that I could send you one,
 Right through Heaven's Gate,
 To say how much we miss you,
 On this special date.
 I'd like to send a Candy Heart,
 That is printed, "I Luv U,"
 And maybe you would whisper back,
 "I know, I Luv U too."

Marilyn Rollins
 TCF Lake-Porter, IN
 For All Our Children



Lights of Love

Jacqueline Brown
 TCF Peace Valley, PA

Can you see our candles
 Burning in the night?
 Lights of love we send you
 Rays of purest white

Children we remember
 Though missing from our sight
 In honor and remembrance
 We light candles in the night

All across the big blue marble
 Spinning out in space
 Can you see the candles burning
 From this human place?

Oh, angels gone before us
 Who taught us perfect love
 This night the world lights candles
 That you may see them from above

Tonight the globe is lit by love
 Of those who know great sorrow,
 But as we remember our yesterdays
 Let's light one candle for tomorrow

We will not forget,
 And every year in deep December
 On Earth we will light candles
 As... we remember

A million times

I needed you,

A million times

I cried.

If *love alone*

could have *saved you,*

You *never would have died...*



**The
 Compassionate
 Friends**
 Supporting Family After a Child Dies

~ Author unknown

A love gift is a contribution to honor our children, grandchildren, and siblings, who have died or a memorial for a relative or friend. To contribute a love gift, simply mail in the form below with your gift. There are no dues or fees to belong to TCF and **FUNDS RECEIVED ARE USED FOR PRINTING AND MAILING EXPENSES, FOR PURCHASING LIBRARY MATERIALS, AND MISCELLANEOUS CHAPTER EXPENSES.** These gifts are frequently given on the anniversary or birthday dates or in lieu of flowers when someone has died. Your donation is tax deductible.

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU WISH TO SEND A LOVE GIFT OR SUBMIT A POEM FOR YOUR LOVED ONE'S BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY DATE, PLEASE SEND THE INFORMATION TO THE POST OFFICE ADDRESS LISTED ON THE DONATION FORM (RATHER THAN DROPPING IT IN THE MAILBOX AT THE MONTHLY MEETINGS), SO THAT WE CAN BE SURE IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE APPROPRIATE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.

We thank the following people for their kind generosity, love and sharing:

CB, IN MEMORY OF HIS DAUGHTER, JK
 JB & YB, IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, LB
 OB, IN MEMORY OF HER DAUGHTER, PB
 MC & JC, IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, LC
 LD, IN MEMORY OF HER DAUGHTER, DD, AND GRANDSON, DD
 DF, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, JF
 BH, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, JH
 GJ & KJ, IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, KJ
 BL & SL, IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, AL
 JS, IN MEMORY OF HIS BROTHER, RS
 PS, IN MEMORY OF HER BROTHER, TG
 GS & RS, IN MEMORY OF THEIR SON, RS, AND DAUGHTER, RS
 CS, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, PS
 AT, IN MEMORY OF HER GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER, MM, AND SISTERS, PG AND MM
 BT & LT, IN MEMORY OF THEIR SON, JT
 GV, IN MEMORY OF HER DAUGHTER, TD
 RW & MW, IN MEMORY OF THEIR SON, RW

DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF TCF MEMBER, WE

MR. & MRS. ML

AP

LOVE GIFT DONATION FORM - PLEASE SEND THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHECK

LOVE GIFTS are a loving memorial to our children, grandchildren and siblings, usually given on birthdays, anniversaries, holidays etc. Your gift may be accompanied by a poem or article for your loved one's special day.

I, (PRINT YOUR NAME) _____ wish to make a donation

in memory of my: Son Daughter Sister Brother Grandson Granddaughter _____

(PRINT THEIR NAME) _____

Their Date of Birth: _____ Their Date of Death: _____

Please note: All love gifts, poems, etc. for the **MARCH/APRIL/MAY 2018** newsletter must be received by **February 1, 2018.**

Please make checks payable to: **THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS** and mail to: **P.O. Box 15495, Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

Please be sure to send all love gifts and poems to our mailing address above
 so that the love gift can be acknowledged in the correct month of your loved one's birthday or anniversary.

**The Compassionate Friends
Pittsburgh Chapter
P.O. Box 15495
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
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Next issue will be
Mar/Apr/May 2018
All love gifts, articles and speakers
will be due by February 1, 2018

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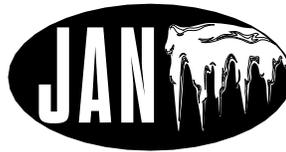
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If disposing of it, please shred.

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

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If you'd like to receive this
newsletter via email, please
contact editor@tcfpittsburgh.org



The Compassionate Friends Credo
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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 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.
PLEASE NOTE: Per National Office of TCF, the parents and siblings credo has been combined and the above version is the one we are to use for children, siblings and grandparents.

We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends.

TCF Pittsburgh Phone:
412-835-1105

Good Grief Center:
412-224-4700

**Highmark Caring Place: A Center for
Grieving Children, Adolescents & their families**
1-888-224-4673