



The Compassionate Friends

Pittsburgh Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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June/July/August Summer Issue 2017

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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Fax: 630-990-0246

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PITTSBURGH PA CHAPTER

P.O. Box 15495
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Phone: 412-835-1105
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PITTSBURGH CHAPTER CO-LEADERS

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REGIONAL COORDINATOR

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United Way #2647



Summer 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,
June 25, 2017**

Our program will be our annual Father's Day program, **The Grief of Fathers.** A panel of fathers will speak about their unique grief experiences.

The *Special Sharing* will be *Fathers Only*

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,
July 30, 2017**

Our speaker will be **Carmen Capozzi**, founder of Sage's Army, a non-profit drug awareness / prevention organization created in honor of his son, Sage Capozzi, a promising young man who lost his life to addiction.

The *Special Sharing* will be on *Overdose and Addictions*

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,
August 27, 2017**

Our program will be a viewing of a DVD, **Healing Guilt and Regret.** Presenter Alan Pedersen shares his own story and discusses the issue of guilt and regret in this informative workshop that offers practical ways we can begin to resolve the guilt and regret that can complicate our grief journey.

The *Special Sharing* will be a *continuing discussion of the DVD*

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

— INSIDE THIS ISSUE —

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



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.

New Members Greeted Recently

We welcome the following new friends who have attended their first Compassionate Friends meeting recently. We are truly sorry that you have experienced the death of your child, sibling or grandchild. We sincerely hope we will be able to offer you some understanding and support. Coming to your first meeting may be the hardest

step you have made since the death of your child. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not it will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting may be the time you will find the right person – or just the right words that will help you in your journey.

FEBRUARY NEWCOMERS

- DG, mother of CW
- BK, mother of DG, Jr.
- AS, father of CDS
- MW & CW, parents of SMW

MARCH NEWCOMERS

- GG
- NM
- NP and RB, mother and step-father of KP
- JP, mother of JP
- JP, father of RP
- CS, mother of RJS
- PS, mother, and TB, uncle, of LS

APRIL NEWCOMERS

- JC & KC, parents of AC
- DG
- DL
- BL, mother of JL
- RS & ES, parents of KS

*Remember . . .
You need not walk alone!!!*



Home Meetings

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HOSTING A HOME MEETING?

Home meetings give TCF-Pittsburgh Chapter members, particularly new ones, the opportunity to meet with a small group in a more intimate setting. Often, a monthly sharing just isn't enough, as members long to talk about and share memories of their child, grandchild, or sibling with others on a more frequent basis. We will guide you through the specifics, although it is rather simple. It is opening your home and hearts to others who are struggling to move forward in the grieving process. In the past, home meetings have been held in the eastern, western, northern, and southern regions of Pittsburgh. Meetings can be held on the day of your choosing, and they have typically been held in the evenings.

TCF-Pittsburgh Chapter's trained facilitators will be available to provide support and guidance for the home meetings.

If you are interested in hosting a home meeting or would like more information, please contact Jeff Bragdon (412-341-3286 or jeffbragdon@gmail.com). We will provide meeting information (dates, hosts' names, address, and contact information) at our monthly meetings, where our members will be able to sign up to attend one or more meetings.

Ongoing home meetings have been scheduled for the rest of 2017:

South Hills area:
June 15, 2017

North Hills area:
July 13, 2017

Please see our website for details.

Please remember to contact the hosts at least two days before the scheduled meeting so that they can have an idea of the number of people interested in attending. Also, if you contacted the hosts to tell them that you are attending, but your plans change and you will not be able to make it to the meeting, please be considerate and call to let the hosts know about your change in plans.



LOVING LISTENERS & REMEMBERING FRIENDS

If waiting until the next meeting is too long and you want to talk, the following people may be contacted. They are willing to listen. They understand what you are going through and they do care. Feel free to call them when you need them.

- SIBLINGS (over 16)** Carlotta Harbaugh 412-859-0303
- ORGAN TRANSPLANT** Donna Simpson - 724-746-2792
- GRANDPARENTS** Mary McGrath - 412-527-7248
- AUTO ACCIDENT (teenage)**..... Dink & Marlene Sontheimer - 412-835-1829
- ALL CHILDREN**..... Gene & Rose Sprando - 724-947-3130
- YOUNG CHILDREN** Martina Hartland - 412-245-7048
- STILLBORN, MISCARRIAGE,
INFANT DEATH** Tammy Tobac - 724-265-9050
- SIDS** Dee Dee Pelled - 412-521-7668
- LEGAL ISSUES** Bob & Mary Grace Boyle - 412-884-0770
- FATHERS** John Urso - 724-939-7181
- SUICIDE** Emmy Gillan - 412-264-6946
- DRUG OVERDOSE** Mary Jane Marculaitis - 412-884-4646

If you cannot reach any of these numbers, please call 412-835-1105

TCF Pittsburgh Chapter notes

- **Chapter Co-Leader Needed:** We are in need of a new Chapter Co-Leader. The Co-Leader is responsible for the operation of the chapter in accordance with the National TCF by-laws, policies and principles; communication with the TCF Executive Director, National Office and Regional Coordinators on behalf of the chapter; and timely and proper submission of the chapter's Year-End Report. Specific duties include: acting as a liaison with the church meeting site; preparing for and leading the monthly meetings; chairing the TCF Steering Committee meetings; and coordinating preparations for our annual special events. If you are interested in this volunteer position, please contact one of our current co-leaders, Pauline Sambol or Megan Talbot (contact information can be found on the front page of this newsletter).
- **Member Renewal Form:** Our annual Member Renewal Form can be found on page 11 of this newsletter. Be sure to return it to us if you would like to continue to be a member of our chapter and would like to remain on our mailing list. You can either mail or email (editor@tcpittsburgh.org) the form to us. Thank you!

Mother Continues Late Daughter's Legacy Through Scholarship

by Rosalind Duncan and Marc Peters, TCF-Pittsburgh Chapter

Lupus is an incredibly complex, unpredictable, and potentially deadly autoimmune disease, meaning that something goes wrong with your immune system and it attacks healthy cells and tissues, which can damage many parts of the body. Over 90 percent of people diagnosed with lupus are women between the ages of 15 and 45, and 2/3 of those are women of color.

At age 13, my daughter, Taylor, began to manifest symptoms of lupus. Her fingers and toes would suddenly turn cold and blue, a medical condition called Raynaud Syndrome, in which spasm of arteries cause episodes of reduced blood flow. Then Livedo Reticularis appeared on her inner thighs, which is a purplish mottled net-like pattern with distinct borders, thought to be due to spasms of the blood vessels or an abnormality of the circulation near the skin surface. Her symptoms included low grade fevers for no apparent reason; redness, swelling, and pain of the knuckles; seizures; migraine headaches; facial swelling; mouth ulcers; loss of hair and scalp sores; a facial butterfly rash; and extreme fatigue, no matter how much rest she got. Body pain was described as "Mommy my hair hurts" and "I feel like glass, someone just hit me with a hammer and I've shattered into a thousand pieces." With tremendous strength, focus, and perseverance, Taylor bravely and courageously fought through misdiagnosis, ridicule, slanderous accusations, a multitude of hospitalizations, and being home schooled by the Woodland Hills School District her 10th grade year, to graduate from Shady Side Academy on time (in 2013) as a member of the National Honor Society.



Benefit Concert

July 8, 2017

Spirit Lounge, 242 51st St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201
(Lawrenceville)

A benefit concert in collaboration with The Suicide Rebellion, a non-profit foundation created in memory of Garret Sinagra, son of TCF members George and Shellie Sinagra, will be held on July 8, 2017. Doors open at 8 p.m. The evening will include music by Whisky Rebellion, a show by comedian Matt Light, and prizes donated by local businesses. Proceeds will benefit the research of Dr. Lisa Pan, a psychiatrist with the University of Pittsburgh whose research specializes in identifying biological markers for treatment-resistant depression and suicidal tendencies in adolescents. She and her team have been working tirelessly over the past few years with the goal of treating and restoring quality of life to those who suffer from this debilitating illness.

Event details: Cash only venue;

\$10 donation at the door; ages 21+ only

For more information, call Shellie Sinagra at (412) 443-7847 or visit The Suicide Rebellion's website at www.thesuiciderebellion.org.

She attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, where she majored in Cellular & Molecular Biology and Spanish with a dissertation in Public Health, belonging to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) program. Though being tragically ill, Taylor still managed to make the dean's list while at Spelman. She made her mark there and was revered for her intellectual capabilities and her kindness, inner strength, and positivity. She always had an encouraging, uplifting word.

Taylor departed this earthly world June 6, 2016, subsequently being diagnosed with lupus and mega colon. Her Spelman sisters visited her before she passed and were there to bid her farewell. Spelman has supported me through my private hell from the very beginning, and is still doing so...A Memorial Service at Spelman was held to celebrate Taylor's life. She was deemed an Eternal Spelmanite. Education is everything Taylor stood for and Spelman embraces and uplifts this in every way imaginable. It is with a grieving, broken heart that I am determined to continue Taylor's legacy of education through the establishment of the Taylor Duncan Scholarship Fund at Spelman College. Please help me with my goal of raising \$5,000 to be given to a student that exemplifies what Taylor stood for her entire short but accomplished life. Please make all donations payable to Spelman College with The Taylor Duncan Scholarship Fund in the memo. A Sincerely Prayerful Thank You for any contributions made to: Spelman College, c/o Cassandra Joseph, 350 Spelman Lane S.W., Box 1551, Atlanta, GA 30314-4399.

A Father Mourns Too

I just watched another TV commercial for cologne, which is the first sign of the approach of Father's Day. Like other fathers, 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 his age, 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 my own father the night before to wish him a happy Father's Day, and I will go to the cemetery to place flowers on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time and then return home to my wife and new infant son. This year we will have a greater measure of peace because of the birth of our son, but I shall always have a hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I die.

Like many bereaved fathers, I have felt misunderstood about how a father should mourn and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such a belief in the strength of maternal love and do such a good job ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at my son's memorial service was how was my wife dealing with this tragedy, to the longtime friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark commercial, it seems that many around us have difficulty understanding a father's grief.

So, support and love is needed and needed badly. Of course, we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. I hope that bereaved fathers will not be forgotten on Father's Day. It is often said that we don't often talk of our emotional needs and are reluctant to show our pain, but we too need love when we hurt. Please remember us on Father's Day and remember that the cute little commercials that hurt mothers in May take their toll on fathers in June.

Doug Hughes
TCF Las Vegas, NV



You were on my mind . . .

When I woke up this morning...
You were on my mind. You were on my mind.

You with that genuine enthusiasm,
like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement
that dads love to be there for.

There's so much of you still with me.
Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or
that we won't share your ways anymore.

But in reality, after all the tears and
inner feelings of pain and sadness pass

We will have joy and great happiness because
we shared your days. Your laughter. You.

And when I wake up each morning
It will be OK that you were on my mind...
You are on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be,
because it will be forever.

Michael Tyler
TCF Lighthouse Chapter, Lewes, DE

In Loving Memory of

Michael
1976 – 2008

Dear Mike,

Your birthday is coming up again and I wish so very much you were still here with us to celebrate it. You would have been 41. We all miss you so much. Your very tight hugs and your wonderful smile! I always tried to make good memories which no one can take away from us. The pain is still there within my heart and I say I'm glad you are at peace and happy but still wish you were here with us. You were an angel here on earth and now you are with the angels – "Bless your little heart." I can feel you near me at times and it feels so good. We all love you and miss you!

Happy Birthday Mike!

Lots of love,
Mom, Dad, Tracie & Geoff

I still find pennies and they let me know you are here!



In Loving Memory

Bridget
1977 - 2006

April 11th is one of the happiest days of my life because it is your birthday. Like the last eleven years we were with you at Resurrection Cemetery celebrating your birthday. We always sing Happy Birthday to you and send you balloons. I hope you received them all with our love.

It's hard for me to use the word anniversary referring to the fatal car accident that took you away from us. I searched for years to try and find the right words that I want to say to you so hopefully you can understand how I feel about you leaving us.

Gone but Not Forgotten

You were so full of life, always smiling and care free,
life love you being a part of it,
and I loved you being a part of me.
You could make anyone laugh,
if they were having a bad day,
no matter how sad I was, you could take the hurt away.
Nothing could ever stop you, or even make you fall,
you were ready to take on the world, ready to do it all.
But God decided he needed you,
so from this world you left,
but you took a piece of all of us,
our hearts are what you kept
Our seat is now empty, and
it's hard not to see your face,
but please always know this,
no one will ever take your place.
You left without a warning,
not even saying good-bye,
and I can't seem to stop asking the question why?
Nothing will ever be the same,
the halls are empty without your laughter,
but I know you're in Heaven,
watching over us and looking after.
I didn't see this coming, it hit me by surprise,
and when you left this world, a small part of me died.
Your smile could brighten anyone's day,
no matter what they were going through,
and I know every day for the rest of my life,
I'll be missing you.

If only we could make a moment last forever...but dying is the grand finale of life and we must all accept it. No parent is perfect but we all try our best. Always remember this, there is no love like the one that a parent has for their child and that is how much I love you.

With Love Always,
Mom

*My Dearest Joel,*

It seems impossible that you have been gone for ten years. In some ways it seems like yesterday, and at the same time, it seems like an eternity since I have seen you, heard your voice, or given you a hug. I think of you constantly, and sometimes the memories bring me joy, but mostly they just make me miss you even more. When you left us, I didn't think I could survive, but I did. There is even joy in my life, but it is always tempered with great sorrow. You were warm, sweet, gentle, tender, caring, sensitive, and loving both as a child and as a man. I have cried an ocean of tears, and yet they continue to fall. I love you with all my heart and soul, and I will wait with heavy heart until we meet again.

"To love another person is to see the face of God."

With all the love in my heart,

Mom

Submitted by PW in memory of her son, Joel
1979 - 2007

*In Loving Memory*

Ryan
1992 - 2014

Blessed

From the moment you were created and the morning you were born. Your eyes, your spirit, your heart, and that smile was infectious and always kept us so close as you grew into a handsome young man.

22 years just wasn't enough to spread the joy, laughter, sarcasm, and warmth we experienced every time you walked in the room.

Our lives forever changed and the pain began, but LOVE remains, Always and Forever in our hearts. Son, you are MISSED more than words can describe and so loved.

Happy 25th Birthday!

Always,
Mom, Dad, and Steve



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:

DB, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, JB, JR.
 SB & MB, IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, ML H-B
 LB, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, AD
 ED & RD, IN MEMORY OF THEIR GRANDSON, RD III
 LLD, IN MEMORY OF HER DAUGHTER, DLD, & GRANDSON, DLD
 PG & CG, IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, LG, AND BROTHER, MP
 DG, IN MEMORY OF HER GRANDSON, GLC III
 BH, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, JGH, JR.
 GJ & KJ, IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, KCJ
 AK, IN MEMORY OF HER GRANDSON, DR
 JK, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, JK
 SM, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, RM
 JM & HJM, IN MEMORY OF THEIR SON & BROTHER, TJM
 TM, IN MEMORY OF HER DAUGHTER, BMM
 GS & RMS, IN MEMORY OF THEIR SON, RS, & DAUGHTER, RS
 BT & LT, IN MEMORY OF THEIR SON, JT
 PW, IN MEMORY OF HER SON, JDW

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 **SEPT/OCT/NOV 2017** newsletter must be received by **August 1, 2017.**

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
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Membership Renewal Form

June-July-August 2017

The National Office of The Compassionate Friends requires that our members permission forms be renewed and/or updated annually.

Every year, The Compassionate Friends - Pittsburgh Chapter asks our members to review their membership information and renew their request to receive the newsletter. In this way, we are able to confirm member interest in our newsletter while keeping printing and mailing costs to a minimum.

Please complete this form and return it by July 15, 2017 to:

Office Administrator
The Compassionate Friends, Pittsburgh Chapter
P.O. Box 15495
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Or email to: editor@tcfpittsburgh.org

PLEASE NOTE: If we do not receive your completed form by the due date, we will assume you are no longer interested in membership and/or receiving our newsletter, and you will be removed from our membership roster and our mailing list.

Please make any changes to your mailing address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Email address: _____

If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please check this box:

Please confirm your permission to include your loved one's name(s) and Birthday & Anniversary dates in our newsletter. Without your permission, we cannot add their name to the Remembrance pages.

Please remember my child, sibling or grandchild on their birthday and anniversary date:

Name: _____ Gender: M / F

Birth Date: _____ / _____ / _____ Date of Death: _____ / _____ / _____
(mm / dd / yyyy) (mm / dd / yyyy)

Please remember my child, sibling or grandchild on their birthday and anniversary date:

Name: _____ Gender: M / F

Birth Date: _____ / _____ / _____ Date of Death: _____ / _____ / _____
(mm / dd / yyyy) (mm / dd / yyyy)

**The Compassionate Friends
Pittsburgh Chapter
P.O. Box 15495
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Return Service Requested
Permit No. 17**

Next issue will be
Sept/Oct/Nov 2017
All love gifts, articles and speakers
will be due by August 1, 2017

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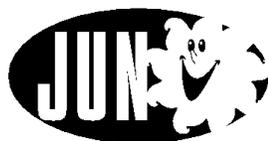
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If disposing of it, please shred.

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

©2007



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