



The Compassionate Friends Pittsburgh Chapter

Fact Sheet as of February 2009

Mission

The mission of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 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.

Organization

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is an international non-profit, self-help support organization, which offers friendship, 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 to any member.

TCF does not grief counsel and the membership is provided only to the bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents. The bereavement may be from premature death, miscarriage, and death of a child at any age due to any cause. TCF provides the much-needed opportunity to grieve and heal in the compassion and comfort of the fellow bereaved. TCF assures the total confidentiality of any information shared among its members.

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.

The Tax Identification number of the Pittsburgh Chapter is registered under the Tax Class 'Nonprofit and Charitable'.

There are more than 700 individual members and about 220 organization members like Churches, Hospitals and other support groups as of February 2009 within the Pittsburgh Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. Our Pittsburgh Chapter is run entirely by volunteers.

Our staff regularly makes out-reach calls to parents, siblings, and grandparents on the special days for their loved one's birthday and anniversary. If they can not be reached by phone, a personal note is mailed.

Our chapter has a website (<http://www.tcfpittsburgh.org>), and Email address (Compassion@tcfpittsburgh.org).

Some members communicate to the public-service organizations to educate them of the needs of bereaved families. In addition, our members and volunteers receive personal education by attending regional and national conferences, and in-house workshops.

Service to the bereaved community

The volunteers share their grief at Chapter Meetings, over the phone and also make phone calls to the bereaved member families on birthdays and anniversaries of the deceased. An Editorial team publishes a newsletter every alternate month helping the members to vocalize their concern and grief by way of articles, and poems.



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TCF, Pittsburgh conducts monthly meetings on the last Sunday of every month except December. In the month of December, the TCF conducts a candle light ceremony.

During monthly meetings, TCF conducts lectures by Psychologists, social workers, others with an understanding of grief, and bereaved members on various topics of concern to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. The topics include healing and coping with grief due to accidental death, illness, suicide, murder, etc.

In addition, the members share their grief in small group “sharing” sessions on any common topic of interest.

TCF, Pittsburgh has a library of books on grief support and counseling and helps the membership with the benefits provided by trained professionals through this reading material.

It also encourages the members to conduct home meetings. The home meetings are informal settings where the members find an additional opportunity to grieve and find compassion with other members.

The steering committee of the TCF, Pittsburgh meets once every two months, conducts the business of the organization, and reviews the matters of concern to members and TCF, Pittsburgh chapter. The steering committee manages the affairs of Finance, Office, Outreach, Newcomers, Membership, Refreshments, Library, Programs, Database and Reports, Home meetings, etc.

TCF, Pittsburgh chapter carries forward the messages from National Office to the general membership and provides a mechanism for the National chapter to share their news with our local members.

Request

The Compassionate Friends is a LIFE SAVER to many. It enables the bereaved family to understand that grieving is not “getting over” the loss of one’s child. Grieving is learning to cope, to adapt and to grow through that process. We learn too that in the process of “giving back” to others, we can keep the memory of our child alive in a very special, meaningful way. We learn, most of all, that if we choose, we can be productive in a way that we never thought possible.

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the Compassionate Friends is seeking financial assistance and sponsorship so that we may continue to sustain this worthy cause and serve our community for years to come. Should you consider our request for funding, we would be most happy to provide any additional details needed. Donations and/or grants may be made payable to ‘The Compassionate Friends’ and mailed to P.O. Box 17388, Pittsburgh, PA 15235