

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families

## APRIL 2011

### Inside Valley Forge

**Meetings are on the first Thursday** of every month at 7:45PM (ending at 9:30PM). We meet at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, Valley Forge and Henderson RDs, King of Prussia, PA. Phone **on meeting evenings only** is 610-265-0733. All other times please call Rhonda at 484-919-0820.



#### **Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of interest Please Mark Your Calendar**

- Apr 7 General Sharing**
- Apr 10 Spring Luncheon at Peppers (see page 4)**
- May 5 General Sharing & Death by Suicide**
- July 15 -17 34th National Conference  
Minneapolis, Minnesota (see page 3)**

We encourage newsletter writings from our members. You may also submit articles written by others, please include the author of all articles submitted. **The cut-off date for newsletter entries is the 15th of the preceding month. ARTICLES SHOULD BE SENT TO THE NEWSLETTER EDITORS.**

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends, or to receive our newsletter. Your tax deductible donations (which we call love gifts) given in memory of your loved one enables us to defray the cost of chapter expenses, particularly the newsletter, meetings, and our outreach to the newly bereaved. **Please include any special tribute you wish printed in the newsletter along with your gift.**

If you donate to **United Way** at your place of work, and wish your contribution to go to the Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, you may do so by entering: **The Compassionate Friends - Valley Forge Chapter United Way ID# 04-104.** on your pledge form.

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER  
SEND TO: CHAPTER LEADER  
RHONDA GOMEZ**

#### **Valley Forge Chapter**

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**NEW FRIENDS**

**Adriane & Peter De Moerloose**, daughter **Olivia** (1 month)  
**Gina Sebastianelli**, brother **Tony** (31)

We welcome our newly bereaved friends, and are sorry for the cause that brings you. Having been in the depths of despair, we know that it is difficult to share our pain and personal feelings. It is important that you attend three or four meetings before evaluating the benefit of our group to you. Our meetings offer confidentiality, unconditional love, compassion and understanding to all of you.

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**MARCH REFRESHMENTS**

**Linda DiPasquale** in honor of my son **Thomas** on his 2nd anniversary.  
**Ann Murray** in honor of my son **Brian** on his 10th anniversary.  
**Lisa & John Russo** in honor of our son **Casey** on his birthday March 17th.

Anyone wishing to donate refreshments (cheese & crackers, fruit, cakes, cookies, etc.) in memory of loved ones, please call **Rhonda Gomez (484)919-0820**, or you may sign the **refreshment chart** located on the refreshment table. Beverages are provided by the chapter.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Joseph, Jovanna** and son **Fabio Bevilacqua** in honor of their son & brother, **Donato "Danny" Bevilacqua** on his 9th anniversary.  
**Rose Marie Cote** in memory of my son, **Mark Cote** on his 12th year anniversary, of his death on March 26th.  
**Rita & Thomas Gibbons** in loving memory of our children, **Patricia** on her 43rd anniversary, & **Paul** on his 11th anniversary.  
**Freda & Jack Gross** in loving memory of our daughter, **Linda Joy Gross** 2/25  
**Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy** in loving memory of our son & brother, **Philip V. Kennedy** (17). We miss you so much. Mom, Dad, brother Sean & family.  
**Maryellen & James Madden** in memory of our daughter, **Anne Marie Madden** (15)  
**Margaret & Robert Rooney** in memory of our daughter, **Sharon Rooney** (16)  
**Dorothy Washington** in memory of my daughter, **Michele** on her 47th birthday.

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**RESPONSE FEATURE ON VALLEY FORGE WEBSITE**

The Valley Forge website has a feature for you to leave comments and suggestions that you would like to see in the Chapter Program. Please voice your opinions on how the Chapter is being conducted, and ways we might improve the program. The chapter belongs to all of us, please support it.

### **VOLUNTEER NEEDED FOR CO-LEADER**

This position requires that you have at least 18 months distance from the death of your child or sibling, and have attended monthly meetings on a fairly regular basis.

Newly bereaved often need additional support between meetings, a co-leader needs to be willing to accept their calls on the Chapter cell phone.

The co-leader should be available to help plan and attend 3 or 4 special programs per year, the programs are held on Saturday or Sunday afternoons.

The Steering Committee (members who have assigned duties) meets with the co-leaders four times annually in order that all are abreast of how the chapter is functioning.

If you have resolved some of your grief, can accept each member without judgment, and feel capable of helping other bereaved families, it can be very healing to reach out to others in pain.

**The Chapter is looking for a volunteer to accept the position of Co-Leader with Rhonda. If interested, please contact Rhonda Gomez. Her contact information is on the front page of this newsletter.**

### **TCF 34TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

The conference will be held in Minneapolis/St. Paul July 15-17, 2011. Room Reservations are now being accepted. Room rate is \$129 per night for a King Room or Double Bed Room, single or double occupancy; \$139 for triple and \$149 for quad. Special reduced rates are available on stays from July 10-19, if reservations are placed by June 21.

Reserve your accommodations online at [Sheraton Bloomington Hotel Minneapolis South](#) or telephone 952-835-7800 and mention you are with The Compassionate Friends. There will be a free shuttle pick-up to and from the hotel and the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport, and complimentary parking at the hotel (Valet service is available \$8 per day).

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### **NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL**

**We are asking if possible , would you please receive your newsletter by email.**

We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefiting from receiving it. We hope it is a help to you while going through your grief, giving you better understanding of your feelings, and letting you know **“We need not walk alone”**.

A newsletter helps to keep our TCF family informed of local and national events. We consider this an important function of our program.

We are asking if you have email, would you consider receiving your newsletter in email format. You will receive your copy earlier if you opt to receive it by email. If you chose to use the email method of receiving your newsletter, you will have the option to switch back to the old method. If you wish to receive the newsletter by email please contact: **Frank Gomez [fgomez@hybridpoplars.com](mailto:fgomez@hybridpoplars.com)**

**SPRING LUNCHEON  
Peppers Restaurant  
239 Town Center Road  
Valley Forge Shopping Center  
King of Prussia, PA**

We hope you will plan to attend the Spring Luncheon. This is a social gathering to share the afternoon with other bereaved families, and the opportunity to feel comfortable speaking of our loved ones. Every one is welcome.

**Directions: Town Center Rd. intersects 202, one traffic light south of Henderson Rd. Peppers will be on your left, next to K&G Fashion, Men’s Super Store.**

**Sunday - April 10, 2011 1:00PM  
Speaker: Fred Mountjoy**

The deaths of Marilyn & Fred’s daughters brought them into TCF. Their twin daughters, Barlyn & Maralin, died shortly after their birth in 1961. There was no TCF at that time. Their third daughter, Marian, was born with inoperable cardiac abnormalities in 1962, & died in 1996. Shortly after her death they attended their local TCF meeting. Marilyn & Fred have been involved with TCF for over 13 years. Fred is well known in The Compassionate Friends organization. He was a presenter at our Eastern Pennsylvania Regional Conference in 2005 & 2007, & also a speaker at the 2007 E. PA Regional conference. His presentations were well received.

**Menu - Buffet  
Cost per person \$20.00 (includes gratuity)**

**Please return this section with your remittance by April 3rd**

Please Return reservations to: **Rhonda Gomez, 12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore, PA 19343**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of guests: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of guests: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: \_\_\_\_\_

**“The Compassionate Friends - Spring Luncheon”** \_\_\_\_\_

**OUR CHILDREN & SIBLINGS LOVED, SADLY MISSED AND REMEMBERED**

Each month some of us must face those special, but difficult days of birthdays and anniversaries. This

Month we ask your thoughts and prayers for the parents/siblings/relatives of the following children:

**We will no longer list the birth and death years of deceased persons in our newsletter.  
We have concerns this information could be misused, and result in an adversity for the families.**

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

**Leslie Brown, son *Scott* 4/3**  
**Phyllis & James Casey, son *Jim "Jimmer"* Casey 4/18**  
**Martin & Mary Conway, son *Neal* 4/8**  
**Linda DiPasquale, son *Thomas* 4/26**  
**Ginny Ebert, son *Jason* 4/17**  
**Maureen & Jim Fleagle, son *Brian* 4/20**  
**Joe & Katie Glinski, son *Joey* 4/10**  
**Stephanie Grier, son *John "JD" Grier* 4/15**  
**Nancy & Gerald Hall, son *Douglas Hall* 4/15**  
**Kristen Hallman, brother *Joey* 4/10**  
**Othell & William Heaney, son *Roger Heaney* 4/17**  
**Jeanne R Helmers, daughter *Betsy Helmers* 4/7**  
**Cynthia Hornyak, daughter *Meredith* 4/1**  
**Robert Huss, son *Daniel* 4/18**  
**Dennis & Lois Ianovalle, son *Dennis* 4/18**  
**Carl and Dorothy Johnson-Speight, daughter *Carlana Speight* 4/6**  
**Janine Johnston, daughter *Ashley Sankus* 4/19**  
**Millie Jones, grandson *Shawn Dian* 4/18**  
**Roxanne Kamilatos, daughter *Dina* 4/29**  
**Susan Kelleher, son *Jake* 4/24**  
**Karen & Francis Legieko, son *John Francis Legieko* 4/8**  
**Lynne & John Malloy, son *David Gross* 4/13**  
**Betty Manzi, grandson *Ronnie T. Seal, Jr.* 4/17**  
**Elaine Marino, son *Mark Joseph Marino* 4/20**  
**Michelle & Chris Mazzio, son *Brendan Mazzio* 4/18**  
**Robert & Marjorie Meckley, son *Douglas Meckley* 4/25**  
**Bob & Janet Milnazik, daughter *Kim* 4/24**  
**Sheila & Mike Mullin, son *Matthew* 4/10**  
**Rosemary Peterson, son *Donald R. Peterson* 4/18**  
**Thomas & Mary Jane Poore, son *Bradley Poore* 4/25**  
**Jacqueline Rider, son *Josua Rider* 4/7**  
**Thelma Rosen, son *Thomas Grisafi* 4/24**  
**Marie Shippen, son *Michael Morgan* 4/19**  
**Art & Carol Silverman, daughter *Cheryl Beth Silverman* 4/23**  
**Barry & Sigrid Snow, son *Robert Snow* 4/28**  
**son *Kevin Snow* 4/19**

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS (continued)**

**James & Betty Treichler**, son **James Treichler Jr.** 4/21  
**Ann VanLandingham**, son **Eric VanLandingham** 4/21  
**Deb Walter**, son **Evan** 4/18  
**Ellen & Dale Weaver**, son **Jeffrey M. Weaver** 4/12  
**Linda Weaver**, daughter **Krista "Binky" Weaver** 4/29  
**Jackie Wesley**, daughter **Teresa Ellen Wesley Hough** 4/25

We regret the omission of the following anniversary listing in the March 2011 newsletter:  
**Karen & Herb Grant**, son **Ryan** - 3/08

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**

**Jim Bailey**, son **Brendan Bailey** - 4/16  
**George & Anne Beerley**, daughter **Jennifer Beerley** - 4/19  
**Leslie Brown**, son **Scott** - 4/4  
**Diana Clark**, grandson **Alexander** - 4/5  
**Amber-Todd Clark-Warrick**, son **Alexander** - 4/5  
**Tom & Irene Cornely**, daughter **Colleen** - 4/26  
**Judy & William Cosgrove**, son **Michael Cosgrove** - 4/17  
**Anton & Maureen DeMaioribus**, daughter **Ann DeMaioribus** - 4/23  
**Ed & Sue Duffy**, son **Peter** - 4/11  
**Nancy & David Dykty**, brother **Jim Sutton** - 4/16  
**Marian Glennie**, daughter **Susan Martini** - 4/12  
**Joanne Haley**, son **Douglas Haley** - 4/3  
**Walt & Adele Higgins**, son/stepson **Brian** - 4/17  
**Sharon Hirst**, son **Tom** - 4/16  
**Susan Kelleher**, son **Jake** - 4/14  
**Joan Kellett**, son **Daniel Thomas Kellett** - 4/29  
**Lynn Kivlen**, son **Brien Kivlen** - 4/26  
**Susan & Richard Leimbach**, son **Sean Duffy** - 4/2  
**Becky & Alan Logsdon**, son **Nathaniel Logsdon** - 4/29  
**Elaine Marino**, son **Joseph Marino** - 4/21  
daughter-in-law **Lisa Marino** - 4/12  
**Jennifer McGowan Clark**, brother **Joseph McGowan** - 4/15  
**Joan Morefield**, son **Robert** - 4/29  
**Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy**, daughter **Marian Mountjoy** - 4/16  
**John Mscisz**, grandson **Liam John Williamson** - 4/6  
**Mary Mulholland**, son **Joseph McGowan** - 4/15  
**Sheila & Mike Mullin**, son **Matthew** - 4/25  
**Barbara & Jeff Norris**, son **Greg** - 4/1  
**Maureen & David Rich**, daughter **Mallory Kirby Rich** - 4/26  
**Jacqueline Rider**, daughter **Michelle Connelly** - 4/14  
**Harry & Carol Schultz**, son **Brian Andrew Schultz** - 4/18

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES continued**

**Joy Conard Settles**, son *R. Gary Korn* - 4/30  
**Jeffrey Smith**, son *Jacob Smith* - 4/5  
**Barry & Sigrid Snow**, son *Robert Snow* - 4/28  
**Edward & Mary Stimson**, son *Keith Stimson* - 4/7  
**Fred & Irene Sutton**, son *Jim Sutton* - 4/16  
**Tracey Sutton-Vitabile**, brother *Jim Sutton* - 4/16  
**Allan Thomas**, wife *Zinta Thomas* - 4/23/01  
**Harry & Lynne Urian**, son *Mike* - 4/22  
**Joan & Ed Young**, son *Jed Young* - 4/2

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**THE STORM OF GRIEF**

Believe it or not, you CAN learn to weather it.

Going through the various stages of grief is like being caught in a small boat at sea in a bad storm; if you are lucky, you will not be alone. After losing a loved one you are destined to ride through the most vicious, horrendous storm you will ever encounter. You cannot fly over it, duck around it, or go under it.

To retain your emotional balance, head directly into the storm. Unfortunately, one cannot even prepare for this disaster -- forget the drugs, booze, and tranquilizers. All these so-called "helpers" only quiet your pain and anesthetize you from feeling your loss; they prolong and delay the start of your grief therapy. One must go through the storm in order to live a normal, peaceful life again.

Lightning has struck you but you are still here. Inside, you are in a state of shock -- almost paralyzed by your loss and numb from your tragedy. Your heart is beating, you know you are breathing, you are coping like a robot, but you don't have any feeling inside or much awareness of what is happening around you.

Black clouds encircle you, the relentless waves pound the boat as you are pitched up and down. Heavy sheets of water pour their fury upon you. You are far off course. One learns quickly how to be a good sailor; there are no choices. To do otherwise means to capsize and drown.

Time seems to stand still. Helpless, you cower in the bowels of the boat, hanging on tightly. It would be so easy to give up and slip over the side, but faith, courage, and hope give you the tenacity to endure.

One day the sky is clear and sunny, the water is calm, and land is close by. Somehow, by some miracle, you have made it to a safe harbor -- you have weathered your storm of grief.

When deep in your sadness, you might find this impossible to believe, but time, keeping busy with everyday activities, and surrounding yourself with compassionate friends will get you through. Join a grief-therapy support group; such groups are found in hospitals, churches and synagogues.

Justify within your soul the many reasons you have to be here, and count your blessings for what you do have left. If you cannot find any, search deeper. There is someone or some cause that needs you badly. We do not forget our losses, but we do learn to adjust to them as the years go by.

**Gloria Gersten**, Miami TCF

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON SHOCK & DENIAL**

Shock is often our survival after the loss of a child or sibling. Our minds go into a state of numbness that insulates us from the pain of fully facing the death all at once. We have discussed anticipatory grief with long term illness, and most will say even though the physician predicts the loved one to be terminal, the mind will still hold back in accepting the fact that death is inevitable.

It is natural to deny anything that will bring such unbearable pain. We use this cushion to get us through that very early stage of our grief, whether it be sudden or long-term. Our brain tries to take one step at a time.

In retrospect, the numbness that shock brought, insulated and cushioned me enough to survive. The time we stay in shock varies greatly. It can be an aide in our grief, but we can not stay there forever.

We usually move into denial. I found myself stuck here for a while; I just didn't want to face the fact that future plans did not include Doug. I wasn't finished mothering him, and having many other children did not help in the beginning. I had a lot of unfinished love that belonged to Doug alone, and it could not be directed toward another child. I felt very guilty for being so all consumed with grief, and not being able to function for my surviving children.

We aren't ready to move on, so we frequently tell ourselves it is all a bad dream that will go away. We don't want to be a part of anything that says our child is dead. The pain is too great to admit our loss is permanent. We can never approve of the happening, but we eventually have to acknowledge the fact that it did happen, so that we can establish where we are. Once we totally acknowledge the death, we move on to other stages of grief.

No matter how well we have learned the grief stages, we can not rush through them to reach the other side. It is called grief work because of the effort and time it takes. We must lean into the pain. It is so gut-wrenching, and we have all had feelings that we just can't survive it. But it softens, we learn to live and love ourselves again. We regain our ability to feel, look for a tomorrow, and all those good memories that we worried about forgetting are still there. When the healing takes away the gut-wrenching pain, the memories can be pleasant. I wish you could be where I am, without going through where I have been. Peace is there for us, but never comes as soon as we would like it to. Be patient with yourself

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel* , TCF Valley Forge

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**REMINISCING**

I thought about you today,  
As I bade farewell for school.  
I thought about you today,  
When I heard a certain song.  
I thought about you today,  
As the teacher passed the test.  
I thought about you today,  
When the kids jumped in the leaves.  
I thought about you today,  
as a stranger passed my way.

I thought about you today,  
When I got drenched in the rain.  
I thought about you today,  
As I sat in church and prayed.  
I thought about you today,  
When I embraced an old friend.  
I thought about you today,  
As the day turned into night.  
I will think of you again,  
When I close my eyes and dream.

*Lori Phillip*, TCF - Scranton, PA

*Barbara Lazear Ascher's brother, Bobby, died of AIDS at the age 31. Following is an excerpt of a beautifully written sensitive article describing the author's struggle with grief. "A Brother's Death" was originally printed in the New York Times Magazine.*

When we first learned of Bobby's illness, it seemed incomprehensible that this could be happening to our baby brother. My sister and I began a journey into paralysis. There were days when it seemed we had to concentrate on putting one foot in front of the other if we were to walk at all. If we traveled more than a couple of blocks, we were exhausted for the rest of the day.

We were hungry, we weren't hungry. We made chocolate chip cookies and chocolate brownies and didn't eat them. We opened and closed the refrigerator door, looking for something that might cushion the pain, fill the chasm that was opening from within.

Now I realize that this was the beginning of grief which starts in the stomach, yawning like the gaping mouth in Munch's painting. "The Scream." But what did we know of grief? We were young, our beloved had not yet died. I began to understand that grieving is like walking. The urge is there, but you need a guiding hand; you need someone to teach you how.

I went to speak with a wise and trusted minister at my church who warned that there were bad times ahead. The death of a sibling, he said, grievous in itself, is also a startling reminder of our own mortality. I suppose it's not dissimilar to the time in youth when we first learned of our origins and began to understand -- if they made me, then they can make another. After that we became the nervous sentinels of our territory. When a sibling dies, the absolute certainty of death replaces the cherished illusion that maybe we'll be the exceptions. When a sibling dies, death tugs at our own shirttails. There's no unclasping its persistent grip. "You too," it says. "Yes, even you."

When you are new to grief, you learn that there's no second-guessing it. It will have its way with you. Don't be fooled by the statistics you read: Widows have one bad year; orphans three. Grief doesn't read schedules.

One morning three weeks after Bobby died, I arose feeling happy and energetic. Well, now, I thought, I guess we've taken care of that. Wrong. The next morning I was awakened by a wail I thought was coming from the storm outside until I realized it was coming from me.

Grief will fool you with its disguises. Some days you insist that you're fine -- you're just angry at a friend who said the wrong thing. One day I wept into the lettuce and peaches at our local market when an acquaintance approached to scold me for my stand in an old battle. Of course, we both assumed that she was responsible for my tears.

You learn that you can cry and stop and laugh and even follow a taxi driver's commands to "Have a nice day," and then cry again. You learn that there is no such thing as crying forever. Three months ago I was certain that I would never be happy again. I was wrong.

Grief is like the wind. When it's blowing hard, you adjust your sails and run before it. It blows too hard, you stay in the harbor, close the hatches and don't take calls. When it's gentle, you go sailing, have a picnic, take a swim.

You go wherever it takes you. There are no bulwarks to withstand it. Should you erect one, it will eventually tire of the game and blow the walls in.

We cannot know another's grief, as deeply personal as love and pain. I cannot measure my own against the sorrow of my brother's friends who must wonder every day which among them will be next... I shy away from the magnitude of my brother's own grief when, upon being diagnosed, he heard the final click of a door as it closed on possibility.

A friend of mine said of her son when he died at 30, "He was just beginning to look out at the world and make maps." So was my brother. And then there was no place to go.

*Barbara Lazear Ascher, NY, NY*

**WOULD THEY COME BACK ?**

We miss them so, but would they come back?

When I see the beauty of the birds soaring ecstatically in the sky, somehow claiming the beauty as their own; I watch them carefully, sometimes they are playfully cutting into the wind to forge in their direction of choice.

I think of our loved ones up in heaven, and I feel they are as happy as the birds soaring and dipping and floating with wings spread wide.

There too, however, they have important work to do: Greeting the new loved ones into the kingdom of heaven and acting as God's angels to watch.

I sense that they wouldn't come back if given a choice. It would be like a caged bird who had had his wings clipped to protect him from flying outside into an uncaring world: Walking on the floor in stoic resignation.

*Bea Kroon - TCF, Bradenton, FL*

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**A RETARDED CHILD**

Having a retarded child has its rewards as well as it heartaches. I wish I could put my feelings into words, so the whole world would know what a joy Brian was to us. He was a very handsome boy with blonde hair and large blue eyes and a very deep dimple, and his smile was like a ray of sunshine. He was very special to us (my husband, myself and our other son and daughter who just idolized him). He could not express verbally his feelings for us, but the way he grabbed and embraced us with such sincere affection for every little thing we did for him (no matter how small) was worth a thousand words. He taught us the true meaning of the word love. We visit his grave quite often, and no matter what kind of a day it is, it seems as though the sun peeks through for just a minute, a reflection of Brian's smile to let us know how grateful he is that we are there.

Since it was God's will for me to have a retarded child, the greatest thing I can say about it is that, I thank God he chose me to be Brian's mother. I feel almost as privileged as Mary must have felt to be chosen as the mother of God. In our minds and hearts, Brian will never die.

*Anita O'Connell - TCF, Delmar/Albany, NY*

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**HOW TO HELP ME GRIEVE**

**Be there for me:**

I feel alone, in pain.  
I need a friend.

**Share my sorrow:**

Speak from your heart.  
I have to talk about my feelings.

**Let me grieve:**

Listen to me, I need to cry.  
We all grieve in our own way  
and in a different time frame.

**Keep the memory alive:**

It is always on my mind.  
I have so many memories.

**I need your help:**

Help me, call me, pray for me.  
Do whatever you can.

**Don't desert me:**

Don't desert me after the 1st or 2nd week.  
I need you especially on holidays.

**Take care of yourself:**

I need to depend on you.

**Help me to heal:**

Involve me, listen to me months later.  
I need your interest and invitations.

**Be my friend:**

Don't be afraid of me or my grief.  
It's okay to cry.

Lastly, please don't criticize until you've  
walked in my shoes.

**Instead: Pray for me.**

*Vivian Sagert*

TCF, Minitonas, Manitoba, Canada

**ADVICE FOR THE BEREAVED**

Realize and recognize the loss.  
 Take time for nature’s slow, sure, stuttering process of healing.  
 Give yourself massive doses of restful relaxation and routine busy-ness.  
 Know that powerful, overwhelming feelings will lessen with time.  
 Be vulnerable, share your pain, and be humble enough to accept support.  
 Surround yourself with life, plants, animals, and friends.  
 Use mementos to help your mourning, not to live in the dead past.  
 Avoid rebound relationships, big decisions, and anything addictive.  
 Keep a diary and record successes, memories, and struggles.  
 Prepare for change, new interests, new friends, solitude, creativity, growth.  
 Recognize that forgiveness (of ourselves and others) is a vital part of the healing process.  
 Know that holidays and anniversaries can bring up the painful feeling you thought you had successfully worked through.  
 Realize that any new death related crisis will bring up feelings about past losses.

*The Centre for Living with Dying*

**GRIEF**

GRIEF is sometimes silent – like snowflakes falling on a dark winter’s night – but never peaceful or serene or pretty like the pure white snow. When grief is silent, the tears seem to turn to ice, like the snowflakes, before they reach our eyes.

GRIEF is sometimes raging – like a monstrous thunderstorm - with all its fury and bolts of lightning striking our hearts at every angle. When grief is raging, the tears come in torrents like the rain and flood our soul.

GRIEF: Whether it be silent or raging . . . IT HURTS.

*Verna Smith, TCF, Ft. Worth, TX*

**CATCHING BUTTERFLIES**

It often hurt to come upon reminders of my son.  
 Tho' often since I lost him,  
 I would search around for one.  
 Which always brought on sadness,  
 And the tears that I would shed.  
 Were caused by names or faces,  
 All things that I would dread.

This view of his intrigued me;  
 I wanted to hear more,  
 And learned that he took all of them  
 And carefully would store.  
 All of the reminders that I chose to push away.  
 He would tuck them deep down inside his heart each  
 and every day.

But then one day I came upon a man  
 Who'd lost his son.  
 I found that things I ran from,  
 He wouldn't even shun.  
 But rather he would treasure,  
 And I said I wondered why.  
 He told me that he called them  
 "Catching Butterflies."

Now a name or likeness,  
 When catching me off guard.  
 Does not upset me as it did,  
 and I don't find it hard.  
 For now, instead, I see these times as opportunities  
 To see my son awakened  
 In these new, fresh memories.

*Dottie Williams, TCF Pittsburgh, PA*