

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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

June 2009

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 at Valley Forge and Henderson RDs, King of Prussia, PA. Phone on meeting evenings only is 610-265-0733. All other times please call Ann or Rhonda at 484-919-0820.

Meeting Schedule

Please Mark Your Calendar

June 4 General Sharing

July 2 General Sharing

July 25 Butterfly Release (see page 3)

Aug 7-9 National Conference , Portland OR

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 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.**

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
SEND TO: RECORD KEEPER, FRANK GOMEZ
PLEASE SEND ALL OTHER CHAPTER MAIL
TO CHAPTER CO-LEADERS
ANN MURRAY or RHONDA GOMEZ**



Valley Forge Chapter

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We send our sympathy and compassion to the family and friends of **Jack Cohen**, who died on April 25, 2009. Jack's wife, Toba, preceded him in death on December 3, 2007. Toba & Jack were the founders of the Philadelphia Bustleton Chapter, which is now lead by Joan & Sheldon Plam. Toba & Jack joined Compassionate Friends after the death of their son, **A. Meyer Cohen**, who died in 1985. They also lost a son, **Richard Jonathan Cohen**, who died in 1961.

NEW FRIENDS

Susan Lipson, nephew **Justin Ingerman** (23)
Joanne Haley, son **Douglas Haley** (25)
Elizabeth & Rebecca Haley, brother **Douglas Haley** (25)
Harry & Lynne Urian, son **Mike Urian** (30)
Mildred Sayles, son **Fredrick Chavis** (35)
Linda Dipasquale, son **Thomas Dipasquale** (22)

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

MAY REFRESHMENTS

Nina Bernstein in honor of all the children & siblings that have died too soon.

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

LOVE GIFTS

Rose Marie Cote, in loving memory of my son, **Mark J. Cote** (35)
and my husband, **Paul Cote**
Abigail Figueroa, in loving memory of my son, **Jose C. Figueroa** (21)
Raymond & Marguerite Posluszny, in loving memory of our son, **Alex Posluszny** (56)

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

The newsletter is available by email to those who wish to receive it in this form. You will receive the newsletter earlier if you opt to receive the newsletter by email. If you chose to use the email method of receiving your newsletter, and later decide you want to receive it by postal service, 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

BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND PROGRAM

Sponsored by the Valley Forge Chapter
of the Compassionate Friends

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND

BUTTERFLIES MUST BE ORDERED BY JUNE 18TH

Tyler Arboretum
515 Painter Road
Media, PA 19063

Phone: 610-566-9134 Email: info@tylerarboretum.org

Saturday, July 25, 2009 at 2:00 PM
(This event will be held rain or shine)

Cost \$9.00 per butterfly

A family can order one butterfly to share, or order one butterfly for each family member. You may order as many butterflies as you wish. If you are unable to come on this date, we can release the butterfly that you have purchased in your loved one's name. The names of all loved ones will be read during the program.

The Arboretum admission fee must be paid upon arrival in order to attend this event:

Adult \$7; Senior \$6; children, ages 3-15, are \$4; and children under 3 are free.

(The Entertainment Book - Philadelphia West has a coupon with one complimentary admission to Tyler when a second admission of equal or greater value is purchased)

Tyler Arboretum is a 650 acre sanctuary of natural beauty. It has horticultural collections, hiking trails, historic buildings, butterfly house with native butterflies in all stages of their life cycle, children's maze, picnic tables, and is open 9 AM until 7PM.

For questions, please call TCF Valley Forge 484-919-0820

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to them

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to them

Please make checks payable to "TCF Valley Forge Chapter" and mail to:
Rhonda Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore, PA 19343

For directions view www.tcfvalleyforge.org

Sharon Ott, daughter *Amber* - 6/8
Sam & Palma Panichello, son *Joseph Panichello* - 6/7
Linda & Andrew Peoples, Jr., son *Brian A. Peoples* - 6/27
Mary Lou Piepenbrink-Riordan, daughter *Nancy Ann Piepenbrink* - 6/25
Raymond & Marguerite Posluszny, son *Alex Posluszny* - 6/16
Elise Rice, husband *James W. Rice, Sr.* - 6/27
Margaret Rodalewicz, son *Shane Wooley* - 6/12
Lisa and John Russo, son *Casey* - 6/23/2008
Michelle & Bill Schmidt, friend *Connor O'Hagen* - 6/16
Frank and Kay Shinnners , son *Erik Shinnners* - 6/24
Charles & Norma Skibbe, son *Mark Steven Skibbe* - 6/26
Barbara Smisko, daughter *Linda* - 6/30
Peter & Suzanne Smith, daughter *Tracy Smith* - 6/28
Janemarie Smith, daughter *Beth Jovanovic* - 6/13
Karen & Alan Stoner, daughter *Holly Patricia Stoner* - 6/13
Chris & Larry Teal, son *Wade Teal* - 6/16
Allan Thomas, son *Tommy Odins* - 6/22
Priscilla Thoroughgood, daughter *Kendra Enochs* - 6/17
Ann VanLandingham, son *Eric VanLandingham* - 6/19
Pat Villante, daughter *Laura* - 6/16
Jackie Ward, grandson *Anthony* - 6/16
Dolores Wiczek, son *Paul* - 6/27
Sandra & Harry Wolfheimer, daughter *Ann Marie Wolfheimer* - 6/19
Florence & Dick Yeager, son *Jason Allen Yeager* - 6/12

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Sylvia Abramson, grand-daughter *Avery Silverman* 6/23
Emily L. Alm, son *Bryan W. Alm* 6/3
Julie Beasley, son *Aaron* 6/4
Lisa Bellopede, son *Johnny* 6/24
Lisa Bledy, sister *Danielle Bledy* 6/2
Jeff & Donna Brown, son *Kenneth Bernstiel* 6/2
Suzanne Carcarey, son *Eddie* 6/22
Stacey & Robert Carter, daughter *Brianne Carter* 6/8
Nina Coppolella, daughter *Nina Marie Tumolo* 6/1
Tom & Irene Cornely, son *Tom* 6/29
Rose Marie Cote, son *Mark J. Cote* 6/3 -
Germaine Cote Weaver, brother *Mark Cote* 6/3
Holly & John Cross, son *John* 6/28
Bob & Madeline Deery, brother *Ronald J. Deery* 6/2
Helen Deery, son *Ronald J. Deery, Jr.* 6/2
Susan Dehlinger, daughter *Amy M Dehlinger* 6/21
Susan Dillman, daughter *Heather Lynne Dillman* 6/4
Shirley & Herb Druker, daughter *Heidi* 6/11
Dorothy Freed, daughter *Diana Lees* 6/25
Carolyn & Allen Gephart, son *Joseph Malec* 6/11
Linda & Steven Gilbert, daughter *Pamela Gilbert* 6/28
Thomas & Anne Glenn, daughter *Lauren Glenn* 6/10

Robert & Kathleen Grossi, son *James Michael Grossi* 6/30
Ronald J. & Margaret Halas, daughter *Desiree A. Halas* 6/2
Charles & Claire Haux, son *Robert Haux* 6/23
Jack & Dee Heil, daughter *Susan Lynn Dina* 6/4
Nancy Lee & Jerry Hess, son *Jerry R.L. Hess* 6/30
Mark & Vicki Hoffman, son *Eric Daniel Hoffman* 6/4
Tammy & Allen Howard, daughter *Brianna Nicole Howard* 6/9
Dorothy & Carl Johnson-Speight, son *Khaaliq Jabbar Johnson* 6/26
Teresa & Bill Lattanze, son *William Noel Lattanze* 6/10
Susan & Richard Leimbach, son *Sean Duffy* 6/4
Susan Leonard, grandson *Nathan* 6/3
Greg & Anita Lewicki, son *Eric Stephen Lewicki* 6/1
Carl & Josie Malitsky, daughter *Cynthia Malitsky* 6/27
Elaine Marino, daughter in law *Lisa Marino* 6/1
Norine & William McDevitt, Jr., son *Sean Francis McDevitt* 6/29
Barbara Meisenhelder, daughter *Renee Meisenhelder* 6/20
Kathleen Mitchel, son *Steven* 6/25
Sue Morris, daughter *Kelly Morris* 6/1
John & Mary Ann Murphy, son *Thomas Patrick Murphy* 6/16
Dorothy Noel, son *Stephen Scharck* 6/11
George & Estelle Null, daughter *Kathleen "Kathy" Null* 6/18
Thomas & Demetra Patukas, son *George Thomas Patukas* 6/12
Michele Paul, sister *Desiree Halas* 6/2/
Kathy & Jim Petrokubi, son *Andrew* 6/20
Tony & Laurene Quercetti, daughter *Christine L. Quercetti* 6/5
Marge Randolph, son *Doug Fixter* 6/19
Ron & Sandy Ruth, son *Brian David Ruth* 6/15
John & Marie Sanders, son *Robert Sanders* 6/30
Donna & Eric Schaertl, son *Jared M. Schaertl* 6/14
Suzanne Schoenhut, son *Joe* 6/29
Anna Schwarz, son *Jerrold Schwarz* 6/11
Ann Sherwood, daughter *Martha Sherwood Fransway* 6/8
Albert & Barbara Shinskie, son *David Shinskie* 6/6/
Matthew Silverman, sister *Avery Silverman* 6/23
Howard & Margorie Silverman, daughter *Avery Silverman* 6/23
Steven & Bernice Sitkoff, daughter *Gwyn Allison Sitkoff* 6/25
Karl & Sue Snapp, son *Dave Snapp* 6/28
Carole Solomon, niece *Avery Silverman* 6/23
Philip & Ilene Spector, neice *Avery Silverman* 6/23
Gerard & Jane Thimm, son *Gary Thimm* 6/18
Allan Thomas, son *Tommy Odins* 6/22
Mary Walker, daughter *Susan* 6/28
George & Helen Warriner, son *David J. Warriner, Sr.* 6/7
Alice Weaver, daughter *Kristen* 6/7
Shirley Weir, son *Robert H. Weir* 6/29
Kevin Welde, brother *John Welde* 6/6
Christine & Raymond Welker, brother *Doug Adam* 6/7
Dolores Wieczek, son *Paul* 6/6
Laurie Wyche, son *Jameson Wyche* 6/27

SHARED THOUGHTS ON GRIEVING FATHERS

When a child dies, it is very acceptable for a mother to fall apart, depend on any and everyone around her, and openly grieve. But, our forefathers have taught us that males are to be stoic, control their emotions, and “be strong” for the entire family. Today’s males have contributed greatly to change this image, but it still needs much improvement for men to comfortably acknowledge their pain, not grieve in isolation, be temporarily dependent while grieving, and let the world know they hurt.

The social conditioning of males has created a major obstacle. Repressing feelings and expressions causes grief to move inward, preventing dealing with their grief. One of the best ways to overcome our grief, is to express it (“overcome” meaning getting to the point of it being tolerable). Sometimes self-focus is necessary for our healing. We all need emotional support when in the turmoil of grief, and the need has nothing to do with the gender. A male’s need to be self sufficient can send out false messages and isolate him from family and friends, who want to help. It is important for wives to feel needed by their husbands. It is very difficult to grieve together, but it is necessary to acknowledge the other’s pain. When family and friends ask how other family members are doing (and fail to inquire about the father’s condition) they minimize his pain, by inferring he is not a primary griever. A father is as much a primary griever as his wife.

We bury our children, but we do not bury love or grief. We do not need to make excuses for tears, that are shed because of the tremendous loss of someone we love dearly. The grief we hide prolongs our healing. We all tend to keep more inside as time passes. This is because we know most people do not understand the longevity of grief. Perhaps, we have helped to create this image by not being honest when we are asked how we are. After much time has passed, we usually won’t admit (to those who have not lost a child) that we are still so fragile, that the tidal wave of pain can come out of nowhere. One small incident can make our grief feel fresh, and cause a raging storm within.

If we had a choice, most of us would have traded places with our deceased child. We did not have this choice, but at some point, and certainly not in our early grief, we do have a choice to make a tolerable life for ourselves. It is not easy to forgive ourselves for our human faults (both real and imaginary) that we make while rearing our children. But forgiveness certainly helps to bring victory over our despair by easing our pain, and very necessary if we are to embrace our future once again. Facing the future can bring much pain to us in our early grief, for we can barely face the day, hour, or moment. Down the road, after some healing, we have to make a commitment to building a life for ourselves. It can never be the same, and that special something is always missing. But, we need to eventually get past that gut-wrenching, all-consuming pain and make a life we can live with. We must begin with small goals that are possible to achieve. It takes a longtime to understand our children’s life was greater than the death. Their living changed our lives, and left us with a lot of unfinished love. The love is immortal, and can be more alive if we get control of our own life once again, and dedicate our very living to their life and not their death.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel*, TCF Valley Forge

FATHER’S DAY

Warm and sunny day in June,
Father’s Day.
Children, small and grown
give gifts to father
say thanks to father
say I love you.

But there are fathers
whose children are not here
to give gifts and say thanks
and say I love you.

Remember the fathers
whose children are gone,
because
they will always be
fathers at heart.

Sascha

HURTING ON FATHER’S DAY

As the day approaches
I wonder how I will react.
Am I still a father?
I will sit quietly never
allowing friends and family
to see how I feel.
I miss my son, but I can’t
allow myself to “break.”

I must remain strong
And always be the “rock.”
I wish I could just let someone
know how much I miss
my little angel,
How much I cry and how
much I miss hearing
“Dad, I love you.”

I am a father, but I wonder will
I just pretend, as usual, that
“it doesn’t bother me?”

Remember me,
for I hurt, too, on this
special day.
TCF – Tampa, FL

MISSING GRADUATE

Parents happy faces all around me,
With a glow from within,
Pomp and Circumstance is playing,
Now the program will begin.
The graduates are lined up,
They are coming down the aisle,
Some have serious faces, yet
Some have a little smile.
I look down the aisle,
Hoping for your face to come into sight,
This is your class,
It was to be your graduation night.
All the graduates pass by,
But none of them are you,
A tug of my heart tells me,
You are not here, your death is true.
God called you home...
I wanted you here in such a bad way.
Looking into your classmates’ faces
Do they recall you, missing this day?
Memories, sweet memories,
Now fill my mind and heart.
There will be no golden tassel
This day for my Sweetheart.
The Class is oh! so happy,
This isn’t the time to be blue.
Now I must go shake a hand
And get a hug or two.

Emma Valenteen, TCF, Phoenixville, PA

Happiness is like a butterfly -
The more you chase it,
The more it will elude you;
But if you turn your attention to other things,
It comes and softly sits upon your shoulder.

Author Unknown

EACH DAY

Each day you hurt a little less
Each day you cry a little less
One day you won’t hurt anymore
One day you won’t cry anymore
I don’t know when that day is yet.

Becky Hoffman, TCF, Atlanta, GA

PROMISE

The colors of life changes as we go through grief. We begin black and white, then gray settles over us seeping into our pores, surrounding us, smothering us for a long period of time, then slowly the colors change, we may not even be aware of their changing till one day we see a rainbow and know it was meant for us.

Fay Harden TCF / Tuscaloosa, AL

SIBLING CORNER

I NEVER KNEW MY BROTHER

I never knew my brother, yet I now him well.
Through my mother's eyes I've known him,
And I love him still.
I'll grow tall and strong like him
And yet not like him at all.
He'll be my guardian angel.

And we'll grow through life as one.
I have his clothes and toys and photo.
I hold them dear to me,
But most of all I treasure loving memories --
The memories my mother gave to me.

Karen Hoyland, TCF, Brisbane, Australia

WHEN MY SIBLING DIED I FELT:

- that a part of me died and that I was all alone
very angry at everything
my childhood had died, too
angry and sad that my family life as I had
known it was over
terrified that I would lose someone else that
I loved
cheated that I didn't have a brother
angry at how it happened
alone
afraid to get close and let anyone in
terrible
I wanted to cry
I felt angry, depressed, confused, drained,
worried
why did it happen to him and not some
one else
I wanted him back

Author Unknown

THIS SIBLING

Yes, I'm an adult...
Over 40
And Tom... "Little brother"
was 25
When he died...
Returning from his bar exam.

So what?
Does grief have and "end age"
Does someone 40+
Not die too...
When losing a
Sweet, small playmate?

I see him:

- ! Learning to roller-skate
- ! I'm running beside his bike
- ! First game of the Cardinal's season
- ! And scared in the stands
- ! A "gorilla" running wild
- ! Sleepy at a drive in
- ! Running around in the zoo

All of that and as an adult,

I knew him too.

- ! At graduations.
- ! Proud in his own "pad"
- ! Pouring Spanish champagne
- ! Tireless breaking wood
- ! Feeding a hungry campfire
- ! Cooking eggs for all...
- ! Sharing dreams.

This sibling remembers...And grieves.

Jeanne Brady, TCF, Olathe, KS

A STAPLE IN MY HEART

My treasure, well some who look may say
"What was he thinking when he made this that day?"
Some may think it's ugly because it is so rare.
Some may say it's stupid, but I don't really care.

It's unique, yet beautiful in it's own special way
My uncle gave it to me, and I will never forget that day.
It's simple, yet complicated in more ways than one.
It reminds me of all the happy time we shared
playing in the sun.

This simple staple necklace has left a huge imprint
on my heart.
It reminds me of my dear uncle who sadly had to depart.
I miss him oh so dearly, but that's why I'm here to say,
That what my uncle gave to me, means more than
words can say.

Written for **Scott Harrison** TCF Valley Forge, PA
By **Nevin Murkley**

"Grief only becomes a
tolerable and creative
experience when love enable it
to be shared with someone
who really understands.

Rev. Simon Stephens,
Founder of International TCF

-
"In remembering our children,
In sharing with each other,
In supporting each other,
We ease our pain,
We share each step,
We help smooth the road,
And we serve as witnesses
to the fact that we can
make it beyond grief,
As we support each other."

Roy Peterson,

THE PATH

My world lay shattered around me. Gone were the flowers and the sun. The path ahead looked dark and threatening. I heard a voice saying, "You have to travel this path alone."

"I don't want to go down that path. I can't." I protested. "I liked the old path."

"The choice is yours," said the voice, "but you may never go back to the old path. You may stay here at the crossroads where anger and pain will keep you company and wither your spirit. Or, you may runoff into the surrounding woods and pretend you are going somewhere, but you will become disoriented and lost. The only peace is to be found at the end of the path ahead."

"If you have the courage to set forth upon the new path and keep struggling through the storms, you will discover depths in yourself that you never knew existed. If you reach out you will find those who have already traveled this difficult way and are there to support and guide you. Though it seems impossible now, your path will become beautiful again, as will your spirit. You will emerge from the desolation a stronger, wiser, and more compassionate person. Then you too can turn and extend your hand to those who are still on the way."

I made a choice. I picked up the remains of my life -- my aching heart and wounded spirit, my broken dreams and disbelief -- and wrapped them carefully in my blanket of grief. Holding them closely to me, I walked steadfastly ahead into the storm with faith in the promise of peace on the other side.

Sharron Cordaro, Riverside, CA

As I sit out here on a beautiful spring day, looking at your headstone, I listen to Enya on the car CD. She was one of your favorites. We played her song "Only Time" at our house. You always wanted to keep your singing private, but oh how I wished I'd taped it for the day I never guessed was coming, and your voice would be forever silent. There will never be any new memories, new experiences to share, no more new photographs. Your leaving 3 years ago has forever changed those who loved you - as did your coming 24 years ago this June 4. My heart still physically aches with a heaviness that only a mother of a deceased child can know. I see the world through different eyes now, knowing a parent can't REALLY protect you. Your Aunt Vicki joined you on Christmas Eve and I know the two of you are silly and giggling angels together, my sister forever pain free, and you forever young and beautiful. MY tears still flow when I am alone - no different now than that first awful knowing. Outwardly the world sees me as a smiling, laughing teacher, one with courage they think they could never possess - but there is no choice but to keep breathing. "I watched you grow to let you go," but I never thought it would be so soon. You've been cheated of so much - as have we. We'll never see you as Brian's beautiful bride, even though you were engaged and we were starting to plan your garden wedding. We'll never see you have the twinkle in your eye as you hold your babies for the first time... the babies you always wanted and started naming when you were about 5 or 6. I remember the first time I held you and how we connected as our eyes met... not knowing our journey together as mother and daughter would be cut short. What a bittersweet life we have on Earth... for something so precious to be taken back without warning, and much too soon. We protect our children and teach them, so they can be happy in the future, not knowing there won't be a future for so many of our children who go before us. What an unnatural state of life. I know you are saving me a seat and I think of you as just a heartbeat away. I miss you my sweet Heather, always the peacemaker and always the generous soul so wise beyond your years. You made a difference Heather. Happy Birthday my love. Always and forever our angel. "I love you the world and back."

Much love to you in Heaven. Mom

Susan Dillman, TCF Valley Forge,
mother of *Heather Dillman* (born June 4th)

SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have traveled a while
 Along this path called grief,
 Need to stop and remember that mile
 The first mile of no relief.

Think of the friend who quietly sat
 And held our hands in theirs,
 The ones who let us talk and talk
 And hugged away our tears.

It wasn't the person with answers
 Who told us the ways to deal,
 It wasn't the one who talked and talked
 That helped us to start to heal.

We need to always remember
 That more than the words we speak,
 It's the gift of someone who listens
 That most of us desperately seek.

Nancy Myerholts,
 TCF, Waterville/Toledo, OH