

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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

## MAY 2010

### 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

May 6 General Sharing & Death by Suicide  
June 3 General Sharing  
July 2-4 33rd National Conference, Arlington, VA  
(See page 3)

Butterfly Release-date & details will be in the June Newsletter.

**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, DIANA CLARK  
PLEASE SEND ALL OTHER CHAPTER MAIL  
TO CHAPTER CO-LEADERS  
RHONDA GOMEZ or ANN MURRAY**



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**NEW FRIENDS**

**Kelly Rossi**, brother *Kevin* (33)  
**Lisa Connolly**, daughter *Elyse Pindjak* (23)  
**Caitlin Morgan**, best friend *Elyse Pindjak* (23)

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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**APRIL REFRESHMENTS**

**Diana Clark**, grandson *Alex* 1st anniversary

Anyone wishing to donate refreshments (cheese & crackers, fruit, cakes, cookies, etc. ) in memory of loved ones, please call **Rhonda Gomez or Ann Rapoport (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**

**Jovanna & Joseph Bevilacqua**, in loving memory of our son *Donato "Danny Bevilacqua"* on his anniversary March 27th  
**Franklin & Patricia Cox**, in loving memory of our daughter *Christen Fox* (39).  
**Willard & Patricia McLain**, in loving memory of our son *Gary J. McLain* on his 46th birthday, May 5th. Love, Mom & Dad & Brenda, Linda & Denise.  
**Tracey Sutton-Vitabile**, in loving memory of our brother *Jim Sutton* (27).

**ACME REBATE PROGRAM DISCONTINUED APRIL 25TH**  
Thanks to all those who have been supporting this program.

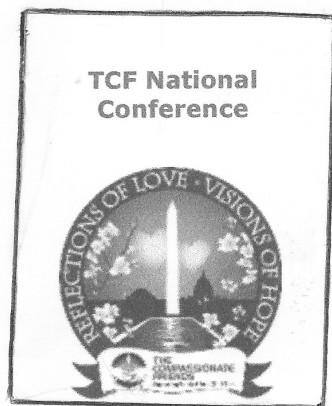
**NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL**

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

**TCF 33rd NATIONAL CONFERENCE - ARLINGTON, VA**

July 2, 8:00AM - July 4, 11:30AM



**“Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope”** is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference which will be held in Arlington, Virginia July 2-4, 2010. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City. The conference will feature a Candle Lighting Service on Saturday evening, and a Walk to Remember on Sunday. Many well-known speakers will give you a week end of healing. They will address the Opening Session, Friday & Saturday evening after banquets, and the Sunday closing. There will be time for one-on-one sharing with our TCF families.

There will be over 100 workshops for parents, siblings, grandparents, and for those who have no surviving children. You will find a hospitality room, a reflection room, the Butterfly Boutique, and a book store. There will be a memory board to place a picture of your loved one. There will be many friends that are waiting to meet you. We hope you will plan to attend. The conference is within driving distance and car pooling.

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS CAN BE MADE ON THE TCF NATIONAL WEBSITE.**

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) **OR BY PHONE.** Please call 1-800-233-1234 or 1-703-418-1234, identify yourself as a Compassionate Friend attending the conference to get a reduced nightly rate of \$129 + tax per room for one or two guests, \$154 per room for three guests, and \$179 per room for four guests.

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**PHOTOS FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE MEMORIAL BOARD**

Frank has designed sample mats as shown in the April newsletter. The mats are 8” x 8”, in color and each background is a different pattern. Check out the Valley Forge website ([www.tcfvalleyforge.org](http://www.tcfvalleyforge.org)) to see the sample in color.

You do not have to attend the conference to participate in this project. **His goal is to take as many personalized matted photos of our loved ones as possible** with him to the TCF 33rd National Conference in Arlington, VA in July. They will be displayed with many other loved ones. Thanks to Frank’s generosity, there is no charge for this service.

If you wish to participate in this project, we are asking that you send your photo early to allow him time to design the mat to frame it. Be sure the photo fits in a regular business size envelope and the name of the loved one(s) is written on the back. If you place a light weight card board in the envelope it will help to keep the photo from being damaged. Sorry, he cannot accept photos as email attachments. His printer’s colors are not accurate.

Send to: Frank Gomez, 12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore, PA 19343

All mats will be displayed at the National Conference, and upon his return, Frank will laminate the matted photo (Many attendees take photos of the memorial boards and the flash will reflect off the laminated surface). He will bring them to the August meeting so you can pick them up. If you do not plan on attending the August meeting, please enclose \$2.00 to cover return postage for photo.

**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: **Additions or corrections to this list should be given to the editors, Marie & Ken Hofmockel.**

**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.**

**MAY BIRTHDAYS**

**Marilynn & Donald Anton, nephew *Steven Schneibolk* 5/7**  
**Donald Barber, son *Steven W. Barber* 5/19**  
**Laura Bedrossian, son *Teddy* 5/9**  
**Stephen & Barbara Billings, daughter *Laura Elizabeth Billings* 5/22**  
**Shirley & Lex Bono, son *Greg* 5/19**  
**Bruce & Barb Campbell, son *Greg* 5/30**  
**Loretta & Ken Cericola, son *Anthony Cericola* 5/3**  
**Mary & John Chelius, son *John J. Chelius, Jr.* 5/2**  
**Joanne & Tom Christman, son *Kyle R. O'Neill* 5/23**  
**Irene & Abbe Cohen, nephew *Scott Alan Rosenthal* 5/26**  
**Anton & Maureen DeMaioribus, daughter *Ann DeMaioribus* 5/17**  
**Judith M. Deutsch, son *Anthony Deutsch* 5/10**  
**Vanessa Diaz, friends child *Samir* 5/16**  
**Helen Dietrich, son *Joseph Dougherty* 5/4**  
**Danielle Evelyn, son *Samir* 5/16**  
**Carol Graber, son *Bobby* 5/17**  
**Judi Griffith, son *Steve* 5/27**  
**Samuel & Mary Lou Hardman, son *Samuel J.* 5/19**  
**Robin Hayman, son *Bradley Hayman* 5/11**  
**Marie & Ken Hofmockel, grandson *Steven Schneibolk* 5/7**  
**William & Marilyn Hudson, son *Robert Hudson* 5/11**  
**Brad Ingerman, son *Justin* 5/18**  
**Jean Jones, grandson *Bobby* 5/7**  
**Loretta Kline, son *Keith Edward Kline* 5/11**  
**Susan Lipson, nephew *Justin Ingerman* 5/18**  
**Maryellen & James Madden, daughter *Anne Marie Madden* 5/18**  
**Jo Makowski, sister *Pamela Makowski Goresh* 5/1**  
**Anne McClenachan, brother *Andy McClenachan* 5/30**  
**Michael & Maria McFadden, daughter *Rachel McFadden* 5/14**  
**Willard & Patricia McLain, son *Gary J. McLain* 5/5**  
**Mike & Jen Meluskey, daughter *Carolyn Meluskey* 5/13**  
**Cheryl Mezzaroba, son *Lon Mezzaroba* 5/18**  
**Leonard & Thelma Miller, son *Lowell Bruce Miller* 5/14**  
**Ann Murray, son *Jonathan Rapoport* 5/17\**

**MAY BIRTHDAYS continued**

Elsie Oreski, son *Gregory T. Oreski* 5/22  
Betty & Richard Owens, Sr., son *Richard H. Owens, Jr.* 5/12  
Sam & Palma Panichello, son *Joseph Panichello* 5/21  
Lyla T. Poulson, brother *Joe* 5/18  
Barbara Purtell-Frank, son *Michael John Keller Purtell* 5/28  
Thomas & Jeri Reinert, father *Albert Volpe* 5/4  
John & Marie Sanders, son *Matthew Sanders* 5/8  
Pamela Schneibolk, son *Steven* 5/7  
Janet & Jonathan Schultz, friend *Scott Alan Rosenthal* 5/26  
Ann Sherwood, son *David Foster Sherwood* 5/3  
Priscilla Shober, son *Jeffrey R. Shober* 5/27

**MAY ANNIVERSARIES**

Madeleine Adler, son *J. Peter Adler* - 5/30  
Donald Barber, son *Steven W. Barber* - 5/30  
Rob and Janet Beiswenger, son *Jared* - 5/18  
Gloria Bello, son *Joseph* - 5/21  
Ben Breskman, son *Brian* - 5/26  
Martha & Albert Caesar, son *Daniel Mark Caesar* - 5/13  
Jennifer Catanese, son *Andrew* - 5/17  
Rose Marie Cote, husband *Paul Cote* - 5/27  
Jamie (Germaine) Cote Weaver, father *Paul* - 5/27  
Franklin & Patricia Cox, daughter *Christen* - 5/26  
Bud Cunnane, son *Patrick* - 5/2  
Justine Ellinger, daughter *Keira Ellinger* - 5/7  
Charlie & Jill Fick, son *Michael Sternberg* - 5/14  
William & Marilyn Hudson, son *Robert Hudson* - 5/11  
Janine Johnston, daughter *Ashley Sankus* - 5/16  
Joan Kingslake, son-in-law *Guy Thornton Woods* - 5/6/97  
Loretta Kline, son *Keith Edward Kline* - 5/20  
Herb & Adaline Leir, daughter *Kimberley Dawn Leir* - 5/18  
John & Nancy Logue, daughter *Kaitlyn Logue* - 5/3/  
Tom & Charmaine Malik, son *Danny Malik* - 5/12  
Michelle & Chris Mazzio, son *Brendan Mazzio* - 5/20  
Robert McCullough, daughter *Caroline Patricia McCullough* - 5/27  
Mike & Jen Meluskey, daughter *Carolyn Meluskey* - 5/22  
Mary O'Halloran, brother *Thomas M. O'Halloran* - 5/28  
Winnie & James O'Halloran, son *Thomas M. O'Halloran* - 5/28  
Anna Packer, daughter *Anna M Packer* - 5/22

**MAY ANNIVERSARIES continued**

- Sharyn & Joe Pozzuolo**, son *Joey Brad Pozzuolo* - 5/19  
**Christine and Richard Purkiss**, son *Adam Clark* - 5/7  
**Joan & Earl Reigel**, daughter *Melissa Reigel* - 5/4  
**Joan Santillo**, son *Brian Gambone* - 5/3  
**Lynn & Stephen Scartozzi**, daughter *Christine Marie Scartozzi* - 5/28  
**Janet & Jonathan Schultz**, friend *Christopher Harvey* - 5/6  
**Cathy Seehuetter**, daughter *Nina Seehuetter* - 5/11  
**Helen Smith**, son *Bob Smith* - 5/15  
**Andy & Alexandra Smith**, son *Charlie* - 5/30  
**Karl & Sue Snepp**, son *Dave Snepp* - 5/31  
**John & Rose Stanley**, daughter *Susan Stanley* - 5/29  
**Robert & Nancy Thompson**, friend *J. Peter Adler* - 5/30
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**WHY BUTTERFLIES?**

Since the early centuries of the Christian Church, the butterfly has symbolized the resurrection and life after death. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and more free existence.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since children are intuitive, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message.

TCF has adopted the butterfly as one of their symbols, a sign of hope to us that our children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom.

- *author unknown* -

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**In your gathering of memories,  
invite your courage to remember everything.**  
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**You can not do a kindness too soon,  
because you will never know how soon it will be too late.**

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON MOTHER'S DAY**

Mother's Day is that special day that our children can make us feel what a good job we have done in rearing them. As they express love, feelings, and appreciation, we know we have given them the right ingredients for living. I still have a box of those beautiful homemade cards from construction paper, flowers, lace, over decorated and many saturated with perfume. I cherish them so. The simplicity, innocence, love, crooked and reversed letters in their message can still bring tears. How fortunate we are to have had children. Many never know the bliss a child can bring.

Many times our beautiful holidays become difficult. Instead of looking forward to them with excitement, and enjoying the anticipation of their coming, we dread and fear those special days. Frequently, our anticipation can cause more pain than the day itself, as we reminisce and say "remember when", it also brings to mind that there will be no more added memories of that person.

Losing our children or siblings, makes us realize the importance memories play in the role of getting through our grief. We cherish memories. They are far more valuable than all the tangible things we have from our children or siblings. In our early grief they are very bitter sweet, for even good memories are painful. But now that many years have passed, I find them very peaceful, and value them. We will always wish there were more, but we gather those we have, and hold them close.

Mother's day will be especially hard for those families who do not have surviving children. I would never attempt to say I know how they feel, because I'm sure I don't know the depth of their despair of not having living children. Our hearts go out to them for this additional pain they must bear. To those we extend our love and caring. For the more fortunate families, it is important to share Mother's Day with our surviving children, and not deny them the same happiness and joy we gave to our deceased child. We are so all consumed with grief, that it takes time before we can value what we have left. Our living children need to know they are as loved as the ones we have lost. We know this, but sometimes we forget to tell them how grateful we are to have them. It is very human to channel all our energy to the one that is not here. Our surviving children need to know they bring us much to live for.

Sometimes it is difficult to find joy in anything when newly bereaved. We at Compassionate Friends know you will heal and will feel joy again, never as soon as you would like, but it will come. Even though that is difficult to believe now, you can tell your surviving families that bereaved parents and siblings before you tell how grief does soften and feelings will return. Our living children need to be assured, we and they will be better in time. You will be better. We wish you peace and hope.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel* , TCF Valley Forge, PA

Our sorrows and wounds  
are healed only when  
we touch them with compassion.

*Author unknown*

We are all mothers in our own right. Though the world  
may see us as childless. In our hearts and souls and  
lives, we ARE and always will be mothers.

*Pittsburgh, PA TCF*

**EMPTY SHOES**

They took off your shoes  
put them in a bag  
and handed them to me.  
I clutched them to my breaking heart.  
I couldn't let my tears start  
for you to see.

I knew then and there  
from the look on your face,  
you sensed this was  
your last race.

You could not speak with words  
your eyes said it all.  
I would never again see you  
walking tall.

You faced death with courage and pride  
you could not stay here,  
empty inside.

We kept you in our circle of love  
til God above  
called you home.

You walked tall, strong and steady  
Right through the gate.  
Met by the Father and the Son.  
And with them you now wait  
til we are all ready  
to make our final run.

To this day your shoes remain empty  
as a part of my heart always will.  
I miss you dad,  
your shoes no one can fill.

*Jamie Cote Weaver*  
TCF Valley Forge, PA  
May 24, 2009

**A MESSAGE TO MY DAUGHTER**

Although I never combed your hair -  
For 9 short months I felt you there.  
Although I never heard your cries -  
A kiss I gave hello - goodbyes.  
Although a diaper I never did change -  
My love for you knew no range.  
Although I never pushed you on a swing -  
A song to you I did sing.  
Although your brothers you did not meet -  
They knew you by your dancing feet.  
There will not be a childhood voice -  
In your destiny I had no choice.  
There will not be any Barbie doll clothes -  
Or pink, yellow, green fancy bows.  
There will not be a young woman's face -  
Just a tear on my heart  
No one can erase.

Love and miss you,  
Mom  
*Cheryl*

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As sunset brings the end  
of day  
As shadow and darkness  
come my way  
I close my eyes to worldly  
woe  
And journey in dreams to  
years ago.  
Your memory so sweet in my  
heart will stay  
Until in God's Heaven I embrace you someday.

*Rose Cote*  
TCF Valley Forge, PA

**ONE SWEET DAY**

I can't wait till that ONE SWEET DAY,  
 When I see her again.  
 In the streets of gold and the heavens so, so bright,  
 I just can't wait till that ONE SWEET DAY.  
 When I was young, she would take me everywhere,  
 She would always be there.  
 Till one day she was there no more,  
 I just can't wait till that ONE SWEET DAY,  
 When I see her again.

by *Lynn M. Fischer*, age 10  
 for her sister: Lisa M. Fischer, age 23  
 Valley Forge, PA

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 When I was two years old, my sister Katie got cancer.  
 She had it until she was eleven and past away. But  
 the one thing I'll always remember her by, is a doll.  
 She made it when she was six. It is a rag doll.  
 I named it Maggie.

by *Frances Santoleri*, age 11  
 for her sister, Katie Santoleri, age 11  
 Valley Forge, PA

**DEALING WITH RAGE**

One of the most important ways of dealing with  
 rage is trying to **forgive** yourself and others.  
 Note: **forgive** contains the word **give**.  
 You **give** yourself the opportunity to place behind  
 you those past agonies that diminish your strength and  
 vigor.

You **give** yourself new energies to move on and  
 meet new challenges.

You **give** yourself permission to live in an unfair,  
 disappointing world.

Forgiveness offers a very powerful way to pull  
 yourself out of the negative spiral of bitterness and  
 hard feelings.

From "Straight Talk for Teenagers"  
 by *Earl A. Grollman*

**PEOPLE THINK**

People think we're fine,  
 You know,  
 They say, "Oh, siblings  
 Heal so fast."

But they don't know  
 The empty feelings  
 Or our longing  
 For the past.

People think we're fine,  
 You know,  
 "Look, how they've resumed their  
 lives,"  
 They say.

But, they don't know  
 Of our troubled hearts  
 Or the loneliness  
 From day to day.

People think we're fine,  
 You know,  
 "See how they're getting over it?"  
 They surmise.

But, they don't know that we've  
 Learned to laugh and smile  
 Only to complete  
 Our broken heart's disguise.

*Mary Mathews*  
 TCF Broward County  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL

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 You may forget with whom you  
 laughed, but you will never forget  
 with whom you wept.

*Arab proverb*

“Human pain does not let go of its grip at one point in time. Rather, it works its way out of our consciousness over time. There is a season of sadness. A season of anger. A season of tranquility. A season of hope. But seasons do not follow one another in a lockstep manner. At least not for those in crisis. The winters and springs of one’s life are all jumbled together in a puzzling array. One day we feel as though the dark clouds have lifted, but the next day they have returned. One moment we can smile but a few hours later the tears emerge... It is true that as we take two steps forward in our journey, we may take one or more steps backward. But when one affirms that the spring thaw will arrive, the winter winds seem to lose some of their punch.”

*Robert Veninga*

A Gift of Hope: How We Survive Our Tragedies

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**MOTHER’S DAY**

Flowers that won’t arrive,  
A telephone that will not ring,  
A box of chocolates that will not come,  
A card that was not sent,  
And, those sweet words,  
“Happy Mother’s Day, Mom, dear,  
I love you,” you will not hear.

Don’t you wish you could lie?  
And pretend, “He didn’t die,  
It was all a huge mistake?”  
Can you look at it that way,  
And on this Mother’s Day say,  
“Well, I did have him for a while,  
I’ve got to...got to TRY.”

Can you?  
And if you can’t, it’s okay, too.

*Dave Ziv, BucksMont Chapter*

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**REFLECTIONS OF A STEP-PARENT**

I watched my mate go through pure Hell. And I felt helpless, useless, and sometimes...invisible. Other times, I stood strong while bearing the brunt of my love’s anger that lashed out at the world as an angry God would open the heavens with roaring thunder and lightning. I was accused of not understanding and surely...I could not. I felt heavy pain for my step-child...the one I took as my own. I grieved for the good times we had together. The tugs at my heart that always pierced through any resentments.

The guilt weighed heavily on my shoulders for the times we didn’t communicate and I wondered if...I could have made it better.

At the funeral home, I felt even a pang of...yes...jealousy toward the natural parents of my beloved step-child...knowing that she and my mate shared a private room from the past that I could never...ever...enter.

Life must go on...this day-to-day existence...but things are different now. I offer my support as I see eyes staring off into a distant land, hold a hand and kiss away the tear drops.

With an added sorrow, I wonder if my love will return to me or stay in that for-off...forever. For deep in my heart, I know that this tragedy will bring us closer together or tear us completely apart.

*Peggi Hull / Huston-Bay Area TCF*

**LITTLE GIRL LOST**

Little girl lost,  
No hand to hold.  
The swings are quiet,  
The weather's grown cold.  
Forever young, never to grow old.  
Little girl lost,  
No hand to hold.  
Flowers that bloomed,  
Now start to fade.  
Memories of my little girl,  
Grow stronger each day.  
The pain and the thoughts,  
Will not go away.  
Consumed by memories,  
Night and day.  
Little girl lost,  
No longer to play.  
Days of my life are,  
Not to be the same.  
Gone are the smiles,  
The laughs and your tears.  
Replaced by my questions and  
Loneliness the great fear.  
Thoughts of your future,  
Are no longer here.  
The little girl lost,  
Forever young and  
Your memory always near.  
The puppies and kittens  
That might have been,  
Are now figurines at your grave,  
Caressed by the wind.  
Little girl lost,  
Someday to hold,  
When my life grows tired and old.  
I will go with you and  
Your hand I will hold.

**Bob West** TCF, Hingham, MA

**GOOD THERAPY**

We shared a few hours, my friend and I,  
At the close of a busy day;  
Left lives filled with daily cares,  
And went away to play.

A few small jobs were there to do,  
With errands to be run,  
So choosing the work we wanted,  
We turned it into fun.

We talked as we drove,  
We talked as we shopped,  
Words overflowing...  
They couldn't be stopped.

We spoke of our happiness,  
We told of our joys,  
We talked of the birth of  
Two special baby boys.

We shared our sorrows,  
Our pain, our fears  
for we have been friends,  
Oh...years and years!

Some burdens are heavy,  
Some burdens are light,  
We shared them quietly, as  
Day slipped into night.

What have I done with my life? you cry,  
What have I done with this day?  
The answer was ready; swift and sure -  
You've been a friend, I say.

Our joys are double, our sorrow is half  
When we are able to share,  
for when there is someone to listen,  
We know there is someone to care.

**Laura Batty**  
TCF, Mercer, OH