



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## AUGUST 2015

### 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

**Aug 6 General Sharing**

**Sept 3 General Sharing**

**Sept 12 Butterfly Release & Program**  
2PM Upper Merion Township building  
King of Prussia (see page 4)

**Oct 9-11 2015 E. PA Regional Conference**  
See page 2 for information

**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**

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#### TCF Mission Statement

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

**INSIDE VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER  
REFRESHMENTS**

**Refreshments** may be donated in memory of loved ones, please call **Rhonda (484) 919-0820**, or you may sign the refreshment chart located on the refreshment table.

**Frank & Rhonda Gomez** in memory of our son, **Frankie** for his anniversary 7/17.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Randie & Robert Harmelin** in honor of the special birthday of my good friend,  
**Nina Bernstein.**

**Marie & Ken Hofmockel** in loving memory of **Mary Ehmann Auger**, for all the love and dedication she gave to the Valley Forge Chapter.

**Joyce & Vern Kaiser** in loving memory of our son, **Michael** on his birthday 8/4.

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

As you know a Regional Conference is being planned for October 9-11, 2015 at the Radisson Hotel in King of Prussia, PA.

We hope you will take the opportunity to share the conference weekend with us. It will be an indescribable experience with bereaved families who have "been there", and know the depth of the pain. There are no strangers, or social barriers, everyone becomes an instant friend. We share our emotional feelings with one another.

There will be seasoned bereaved families, who have proven life can be meaningful once more. They have learned to love, laugh, and live again, and know the love and memories of our children and siblings have not diminished.

If you are interested in serving on the planning committee, please join us at the next planning meeting scheduled for **1:30PM July, 26, 2015**. This, and all planning meetings, will be held at the Radisson Hotel, King of Prussia, PA.

**E.PA REGIONAL CONFERENCE FORMS Pages 10 - 15**

**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@hybridpplars.com](mailto:fgomez@hybridpplars.com)



**Mary Ehmann Auger**

**April 30, 1925 – June 24, 2015**

**TCF Valley Forge Chapter - Founder & Leader (1981-1993)**



It is with sadness that I let my mother's beloved TCF friends know of her passing, after a difficult struggle with Parkinson's disease. Mary founded the Valley Forge Chapter in 1981, leading it for 12 years. Over the years, she tirelessly gave a tremendous amount of love and support to devastated people working through their grief. And for that dedication, as well as her kind, loving spirit, I hope she will be remembered. She was also a pioneer in eliminating the cause of her son's death by a split-rim tire truck, in order to protect others from harm and bring meaning and purpose to the loss of his young life.

For those that may still be around to remember her, funeral services will be held at the Church of the Good Samaritan in Paoli on August 15 at 11:00. Interment will be private. Friends may meet with the family in Ashton Hall South after the service.

Memorial contributions in Mary's memory may be made to TCF or to the Church of the Good Samaritan's fund for the local needy (to the "Food Closet" or the "HELP Ministry," which helps with paying bills).

Rest in peace, Mom, greatly missed and always loved. Reunited with Eric, at long last.

♥ Your daughter, Anne ♥

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We send our regrets, love, and compassion to **Dr. Yvonne Kaye**, family, and friends on the passing of her beloved partner, **John Renshaw Roberts**, on June 5, 2015. He was a very courageous, generous, loving, and funny man. Always a smile no matter the circumstances. Former Royal Navy and highly respected international business man.

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The **Hofmockel family** ask for your prayers as they grieve on the passing of Marie's brother, **Henry Rose II** on June 27, 2015. Henry was a very loving, kind, and lifetime friend. A very successful business man as a well driller in four states.

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### **Love Lives On**

Those we love  
are never really lost to us --  
we feel them  
in so many special ways --  
through friends  
they always cared about  
and dreams they left behind,

in beauty that they added to our days ...  
in words of wisdom  
we still carry with us  
and memories that never will be gone ...  
Those we love  
are never really lost to us --  
For everywhere their special love lives on.  
*Amanda Bradley*



**BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND PROGRAM  
Saturday, September 12, 2015 at 2PM**



**Upper Merion Township Park (back of Police Station)  
175 West Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406**

Diagonally across from our monthly meeting place at Good Shepherd Church.  
This event will be held in back of the township building, **near the gazebo.**

**Cost \$8.00 per butterfly - August 15th last day to place order.  
There is no admission or parking fee.**

**Water will be provided by the chapter. Please bring folding chairs or a blanket to sit on.**

A family may order one butterfly to share, or order one butterfly for each family member. You may order as many butterflies as you wish. All butterflies must be preordered. If you are unable to attend 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.

**For questions, please call TCF Valley Forge 484-919-0820  
Any further details will be posted at the VF website. [www.tcfvalleyforge.org](http://www.tcfvalleyforge.org)**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

**Total number of butterflies ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ \$8.00 each**

**Total money (no credit cards) enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please forward registration and check to: Rhonda Gomez,  
12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore, PA 19343**

**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.

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

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

Marilynn Anton, cousin/godmother *Douglas Hofmockel* 8/27  
Denis Nicholson Asselin & Judy, son *Nathaniel* 8/21  
Rob and Janet Beiswenger, son *Jared* 8/17  
Dorothy & Jack Bert, son *Matthias* 8/16  
Jovanna & Joseph Bevilacqua, son *Donato "Danny" Bevilacqua* 8/20  
Richard & Jo Bewley, son *Kevin Bewley* 8/24  
Thomas & Janet Cleary, son *Ryan* 8/21  
Joane Cooper, son *Ben* 8/2, and daughter *Katy* 8/2  
Evelyn M. Corrado, son *John A. Corrado* 8/5  
Allison Crowder, daughter *Amber* 8/8  
Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr., son *David* 8/26  
Lisa & David Dibello, son *Joey* 8/14  
Jim and Patty Duffy, son *Michael Duffy* 8/8  
Nancy & David Dykty, brother *Jim Sutton* 8/7  
Tom & Irene Edmunds, son *Kyle Derek Edmunds* 8/1  
Mary Lou Harrison, son *Lance 'Scott' Harrison* 8/4  
Danielle Hemmench Ricci, boyfriend *Ryan* 8/21  
Beatrice K Hildebrandt, son *John R. Hildebrandt* 8/26  
Marie & Ken Hofmockel, son *Douglas Hofmockel* 8/27  
Jan & Dan Jackson, son *John Jackson* 8/18  
Michael & Betsy Jarrett, son *Michael Jarrett* 8/13  
Vern & Joyce Kaiser, son *Michael* 8/10  
Joan Kingslake, daughter *Ann Kingslake Woods* 8/3  
Sue Lawlor, son *Jim* 8/24  
Kathleen & John Leeper, son *Shaun Michael Leeper* 8/17  
Janet Leflar, son *Scott* 8/11  
John & Nancy Logue, daughter *Heather Logue* 8/16  
Timothy & Maxine Lurowist, daughter *Kristine* 8/24  
Mary Mac Farland, son *Marc* 8/4  
Bonnie Macdonald, youngest son *R. Scott Geddes* 8/30  
Mary MacFarland, son *Marc* 8/4  
Anna E Marchese, son *Matthew Paul Marchese* 8/28  
Diane Mazzagatti, son *John Pirocchi, Jr.* 8/3  
Sue McMaster, cousin *Patty* 8/30  
Alfred J. & Joan Michini, son *Alfred J. Michini, II* 8/2  
Alexandra Milas, daughter *Nicole Penelope Wiseley* 8/23  
Andrew Miller, daughter *Perri* 8/21  
Kathleen Mitchel, daughter *Danielle* 8/21  
John B. & Lillian Neff, son *Patrick Neff* 8/30

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS CONTINUED**

Carol & Dennis, son *Michael O'Connor* - 8/23/99  
Sharon Ott, daughter *Amber* 8/12  
Joan Palumbo, son *Michael* - 10/13  
Marie Poulsen, grandson *Jerry August Warfel* 8/12  
Chris Poulsen, nephew *Jerry* 8/12  
Sharyn & Joe Pozzuolo, son *Joey Brad Pozzuolo* 8/26  
Joe & Marti Purifico, son *Jeffrey* 8/3  
Elise Rice, son *Raymond Anthony Rice* 8/2  
Bonnie Rosen, son *Troy* 8/30  
Becky Rotkowski, brother *Brian* 8/17  
Marie Schmeltzer, son *Sam "Sonny" Schmeltzer* 8/22  
Pamela Schneibolk, brother *Douglas Hofmockel* 8/27  
Harry & Carol Schultz, son *Brian Andrew Schultz* 8/23  
Janet & Jonathan Schultz, brother *Marc Ernest Stein* 8/17  
Susan Snyder, son *Brian* 8/24  
Lorraine Spear, daughter *Kimberly Jean Spear* 8/15  
Susan & Ron Spencer, son *Rob* 8/21  
Elaine & Joe Stillwell, daughter *Margaret Mary O'Connor* 8/23  
Karen & Alan Stoner, daughter *Holly Patricia Stoner* 8/11  
Fred & Irene Sutton, son *Jim Sutton* 8/7  
Tracey Sutton-Vitabile, brother *Jim Sutton* 8/7  
Pety Suy Matthew Kuchler, son *Ethan* 8/22  
Hellmut Theil, son *Hellmut Theil, Jr.* 8/2  
Thomas & Sara Thiermann, daughter *Heather Bruce Thiermann* 8/26  
Akhil & Judy Tripathi, son *Sunil* 8/29  
Tina Ulshafer, son *Jimmy* 8/22  
Pat Villante, daughter *Patty* 8/30  
Andy & Peg Yanoviak, daughter *Elizabeth "Betsy" Hershman* 8/6/  
Pat Zimmerman, son *Bernard Zimmerman* 8/29

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

Emily L. Alm, son *Bryan W.* - 8/23  
Chip Arena, son *Nick* - 8/1  
Lisa Bellopede, son *Johnny* - 8/12  
Dorothy & Jack Bert, son *Matthias* - 8/29  
Tom & Kathy Biggar, granddaughter *Ava Nobles* - 8/28  
Joe & Maryann Bucci, son *Dante* - 8/13  
Joann & Gary Chavez, son *Christopher Dale Chavez* - 8/4  
Mary & John Chelius, son *John J. Chelius, Jr.* - 8/24  
Wendy Coleman, daughter *Gabrielle* - 8/18  
Liz & Scott Conaghan, brother *Jan* - 8/27  
Joane Cooper, son *Ben* - 8/2  
Jean & Bill Cotter, son *Patrick Cotter* - 8/11  
Carol Curtiss, grandson *Kurt* - 8/20  
Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr., son *G. Robert Daily, Jr.* - 8/10  
Kimberly De Simone, daughter *Lacey* - 8/13

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED**

**Antoinette & John DiDonato**, son *John, Jr.* - 8/17  
**Richard & Martha Fenoglio**, daughter *Judith Fenoglio Daw* - 8/6  
**Mary Field**, daughters *Lindsay Field* - 8/19 and *Karolin Field* - 8/13  
**Lisa Foos**, son *Curtis* - 8/12  
**Denise & Edward Frazier**, son *Akhir* - 8/25  
**Molly Gehring**, son *Daniel* - 8/26  
**Angela Giannantonio**, son *Anthony* - 8/2  
**Stephanie Grier**, son *John "JD" Grier* - 8/17  
**Tim & Rosemarie Griffiths**, son *Timothy Griffiths* - 8/17  
**Tom & Judy Hahn**, daughter *Erica Hilley* - 8/23  
**Janet Higgins**, son *Nicholas* - 8/1  
**Joan Jagers**, son *John Costello* - 8/18  
**Lori Joseph**, son *Andy* - 8/29  
**Janet & Dave Keller**, son *Joseph E.* - 8/21 & brother *Thomas A. Keller* - 8/10  
**Greg & Anita Lewicki**, son *Eric Stephen Lewicki* - 8/20  
**John & Nancy Logue**, daughter *Heather Logue* - 8/23  
**Kathleen & Hugh Martin, Jr.**, son *Colin John "C.J." Martin* - 8/16  
**Laurie, Lee, Samantha Maxwell**, son, son, brother *Dan* - 8/21  
**Jeff and Kathy McCarron**, daughter *Sarah* - 8/14/  
**Robert & Marjorie Meckley**, son *Douglas Meckley* - 8/16  
**Kathleen Mitchel**, daughter *Danielle* - 8/21  
**Carol & Dennis O'Connor**, son *Michael O'Connor* - 8/23  
**Patricia Peraino**, brother *Anthony* - 8/2  
**Susan Pollock**, son *Brendan Rosko* - 8/17  
**Marge Randolph**, son *Doug Fixter* - 10/12 and husband *Bob Fixter* - 8/18  
**Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert**, mother (Bubbles) *Theresa Volpe* - 8/23  
**Thelma Rosen**, son *Thomas Grisafi* - 8/24  
**Susan & John Rutland**, son *Justin Rutland* - 8/30  
**Carol Sannella**, son *David Sannella* - 8/31  
**Rosemarie Scott-Griffiths**, stepson *Timothy F. Griffiths* - 8/17  
**Marie Shippen**, son *Michael Morgan* - 8/29  
**Robert & Nell Shoemaker**, daughter *Brynn Shoemaker* - 8/9  
**Edie Smith**, son *John Seddon "Sed" Wilson* - 8/20  
**Linda Sposato**, daughter *Bernadette Funaro* - 8/24  
**Elaine & Joe Stillwell**, daughter *Margaret Mary O'Connor* - 8/2  
son *Denis E. O'Connor, III* - 8/6  
**Walter & Irene Stolarczyk**, daughter *Barbara Stolarczyk* - 8/10  
**Juan & Casey Terrero**, son *Jalen* - 8/31  
**Judy Tomarelli**, son *Daniel Robert Tomarelli* - 8/10  
**Jack, Bobbie and Ross Trotter**, daughter/sister *Megan* - 8/26  
**Steven Tucker**, son *Patrick Ryan* - 8/18  
**Kevin Welde**, brother *John Welde* - 8/14  
**Carolyn & Tom Yuhas**, son *Eric Whitelock* - 8/17

## SHARED THOUGHTS ON HOPE THROUGH SHARING

Many bereaved parents and siblings attend Compassionate Friends National & Regional Conferences. As we share with each other, it is obvious that hope brings us together. The very fact we are there means we want to help ourselves. Many speakers & workshop presenters come at their own expense, to help others better understand their grief. There are very newly bereaved and many with distance from their grief, but all are there with hope to help themselves, or to attend leadership workshops, so they can come back with new insights on how to help others. Many attendees are fragile with fresh grief and only have a glimmer of hope, but they come to build on what they have.

There are times in our grief when we feel we cannot survive, and the intense pain can cause such momentary despondence that we don't want to survive. The gentle encouragement of those who are further down the path can give us hope that we can make it. They help to build self-confidence by telling us that tears, anger, guilt, fear, low self-esteem and all those painful aspects of grief are normal and we need to deal with them. We have learned that the best way to get past such feelings is to express them. It is very helpful to share with someone who has experienced and know the depth of despair it takes to get through grief.

We know our tears can be very warm and bring solace, or they can come from a raging anger for the loss of our child or sibling, or the injustice that life brings. We also know they can be private or shared. But, the one thing most of us have learned, they are very healing, and cleansing. Shedding tears does not mean we have lost hope. Mourning helps us to accept (but not approve) of the situation we are in. We are recognizing the fact our loved one is gone, and how we will miss them. As Sascha Wagner writes, "Grief cannot be conquered like an enemy. Grief can only be changed from pain... to hope... from hope... to deeper life". This cycle is necessary to go on with life and eventually face the challenge of our tomorrows.

It is difficult, but we must allow ourselves to feel the pain of grief. It is normal to cry, to be enraged, to be confused, and sad. But, we have found strength in sharing. It can help to prevent self-pity. And no matter how dark our path, we learn we can still believe in rainbows. For it is hope that can eventually overcome our nightmare and bring dreams back into our lives, so we can again cherish the love and loved ones around us. We know all this comes so very slowly. We must take time and be patient and first learn to stand, before we can walk.

**Hopefully you will try to attend the E PA Regional Conference (see page 3) in King of Prussia, PA October 9 –11, 2015, registration forms are available on the Valley Forge website, July newsletter pages 10-15. Where you can take the hand of a Compassionate Friend and not try walking alone. If you are further along in your grief, PLEASE COME to support the more fragile ones in their fresh grief.**

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

**TO MY BIG BROTHER**

You were the best big brother.  
 You were such a true true friend.  
 You were someone to whom I could always  
 talk and always could depend.

Its hard to believe that you are not here.  
 Smiling, laughing ... Oh, I feel a tear.

I think back on many times gone by  
 and I just keep asking myself, why?  
 But, it makes me smile and it makes me laugh.  
 To think back on sweet memories of the past.

Moving up from Osborne Street  
 and joining a new school.  
 Greg and Grant were always there  
 even when we joined the pool.

Then we went off to Ocean City  
 to spend our summers at the shore.  
 The sand would drift the ocean roll  
 and the gulls would often soar.

I watched you go through LaSalle,  
 and then off to Penn State too.  
 I was your little sister  
 who was so very proud of you.

I think of you quite often.  
 For your thoughts I'd give a penny.  
 Did you know I had a son last year.  
 I know he'd love his uncle Denny.

You'll be with me forever.  
 And although we are apart.  
 You live forever in my memories  
 and always in my heart.

**Kimberly Kearns Minetola**, Phila., PA  
 for her brother, **Dennis Kearns, Jr.**

9/18/57 - 9/28/93

**EACH LIFE AFFECTS ANOTHER'S**

We may not always realize that everything we do  
 Affects not only our lives but touches others, too.  
 A single happy smile can always brighten up the  
 day

for anyone who happens by.  
 And a little bit of thoughtfulness that shows  
 someone you care,  
 Creates a ray of sunshine for both of you to share.

Yes, every time you offer someone a helping hand,  
 Every time you show a friend you care and  
 understand.

Every time you have a kind and gentle word to  
 give,  
 You help someone find beauty in this precious  
 life we live,

For happiness brings happiness,  
 and loving ways bring love,  
 And giving is the treasure  
 that contentment is made of.

*Author Unknown*

**I'M TIRED OF BEING STRONG**

“Forgive me Lord, but I'm tired of being some of  
 the things I've tried so hard to be ... I'm tired of  
 being so capable, so efficient. I'm tired of the  
 compliment, ‘You are such a strong person, I  
 admire your strength’. I'm tired of being  
 considered so patient and understanding that  
 people dump their troubles on me. I'm tired of  
 being so cheerful. I want to be free to be cross and  
 complain and not get a ‘buck up, old chap’ routine.  
 I'm tired of being considered so independent, so  
 strong. Sometimes, at least sometimes, Lord, I  
 want to be weak and helpless, able to lean on  
 somebody, able to cry and be comforted. Lord, I  
 guess there are just times when I want to be a child  
 again, running to climb on my mother's lap.”

*Marjorie Holmes* “Hold Me Up a Little”

## GRATITUDE: THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

I am convinced that the real key to happiness is gratitude. I did not come upon this insight. I learned it from Dennis Prager, a wonderful and gifted man who is both author and talk show host for KNBC radio in Los Angeles. I give him all the credit. But I have thought a lot about this idea after my son, *Mark*, died seven years ago.

At first, I was offended by people who smiled or even laughed during The Compassionate Friends meetings. These were the people who seemed to have somehow re-entered the land of the living. How dare they greet each other with hugs. How dare they laugh. How dare they appear normal when their children have died. But over the last seven years. I have learned three valuable lessons:

**Life goes on and we must too.** Gradually the pain eases and the warm memories replace the sadness. Gradually we return to life. One day we find that it is 11:00 in the morning and we have not thought about our child yet. At first we feel guilt. But then we also realize we are going forward. We will never forget. But we decide that the loss of our child will not be the all-consuming factor in our life. We choose to enjoy friends again. We choose to go out to dinner again. We choose to laugh again. I am convinced that this is what our children would want for us. The pain does not bring our child back. It only makes us miserable without end.

**Become grateful for what we have, not focused on what we have lost.** I see people in our chapter meetings who have gone through “every parent’s nightmare” and want no part of life again. But, I ask that these compassionate friends also think about the ways they have been blessed, as well as hurt. In my experience, most people have more to be thankful for than they realize, health, other children, a loving family, a career they enjoy, financial security, life in a free country, a faith that works for them, a true best friend, a spouse whom they love. Nobody has it all. But compared to most of the world, we have a lot.

**The life we now lead will be better than it would have been.** That does not make our child’s death a good thing. It just means that our child’s life mattered, and it has changed us forever. It means that in some small way the world will be better because our child lived, and we are the ones who can make it so. We have a new sense of priorities. We don’t “sweat the small stuff.” We know what matters because we know what is irreplaceable. And we know how deeply other people hurt, because we, too, have been there. “We know how they feel.”

And when our life is different and better because our child lived, then that child is never forgotten. Each of us would do anything in the world to go back in time, but we can’t. It is up to us now to go forward, and we can.

Richard Edler,  
Served on the The Compassionate Friends  
National Board of Directors,  
during his tenure he served as President.

**TAKE THE TIME . . . TO HURT, TO CRY . . .**

Wordless and worldless -- Endless and forever, grief goes on --  
It takes the best -- And leaves the rest an empty shell -- Life is Hell.

David was dead four months when I wrote that in my journal. Time is my enemy. As I envisioned the future of my life, I saw only a vast expanse of desert - dry, parched, and empty.

It is now a year and a half since David's death, and I recognize that time has become my friend. Now, when I look to the future, I see hills and valleys - struggles, to be sure, but, also, moments spent at the summit. What has happened? Time is healing.

**Take the time . . .**

**To hurt . . .** The pain is great and the temptation to run away is great. But, there is no avoiding, no escaping the hard feelings. If you cover them over, they only re-surface later in a potentially more destructive way.

**To cry . . .** It may feel like once started, you can never stop. But you have every reason to cry, and when you have cried enough, you will stop.

**To "fall apart." . . .** If you have a broken leg, you would not expect yourself to function at full capacity right away. Your wound is much greater - you have a broken heart. Confusion, inability to concentrate, lethargy, imagined glimpses of your dead child are a normal part of the grieving process and do not mean that you are going crazy.

**To be "selfish." . . .** Mourning is an egocentric time, a time for turning inward and introspection.

**To "identify" . . .** and seek out resources in your environment that can help: friends, clergy, Compassionate Friends, a counselor. Talk to them.

Having done all that - having lingered in the valley of the shadow - it is time to begin the climb out.

**Take the time . . .**

**To engage again** in activities that were once pleasurable. They may hold no joy the first few times; someday they will and that will be all right.

**To laugh without guilt.** Savor the good moments in the day, brief though they may be. Through your child, you can re-discover the beauty of a sunset.

**To care for your health.** Grieving is a physio-, as well, as psycho-logical stress. Your body needs protection.

**To be patient.** Wanting to live again and learning to live again takes time. The path out of the other side of the valley is steep, and we all often stumble. But with time - time spent doing the work of grief - you can find the path to a world made richer by your love.



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

Valley Forge, PA Chapter  
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### **...A bereavement organization**

**For parents, siblings & families**

**We offer friendship, love and understanding**

**We talk, we listen, we share, we care**

### **The Compassionate Friends Credo**

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 all 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.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2007