

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## Inside Valley Forge

Meetings are on the first Thursday of every month, at 7:45 PM (ending at 9:30 PM) We meet at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Founders Hall, Valley Forge Road and Henderson Rds., King of Prussia, PA.

For info call Rhonda @ (484) 919-0820

### Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of Interest.

Meeting - 12/2/2021

Event - 12/12/2021 - Worldwide Candle Lighting Service at 2 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

Next Meeting - 01/6/2022

**SAVE THE DATE— 45th National Convention, August 5 - 7, 2022 in Houston, TX**



## December 2021

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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 editor.

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 the 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 Rhonda Gomez

## 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.

## NEW FRIENDS

We welcome our newly bereaved friends, sorry for the cause that brings you. We all have been in the depths of despair, and offer unconditional love and understanding to all of you, it sometimes takes several meetings to feel the full benefit of group sharing. We offer confidentiality, unconditional love and understanding to all of you.

### 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.

#### The Chapter

### LOVE GIFTS

Irene Sutton — In Memory of her Fred (husband) and Jim (son)

Kenneth (Steve) and Freda Gross — In Memory of their daughter's birthday, Linda Joy Gross

Sharon Harvey — In Memory of her son, Christopher

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**Missed In November Newsletter for Birthdays - Tracey Hawley — son — Sean — 11/2**

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### THE HOLIDAY SEASON:

Getting through the holidays can be a difficult task for bereaved parents. We as bereaved parents need to handle the holidays in a way that we feel is best for ourselves and our families. There are many things that bereaved parents can do to help ease the pain of the holiday season. Below are some suggestions that we thought may be helpful for you:

1. PLAN to be with people you enjoy.
2. VISIT the cemetery and take a Christmas tree to the grave. Decorate it with popcorn or food for the birds.
3. DO SOMETHING for someone else. Give a gift or make a donation in memory of your child. This can help to keep their memory alive.
4. INCLUDE YOUR CHILD IN CONVERSATIONS -- once others realize that you are comfortable talking about your child, they can relate stories that will add to your memories of him or her.
5. DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE CHANGES It really can make things less painful. Change the time you open packages, or when the holiday meal is served.
6. KEEP IN MIND THE FEELINGS of our other children and family members. Let your needs be known to others and try to understand their needs as well.
7. MOST IMPORTANT, it is pointless to pretend that everything is the same as it was. As you accept your loss, give yourself the necessary time for grieving during the holidays.
8. TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME. Be realistic, and realize that we all need to set limits to do those things which are meaningful to ourselves and our families.

Author Unknown

## **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.

## **Anniversaries**

**Nina Ansel - Jenny - daughter - 12/21**

**Carole Bailey - Matthew J. Bailey - son - 12/21**

**Richard & Jo Bewley - Kevin Bewley - son - 12/29**

**Lisa Bledy - Danielle Bledy - sister - 12/4**

**Marbeth Blocklinger - Parker - grandson - 12/13 - Bryam Jr - grandson - 12/13**

**Becky & Frank Clark - Pat - son - 12/4**

**Tracy & Mike Collins - Krystal Chuck - daughter - 12/5**

**Carole and Kevin Creighton - Ryan Kent Creighton - son - 12/6**

**Reno & Bonnie Crescimone - Jonathan - son - 12/21**

**Bill & Donna Deasey - Michelle Deasey - daughter - 12/19**

**Helen Deery - Ronald J. Deery, Jr. - son - 12/20**

**Susan Dehlinger - Amy M Dehlinger - daughter - 12/7**

**Antoinette & John DiDonato - Kenneth (Kenny) - son - 12/5**

**Karen Donaldson - Willow Ann - daughter - 12/28**

**Maureen & Jim Fleagle - Brian - son - 12/11**

**Lee & Patricia Grossman - Rachel Leah - daughter - 12/5**

**Giuliana Hilend - Patrick Andrew Hilend - son - 12/10**

**Michelle Hillstrom - Jen - daughter - 12/20**

**Enid M. Irizarry - Lisette M. Molina - daughter - 12/25**

**Carl and Dorothy Johnson-Speight - Carlana Speight - daughter - 12/13 - Khaaliq Jabbar Johnson - son - 12/6**

**Joan Kingslake - Ann Kingslake Woods - daughter - 12/31**

**Howard & Stacy Koller - Kaitlin - daughter - 12/18**

**Teresa & Bill Lattanze - William Noel Lattanze - son - 12/25**

**Barb & Larry Lauchle - Gray - son - 12/18**

**Tracy Lukens - Parker - son - 12/13 - Bryan Jr - son - 12/13**

**Timothy & Maxine Lurowist - Kristine - daughter - 12/24**

# Anniversaries - Cont'd

**Alfred J. & Joan Michini - Alfred J. Michini, II— son - 12/14**

**Alexandra Milas - Nicholas Stathes - mom's brother - 12/19**

**Gerald & Margaret Milice - Gerald Milice - son - 12/11**

**Greg and Mary Miller - David - son - 12/3**

**Audrey Morasco - Christopher Morasco - son - 12/27**

**Carol & Dennis O'Connor - Jack Coladonato - brother - 12/3**

**Roy Redman - Linda Inez Redman - daughter - 12/16**

**Jill & Richard Reich - Patrick - son - 12/28**

**Tony & Toni Riccardi - David Riccardi - son - 12/1**

**Elise Rice - Raymond Anthony Rice - son - 12/9**

**Daune Ring - Chloe - daughter - 12/29**

**Margaret & Robert Rooney - Sharon Rooney - daughter - 12/8**

**Beth Schad - Gage - son - 12/27**

**Art & Carol Silverman - Cheryl Beth Silverman - daughter - 12/16**

**Mike & Beverly Smith - Ryan - son - 12/11**

**Lisa M Spinks - Robert - brother - 12/9**

**Ronda Stansbery - Susan Anne Stansbery Stamman - daughter - 12/22**

**Fred & Irene Sutton - Pearl Collins - mother (Fred) - 12/19**

**Frank Yanni - Delores - wife - 12/9**

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## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS WORLD WIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

Held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 12th, The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe as they light candles for one hour to honor and remember children and siblings who have died at any age from any cause.

As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

### GUEST SPEAKER - JOE PURIFICO

Joe & Marti's twenty year old son, Jeffrey, died January 2003 in an auto accident. They have been members of the Valley Forge Chapter since February 2003.

**As many friends and family as you like to bring with you — all are welcome!!!!**

## SHARED THOUGHTS ON LOOKING FOR YOUR GIFT

Newly bereaved families often face the holidays with fear and trepidation. Just the fact, holidays continue to go on, can cause outrage. Our sadness is monumental, and causes our bodies to resist moving on. We need to be gentle with ourselves; we are going through an emotional rehabilitation. Holidays often renew our grief, even if we are a distance from fresh grief.

We need to selectively choose what traditions are important to our family. If we over commit, we set ourselves up for a let down when we cannot meet our goals. If you have some traditions that are very important and you are not physically up to doing them, you will find friends and extended family will feel honored if you ask for their help. Most people want to help you get through the holidays, but don't know what to do. Give them the opportunity to feel they are helpful in your healing.

Grieving cannot be put on the shelf until the holidays are over. We need to take time to feel our grief, and express our sadness. We also need to take time to try and put a bit of normality in our lives. We must remember it is not disrespectful to laugh. I'm sure our loved one would want us to surround ourselves with caring people who can help us through the holidays. A caring supportive person is one who encourages us to be the best we can be, not one who expects us to be as we used to be.

Our healing will eventually cause our pain to move out and make room for our loved ones memories. We learn to make a new life for ourselves. Holidays get better and we learn how to live again.

We tend to think of life's richest moments as being the joyous, fun filled, carefree days prior to losing our children and siblings. But, as I search for the most meaningful things that have given me strength and a real appreciation for life, they certainly do include the pain, overcoming my despair, losing my son, grandson, and 6 siblings. We cherish the friendships that doesn't always demand a smiling face, and those with the warm touch that says, "share your pain, let me be a part of your grief, don't worry about making us uneasy with tears, we have all been there". Much healing can take place through sharing as we learn to be very honest and courageous with our feelings, which helps us to find hope. Hope helps to restore our love for life, and gives us the strength to survive.

This holiday we will all miss our loved ones, who are no longer with us. Though it has been through much pain, you probably have never been so close to your child or sibling, or shared such a large part of your life with them. We hope the memories that ache with pain, can also bring you thoughts of love. For those of us who are further removed from our early grief, who can look back and appreciate the strength for our struggle, the compassion from seeing other's pain, wanting to become functional human beings again so we can contribute to making a better world, are gifts our children and siblings have given to us for our survival. These gifts are greater than any fancy bow tied box can contain. Look for your gifts and cherish them.

God Bless, Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge, PA

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## THE ANSWER IS BECAUSE

Early in the evening  
Reluctant to the dawn  
Scot would choose to die  
Before the early morn  
He chose the final method  
The one that hurts the worst  
He chose to die the loss -  
The loss of self worth.

I miss him something terrible  
I wish he knew I cared  
I wish he knew I loved him  
And really would have shared.  
I hope he's happy now  
I hope he's found his peace  
I hope he's found the things he wants  
The things he really needs.

Stacy Blumenthal, in memory her brother  
TCF, St. Louis, MO.

# BIRTHDAYS

Lori Bartholomew - brother - Matthew - 12/17  
 Tom & Kathy Biggar - granddaughter - Ava Nobles - 12/13  
 Eleanor Brennan - grandson - Jonathan Masiak - 12/20  
 Ben & Cathy Breskman - son - Brian - 12/11  
 Libby Cavallaro - sister - Theresa - 12/29  
 Becky & Frank Clark - son - Pat - 12/16  
 Jean & Bill Cotter - son - Patrick Cotter - 12/20  
 Bobbie Coyle - son - Whitney Coyle - 12/23  
 Peter De Moerloose - daughter - Olivia - 12/30  
 Tom & Marge Del Rosario - son - Dominic - 12/14  
 Antoinette & John DiDonato - son - Kenneth (Kenny) - 12/15  
 Joseph & Patsy Dooley - son - Peter J. Dooley - 12/22  
 Ed & Sue Duffy - son - Peter - 12/12  
 Justine Ellinger - daughter - Keira Ellinger - 12/11  
 Bob & Dena Filipone - daughter - Denise - 12/13  
 Mary Ann Flocco - sister - Barbara - 12/22  
 Bonnie Gardner - daughter - Michelle - 12/16  
 Suze Goldberg - Uncle - Neal - 12/14  
 Mary Green - ,Paul Green - 12/2  
 Jack & Freda Gross - daughter - Linda Joy Gross - 12/28  
 Ginger Jarrett - daughter - Adrienne - 12/5  
 Joan Kellett - son - Daniel Thomas Kellett - 12/7  
 Wendy Kuhn - brother - David - 12/19/  
 Teresa & Bill Lattanze - daughter - Jodi Noell Lattanze - 12/19  
 Frank & Laura Lincicome - son - Daniel - 12/22  
 Sue, Dave, Dan, and Lauren McCarthy - son and brother - Brian McCarthy - 12/25  
 Kevin & Nancy McKelvey - son - Michael - 12/4  
 Fran & Kathy Moran - daughter - Denise Nicole Moran - 12/31  
 Ann Murray - son - Brian Rapoport - 12/2  
 Bonnie Nimerfroh - son - David - 12/19  
 Jenn Nobles - daughter - Ava Ruth Marie - 12/13  
 Maurice & Ruth Onraet - son - Thomas - 12/19



## **Birthdays — continued**

**Betty Jane Peters Neilson - son - Martin A Peters - 12/8**  
**Maureen & David Rich - daughter - Mallory Kirby Rich - 12/4**  
**E. Pearl & Ernest Smith - son - Tony - 12/23**  
**Eileen Smith - son - Craig - 12/17**  
**John & Rose Stanley - daughter - Susan Stanley - 12/4**  
**Ronda Stansbery - daughter - Susan Anne Stansbery Stamman - 12/22**  
**Luanne Stetler - grandson - Jordyn - 12/25**  
**Edward & Mary Stimson - son - Keith Stimson - 12/29**  
**Morgan E Taylor - sister - Devan - 12/25**  
**Brooke Test - sister - Devan - 12/25**  
**Judy Tomarelli - son - Daniel Robert Tomarelli - 12/19**  
**Laura & Leo Weishew - brother - Steven McGowan - 12/28**  
**John & Ceciia Zisk - son - Jacob - 12/13**

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### A LETTER TO MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Thank you for not expecting too much from me this holiday season. It will be our first Christmas without our child and I have all I can do coping with the "spirit" of the holiday on the radio, TV, in the newspapers and stores. We do not feel joyous and trying to pretend this Christmas is going to be like the last will be impossible because we are missing one.

Our family traditions will be too painful for us to continue this year. Please understand this and maybe some Christmas in the future we will have these traditions again.

Please allow me to talk about my child, if I feel a need. Don't be uncomfortable with my tears. My heart is breaking and the tears are a way of letting out my sadness.

I plan to do something special in memory of my child. Please recognize my need to do this in order to keep our memories alive. My fear is not that I'll forget, but that you will.

Please don't criticize me if I do something that you don't think is normal. I'm a different person now and it may take a long time before this different person reaches an acceptance of my child's death.

As I survive the stages of grief, I will need your patience and support, especially during these holiday times and the "special" days throughout the year. Thank you for not expecting too much from me this holiday season.

Love, A bereaved parent, Madison, WI

We need not walk alone, we are the Compassionate Friends, 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.

### The Compassionate Friends Credo



*A bereavement organization  
For parents, siblings and families  
We offer friendship, love and understanding  
We talk, we listen, we share, we care.*

Valley Forge Chapter  
of the Compassionate Friends  
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**The  
Compassionate  
Friends Inc.**

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