

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 - 2/3/2022

Next Meeting - 03/3/2022

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



February 2022

Chapter Leader:

Rhonda Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore PA 19343
(484) 919-0820 Chapter cell phone
Email: rhonda@tcfvalleyforge.org

Newsletter Publisher:

Rhonda Gomez

Love Gift Acknowledgements:

Connie Nolan

Treasurer: Joe Purifico

Librarian: Carole Bailey

National Headquarters

48660 Pontiac Trail
3930808
Wixom, MI 48393

Email: Compassionatefriends.org

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.

No new friends

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

Gerald and Nancy Hall in memory of their son, Douglas
 Joan Kellett in memory of her son, Danny
 Sharon Harvey in honor her son, Christopher
 Sara Kresge (great grandparent), Matthew and Erica Puskas in memory of their son, Grant
 Carol Sannella in memory her son, David and her husband, Robert

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

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

We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefiting from receiving it.

We hope it is a help to you while going through your grief, giving you better understanding of your feelings, and letting you know **“We need not walk alone”**.

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

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

When love is strong and runs deep it pulsates with an energy that cannot be stopped, not even in death's grip. When two souls are connected and one departs from this world, the separation may seem final, but in truth the relationship transcends time. Love, like a river, flows eternal, and it embraces all those who swim in its streams.

Author Unknown

Tears don't erase all the hurt, Tears don't bring the dead to life, But tears do help to ease the pain.

Phillip W. Williams

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

- Gary & Phyllis Adler - Matthew - son - 2/18**
- Marilynn Anton - Douglas Hofmockel - cousin/godmother - 2/7**
- Nina Bernstein - Andrew Voluck - son - 2/9**
- Donna & Gregory Class - Megan Maria Class - daughter - 2/9**
- Allison Crowder - Amber - daughter - 2/21**
- Frank & Linda Cymbala - Nicholas cymbala - son - 2/5**
- Carol Dawidziuk - Rachel - daughter - 2/27**
- Emilie Degville - Madeline - daughter - 2/8**
- Jennifer Dixon - Graham - son - 2/14**
- Harold & Marcia Epstein - Andrew Voluck - grandson - 2/9**
- Danielle Evelyn - Samir - son - 2/12**
- Jack & Freda Gross - Linda Joy Gross - daughter - 2/25**
- Frank Harms - Tyler - son - 2/16**
- Kimberlee Hills - Chuck Hills - brother - 2/24**
- Marie Hofmockel - Douglas Hofmockel - son - 2/7**
- Margaret Huss - Daniel - son - 2/27**
- Tash Jackson - Peter Simmons Jr - cousin - 2/14**
- Ginger Jarrett - Adrienne - daughter - 2/4**
- Jack & Stacy Kabic - Brithy - daughter - 2/3**
- Vern & Joyce Kaiser - Michael - son - 2/2**
- Barbara & Michael Kaner - Max Steven Kaner - son - 2/7**
- Sandi Kensicki - Rose - sister - 2/5**
- Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner - Anna Kreiner - daughter - 2/10**
- Lynette Lampmann - Shawn - son - 2/13**
- Sue Lawlor - Jim Sinha - son - 2/17**
- Janet Leflar - Scott - son - 2/22**
- Mary MacFarland - Marc - son - 2/12**
- Carl & Josie Malitsky - Cynthia Malitsky - daughter - 2/8**

Anniversaries – Cont'd

James & Mary Beth Mattiford - Scott Mattiford - son - 2/26
 Pat & Harry McCullough - Brian - son - 2/10
 Debra McKinley Hastings - Ken - brother - 2/17
 William & Carol Meehan - Patrick W. Meehan - son - 2/11
 Alexandra Milas - Demitra Vallianos - mom's sister - 2/17
 Betty (Elizabeth) Miller - Dick Miller - husband - 2/8
 Andrew Miller - Perri - daughter - 2/5
 Jeffrey & Christine Miller - Teresa Leanne Miller - daughter - 2/20
 Kathleen Mitchel - Jeffrey Hathaway - brother - 2/27
 Fran & Kathy Moran - Denise Nicole Moran - daughter - 2/3
 Aminah Na'im - Dawann - son - 2/14
 Dale & Helen Ninneman - Dale Ninneman II - son - 2/29
 Carol Phipps - Casey - daughter - 2/16
 Matthew & Erica Puskas — Grant - son — 2/20
 Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert - Thomas Reinert Jr. - son - 2/19
 Susan Reynolds - Craig Anderson - son - 2/3
 Pamela Schneibolk - Douglas Hofmockel - brother - 2/7
 Felicia Skalecki - Zuko Iroh McNulty - 2/4
 Penny & Steve Stanaitis - Mikayla Faith - daughter - 2/20
 Luanne Stetler - Jordyn - grandson - 2/25
 Ellen & Frank Svitek - Kate Elizabeth Svitek - daughter - 2/9
 Mary Ellen Swider - Kelly Swider - daughter - 2/8
 Marilyn Toole - Ted Toole - son - 2/26
 Laura & Leo Weishew - Steven McGowan - brother - 2/2
 Kathryn & Pat White - Steven White - son - 2/9
 Terry & Bob Wolfe - Steven Moyer - son and stepson - 2/15
 Frank Yanni - David Yanni - son - 2/10
 Rose Yanni - David Yanni - nephew - 2/10
 Anthony & Cindy Zalesky - Max Zalesky - grandson - 2/12

Look at yourself in the mirror. Say to yourself "It is hard to lose a child." Say to yourself "It is reasonable to hurt." Say to yourself "Healing takes time." BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

Sascha Wagner

SHARED THOUGHTS ON TEACHING GRIEF WITH LOVE

Sometimes society sets an unacceptable length of time for our grief. It is very difficult for those who have not experienced the loss of a child or sibling to know the depth of despair we must go through. They don't want our pain to become their pain, so they try to get us to concentrate on happier thoughts to ease their uncomfortable feelings. Frequently they are being all they can be to us, they are not capable of knowing our needs. We don't know how to help ourselves, so it is unfair to expect friends and families to know the right thing to say and do. Perhaps, we should review our responses prior to our loss. Did we know what was appropriate, or did we too, try to do things to make them "get on with their life"?

Perhaps, it is our responsibility to teach the world about grief. But it must be done in a very positive manner, to be properly received. It is very important to thank those who "allow us to grieve", and for us to express the need we have to do so. Many times friends and families are very frustrated, because they don't know how to help us.

The Compassionate Friends has taught me to be honest, to express my feelings, taking as much time as needed to grieve, speak of my deceased child without apologizing, knowing it is all right to be mad, sad, or glad. Just knowing all feelings are normal, in this very abnormal situation, has contributed much to my healing.

After 30 years, I have built a new world that is tolerable and livable. This world includes all the memories of Doug, there is never a day that passes that I don't remember and speak of him. The memories are fresh, but most times these are pleasant memories of his life, that lasts for moments or minutes, and bring pleasure. I don't have the all consumed raw grief I once knew, and which dominated my life. For me, the healing has come through the freedom of grieving, which I have learned from those before me.

We have learned much about grief, and it needs to be taught to others outside of The Compassionate Friends. You are the experts, you have been there. Teach it with love and not anger, and it will be much better received. It is much more affective to say what you need, rather than condemn for what you did not receive. We at Compassionate Friends treat one another with much love, and we know it works. We should extend that treatment to those we meet outside our group.

Marie Hofmocker, TCF Valley Forge, PA

Compassion

I cry when a tear rolls down your cheek.
 I agonize when you weep.
 I know that you question, I know that you pray.
 That you scream at night in your sleep.
 I'm aware of your quivering voice when you speak.
 Of your blank straightforward stare.
 I know of your pain, your depression, your guilt.
 That you search for "a face" everywhere.
 I watch as you walk with your head bowed low
 With despair written over your face.
 I hear the quick sigh, the internal cry
 I know how you wearily pace.
 I see how you search for a sign, for some hope
 That the light will still shine in your life.
 I know how you live, I know that you die
 From the harsh words that wound like a knife.
 I empathize most with your loneliness now
 Even though you're not always alone.
 I see the rapture as you speak your child's name
 For I have lost a son of my own.

Charmaine Strickle TCF Pittsburgh, PA

BIRTHDAYS

Madeleine Adler - son - J. Peter Adler - 2/5
Donna & Gregory Class - daughter - Megan Maria Class - 2/7
Wendy Coleman - daughter - Gabrielle - 2/19
Liz & Scott Conaghan - brother - Jan - 2/6
Jane Cox - son - bill - 2/21
Bud Cunnane - son - Patrick - 2/14
Jim & Ruth Fairley - son - David Fairley - 2/5
Rochena & Pat Fatale - son - Mark Longan - 2/21
Charlie & Jill Fick - son - Michael Sternberg - 2/10
Frank & Rhonda Gomez - brother - Paul - 2/7
Sandra Greenly - son - Michael Greenly - 2/18
Tim & Rosemarie Griffiths - son - Timothy Griffiths - 2/18
Cathy Grosshanten - son - Gary - 2/16
Lee & Patricia Grossman - daughter - Rachel Leah - 2/2
Jean & James Hayden - son - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - 2/17
Othell & William Heaney - son - Kevin - 2/14
Lorie & Mike Henry - grandson - Blair Henry - 2/29
Kimberlee Hills - brother - Chuck Hills - 2/10
Sigrid Hirschhorn - daughter - Samantha - 2/20
Thomas & Virginia Hoesch - son - William E. Buddy Hoesch - 2/16
Margaret Innes - brother - Frank - 2/14
Joan Jagers - son - John Costello - 2/17
Julie, Kiley, Katie Keenan - daughter/sister - Jordan - 2/17
Deborah Keevill - son - Brandon - 2/23
Shirley Kennedy - son - Philip V. Kennedy - 2/22
Margaret & Edward Kiefski, Sr. - son - Edward Kiefski, Jr. - 2/11
Lynette Lampmann - son - Shawn - 2/10
Marlene & Jerry Lener - ,Daniel - 2/11
Liz & Joe Loeper - son - Jamey - 2/27
Andie Lunkenheimer - brother - Brennan - 2/26
Julie & Richard May - son - William L. May - 2/25
Eileen McCormick - daughter - Lauren - 2/3
Jennifer McGowan Clark - brother - Joseph McGowan - 2/25



Birthdays — continued

Sue McMaster - cousin - Laura - 2/28

Sharmell & Chris McMurray - son - Ryan - 2/17

Kathleen Mitchel - brother - Jeffrey Hathaway - 2/19

Audrey Morasco - son - Christopher Morasco - 2/22

Mary Mulholland - son - Joseph McGowan - 2/25

Marian Mullahy - brother - Matt - 2/28

John & Mary Ann Murphy - daughter - Maureen Murphy - 2/13

Dale & Helen Ninneman - son - Dale Ninneman II - 2/24

Connie Nolan - son - Christopher Nolan - 2/9

Robert & Jean Phillips - son - Robert Phillips - 2/23

Carol Phipps - daughter - Casey - 2/18

Joan & Earl Reigel - daughter - Melissa Reigel - 2/19

Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert - mother (Bubbles) - Theresa Volpe - 2/27

Tony & Toni Riccardi - son - David Riccardi - 2/17

Barbara Rossman - daughter - Kickole Lyn - 2/13

Linda Sandlin - brother - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - 2/17

Rosemarie Scott-Griffiths - stepson - Timothy F. Griffiths - 2/18

Frank and Kay Shinnors - son - Erik Shinnors - 2/22

Felicia Skalecki - ,Zuko Iroh McNulty - 2/4

Janemarie Smith - daughter - Beth Jovanovic - 2/6

Margaret & Wade Stallard - son - Wade Hampton Stallard, III - 2/21

Elaine & Joe Stillwell - son - Denis E. O'Connor, III - 2/4

Nancy Thompson - friend - J. Peter Adler - 2/5

Esperanza & Libardo Toro - daughter - Maria Eugenia Toro - 2/9

Barbara Torrens - brother - Robert Birmele - 2/18

Steven Tucker - son - Steven II - 2/27

Mek Wagner - daughter - Paige - 2/1

X Weaver - grandson - Donald Smith, Jr. - 2/24

Gisela Witte - son - Bruce G. Edlund - 2/24

BELIEVE — Crocuses poke their heads through the crusty snow to let us know the long, bleak winter is ending and spring will come again. So, too, the long bleak winter of your aching, breaking heart will end and spring will come again one day. Be patient – but believe it – your spring will come again.

Betty Stevens, TCF, Baltimore, MD

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.

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 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.

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
Rhonda Gomez
Chapter Leader
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore PA 19343



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Friends Inc.**

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