

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

General Sharing January 2nd, 2020
at 7:45 PM

General Sharing February 6th 2020
at 7:45.



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.

If you donate to the 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.

Please make all checks Payable to:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
Send to Rhonda Gomez

January 2020

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Compassionatefriends.org

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.

NEW FRIENDS

Susan Utain, Her son Alex (35)

Joe & Germaine DePiano their son Luke (17)

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.

LOVE GIFTS

Esperanza & Libardo Toro in memory of our daughter **Marid Eugenia 2/9**

Joan Kellett In memory of my son **Daniel T Kellett 4/29**

Mary Lesheam in memory of my son **Michael 9/16**

Gloria & Jerry Koval in memory of our son **Steven Koval 9/3**

REMINDER

Did you wake up in the morning
with tears in your heart?
And did you say to yourself
"I should not feel like crying
not like this, every morning.

"But you do know the truth, don't you?
When life deals us such a tragic blow,
such enormous damage,
We need many mornings to recover.
We need more than a few moments to heal.

Take for yourself the grace
of one quiet healing-step at a time.
Trying to rush the work of grief,
will slow down your renewal.

You only need to remember
that you will recover some day.
You only need to remember
that we all have our own pace,
and we all move in our own measure.

Healing takes time. *Sascha Wagner*

SHARED THOUGHTS ON HEALING LOVE

When we think of our deceased children and siblings, it is most often attached to our fond memories and love. Sometimes it can even be inter-mingled with anger, particularly if they contributed to their death. The anger is not caused by hate, but by the fact we are now deprived of showing and sharing our love to them. These same tender feelings that brought us joy while our loved ones were alive, cause us to grieve. Our heart knows there will be no more new memories, that is why we hold and cherish those we have so dearly. It is the love remembered that gives us hope in the midst of our sorrow.

It is more the life and love of our children and siblings, rather than the death, that gives us the need to go to Compassionate Friends. It provides a safe haven to speak of those we love, and to share the memories. If the child was too young for physical memories, there are still memories of anticipation of what our child might have been. What to do with our unfinished love, and pain of not seeing the child or sibling experience life outside the womb, or a short childhood, all needs to be shared with love and understanding.

One of the reasons our children and siblings are so sadly missed is because of the love and kindness they showed. Remembering this helps to keep them close and alive in our hearts. One way of honoring our loved ones is by showing love to those around us, particularly our family. Sometimes, this can be very difficult when we are grieving, for the natural thing to do is to lash out at anyone, or anything, that crosses our path. Most of the time a response will be returned in a similar temperament, for the tone we have set with our dialogue.

The whole family is hurting. Parents dreams have been shattered, we have fallen apart to the degree we feel our life can never be put back together again. We know we are not functioning as the stable parent we were, the guilt of letting our surviving children down adds to our pain. We want so badly to remove the pain from the whole family, but we don't even know how to help ourselves. This helpless feeling lowers our self-esteem. The siblings have lost their parents, as they knew them. Many have to cope with a new family structure of being an only child, or now the oldest, or youngest. It takes a lot of love and understanding to get through the horrendous ordeal. Love is a gift that must be exchanged to be effective, we all need it to heal. This is a time for caring, touching and hugging one another. We hope you can give and receive your share.

God Bless, Marie Hofmockel , TCF Valley Forge

The breath of winter
painted fragile stars
on all the windows
of my quiet house.

And there I found
your face,
more fragile even than
the season's art,
a wonder to my eyes.

How can it be
that winter paints
such secret things
in white-and-silver sheen
for those who cry alone
at frosted windows?

Sascha Wagner

I wish I could tell everyone who has lost a loved one how important it is to let themselves, and their family, remember. Forget, if you can, the sickness or tragedy that took them, but give them a place in your life.

My family speaks very naturally of their father and their sister. We remember the fun, the love, and the closeness... We have memories to cherish, and we shouldn't cheat ourselves by not doing that.

I don't mean that we should constantly talk about them, but when something we're doing reminds us of something good that happened when we were still a whole family, we don't hesitate to say so.

Lettie Petrie



QUIET TIME

An important way to push stress out of your life is to take advantage of quiet time. Choose a time when you can be alone with your thoughts and feelings. Sound scary? Read on...

There is a tendency to run from the pain of grief –to keep so busy and push yourself so hard that all you can do is fall in bed at night and go right to sleep. You may keep from feeling the pain, but it will catch up with you in some form in the future. It may be in the form of a disabling disease, frequent colds, a sudden heart attack or grief in years to come.

Stop and...open up the picture album and remember times past.

Take a walk where there were special memories. Sit down during the day and reflect.

At the beginning of these quiet times you may have a rush of feelings. Feel them. You won't break, and nobody has ever cried forever. Once you have gone into them, you will eventually begin to quiet down. At this time you could play some quiet music or put on a tape with some relaxing sounds, such as ocean waves or gentle rainfall.

Rest when you can. During this time your body is trying very hard to heal your emotional wounds and you may tire easily. Take a nap in the middle of the day. Yes, even at your place of work if possible. When I returned to work the week after my son's death, I found a couch in one of the women's rest rooms. I would curl up under a velveteen blanket for about 20 minutes after lunch. That helped me get through the rest of the day. Plus, it was the only place I could have a good, private cry in that kind of environment.

It's very common to have sleeping difficulties. Grievors frequently have trouble getting to sleep or wake during the night and are unable to go back to sleep. You have a lot on your mind, and it's hard to turn it off.

If you're having trouble sleeping at night, try the following tips before resorting to sleeping pills. Some medicines ward off your feelings so that when you stop taking them, it's as if your grief just begun.

- get out of bed if you wake up and can't go back to sleep within 10 minutes. Stop fighting wakefulness and do something else for a while.
- - don't make yourself sleep in a bed which has memories if it's too difficult, or put a pillow where the empty spot is. George Burns found comfort sleeping in his wife's bed after she died. A widow found comfort in wearing her husband's pajama top and laying on his side of the bed.
- - have a good book or magazine handy to read.
- - keep your journal next to your bed and write out your thoughts and feelings.
- - watch TV or read.
- - drink warm milk. It has a chemical which helps bring on sleep.
- - listen to relaxation cassette tapes, such as ocean waves or whale sounds. If you have never tried them you'll be surprised at how soothing they are.
- - play an affirmation tape. Or, if you're a snuggler, just rest in bed, not "trying" to go to sleep. Enjoy the soft feel of your pillow, the cuddliness of your mattress and covers.
- Give yourself the gift of time out, awake or sleeping.

Kelly Osmont, TCF S. Chester Co., PA



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.

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

5

Gail Alyanakian - brother - **Glenn Alyanakian** - 1/25

John Bilinski - daughter - **Alayna** - 1/22

Liliana Couchara - friend - **Christian** - 1/2

Bobbie Coyle - son - **Whitney Coyle** - 1/4

Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr. - son - **David.** - 1/11

Adriene & Peter De Moerloose - daughter - **Olivia** - 1/26

Janie & Joseph Dougherty - son - **Brendan K. Dougherty** - 1/20

Robert & Lee Duffield - son - **Michael Robin** - 1/16

Laureen Feldman - son - **Oliver** - 1/17

Jo Ann Gatlin - daughter - **Lisa Diane Gatlin** - 1/31

Rita Gibbons - husband- **Thomas** - 1/3

Robert & Kathleen Grossi - son - **James Michael Grossi** - 1/28

Nancy & Gerald Hall - son - **Douglas Byron Hall** - 1/25

Jeanne R Helmers - sister - **Mary Ann** - 1/9

Tammy & Allen Howard - daughter - **Brianna Nicole Howard** - 1/19

Karlin Hughes - son - **Keegan Hughes** - 1/19

Nancy Jones - grandson - **Jeff** - 1/20

Tracey-Anne Langley - Sister - **Nataly** - 1/23

Kathleen & John Leeper - son - **Shaun Michael Leeper** - 1/15

Liz & Joe Loeper - son - **Jamey** - 1/6

Vivian & Kenneth Maahs - daughter - **Kirsten** - 1/18

Anna E Marchese - son - **Matthew Paul Marchese** - 1/29

Mary & Bob Matcovich - son - **Christian** - 1/2

Julie & Richard May - son - **William L. May** - 1/4

Diane Mazzagatti - son - **John Pirocchi, Jr.** - 1/30

Michael & Maria McFadden - daughter - **Rachel McFadden** - 1/14

Linda & Jim McGrath - son - **Paul Drew McGrath** - 1/22

Sue McMaster - cousin - **Laura** - 1/31



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Mark & Kathryn McNally - daughter - **Beth Ann McNally** - 1/11
John & Mary Ann Murphy - son - **Thomas Patrick Murphy**- 1/11
Ashlie Nawrocki - sister - **Chereen** - 1/9
Connie & Richard Nolan - son - **Christopher Nolan** - 1/3
Jim & Bobbi O'Brien - daughter - **Beth Hubbard** - 1/26
Peggy O'Brien - son - **Rick O'Brien** - 1/9
Elizabeth Orbann - daughter - **Linda Elizabeth Johnson** - 1/1
Thomas & Demetra Patukas - son - **George Thomas Patukas** - 1/4
Betty Jane Peters - Neilson - son - **Russel F Peters Jr.** - 1/21
Rosemary Peterson - son - **Donald R. Peterson** - 1/25
Robert & Jean Phillips - son - **Robert Phillips** - 1/3
Karen Pilcicki - son - **Jeff** - 1/12
Joe & Marti Purifico - son - **Jeffrey** - 1/18
Vernice Quattlebaum - daughter - **Gwendolyn Y. Ashe** - 1/12
Andrew Randolph - brother - **James** - 1/14
Roy Redman - daughter - **Carol** - 1/9
Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert - father (Bubbles) - **Albert Volpe** - 1/18
Carol Robinson - son - **Jim Kearney** - 1/17
Andrea Rohloff - son - **Jim** - 1/23
Sandy Salveter - son - **Greg** - 1/28
Sheila & Jim Smith - son - **Seth Richter** - 1/13
Patricia & Bertram Snead - son - **James Christopher Snead** - 1/6
Gary Snyder - daughter - **Alyse** - 1/3
Lorraine Spear - daughter - **Kimberly Jean Spear** - 1/30
Susan & Ron Spencer - son - **Rob** - 1/18
Thomas & Sara Thiermann - daughter - **Heather Bruce Thiermann** - 1/23
Allan Thomas - son - **Vernon Odins** - 1/1
Joy Tower - son - **Ken** - 1/17
Janice Vanderslice - son - **Gregory Vanderslice** - 1/14
Pat Villante - daughter - **Patty** - 1/30
Alice Weaver - daughter - **Kristen** - 1/6
Mimi & Tom Weber - - **Michael** - 1/17
Dave White - son - **Randy** - 1/28
Susan Yarnall - son - **Jesse** - 1/22
Judi Zollers - son - **Sam** - 1/20



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Gail Alyanakian, brother **Glenn Alyanakian** 1/27
George & Anne Beerley, daughter **Jennifer Beerley** 1/21
John Bilinski, daughter **Alayna** 1/22
Joyce Caperilla, daughter **Jennifer** 1/14
Linda Cymbala, son **Nicholas cymbala** 1/2
Carol Dawidziuk, son **Michel** 1/8
Kimberly De Simone, daughter **Lacey** 1/18
Bill & Donna Deasey, daughter **Michelle Deasey** 1/21
Emilie Degville, daughter **Madeline** 1/20
Abigail Figueroa, son **Jose C Figueroa** 1/2
Sharon Hirst, son **Tom** 1/19
Jim & Betty Hogan, daughter 1/20
Joan Hornsby, daughter **Jackie** 1/30
Craig Horwitz, daughter **Kimberly** 1/3
Karlin Hughes, son **Keegan Hughes** 1/17
Priscilla & Urs Joho, daughter **Ursula** 1/21
Barbara & Michael Kaner, son **Max Steven Kaner** 1/18
Pat Kuchler, son **Michael** 1/23
Ed & Linda Lincul, son **Matthew** 1/29
John & Nancy Logue, daughter **Kaitlyn Logue** 1/19
Sharon Mallozzi, son **Anthony** 1/28
Kathleen & Hugh Martin, Jr., son **Colin John "C.J." Martin** 1/12
Linda Massey, son **Gene** 1/19
Pat & Harry McCullough, son **Brian** 1/14
Debra McKinley - Hastings, brother **Ken** 1/23
Marian Melchiorre, grandson **John Anthony Peticca, Jr** 1/6
Gerald & Margaret Milice, son **Gerald Milice** 1/28
Rose & Mike Orlando, son **Michael** 1/27
Teresa and Ron Perkins, daughter **Allison** 1/3
Sheldon & Joan Plam, son **Michael Tobiah Plam** 1/27
Ruth Pluck, niece **Jackie** 1/30
Mary Jane Pollart, son **Mark Andrew Steffler** 1/30
Christine and Richard Purkiss, son **Adam Clark** 1/15



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Steve & Joann Reynolds, son Chris 1/10
 Elise Rice, husband James W Rice Sr. - 1/27
 Margaret & Robert Rooney, daughter Sharon Rooney 1/30
 Mildred Sayles, son Fredrick Chavis 1/31
 Anthony & Marsha Schrader, daughter Krista 1/23
 Linda Sciarra, son John Anthony Peticca Jr 1/6
 Barbara Smisko, daughter Linda 1/19
 Harry & Merrily Spiess grandson Charles Smith 1/27
 Penny & Steve Stanaitis, daughter Mikayla Faith 1/24
 Ruth Thomas, son David George Thomas 1/21
 Sherron Trio, son Tom 1/5
 Weldon & Marie Tyson, daughter Lisa M. Tyson 1/22
 Nancy Willis, son Alex 1/3
 Anthony & Cindy Zalesky, grandson Max Zalesky 1/13

I BELIEVE I

I believe that imagination is stronger than
 knowledge. That myth is more potent than history.
 I believe that dreams are more powerful than facts.
 That hope always triumphs over experience;
 That laughter is the only cure for grief.
 And I believe that love is stronger than death.

Robert Fulgham, TCF, Boise, ID

NEW YEAR'S WISH

wish you gentle days and quiet nights.
 I wish you memories to keep you strong.
 I wish you time to smile...and time for song.
 And then I wish you friends to give you love,
 When you are hurt and lost and life is blind...
 I wish you friends and love and peace of mind.

Sascha Wagner, TCF, Des Moines, IA

DO IT YOUR WAY

I think it's only fair to tell you - There is no bereaved
 Parent of the Month award nor an award for the one
 with the stiffest upper lip.

In fact, what you will find if you try to be the most stoic,
 brave, and strong, the one doing too well, is instead of
 reward, you suffer the consequences.

It is not possible to lose someone as vital as one's
 child and not have the pain of deep grief. You will find
 a great many non-bereaved people will encourage you
 to play the old,

**"If you'll pretend you're OK and it's not really so
 bad, we'll let you come play with us. But if you're
 going to cry and talk about your dead child then
 you can't play" game.**

This is one time in your life you don't have to meet
 anybody else's standards. There is nothing more
 unique about you than the way you express your grief.
 And you have that right, however it is manifested.

TCF Newsletter, Tidewater, VA

FAMILY TIES

Every time a new person is added to the family by birth, marriage, adoption, etc., everyone begins to readjust and reorganize to new roles they must assume. Husband and wife work out the give and take necessary to establish a family system. Mothers and fathers find new roles when children enter the picture, and adjust their sleeping, eating, loving, working and being. Brothers and sisters truly learn what sharing and change are all about when a new member is added.

Everyone, in fact, becomes a changed individual in this new system. New patterns of trusting and communicating are established. Like the mobile we hang above the crib, the family works toward establishing stability; each part balances the whole.

The family mobile is susceptible to many forces of change; winds from outside and within. But blown and disturbed, each piece moves and sways until eventually the mobile becomes stabilized once again.

When one of the parts is suddenly removed, as in the death of a child, the very core is threatened. Cut off one of the parts of the mobile and it becomes frenzied, looking for stability and lost balance. It sways to and fro, bobbing and weaving, tilting up and down.

When our child dies, we are inevitably faced with this chaos in the system. How can we seek to balance our ship of life when we, as a part of that system, feel pain, confusion and imbalance? If we were the anchor before, we find ourselves adrift, unable to hold in the current. If we were the steering wheel, we begin to spin uncontrollably. The propeller shaft is bent; the spare oar is missing; there aren't enough life preservers to go around. How do you save the ship – the mobile – the family?

Recognize the part you as an individual play in the family and work at resolving your own losses. Encourage the expressing of feelings in yourself and others. Know that each person grieves in his own way and at his own pace, and give them permission to do so.

Understand that sometimes a system cannot rebalance without professional help, and seek this help if needed. Watch for obsessive behavior in your family, i.e. overprotectiveness, overeating, undereating, alcohol and/or drug abuse, rage and violence, etc., and offer support, sharing and help for the pain – not the behaviors.

How tragic it is when the ultimate loss, the death of a child, leads to an even greater loss; the breakdown of the family, the marriage, the individual. You, as part of the family, can work to make sure this doesn't happen.

Neehan, WI TCF -

I want to cry.

Just sometime, let me cry.

do not demand

that constant smile from me.

I know you are

uneasy with my tears.

I need to cry.

Please, do not go away.

I promise you

that I will smile again.

Tomorrow I

will be as light as air.

But hold me now

And let my sorrow be

Just for today

This moment: let me cry.

Sascha Wagner

PERHAPS LOVE

Perhaps love is like a resting place
A shelter from the storm
It exists to give you comfort
It is there to keep you warm
And in those times of trouble
When you are most alone
The memory of love will bring you home.

Perhaps love is like a window
Perhaps an open door
It invites you to come closer
It wants to show you more
And even if you lose yourself
And don't know what to do
The memory of love will see you through.

Oh, love to some is like a cloud
To some as strong as steel
For some a way of living
For some a way to feel
And some say love is holding on
And some say letting go
and some say love is everything
And some say they don't know.

Perhaps love is like the ocean
Full of conflict, full of change
Like a fire when it's cold outside
Or thunder when it rains.
If I should live forever
And all my dreams come true
My memories of love will be of you.



Holiday Wishes

We send our love and compassion to you who have the courage to come and share with us, even though the pain permeates your very being. We wish much healing to you who can see a glimmer of hope, and feel the pain softening. We wish patience and endurance to you who have multiple losses. We wish strength to cope to those of you who have suffered the death of your only child or all of your children. We wish patience to you who are struggling in your marriage or relationship, and understanding to accept what each can give. We wish peace to you who are spiritually struggling with your faith. We wish a meaningful holiday to you whose memories have become gifts, rather than moments of pain. May you feel the warmth, as the sun does shine again. We say "thank you" to you who have reached out to comfort others, given them hope, and a hug that said "I know". We say "thank you" to all who share the responsibilities of keeping the Valley Forge Chapter together, making it a safe haven for all the bereaved families to come and support one another. Marie & Ken Hofmockel





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.



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

