

# 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

Sorry, July meeting has been cancelled, it is too dangerous right now to have 10 people in a room for 90 minutes no matter the spacing if there is no air circulation. Another choice would be to have it outside on a Saturday afternoon. Please send your feedback. I need to hear from you. [frank@tcfvalleyforge.org](mailto:frank@tcfvalleyforge.org)



## July 2020

### Chapter Leaders:

Rhonda & Frank Gomez  
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### Webmaster, Database Record Keeper and Newsletter editor, Frank Gomez

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### Love Gift acknowledgements:

Connie Nolan

Treasurer: Joe Purifico

Librarian Carole Bailey.

### National Headquarters

PO Box 700  
Jensen Beach FL 34957  
[Compassionatefriends.org](http://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

### 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**

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**

**Rose Marie Cote** in memory of her son **Mark Cote** 6/3

**Sara Kresge** In memory of her son **Kenneth R Kresge** 7/6

**Fred & Irene Sutton** in memory of their son **Jim**

**Anna B Thompson and Amy Cacchio** in honor of her son and Amy's brother **Andrew**

**Charlotte & Michael Gormish** in memory of his brother **Douglas Moyer**

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"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

*Albert Schweitzer*

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## 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

- Lori Bartholomew** - brother - **Matthew** - 7/14
- Eleanor Brennan** - grandson - **Jonathan Masiak** - 7/9
- Jackie & Steve Brown** - son - **Doug Brown** - 7/23
- Ellen & James Burbano** - son - **Eric** - 7/14
- Joanne & Tom Christman** - son - **Kyle R. O'Neill** - 7/20
- Catherine Dardozzi** - grandson - **Evan Schmidt** - 7/15
- Vanessa Diaz** - friends child - **Samir** - 7/12/
- Herman & Lily Eason** - son/stepson - **Peter Montijo** - 7/27
- Bob & Connie Ercole** - son - **David** - 7/2
- Sharon & Francis Gailey** - daughter - **Danielle Marie Gailey** - 7/14
- Ron & Sue Gamza** - daughter & Grandson - **Rachel & Troy** - 7/24
- Gwen & Walt Gearhart** - grandson - **Jamie Rogers** - 7/12
- Carolyn & Allen Gephart** - son - **Joseph Malec** - 7/14
- Craig & Kathleen Gerland** - daughter - **Alexis** - 7/18
- Frank & Rhonda Gomez** - son - **Frank Jr.** - 7/17
- Danielle & Joshua Graham** - brother - **Jake** - 7/29
- Jean & James Hayden** - son - **LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden** - 7/26
- Mark & Vicki Hoffman** - son - **Eric Daniel Hoffman** - 7/21
- Dennis & Lois Ianovalle** - son - **Dennis** - 7/6
- Sally Ivory** - son - **Jimmy Ivory** - 7/16
- Mary Pat King** - son - **Griffin Scott Gearhart** - 7/25
- Barbara Kirk** - son - **Eric** - 7/2
- Sara & Carl Kresge** - - - 7/6
- Bob & Laura Iatshaw** - son - **Scott** - 7/12
- Maryann Lockyer** - son - **Keith** - 7/15
- Maryellen & James Madden** - daughter - **Anne Marie Madden** - 7/28
- Linda Massey** - son - **Gene** - 7/16
- Lee & Laurie Maxwell** - son - **Dan** - 7/21
- Frank & Bernadette McAllister** - son - **Christopher J. McAllister** - 7/11
- Sue, Dave, Dan, and Lauren McCarthy** - son and brother - **Brian McCarthy** - 7/7
- Cheryl Mezzaroba** - son - **Lon Mezzaroba** - 7/24

# Anniversaries

Betty (Elizabeth) Miller - son - Raymond "Jim" - 7/26  
 John & Mary Ann Murphy - daughter - Maureen Murphy - 6/11  
 Christy O'brian - daughter - Evie - 7/19  
 Janet Patrizio - son - Stephen - 7/5  
 Betty Jane Peters - Neilson - son - Walter C. Peters - 7/21  
 Chris Poulsen - nephew - Jerry - 7/3  
 Marie Poulsen - grandson - Jerry August Warfel - 7/3  
 Debbie Repas - daughter - Stacy Lynn - 7/18  
 Christine Rizol - son - Tyler - 7/10  
 Donna Rogers - husband - Jonathan Rogers - 7/13  
 Donna Rogers - son - Jamie Rogers - 7/12  
 Linda Sandlin - brother - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - 7/26  
 Jackie Savage - Granddaughter - Gwen - 7/25  
 Mildred Sayles - son - Fredrick Chavis - 7/6  
 Donna & Eric Schaertl - son - Jared M. Schaertl - 7/13  
 Suzanne Schoenhut - son - Joe - 7/5  
 Anna Schwarz - son - Jerrold Schwarz - 7/11  
 Matthew Silverman - sister - Avery Silverman - 7/14  
 Howard & Margorie Silverman - daughter - Avery Silverman - 7/14  
 Janis Siravo - son - Christian - 7/22  
 Eileen Smith - son - Craig - 7/31  
 Philip & Ilene Spector - neice - Avery Silverman - 7/14  
 Margaret & Wade Stallard - son - Wade Hampton Stallard, III - 7/27  
 Margaret & Matthew Strickler - son - Timothy Strickler - 7/23  
 Suzanne Teleha - son - Peter Teleha - 7/29  
 Hellmut Theil - son - Hellmut Theil, Jr. - 7/14  
 Gerard & Jane Thimm - son - Gary Thimm - 7/12  
 Nancy Thompson - son - Andrew Thompson - 7/28  
 Brenda Timbers - daughter - Niya Raquel Timbers - 7/2  
 Betsy Townsend - daughter - Wendy Townsend Besche - 7/29  
 Roseanne Vigliotti - granddaughter - Adriana - 7/4  
 Shelly Wagner - son - Andrew Wagner - 7/26  
 Ellen & Dale Weaver - son - Jeffrey M. Weaver - 7/29  
 Irene & Bob Weaver - daughter - Monica - 7/17  
 Peggy West - daughter - Kelly Ann West - 7/28  
 Donna White - sister - Diane White - 7/4  
 Nancy Willis - son - Alex - 7/9

# BIRTHDAYS

**Nina Ansel** - daughter - **Jenn** - 7/27  
**Loretta Bovell** - daughter - **JoAnna** - 7/12  
**Carol & Ira Caplan** - son - **Julian** - 7/7  
**Joann (D) & Gary Chavez** - son - **Christopher Dale Chavez** - 7/19  
**Tracy & Mike Collins** - daughter - **Krystal Chuck** - 7/19  
**Hazel Corbin** - daughter - **Dayle C Rutledge** - 7/7  
**Jennifer Dixon** - son - **Graham** - 7/22  
**Nancy Hartzell** - son - **Adam** - 7/29  
**Giuliana Hilend** - son - **Patrick Andrew Hilend** - 7/9  
**Nancy Jones grand** - son - **Jeff** - 7/2  
**Janet & Dave Keller** - brother - **Thomas A Keller** - 7/3  
**Al & Sue Koenig** - daughter - **Emily Grace Koenig** - 7/8  
**Stacy Ludy** - - daughter - **Alyssa Kenny** - 7/27  
**Maureen and Pat McCormick** - son - **John McCormick** - 7/20  
**Robert McCullough** - daughter - **Caroline Patricia McCullough** - 7/19  
**Cameron and Sandra Meikle** - daughter - **Laura** - 7/4  
**Pete Mihalek** - son - **Andy** - 7/15  
**Alexandra Milas** - mom's brother - **Nicholas Stathes** - 7/1  
**John & Mary Ann Murphy** - son - **Brian Michael Murphy** - 7/20  
**Carol & Dennis O'Connor**—brother- **Jack Coladonato** - 7/14  
**Gary & Patricia Otto** - son - **Benjamin Otto** - 7/26  
**Betty Jane Peters** - son - **Russel F Peters Jr** - 7/25  
**Karen Pilcicki** - son - **Jeff** - 7/2  
**Vernice Quattlebaum** - daughter - **Gwendolyn Y. Ashe** - 7/11  
**Jill & Richard Reich** - son - **Patrick** - 7/20  
**Donald & Freda Rhinier** - son - **Glenn D. Rhinier** - 7/18  
**Rocco@ Fran Rinaldi** - son - **Stephen** - 7/30  
**Tracey Robin** - son - **Connor** - 7/6  
**Mike & Beverly Smith** - son - **Ryan** - 7/18  
**Helen Smith** - son - **Bob Smith** - 7/2  
**Patricia & Bertram Snead** - son - **James Christopher Snead** - 7/15  
**Jen & Alex Soutos** - daughter - **Alexi** - 7/27  
**Harry & Merrily Spiess** - son - **F. Ryan Spiess** - 7/16



# BIRTHDAYS

**Linda Sposato** - daughter - **Bernadette Funaro** - 7/23

**Dave & Lynn Strange** - son - **Bradley** - 7/9

**Ellen & Frank Svitek** - daughter - **Kate Elizabeth Svitek** - 7/1

**Jean Sykora** - son - **Mark** - 7/14

**Chris & Larry Teal** - son - **Wade Teal** - 7/30

**Renee Teufel** - son - **Gregory** - 7/28

**Nancy Thomp** - son - **Andrew Thomp** - 7/21

**Brenda Timbers** - daughter - **Niya Raquel Timbers** - 7/3

**Melissa Toland** - son - **Connor Shepherd** - 7/10

**Steven Tucker** - son - **Patrick Ryan** - 7/12

**Barbara Tuller** - son - **Charles** - 7/3

**Pat Villante** - daughter - daughter **Laura** 7/28

**Bill & Patti Whitehead** - daughter - **Maria** - 7/4

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## TRY NOT TO ABANDON YOUR SPOUSE

My son died. I blamed my husband. He isn't a bad husband, but the stupid things he did, in my mind led to my son's death. This could be true. It could be imagined, Either way, he is the person who along with myself, knew our son best. So in my grief, I could scream and yell at him, but at least he knew what I was talking about. We shared loving our son, we shared his favorite foods, tv shows, everything about him. Now he is gone and the one person I hate the most at the moment is also the one person who best understands what I am going through.

People say that the death of a child will make you fall apart or make you stronger as a couple, as a family, and as a person. The best thing you can do at first, is remember what you have shared together and stick together. You need each other between the rage and hurt and all the up and down feelings.

Your marriage may not stand, but don't make that decision for a while, like everything else, this is a whole new world, this world of losing a child and falling apart, and no one understanding. Your spouse, love him or hate him, know what you are going through and is going through the same thing, even though he might be handling it totally different.

Compassionate friend meetings are very important when you are new to this. It is important for you to meet and talk to people who have gone through what

you are going through. It is also very smart to speak with other women, and for men to speak with other men. That sounds like a contradiction, since men don't usually do much speaking. That's why it is a good idea to stick the men together in a group and lock the door. Siblings also can really benefit from meeting with other siblings. If your group is too small to supply what you need, talk to the leader and see if groups can come together, just women, just men, just kids or something. Or look on line for other similar groups. Don't stay home and rot in your grief, or let your hatred fester. God is the answer for some, others turn away from God in their anger. Others don't have religious beliefs in the first place. We are all different, but we have all lost a child, that shouldn't happen, and we need to talk to other people who can truly feel your pain, people who have walked this path before you. You will feel like many friends have abandoned you. It is because they are clueless and can't deal with your pain.

This brings me back to the beginning. Don't give up on your spouse, or at least not right away. You probably need each other and if you can survive this, you will be much stronger and better off in the long run. This is the worst part of the *for better of for worse.*, but if you can remember that, perhaps you can get past it and still have a life together.

Ruth





# Things to Remember

## What to do and not to do

### Part 1 (so this doesn't become an entire book)

My child has just died. I can run around like a chicken. I can bury my head in the sand. I can scream and cry. I can punch things. I can break things. I can cancel everything I may have coming up in my life. I am pretty sure at least one of these things or something similar may have crossed your mind.

One of the first things I learned at my first Compassionate Friends meeting was that it is very very important not to make any major decisions for quite some time. We aren't rational. Our emotions are all over the place. We may regret things we have done in haste, even though it might take a few years to realize the regret.

**DO NOT FORGET OR ABANDON YOUR OTHER CHILDREN.** I have seen people so engulfed in their grief that their other children are almost totally left behind. I consider myself fortunate that I had a 7 month old baby at the same time I lost my 4 year old son. If I didn't take care of my baby, he would die. Also, I could hold and squeeze him all day and give him the love I wanted to give to my 4 year old. He needed love and care and affection. Perhaps this made it easier for me, or perhaps that is just the way I think, but either way, regardless of the age of your other children, don't forget about them. If they are

old enough to know what happened, they are grieving as well. People tend to forget about the kids. They always ask how the mom is doing, or how the wife is doing, the kids get left by the wayside. They sometimes are even told to stay strong for their parents. Meanwhile, you may notice acting out and inappropriate behaviors and instead of helping them through their grief, you ask them to chill out and give you a break because you are grieving. It is a horrible situation for you and for them and the best way to get through it is to get through it together. Remember this one thing. We all grieve, we all grieve differently and at our own pace, BUT it is us together that truly know how each other feels. We have all lost something that other people can never truly imagine. We can talk and scream at each other, just remember that a hug, or an "I love you" should be given at the end. Call it a private grief session, call it whatever you want, but we all need to get it out, and at first this might be the best, or a good way to get started on the road to recovery. It might be loud, it might be ugly, but we need to do it. We need all these things, the crying, the hurting, the pain, we need it all to get to a new place that we are totally unfamiliar with in our lives.

Ruth

## ABOUT VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER

It has been a month and yes, there are some improvements. We do have a **newsletter folder** and a new **treasurer**. That takes some work out of our backs. But we still need a lot of help. Another person inquired about the treasurer's position and then I realized that we do need a lot more help than anticipated.

**Librarian:** Carol our librarian has been faithfully doing the job of librarian for many years and it is time we give her a break. Work is not hard, the main thing is that you have to be there to help anybody find an appropriate book.

**Greeter:** We have not had one for a long time, a greeter will make new friends feel more comfortable when they come for the first time to our meetings, help them fill out the forms and understand how we try to help them survive thru their tragic loss.

**Database Keeper.** This job includes entering new names into the database and delete the ones who ask to be removed. This person makes the Name Tags for all new friends and the forms we need at the chapter meetings.

**Newsletter Editor.** Probably the most demanding job, this person is in charge of putting together our 12 page newsletter every month, sending it to the printers and uploading it to the server (as a PDF file) so everyone can read it in our web site [tcfvalleyforge.org](http://tcfvalleyforge.org)

**Leader:** This is the person or persons who have the key to get into the Founders Hall, where we have our meetings. The leader makes sure there are refreshments and prepares the room for the meeting. He also prepares the Founders Hall with chairs gets tables out and all the forms needed to sign up new friends and information pamphlets, At the end puts everything back the way it was.

**Steering Committee.** This is a group of **YOUNG** people, not old bats like us. They help the leader(s) make decisions on new projects such as butterfly releases or any other projects such as contents of the packet sent to new friends. Steering committee meets whenever the leader(s) think it is necessary.

As you can see, there are some new articles in this issue of the newsletter. I hope we get many more for

the next issue.

**Webmaster** This will be someone with computer/internet/email skills. The newsletter should be added to the web site every month and we have a list with 350 email addresses of members who would like to have the newsletter mailed via email every month. The web site will give every one a quick up to date information on what is going on, any cancelations, etc. Sending the newsletter via email would save us about \$150 every month.

Today, June 14 at noon, I emailed 368 test messages to the email names I have in my computer. Within seconds I started getting replies, thank you. By the evening, I had 74 replies of emails received, some very colorful in fact there were some replies with *I am sorry, I did mean to write something... or I never got to send you that article, or I forgot...,the standard excuses for being inactive,* and one **DELIVERY FAILURE**. The failure said: All recipient addresses were rejected: Access denied. Reason: Transferring to Michells-com.mail.protection.outlook.COM SMTP protocol returned a permanent error 550.5.4.1. In view of that error, I have no idea how many emails really made to their destination, that prompts me to send everybody a hard copy again.

If anybody knows what this error means, I will be grateful if you could help me decipher it. I am not a computer programmer and much less an Internet expert.

**Attendance:** We have HAD very poor attendance. During the last months we had 2 to 6 people joining us at the meeting. Maybe those who don't come already graduated...? and don't need any help, or Just maybe their loved one does not need you to grieve any more, or maybe you just don't care.

It is clear to me that if you don't want to come to the meetings, we really do not need to have a Valley Forge Chapter and you can grieve by yourself with no need for meetings or publishing a newsletter. The problem is not financial support, we could survive without it for about 10 years, The problem is **PEOPLE**. You have to be part of it.





We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, just as you hope becomes my hope. 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 helplessness 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  
Frank & Rhonda Gomez  
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