

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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

MARCH 2008

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 at Valley Forge and Henderson RDs, King of Prussia, PA. Phone on meeting evenings only is 610-265-0733. All other times please call Ann or Rhonda at 484-919-0820.

Meeting Schedule

Please Mark Your Calendar

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Mar 6 | SPECIAL PROGRAM see page 3
COLLECTION OF GIFTS FOR
"FIRST STEP" see page 6 |
| Apr 3 | General Sharing |
| Apr 18-20 | Chapter Leadership Training
Program in Oak Brook, Illinois |
| Jul 17,18,19 | TCF National Conference
Nashville, Tennessee - see website:
www.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 EDITORS.

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends, or to receive our newsletter. Your tax deductible donations 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.** Donations are also accepted at meetings. We are most grateful for your support.

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
SEND TO: RECORD KEEPER, FRANK GOMEZ
PLEASE SEND ALL OTHER CHAPTER MAIL
TO CHAPTER CO-LEADERS
ANN RAPOPORT or RHONDA GOMEZ**



Valley Forge Chapter

Chapter Co-Leader

Ann Rapoport
14 Lakewood Drive
Media, PA 19063
email: ann@tcfvalleyforge.org
(484) 919-0820 cell phone

Chapter Co-Leader

Rhonda Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore, PA 19343
(484) 919-0820 cell phone
email: sugar@tcfvalleyforge.org

Record Keeper

Frank Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore, PA 19343
email: frank@tcfvalleyforge.org

Webmaster

Frank Gomez
www.tcfvalleyforge.org

Newsletter Editors

Marie & Ken Hofmockel
340 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406
(610)337-1907
email: kenhofmockel@comcast.net

E.PA Regional Coordinators

Marie & Ken Hofmockel
(see info above)

National Headquarters

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll Free: (877)969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org
email: national.office@compassionatefriends.org

NEW FRIENDS

Sue Lawlor, son *Jim* 8/24/77 - 2/17/07

Molly Gehring, son *Daniel* 9/12/82 - 8/26/07

Joyce Caperilla, daughter *Jennifer* 1/14/76 - 11/22/07

Ronda Stansbery, daughter *Susan Anne Stansbery Stamman* 12/22/88 - 12/22/88

Joan Lippre, son *John* 7/16/65 - 1/26/94

We welcome our newly bereaved friends. We are sorry for the cause that brings you. We have all been in the depths of despair, and know that it is difficult to share our pain and personal feelings. We hope you will attend three or four meetings before evaluating the benefit of our group to you. We offer confidentiality, unconditional love, compassion and understanding to all of you.

FEBRUARY REFRESHMENTS

Nina Bernstein, son *Andrew Voluck* 10/12/84 - 2/9/85, and girlfriend *Molly*.

Marilyn Toole, son *Ted Toole* 11/3/66 - 2/26/03

Carole Bailey, son *Matthew J. Bailey* 10/6/80 - 12/21/97

Anyone wishing to donate refreshments, please call **Ann or Rhonda (484)919-0820**.

LOVE GIFTS

Nina Bernstein, in loving memory of my son *Andrew Voluck* 10/12/84 - 2/9/05.

Charlotte & William Bodulich, in loving memory of our son *Bill* 2/14/53 - 10/15/99.

Joan Chamness, in loving memory of my son *Scott Vincent's* birthday 2/15/62 - 11/9/92.

Judy & William Cosgrove, in loving memory of our son *Michael Cosgrove* 9/4/67 - 4/17/92.

Rose Marie & Paul Cote, in loving memory of our son *Mark J. Cote* 6/3/63 - 3/26/99 from Mother & Dad & Jamie.

Dorothy & G. Robert Daily Sr., in loving memory of our son *G. Robert Daily, Jr.* 9/19/48 - 8/10/95.

Kathleen & Robert Grossi, in loving memory of our son *James Michael Grossi* 6/30/66 - 1/28/90 on his anniversary. We love and miss you. Mom, Dad, Theresa's family & Patty's family.

Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy, in loving memory of our son *Philip V. Kennedy* 2/22/70 - 9/23/87.

Lynne & John Malloy, in loving memory of our son *David Paul Gross* 4/13/57 - 7/1/89 We miss you so very much.

Audrey Morasco, in loving memory of my son *Christopher Morasco* 2/22/58 - 12/27/93 on his birthday.

Marguerite & Raymond Posluszny, in loving memory of our son *Alex Posluszny* 3/22/43 - 6/16/00.

Laurene & Tony Quercetti, in loving memory of our daughter *Christine* 6/5/70 - 11/7/94.

Freda & Donald Rhinier, in loving memory of our son *Glenn D. Rhinier* 7/18/50 - 9/16/97.

Sandy & Ron Ruth, in loving memory of our son *Brian David Ruth* 6/15/78 - 10/21/01 who is missed so much.

Suzanna Schoenhut, in loving memory of my son *Joe* 6/29/72 - 7/5/07.

Nancy & Arthur Singer, in loving memory of our son *Jeffrey Vincent Singer* 3/9/62 - 3/9/97.

Marilyn Toole, in loving memory of my son *Ted Toole* 11/3/66 - 2/26/03.

**MARCH 6TH 7:45PM TCF VALLEY FORGE MONTHLY MEETING,
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Valley Forge & Henderson Roads, King of Prussia, PA**

GUEST SPEAKER - ALAN PEDERSEN

Alan Pedersen has been performing for more than 25 years. An accomplished singer and award winning songwriter, he spent several years writing and recording music in Nashville, Tennessee. Alan has had several songs recorded by other artists.

His writing has not been limited to music, he has written commercials, radio news copy, and collaborations for television shows and other comedy projects. His performing credits are numerous as well. Alan has worked as an actor, stand-up comedian, keynote speaker/emcee, and in radio as a network news and sports reporter for Westwood One Communications.

Currently living in Englewood, Colorado, Alan is the father of four boys and an angel.

In August of 2001 Alan's life took a tragic turn, his 18-year-old and only daughter Ashley was killed in an automobile accident. This tragedy would take his life in a direction he never imagined. Struggling for months to find answers and trying to cope with tremendous pain and anger, he entered a grief program in Denver, Colorado and began attending monthly meetings of a support organization (The Compassionate Friends.)

Alan credits these organizations with saving his life and inspiring him to honor his daughter's life by helping others. In July of 2003, Alan released a CD of songs he had written about his walk through the valley of grief, titled Ashley's Songbook. In 2006, he released a follow up CD titled "A Little Farther Down The Road." Alan now helps others by sharing his story of faith and hope. His message is simple; grief and loss offer the opportunity for ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. He believes that healing begins when we once again give of ourselves by helping others.

Alan speaks and plays his music for churches and grief organizations around the country. In 2008 Alan will release his third CD of original music about the journey bereaved families must walk.

Alan has performed at National Conferences for The Compassionate Friends, Bereaved Parents of the USA, and the World Gathering on Bereavement. Alan will travel and speak to chapters of TCF, BP-USA, and other grief organizations dedicated to helping families grieving the loss of a child.. See his website: www.everashleymusic.com

You do not need to be a member of the TCF Valley Forge Chapter to attend. Everyone is welcome to the above event, there is no charge. In order that we have some indication of how many attendees to plan for, please contact one of the chapter leaders:

Ann Rapoport email: ann@tcfvalleyforge.org or (484) 919-0820 cell phone

Rhonda Gomez email: sugar@tcfvalleyforge.org or (484) 919-0820 cell phone

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:

Additions or corrections to this list should be given to the editors, Marie & Ken Hofmockel.

Jovanna & Joseph Bevilacqua, son *Donato "Danny" Bevilacqua* 8/20/1988 - 3/27/2002

Lois Bishop, daughter *Kaitlyn Bishop* 9/26/1999 - 3/15/2002

Marvin & Wilma Bordetsky, daughter *Noreen Bordetsky Cook* 8/29/1964 - 3/24/1999

Anita Burns, daughter *Suzanne Burns* 7/21/1956 - 3/19/2001

Kathy Castner, son *Matthew* 3/29/1965 - 11/5/2005

Cynthia Chester, son *Christian* 3/29/1984 - 8/7/2003

Rose Marie & Paul Cote, son *Mark J. Cote* 06/3/1963 - 3/26/1999

Jamie Cote Weaver, brother *Mark Cote* 6/3/1963 - 3/26/1999

Denise & Dennis Cramsy, daughter *Elli Cramsy* 3/2/2001 - 4/11/2002

Catherine Dardozzi, son *James Dardozzi* 3/7/1964 - 9/7/2002

Louis Dardozzi, son *James* 3/7/1964 - 9/7/2002

Lucie Delia, son *Joe Trotti Lambert* 3/19/1936 - 9/25/1995

Robert Dilbeck, son *Daniel Dilbeck* 12/20/1952 - 3/25/1993

Mary Dion, daughter *Theresa* 3/24/1963 - 1/26/2004

Janie & Joseph Dougherty, son *Brendan K. Dougherty* 3/29/1973 - 1/20/1997

Ginny Ebert, son *Jason* 4/17/1972 - 3/25/2000

Tom & Irene Edmunds, son *Kyle Derek Edmunds* 8/1/1983 - 3/17/2003

Mary Ellen Falk, son *Daniel Falk* 6/19/1959 - 3/5/1996

Richard & Martha Fenoglio, daughter *Judith Fenoglio Daw* 3/30/1971 - 8/6/1995

Nick & Fran Fioravanti, son *Nicholas J. Fioravanti, Jr.* 3/24/1966 - 2/22/1999

Sarah Fishel, daughter *Allyson* 3/26/1991 - 9/15/2006

Lisa Foos, son *Curtis* 3/14/1987 - 8/12/2006

Kenneth Frantz, son *Kenneth Frantz, Jr.* 3/20/1950 - 7/14/2002

Mary B. Frederick, son *Michael W. Frederick* 3/31/1953 - 11/3/1995

friend ***Michael Puglisi* 3/5/1966 - 9/10/1994**

Marco & Patricia Giubilato, daughter *Robin Giubilato Zarelli* 3/18/1960 - 6/9/1991

Ronald J. & Margaret Halas, daughter *Desiree A. Halas* 6/2/1969 - 3/11/1999

Beatrice Hallermeier, son *Robert George Hallermaeir, Jr.* 4/6/1949 - 3/1/2002

Elizabeth Haney, son *Christian* 3/6/1986 - 11/28/2006

Othell & William Heaney, son *Kevin* 2/14/1968 - 3/10/1987

Nora & Peter Heiss, daughter *Kathleen Heiss McCaughan* 3/25/1959 - 11/23/1990

Michael & Betsy Jarrett, son *Michael Jarrett* 8/13/1968 - 3/10/1985

Margaret C Jones, son *Christopher* 3/17/1989 - 9/15/2007

Suellen & Stephen King, daughter *Danelle Rossi* 9/18/1973 - 3/12/2006

Marcia Kling, son *CJ* 9/20/1982 - 3/13/2007

Gloria and Jerry Koval, son *Steven* 3/11/1973 - 9/3/1991

Joe & Barbara Ladd, son *William "Bill" F. Ladd* 3/18/1959 - 11/12/1994

William & Margaret Lang, son *Michael J. Leib* 3/15/1981 - 6/18/2000

Donna Leathers, son *Brandon M* 3/16/1979 - 7/4/2004

Fred & Kay Lokoff, daughter *Terry Lokoff* 3/17/1961 - 7/27/1986
Vivian & Kenneth Maahs, daughter *Kirsten* 3/22/1978 - 1/18/2002
Elaine & James Madden, son *Andrew Madden* 9/26/1978 - 3/6/1995
Lorelei Malandra, brother *Jeff Singer* 3/9/1962 - 3/9/1997
Tom & Charmaine Malik, son *Danny Malik* 3/3/1983 - 5/12/1999
Gerrie Matchus, son *Michael* 12/27/1942 - 3/7/1999
Jeff and Kathy McCarron, daughter *Sarah* 3/30/1983 - 8/14/2003
Anne McClenachan, brother *Andy McClenachan* 5/30/1949 - 3/30/1988
Sue McClenachan, son *Andy McClenachan* 5/30/1949 - 3/30/1988
William & Carol Meehan, son *Patrick W. Meehan* 3/11/1970 - 2/11/1993
Barbara & Reynold Meisenhelder, daughter *Renee' Meisenhelder* 6/20/1974 - 3/2/2001
Bob & Janet Milnazik, daughter *Kim* 4/24/1955 - 3/3/2006
Beth Mohr, brother *Matthew Bock* 3/18/1982 - 3/16/2006
George W. Nase, son *Brian D. Nase* 12/16/1959 - 3/19/2000
George & Estelle Null, daughter *Kathleen "Kathy" Null* 6/18/1958 - 3/7/1980
Terri O'Brien, father *John Hoban* 3/25/1942 - 6/29/2007
Betty & Richard Owens, Sr., son *Richard H. Owens, Jr.* 5/12/1965 - 3/26/1998
Michele Paul, sister *Desiree Halas* 6/2/1969 - 3/11/1999
Angela Perachio, daughter *Melanie McAllister* 3/1/1976 - 8/26/1997
Thomas & Mary Jane Poore, son *Bradley Poore* 4/25/1974 - 3/19/1994
Raymond & Marguerite Posluszny, son *Alex Posluszny* 3/22/1943 - 6/16/2000
Lyla T. Poulson, daughter *Kimberly Poulson* 3/4/1956 - 5/21/1985
Claire & Joseph Progar, son *Charlie Progar* 3/17/1989 - 11/3/1991
Rusty & Anthony Puglisi, son *Michael Puglisi* 3/5/1966 - 9/10/1994
Mike & Cheryl Raniszewski, daughter *Amanda Nicole Raniszewski* 2/12/1996 -
Ann Rapoport, son *Brian Rapoport* 12/2/1983 - 3/9/2001
Grace & Michael Rello, daughter *Michelle Clare Rello* 3/8/1977 - 3/9/1998
Thelma & Ike Rosen, nephew *Charles Carswell* 3/26/1949 - 7/10/1997
Susan & John Rutland, son *Justin Rutland* 3/28/1983 - 8/30/1996
John & Marie Sanders, son *Matthew Sanders* 5/8/1971 - 3/28/1978
Carol Sannella, son *David Sannella* 3/18/1970 - 8/31/1989
Judy & Lin Schleicher, daughter *Quinna Marie Schleicher* 2/2/1969 - 3/10/1989
Michelle & Bill Schmidt, brother *James Dardozi* 3/7/1964 - 9/7/2002
Susan Schofield, daughter *Kim* 10/14/1967 - 3/24/2003
Janet & Jonathan Schultz, friend *Christopher Harvey* 3/5/1974 - 5/6/1999
Abigail Schwartz, brother *Jake* 3/27/1980 - 9/13/2006
Arthur & Nancy Singer, son *Jeffrey Vincent Singer* 3/9/1962 - 3/9/1997
Peter & Suzanne Smith, daughter *Tracy Smith* 3/30/1978 - 6/28/2002
Jill Smith, son *Andrew Jensen* 3/21/2000 -
Nancy Sullivan, daughter *Kathleen Sullivan-Purcell* 7/23/1957 - 3/18/2002
Greg Swider, sister *Kelly Swider* 3/25/1981 - 2/8/2002
Mary Ellen Swider, daughter *Kelly Swider* 3/25/1981 - 2/8/2002
Allan Thomas, son *Vernon Odins* 3/5/1961 - 1/1/1994
Jerry & Ann Timinski, daughter *Janelle Ann Timinski* 3/9/1982 - 11/24/1999
James & Betty Treichler, son *James Treichler Jr.* 4/21/1949 - 3/13/1986

Peggy Tweed, son *Matthew Bock* 3/18/1983 - 3/16/2006
Emma Valenteen, daughter *Marianne Valenteen* 12/14/1971 - 3/19/1983
Maria Villano, son *Rocco Villano* 3/18/1959 - 3/9/2001
Dorothy Washington, daughter *Michele Washington* 3/2/1964 - 11/26/1993
Germaine Weaver, brother *Mark Cote* 6/3/1963 - 3/26/1999
Linda Weaver, son *Damon Weaver* 11/21/1979 - 3/18/1999
Christine & Raymond Welker, son *Zachary Graham* 4/23/1980 - 3/18/1991
nephew *Mark Ayer* 3/20/69 - 12/22/91
Peggy West, daughter *Kelly Ann West* 3/8/1968 - 7/28/1989

TO SCOTT

It's still I often meditate ...
Although year by year time slips by ...
I still close my eyes dawn or very late
And there you are in my heart ...
I know now, this was your fate ...
I remember you especially on your birthdate
Scott Vincent Chamness February 15, 1962
Joan Chamness

They say there is a reason, they say that time will heal.
But neither time nor reason, will change the way we feel.

For no one knows the heartache that lies behind our smile.
No one knows how many times we have broken down and cried.

We want to tell you something, so there won't be any doubt.
You're so wonderful to think of but so hard to be without.

In memory of *Peter Duffy* 1976 - 2001
Submitted by *Susan Duffy*

HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR FIRST STEP

First Step is a program of Chester County for under privileged/handicapped children. For many years our Chapter has collected gifts for them. We will do so again this year, you may bring your gifts to our March 6th monthly meeting. The children are between the ages of 2 and 6. Both clothing and toys are welcome gifts. Please do not wrap gifts. It is very rewarding to remember your child, by showing love to these children. You may sign it, "from your friend", or your child or sibling's name. This may be the only gift the child will receive. We appreciate your participation in this worthy cause.

SHARED THOUGHTS ON CARING FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Frequently, the change of seasons adds to our depression. In the spring, we look forward to the new plant life popping up all around us, bearing the fact its dormant life was only temporary. Often, when the evidence of spring does not lift our spirits as it has in the past, it iterates to the low level our depression has descended. We begin to question why our beloved children and siblings can not return to us. It can even make us feel we are less important than the nature we view.

When we are in the pit of depression, we can not see beyond our loss. It is important to have someone who will not immediately encourage us to see a doctor to prescribe anti-depressant drugs, so they can shift the responsibility of helping us to someone else. We need someone who is willing to listen to our rambling and repetitive talking about our loss, and will not pass judgment, even though they do not understand us. But hopefully, they will gently encourage positive thinking. We need to be accepted for what little we can give in return. When we lean on those who help us, it is essential to let them know we are doing the best we can in our very abnormal situation, and appreciate their allowing us to talk about that which is very healing in our grief.

Relationships with our family members, are also important. Our remaining children need to know they are as equally important, and loved as much as our deceased. By putting our dead child on a high pedestal, the remaining siblings can feel they are not as precious to us. It is best to be verbal, and not assume they understand our feelings. It is very normal for siblings to find more comfort in sharing with friends, or other siblings, rather than parents. It is too much for them to take on their parent's grief, and it hurts too much to see parents cry. They have had both the terrible loss of a sibling and a stable parent (as they knew them), and they too, are fragile.

The marriage is under tremendous strain. Both are so overwhelmed with grief, and don't have the strength to support the other. It is like leaning on a bent twig. If we harbor little grievances, all sorts of held in resentment may surface, exploding into serious problems. Most sexual relations habits will change, and frequently, in opposite directions. It is important to try and resolve continued absence of sexual relationships. This takes communicating with one another. A spouse can not fully understand or solve their mate's grief, but we must accept each other's style of grieving. The accusation of blaming a mate for the death is probably the most damaging of all. If this continues to smolder, it may be helpful to include a third party, such as a psychiatrist, pastor, or some form of grief counselor. No bereaved parent can handle being accused of their child's death. We must attempt a resolution, we can't afford to lose our marriage along with our child. Sometimes an experienced grief specialist can help clear our vision. It is very normal to blame someone for the death. But, most often in a family situation, the death could not have been prevented, or the party being accused was acting to the best of their ability. We must forgive, for they also loved the deceased, and are hurting badly

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel*, TCF Valley Forge

"Commitment to life and living for yourself, spouse and family; and commitment to your child's memory are four choices you must make. Each one requires perserverance and patience. Failure to make these commitments will extend the tragedy by increasing the loss."

Nancy Hogan

THOUGHTS FROM A PARENT WHO LOST AN OLDER CHILD

Perhaps, I had my child longer than you had yours, but thirty-eight years does not seem long. Perhaps, there are more memories to hold in my heart, but I know yours are just as dear to you as mine are to me even if your memories are memories of only one or two days.

Your dreams for your child are gone. So are mine. Never did I imagine that I would have to deal with my child's death instead of him having to deal with mine.

In thirty-eight years there was time to give me a legacy of three grandchildren. This is a very special blessing and one that I do not take for granted.

My child died from a terminal illness that is not one of the 'acceptable' diseases. My child died of alcohol and drug addiction. The tools for remission of this disease are place in the hands of the person who has the disease. Even with help of four treatment centers the recovery was not to be.

One day at a time my recovery is taking place. The pain, after two and one half years has gone to a place where it can be tolerated. My mission is to sustain the relationship with my three granddaughters who now live three thousand miles away from me.

My story and my age may be different from yours, but the bottom line is the same! My child has gone to a place where I cannot go and I miss him so much. The pain of grief is still there, but I am living life one day at a time enriched because my son came through my body into my life.

Helen Godwin, TCF – Orange Park – Jacksonville Chapter

RISKS

To laugh...is to risk appearing the fool
To weep...is to risk appearing sentimental
To reach out for another...is to risk involvement
To expose feelings...is to risk exposing your true self
To place ideas, your dreams before a crowd...is to risk their loss
To love...is to risk not being loved in return
To live...is to risk despair
To try...is to risk failure.

But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing
The person, who risks nothing, does nothing...has nothing...and is nothing.
They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they cannot learn...feel...change...grow...love...live
Chained by their certitude's, they are a slave, they have forfeited their freedoms
Only a person who risks is free. *Author Unknown*

**“Who can so softly bind up the wound of another,
as he who has felt the same wound himself.”**

Thomas Jefferson

THE SOUND OF PAIN

There's a sound that can only be heard by those with broken hearts;
 I believe it's the sound of God working, to mend that hurting part.
 We have all come to know what this pain can do;
 We've lost one we love, and learned agony we never knew.
 And it doesn't go away, not in a day, a month, or even two years,
 No matter where we are and no matter what we do, the pain is always near.
 So how do we continue to live when our lives have been turned upside down?
 How do we continue to smile and laugh – to see what lies beyond that sound?
 I don't have all the answers, and sometimes it seems I never will;
 All I know for sure is that the sound means God is with us still.
 Years will keep going by, but I know we shall never, never forget him;
 Our precious, beautiful Peter, whose life light will never ever dim.

Stacey Mastrocola Sullens

For her brother, **Peter A. Mastrocola, III**

June 7, 1975 – August 10, 1995

PLEASE ASK

Someone asked me about you today,
 It's been so long since anyone has done that.
 It felt so good to talk about you
 ...to share my memories of you
 ...to simply say your name out loud.
 She asked me if I minded talking about what
 happened to you or would it be too painful to
 speak of it.
 I told her I think of it everyday and speaking
 about it helps me to release the tormented
 thoughts whirling around in my head.
 She said she never realized the pain would last
 this long
 She apologized for not asking sooner.
 I told her, "Thanks for asking."
 I don't know if it was curiosity or concern that
 made her ask, but I told her,
 Please do it again sometime soon."

Barbara Taylor Hudson, Cincinnati, OH

WHEN

When we finally realize that you are always
 going to be smiling and dancing in our hearts,
 then, our pain shall turn to joy.

Bob Walters

SILENT GRIEF

Grief is sometimes silent – like
 snowflakes falling on a dark winter's
 night – but never peaceful or serene or
 pretty like the pure white snow. When
 grief is silent, the tears seem to turn to
 ice, like the snowflakes, before they
 reach our eyes.

Grief is sometimes raging – like a
 monstrous thunderstorm – with all its
 fury and bolts of lightning striking our
 hearts at every angle. When grief is
 raging, the tears come in torrents, like
 the rain, and flood our soul.

Grief, whether it be silent or raging -
 hurts.

Verna Smith TCF, Ft. Worth, TX

**Those we hold dear never truly
 leave us. They live on in the
 kindness they showed, and the love
 they brought into our lives.**

Isabel Norton, Central Iowa Newsletter



OUR LOGO: ITS MYSTERY AND ITS HISTORY

Are the hands reaching out or letting go? Are they the hands of one person or two? These are questions often heard from new members,...so we asked the people who know.

Much of the beauty of our logo lies in the fact that there are no definitive answers to its symbolism. At first glance its meaning seems obvious; yet as you look more closely, these questions may arise.

The hands represent different things to us at different periods in our grief journeys. To the newly bereaved, the hands reach out toward him or her, offering comfort and support. Later in our grief journeys, they may symbolize the process of letting go, of coming to terms with the child's death, or acknowledgment that the child is no longer a part of our earthly existence.

Still later in our grief journeys, we begin to reinvest in life and reach out toward others. Then, *our* hands become the hands which are extended to the newly bereaved. ***The circle is complete:*** a circle of love and understanding, with the child at the center.

Joe Lawley, Founder-Chairman of the Society of the Compassionate Friends (Coventry, England, 1969) supplied the details on how the logo came about. Help came from John Fisher Design, Marketing, LTD, Maggie and John Fisher (Coventry) – whose 8 ½ year-old daughter, Clare, was killed on November 17, 1974 –wrote: "We are mobile, immediately available, and ready, both physically and spiritually, to begin work for the Friends. Please use us".

The logo first appeared on the June 1975 newsletter. Originally, the logo was a bright emerald green; subsequently, in 1977, the general universal color of royal blue with white was used and continues to this day.

Joyce Andrews
From "Friends Caring & Sharing"

MY SWING

Out in the backyard
Was the most wonderful thing,
From a huge maple tree
There hung my swing.

When I had a problem
A bad day at school,
Straight to my swing
That's what I'd do!

I'd swing away worries
Swing high in the air,
When I was there swinging
I hadn't a care.

Now I am much older
The pains run so deep,
I have much depression
And I cannot sleep.

Now I am childless
I don't have my boy,
My reason for living
The source of my joy.

My life is so different
Not a minute goes by,
When I can become tearful
I just start to cry.

My husband's so patient
With me all these years,
He never stops trying
To stop all my tears.

He gave me a gift
Only a true friend can bring,
He gave me back comfort
He gave me my swing!

Diane Hornis
Alive Alone Newsletter, Feb. 1999

ESSENCE OF TCF

I can tell by that look, friend, that we need to talk.
So come take my hand and let's go for a walk.
See, I'm not like the others – I won't shy away,
because I want to hear what you've got to say.
Your child has died and you need to be heard,
but they don't want to hear a single word.
They say your child's with God, so be strong.
They say all the "right" things that somehow seem wrong.
I'll walk in your shoes for more than a mile
I'll wait while you cry and be glad if you smile.
I won't criticize you or judge you or scorn,
I'll just stay and listen 'til night turns to morn.
Yes, the journey is hard and unbearably long
and I know that you think that you're not quite that strong.
So just take my hand 'cause I've got time to spare,
and I know how it hurts, friend, for I have been there.
See, I owe a debt you can help me repay,
for not long ago, I was helped the same way
and I stumbled and fell through a world so unreal,
so believe when I say that I know how you feel.
I don't look for praise or financial gain
And I'm sure not the kind who gets joy out of pain.
I'm just a strong shoulder who'll be here 'til the end-
I'll be your Compassionate Friend.

Steven L. Channing, TCF Winipeg, Canada

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

There will always be times when
it's hard to remember your
strengths.
These are the times when you need
to give yourself special attention.
Be kind to yourself...
Kindness nurtures and gives hope to
growing dreams.
Respect yourself...
Listen to your needs, and treat
yourself as you would a friend.
Encourage yourself...
Remember what you truly want, and
fight for it as you would your life.
Appreciate yourself...
Don't take for granted the qualities
that make you unique.
Focus yourself...
It is with discipline and motivation
that you will move towards your
goals.
Be giving towards yourself...
In that way your strength will thrive,
and you'll be realizing your goals a
day at a time.

Gail Mutterperl

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"