

# 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.

It is our intention to have a Zoom meeting in March 2021. Please send an email to Rhonda (rhonda@tcfvalleyforge.org) if you plan on attending. We received a call from the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church indicating that there will be no meetings at least until sometime in 2021. My TCF email has changed it is rhonda@tcfvalleyforge.org



## March 2021

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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**

Frank Yanni in memory of his son, David

## **CHANGE AND CHALLENGE**

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too, for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun-loving but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the 'old us' too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar who shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when our child dies. We wonder, our family wonders, our friends wonder - - when will he or she come out of it? Will they make it through the long sleep? What hues will show when they emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of a cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy - - but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the "new us." When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from his own cocoon; when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge, then we can proudly say, "I have survived against overwhelming odds. Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give us hope that we can be happy, we can feel fulfilled again, we can love again.

**Sherry Mutchler - Appleton, WI**

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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**

**Jovanna & Joseph Bevilacqua - Donato ""Danny"" Bevilacqua - son - 3/27**

**Loretta Bovell - JoAnna - daughter - 3/7**

**Joann (D) & Gary Chavez - JoAnn - wife - 3/31**

**Rose Marie Cote - Mark J. Cote - son - 3/26**

**Barbara Cotteta - Denise - granddaughter - 3/28**

**Joanne Devito - Domenico - grandson - 3/21**

**Linda DiPasquale - Thomas - son - 3/24**

**Michelle Dozier - Eric McCoy - son - 3/31**

**Ginny Ebert - Jason - son - 3/25**

**Tom & Irene Edmunds - Kyle Derek Edmunds - son - 3/17**

**Bob & Dena Filipone - Denise - daughter - 3/8**

**Kate Gara - Colin - godchild - 3/13**

**Rita Gibbons - Paul Gibbons - son - 3/20**

**Herb & Karen Grant - Ryan - son - 3/8**

**Ronald J. & Margaret Halas - Desiree A. Halas - daughter - 3/11**

**Othell & William Heaney - Kevin - son - 3/10**

**Michael & Betsy Jarrett - Michael Jarrett - son - 3/10**

**Joan Kellett - Keith Mastronardo - grandson - 3/19**

**Jacquie Kilroy - Shilen Kenneth - son - 3/21**

**Suellen & Stephen King - Danelle Rossi - daughter - 3/12**

**Susan Lipson - Justin Ingerman - nephew - 3/18**

**Stacy Ludy - Alyssa Kenny - daughter - 3/10**

**Stacy Ludy - Anastasia - granddaughter - 3/10**

**Ella Mack - Elizabeth - sister - 3/23**

**Dan Markle - Matt Markle - brother - 3/3**

**Shannon Mastronardo - Keith - son - 3/19**

**Anne McClenachan - Andy McClenachan - brother - 3/30**

**Kevin & Nancy McKelvey - Michael - son - 3/30**

Barbara Meisenhelder - Renee Meisenhelder - daughter - 3/2  
Bob & Janet Milnazik - Kim - daughter - 3/3  
Beth Mohr - Matthew Bock - brother - 3/16  
Ann Murray - Brian Rapoport - son - 3/9  
George & Estelle Null - Kathleen ""Kathy"" Null - daughter - 3/7  
Betty & Richard Owens, Sr. - Richard H. Owens, Jr. - son - 3/26  
Thomas & Mary Jane Poore - Bradley Poore - son - 3/19  
Kelly Rossi - Kevin - brother - 3/8  
Becky Rotkowski - Brian - brother - 3/14  
Beverly & Joe Rush - Kelsey - daughter - 3/29  
Arthur & Nancy Singer - Jeffrey Vincent Singer - son - 3/9  
Melissa Toland - Connor Shepherd - son - 3/17  
Akhil & Judy Tripathi - Sunil - son - 3/17  
Peggy Tweed - Matthew Bock - son - 3/16  
Jamie (Germaine) Cote - Weaver - Mark Cote - brother - 3/26  
Laurie Wyche - Jameson Wyche - son - 3/1

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You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that come along." The danger lies in refusing to face the fear, in not daring to come to grips with it. If you fail anywhere along the line it will take away your confidence. You must make yourself succeed every time. You must try to do the thing you think you cannot do.

Eleanor Roosevelt

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**GRIEF IS A GREAT TEACHER** when it sends us back to serve and bless the living. We learn how to counsel and comfort those who, like ourselves, are bowed with sorrow. We learn when to keep silence in their presence, and when a word will assure them of our love and concern.

from **GATES OF PRAYER**  
reform Judaism Prayer Book

# BIRTHDAYS

**Catherine Dardozzi - son - James Dardozzi - 3/7**  
**Anne DeMaio - grandson - Domenico DeVito - 3/7**  
**Joe & Germaine DePiano - son - Luke - 3/27**  
**Joanne Devito - grandson - Domenico - 3/7**  
**Janie & Joseph Dougherty - son - Brendan K. Dougherty - 3/29**  
**Robert & Lee Duffield - son - Michael Robin - 3/31**  
**Richard & Martha Fenoglio - daughter - Judith Fenoglio Daw - 3/30**  
**Sarah Fishel - daughter - Allyson - 3/26**  
**Bill & Karen Flavin - son - Chad Flavin - 3/7**  
**Lisa Foos - son - Curtis - 3/14**  
**Kate Gara - godchild - Colin - 3/27**  
**Jo Ann Gatlin - daughter - Lisa Diane Gatlin - 3/20**  
**Marco & Patricia Giubilato - daughter - Robin Giubilato Zarelli - 3/18**  
**Danielle & Joshua Graham - brother - Jake - 3/27**  
**Elizabeth Haney - son - Christian - 3/6**  
**Jack & Stacy Kabic - daughter - Brithy - 3/29**  
**Elida Kauffman - son - Daniel - 3/9**  
**Joan Kellett - grandson - Keith Mastronardo - 3/23**  
**Gloria and Jerry Koval - son - Steven - 3/11**  
**Terry Kozlewski - son - Frankie - 3/12**  
**Tracey-Anne Langley - sister - Nataly - 3/25**  
**Julie Lauderback - son - Donovan Lauderback - 3/5**  
**Vivian & Kenneth Maahs - daughter - Kirsten - 3/22**  
**Tom & Charmaine Malik - son - Danny Malik - 3/3**  
**Shannon Mastronardo - son - Keith - 3/23**  
**Andrew Mautz - son - Jaxon - 3/17**  
**Lee & Laurie Maxwell - son - Dan - 3/14**  
**Jeff and Kathy McCarron - daughter - Sarah - 3/30**  
**William & Carol Meehan - son - Patrick W. Meehan - 3/11**  
**Greg and Mary Miller - son - David - 3/26**  
**Beth Mohr - brother - Matthew Bock - 3/18**



John Mscisz - grandson - Liam John Williamson - 3/8  
Aminah Na'im - son - Dawann - 3/3  
Marie - O'Connon - son - Curran J - 3/27  
Maureen O'hara Munoz - daughter - Teresa - 3/27  
Janet Patrizio - son - Stephen - 3/12/1995  
Terri Pfeiffer - son - Matthew - 3/6  
Rusty & Anthony Puglisi - son - Michael Puglisi - 3/5  
Susan Reynolds - son - Craig Anderson - 3/24  
Lisa and John Russo - son - Casey - 3/17  
Susan & John Rutland - son - Justin Rutland - 3/28  
Sandy - Salveter - son - Greg - 3/20  
Carol Sannella - son - David Sannella - 3/18  
Arthur & Nancy Singer - son - Jeffrey Vincent Singer - 3/9  
Jeffrey Smith - son - Jacob Smith - 3/2  
Mary Ellen Swider - daughter - Kelly Swider - 3/25  
Allan Thomas - son - Vernon Odins - 3/5  
Joy Tower - son - Ken - 3/28  
Peggy Tweed - son - Matthew Bock - 3/18  
Peggy West - daughter - Kelly Ann West - 3/8  
Susan Yarnall - son - Jesse - 3/2  
Carolyn & Tom Yuhas - son - Eric Whitelock - 3/4

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#### IN MEMORIAM

I'm wishing desperately against time  
to that summer place where the future seemed to sprawl endless before us,  
beckoning,  
"come dance in my hours and lounge about in my days"  
and for a time we did  
Oh what I would give to have you stand before me once more, carefree and invincible  
and you could just smile away all my tears  
But even to this I can hear your reply  
I'm going to have to forge ahead atop the world's misleading promises with only  
A picture of you hanging in my heart.  
How will I survive on just memories?

It feels like goodbye, doesn't it?  
because it is here that our paths unwind  
and here that we as mortals have lost each other  
but we have lost each other only as mortals  
Because the future is alive with your spirit  
and the promise of your smile beaming before me  
rather than upon me.

Jessica Knoll

A friend of Brian Rapoport and  
his classmate at Shipley

## SHARED THOUGHTS ON HEALING, BUT NEVER FORGETTING

We lost our son, Doug, 28 years ago. I did not run away from anything. I met it all head-on, but all the while, feeling the intensity of the pain would last a lifetime. **I did my grief work**, I shared my grief with most anyone who wanted to listen. (probably with some who did not want to listen) After a while, I noticed I did not have the need to speak of my grief, and could find healing in listening to, and trying to salve other's pain. This played a big role in my becoming functional again. For the most part, my life is enjoyable and filled with anticipation and looking for a tomorrow.

The one thing I cannot get past is feeling the pain for the newly bereaved. Because I have "been there" their pain becomes my pain. Several years ago our steering committee decided it would be beneficial for those attending a Compassionate Friends meeting for the first time, to meet separately. Having previously talked to most of these people by phone, gave me some insight on their background, therefore I seemed the logical one to facilitate this group.

This was a very good experience for me. It reiterated that we heal, but we don't forget. Perhaps the remembering is what gives us compassion and the desire to reach out to those hurting so badly. Much of the devastation of our loss is the same for all of us, the deep depression, anger, guilt, no interest in life around us, "going over the edge", worry about losing another, crying, can't cry, marital deterioration, unable to fulfill obligations with our family and work situations. I so want to make them better now, teach them to love again (particularly themselves), restore their faith in their supreme being, help them sort grief from true marital problems, and tell them we have all felt like we were going over the edge (but didn't).

It seems so little to offer, "your feelings are normal, you will get better, and become functional again". If the newly bereaved could **truly believe** these words, then I guess that is a **lot** to offer. But I feel most of them are saying "you don't know how deep I have fallen in the pit" and this transition could never happen to me. (This was my reaction in the early stages) Believe me, we know where the bottom is, we've been there. We can learn to smile again; we can even learn to live again, once we have let go of some of the pain. Be patient, this doesn't happen soon. If it has not been long enough for you to see progress, look at those at The Compassionate Friends meetings, who have moved ahead in their grief. They didn't love any less, they have not forgotten how intense your pain can be, and they are just in a different place in their grief. Many have stayed to help you through your loss; their very presence says its possible to survive.

**They are healing, but never forgetting.**

God Bless, **Marie Hofmocker**, TCF Valley Forge, PA



We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, just as your 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  
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