

# 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 - 3/3/2022

Next Meeting - 04/3/2022

**SAVE THE DATE— 45th National Convention, August 5 - 7, 2022 in Houston, TX .** Make your reservation now with Marriott Marquis Houston. The phone number is 877-688-4323 and mention TCF National Conference. The price of the room is \$149.00.



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

## March 2022

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## 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

Missed 2 for the month of February 2022  
 Frank Yannini in memory his son, David  
 Joseph and Jane Dougherty in memory of their son, Brendan K. Dougherty

For March

Rose Marie Cote — In memory of her son, Mark, and her husband, Paul

In February's newsletter for Anniversary – Tash Jackson - Peter Simmons Jr - brother - 2/14

## 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)**

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 By my helping I will be helped, If I accept your anger then my anger is accepted. By my caring I am cared for. When I listen I will be listened to. And all these things mean, On the lonely road of grief I will not be alone. My recovery will be a little gentler, And my child will not be forgotten, Because the memory of him can be shared, With you who understand how I feel -- My special Compassionate Friends.

Shirley Egan

TCF, New South Wales, Australia

## **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**

- Eileen & Tom Algeo - Megan - daughter - 3/2**
- Jovanna & Joseph Bevilacqua - Donato ""Danny"" Bevilacqua - son - 3/27**
- Loretta Bovell - JoAnna - daughter - 3/7**
- 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**
- Herb & Karen Grant - Ryan - son - 3/8**
- Linda Haines - Zackary Monroe McCarthy - son - 3/24**
- 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, 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**

# Anniversaries - Cont'd

**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**

**Marcella Rice - Elise B. Rice - mother - 3/28**

**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**

## EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me -- NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere -- love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say -- nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer; "I am mad, Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong"

Lisa Ann Jones, Avoca, PA

## THE PATH

My world lay shattered around me. Gone were the flowers and the sun. The path ahead looked dark and threatening. I heard a voice saying, "You have to travel this path alone".

"I don't want to go down that path. I can't." I protested. "I liked the old path."

"The choice is yours," said the voice, "but you may never go back to the old path. You may stay here at the crossroads where anger and pain will keep you company and wither your spirit. Or, you may runoff into the surrounding woods and pretend you are going somewhere, but you will become disoriented and lost. The only peace is to be found at the end of the path ahead."

"If you have the courage to set forth upon the new path and keep struggling through the storms, you will discover depths in yourself that you never knew existed. If you reach out you will find those who have already traveled this difficult way and are there to support and guide you. Though it seems impossible now, your path will become beautiful again, as will your spirit. You will emerge from the desolation a stronger, wiser, and more compassionate person. Then you too can turn and extend your hand to those who are still on the way."

I made a choice. I picked up the remains of my life -- my aching heart and wounded spirit, my broken dreams and disbelief -- and wrapped them carefully in my blanket of grief. Holding them closely to me, I walked steadfastly ahead into the storm with faith in the promise of peace on the other side.

Sharron Cordaro, Riverside, CA

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## A LETTER TO MY BROTHER

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer.

How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you, I think of you everyday and feel you in my heart always.

Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness.

I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

**Robin Holeman**  
Tuscaloosa, AL TCF

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The depth of your sorrow diminishes slowly and, at times, imperceptibly. Your recovery is not an act of disloyalty to the one who has died. Nor is it achieved by forgetting the past. Try to strike a delicate balance between a yesterday that should be remembered and a tomorrow that must be created.

**Author Unknown**

"How does one become a butterfly?" she asked pensively. "You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar". "You mean to die?" asked Yellow. "Yes and no," he answered. "What looks like you will die, but what's really you will live." **Trina Paulus** - from "Hope for the Flowers"

# BIRTHDAYS

Catherine Dardozi - son - James Dardozi - 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 - son - 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 Mutz - 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



## **Birthdays — continued**

**Janet Patrizio - son - Stephen - 3/12**  
**Terri Pfeiffer - son - Matthew - 3/6**  
**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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### **SECOND AVENUE**

Who would have expected that your life as we knew it, Would come to an end in a blizzard, in New York City, On a Second Avenue sidewalk?  
 Did the snow somehow cushion you when you collapsed? Did it give you comfort in some way, as in the softness of a mother's arms?  
 Did it protect you from the hard, cold pavement beneath it, Or even the harshness of the sudden blow That came on Second Avenue?  
 I would like to believe the snow was falling To make your death somehow purer, whiter and softer The way I would have wanted it to be.  
 And wasn't it fitting that your life should cease there, In the state where you began your journey Twenty-one years before?  
 Second Avenue, a blizzard - How appropriate an end for such a fine young man In the prime of his life, Who loved both the snow, and the excitement of the city, To which you traveled for the weekend.  
 Again and again, I will wonder . . . If there, in that split second before your sweet face touched, The soft warmth of the snow, Did you silently call out -- "Mom"?

Remembering Shaun

With love always, Kathleen Leeper  
 TCF - Valley Forge, PA Chapter

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  
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**The  
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Friends Inc.**

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