

# 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 May 2021. Please send an email to Rhonda (rhonda@tcfvalleyforge.org) if you plan on attending. There will not be an in person meeting at least until sometime in 2021. My TCF email has changed it is rhonda@tcfvalleyforge.org



## May 2021

### Chapter Leader:

Rhonda Gomez  
12 Brook Circle  
Glenmoore PA 19343  
(484) 919-0820 Chapter cell phone

### Newsletter Publisher:

Rhonda Gomez

### Love Gift Acknowledgements:

Connie Nolan

Treasurer: Joe Purifico

Librarian Carole Bailey.

### National Headquarters

48660 Pontiac Trail

3930808

Wixom, MI 48393

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.

Walt and Geogianna Bolger

Crystal Moyer

Nancy McLaughlin

## **THE STORM OF GRIEF**

Believe it or not, you CAN learn to weather it.

Going through the various stages of grief is like being caught in a small boat at sea in a bad storm; if you are lucky, you will not be alone. After losing a loved one you are destined to ride through the most vicious, horrendous storm you will ever encounter. You cannot fly over it, duck around it, or go under it.

To retain your emotional balance, head directly into the storm. Unfortunately, one cannot even prepare for this disaster --forget the drugs, booze, and tranquilizers. All these so-called "helpers" only quiet your pain and anesthetize you from feeling your loss; they prolong and delay the start of your grief therapy. One must go through the storm in order to live a normal, peaceful life again.

Lightning has struck you but you are still here. Inside, you are in a state of shock --almost paralyzed by your loss and numb from your tragedy. Your heart is beating, you know you are breathing, you are coping like a robot, but you don't have any feeling inside or much awareness of what is happening around you.

Black clouds encircle you, the relentless waves pound the boat as you are pitched up and down. Heavy sheets of water pour their fury upon you. You are far off course. One learns quickly how to be a good sailor; there are no choices. To do otherwise means to capsize and drown.

Time seems to stand still. Helpless, you cower in the bowels of the boat, hanging on tightly. It would be so easy to give up and slip over the side, but faith, courage, and hope give you the tenacity to endure.

One day the sky is clear and sunny, the water is calm, and land is close by. Somehow, by some miracle, you have made it to a safe harbor --you have weathered your storm of grief.

When deep in your sadness, you might find this impossible to believe, but time, keeping busy with everyday activities, and surrounding yourself with compassionate friends will get you through. Join a grief-therapy support group; such groups are found in hospitals, churches and synagogues.

Justify within your soul the many reasons you have to be here, and count your blessings for what you do have left. If you cannot find any, search deeper. There is someone or some cause that needs you badly. We do not forget our losses, but we do learn to adjust to them as the years go by.

Gloria Gersten, Miami TCF

## **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**

- Madeleine Adler & J. Peter Adler - son - 5/30**
- Don & Monica Barber - Steven W. Barber - son - 5/30**
- Gloria Bello - Joseph - son - 5/21**
- Ben & Cathy Breskman - Brian - son - 5/26**
- Krishna Byrd - William - son - 5/29**
- Martha & Albert Caesar - Daniel Mark Caesar - son - 5/13**
- Joane Cooper - Katy - daughter - 5/21**
- Rose Marie Cote - Paul Cote - husband - 5/27**
- Franklin & Patricia Cox - Christen Fox - daughter - 5/26**
- Jane Cox - Bill - son - 5/24**
- Bud Cunnane - Patrick - son - 5/2**
- Dawn Dellabarba - Brett - son - 5/5**
- Janie Ebersole - Ashley Sankus - daughter - 5/16**
- Justine Ellinger - Keira Ellinger - daughter - 5/7**
- Bridget & David Ellison - Caroline - daughter - 5/7**
- Charlie & Jill Fick - Michael Sternberg - son - 5/14**
- Colleen and Dan Fledderman - Amy - daughter - 5/25**
- Daniel Gentry - Emily - daughter - 5/4**
- William & Marilyn Hudson - Robert Hudson - son - 5/11**
- Joan Kelly - William - son - 5/2**
- Joan Kingslake - Guy Thornton Woods - son-in-law - 5/6**
- Pat Kuchler - Michael - son - 5/3**
- Dan Logan - Joanie - daughter - 5/28**
- John & Nancy Logue - Kaitlyn Logue - daughter - 5/3**
- Tom & Charmaine Malik - Danny Malik - son - 5/12**
- Andrew Mautz - Jaxon - son - 5/6**
- Michelle Mazzio - Brendan Mazzio - son - 5/20**

# **Anniversaries— continued**

**Robert McCullough - Caroline Patricia McCullough - daughter - 5/27**

**Marian Melchiorre - John Anthony Peticca, Jr - grandson - 5/11**

**Mike & Jen Meluskey - Carolyn Meluskey - daughter - 5/22**

**Winnie & James O'Halloran - Thomas M. O'Halloran - son - 5/28**

**Mary O'Halloran - Thomas M. O'Halloran - brother - 5/28**

**Anna Packer - Anna M Packer - daughter - 5/22**

**Holly Kuiatkouski and Paul Falkestein - Anna - daughter - 5/26**

**Sharyn & Joe Pozzuolo - Joey Brad Pozzuolo - son - 5/19**

**Joe & Kim Pratt - Paul - son - 5/16**

**Rusty Puglisi - Tony Puglisi - husband - 5/23**

**Christine and Richard Purkiss - Adam Clark - son - 5/7**

**Joan & Earl Reigel - Melissa Reigel - daughter - 5/4**

**Kathleen Schmitt - Ken Schmitt - son - 5/21**

**Anthony & Marsha Schrader - Krista - daughter - 5/11**

**Linda Sciarra - John Anthony Peticca Jr - son - 5/11**

**Cathy Seehuetter - Nina Seehuetter - daughter - 5/11**

**E. Pearl & Ernest Smith - Tony - son - 5/5**

**Helen (Barb, daughter) Smith - Bob Smith - son - 5/15**

**Harry & Merrily Spiess - Charles Smith - grandson - 5/29**

**John & Rose Stanley - Susan Stanley - daughter - 5/29**

**Pety Suy & Matthew Kuchler - Ethan - son - 5/3**

**Morgan E Taylor - Devan - sister - 5/30**

**Brooke Test - Devan - sister - 5/30**

**Nancy Thompson - J. Peter Adler - friend - 5/30**

**Sherron Trio - Tom - son - 5/21**

**Marissa Wadsworth - TJ Wadsworth - son - 5/28**

**Mek Wagner - Paige - daughter - 5/13**

**Deb Walter - Evan - son - 5/10**

**Jamie (Germaine) Cote Weaver - Paul - Father - 5/27**

**Terry & Susan Weikel - Jennifer - daughter - 5/11**

**John & Cecilia Zisk - Jacob - son - 5/20**

# BIRTHDAYS

**Courtney Aaron - brother - Justin - 5/18**  
**Marilynn Anton - nephew - Steven Schneibolk - 5/7**  
**Don & Monica Barber - son - Steven W. Barber - 5/19**  
**Stephen & Barbara Billings - daughter - Laura Elizabeth - 5/22**  
**Shirley & Lex Bono - son - Greg - 5/19**  
**Krisha Byrd - son - William - 5/29**  
**Loreta & Ken Cericola - son - Anthony Cericola - 5/3**  
**Mary & John Chelius - son - John J. Chelius, Jr. - 5/2**  
**Joanne & Tom Christman - son - Kyle R. O'Neill - 5/23**  
**Kathy Concannon - daughter - Tracey - 5/31**  
**Joanne De Felice - son - Joseph - 5/27**  
**Vanessa Diaz - friends child - Samir - 5/16**  
**Michelle Dozier - son - Eric McCoy - 5/24**  
**Danielle Evelyn - son - Samir - 5/16**  
**Carol Graber - son - Bobby - 5/17**  
**Frank Harms - son - Tyler - 5/20**  
**Tracey Hawley - son - Christopher - 5/7**  
**Robin Hayman - son - Bradley Hayman - 5/11**  
**Debbie Helman - son - Adam - 5/7**  
**Marie Hofmockel - grandson - Steven Schneibolk - 5/7**  
**William & Marilyn Hudson - son - Robert Hudson - 5/11**  
**Hazel Hurley - son - Michael - 5/3**  
**Jean Jones - grandson - Bobby - 5/7**  
**Joan Kelly - daughter - Joan Barbara - 5/6 - son - William - 5/2**  
**Donna Kendall - daughter - Jennifer - 5/7**  
**Mary Leshem - son - Michael - 5/18**  
**Susan Lipson - nephew - Justin Ingerman - 5/18**  
**Ella Mack - sister - Elizabeth - 5/31**  
**Maryellen & James Madden - daughter - Anne Marie Madden - 5/18**  
**Anne McClenachan - brother - Andy McClenachan - 5/30**  
**Michael & Maria McFadden - daughter - Rachel McFadden - 5/14**



## **Birthdays — continued**

**Susan McKelvey - son - John - 5/20**

**Mike & Jen Meluskey - daughter - Carolyn Meluskey - 5/13**

**Cheryl Mezzaroba - son - Lon Mezzaroba - 5/18**

**Ann Murray - son - Jonathan Rapoport - 5/17**

**Christy O'Brian - daughter - Evie - 5/2**

**Elsie Oreski - son - Gregory T. Oreski - 5/22**

**Betty & Richard Owens, Sr. - son - Richard H. Owens, Jr. - 5/12**

**Sam & Palma Panichello - son - Joseph Panichello - 5/21**

**Holly Kuiatkouski and Paul Falkestein - daughter - Anna - 5/21**

**Barbara Purtell-Frank - son - Michael John Keller Purtell - 5/28**

**Andrew Randolph - brother - James - 5/26**

**Thomas & Jeri Bubbles Reinert - father (Bubbles) Albert Volpe - 5/4**

**Carl Rudegeair - son - Adam - 5/7**

**Lynn Saxon - son - Michael - 5/30**

**Sheila Scanlon - grandson - Andrew McGuire - 5/12**

**Kathleen Schmitt - son - Ken Schmitt - 5/31**

**Pamela Schneibolk - son - Steven - 5/7**

**Enjoli Segneri - boyfriend - Shane - 5/16**

**Margaret & Matthew Strickler - son - Timothy Strickler - 5/4**

**Suzanne Teleha - son - Peter Teleha - 5/20**

**Nancy Venafrà - son - Justin Aaron - 5/18**

**Roseanne Vigliotti - granddaughter - Adriana - 5/9**

**Donna White - sister - Diane White - 5/1**

**Joan & Ed Young - son - Jed Young - 5/18**

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I'm writing this from heaven,  
Where I dwell with God Above.  
I am resting here with the angels  
Who surround me now with love.

But though I may seem far away,  
We will never truly part,  
For part of me lives on with you,  
Forever in your heart.

**Author unknown—Submitted by  
Mary Lou Harrison—In memory  
Scott Harrison, her son**

Those we Love  
don't go away,  
they walk beside us  
every day,  
Unseen, unheard,  
but always near,  
so loved, so missed,  
so very dear.

**Author Unknown—Submitted by Mary  
Lou Harrison—In memory of Scott  
Harrison, her son**

## SHARED THOUGHTS ON "MOTHER'S GUILT"

The month of May has always been an ego booster for most of us mothers, as we receive cards of praise and flattery from our children. But now that our child has died, and we are walking around with a hole in our soul, those same greeting cards can cause us guilt by not feeling worthy of the words.

We most always refine our priorities, and make new standards for ourselves after the death of our children. One of those priorities is don't put off spending time together or expressing our love. With our hindsight of knowing the child's life was cut short, we critique our motherhood as though we could have been super-human. We measure our mothering performance as though we could have given 100% of our time to our precious child. We punish ourselves with guilt, by remembering specifics of harsh words or deeds. Most often these are very normal human things most parents do and say. We know we cannot change, or take back, any infliction we place upon our child.

When we were entrusted with the gift of our children, we were not given hindsight, or the ability to be perfect. We were expected to handle all the other responsibilities placed upon us by other family members, and many mothers dealt with jobs to provide financial support for the family. This means there was not time, nor energy, to be the perfect parent. We were even expected to make mistakes, but now guilt holds us responsible for all our parental shortcomings. I have learned if we did what we thought was right at the time, or the best we could, that was all we could do. It is unfair to measure our performance as a parent with hindsight or super-human powers that we did not possess.

I'm sure our children did not judge us nearly so harshly as we judge ourselves. You may find it very helpful to tell your deceased child how you feel, what you wish you could have done, and how much you love them. I, personally, feel they are in an all-knowing state, and can better understand our expression of love. I'm sure a lot of our guilt would subside, if our children could express their image of us as parents.

Love is the greatest gift we have ever given or received. Just the fact we hurt so badly, and our pain is so intense, tells us we had great love for our children.

The pain of losing our children can never stop totally, but we can help to ease it to the point we can live with it. We would be very angry if someone would judge us as unfairly as we judge ourselves. We must first learn to love ourselves again, so we can love others. We love our children, even with their flaws. We must respect our children enough to know they love us, even when we are not the perfect parent. Don't minimize their love by thinking they were not capable of forgiving, or understanding that we did our best, and that was good enough.

God Bless, Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge

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### CATCHING BUTTERFLIES

It often hurt to come upon reminders of my son.  
Tho' often since I lost him,  
I would search around for one.  
Which always brought on sadness,  
And the tears that I would shed.  
Were caused by names or faces,  
All things that I would dread.

But then one day I came upon a man  
Who'd lost his son.  
I found that things I ran from,  
He wouldn't even shun.  
But rather he would treasure,  
And I said I wondered why.  
He told me that he called them  
"Catching Butterflies."

This view of his intrigued me;  
I wanted to hear more,  
And learned that he took all of them  
And carefully would store.  
All of the reminders that I chose to push away.  
He would tuck them deep down inside his heart each and every day.

Now a name or likeness,  
When catching me off guard.  
Does not upset me as it did,  
and I don't find it hard.  
For now, instead, I see these times as opportunities .  
To see my son awakened In these new, fresh memories.

**Dottie Williams, TCF Pittsburgh, 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  
Rhonda Gomez  
Chapter Leader  
12 Brook Circle  
Glenmoore PA 19343



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends Inc.**

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