

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Inside Valley Forge

Meetings are on the **First Saturday** of every month, at 1:45 PM (ending at 3:30 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 Meetings -

Feb, Sept, Dec— No meeting

June— 6/01/2024 @ 1:45

July— 7/06/2024 @ 1:45

August— 8/3/2024 @ 1:45

September— No Meeting

October - 10/5/2024 @ 1:45

November — 11/2/2024 @ 1:45

December— 12/8/2024

Remembrance service, 2 pm

The reason there is no meeting, service, 2 pm.

The reason there is no meeting, the Church has time reserved by the church for other activities.



May 2024

Chapter Leader:

Rhonda Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore PA 19343
(484) 919-0820 Chapter cell phone
Email: rhonda@tcfvalleyforge.org

Newsletter Publisher:

Rhonda Gomez

Love Gift Acknowledgements:

Connie Nolan

Treasurer: Joe Purifico

Librarian: Carole Bailey

National Headquarters

48660 Pontiac Trail
#930808
Wixom, MI 48393
Toll Free: (877)969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

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 ones enables us to defray the cost of the chapter expenses, particularly the newsletter, meeting and our outreach to newly bereaved. Please includes a special tribute you wish printed in the newsletter along with gift.

Please make all checks Payable to:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
Send to Rhonda Gomez

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.

Changes in this newsletter

The changes you see on the front page are due to the fact that we all are getting older and prefer not to drive at night. We consulted with the church staff to find out how we could come up with a day and time that is convenient for most of you. We will not be able to notify members about meeting cancellations due to bad weather if we not have their email addresses.

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.

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

FRED & IRENE SUTTON – IN MEMORY OF JIM SUTTON

The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold its meeting on May 4, 2024 at 1:45 pm.

NOT GUILT, REGRET

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn't we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us. Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn't feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt - we feel regret.

Kitty Sanders, Nashville

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
 Krisha Byrd - William - son - 5/29
 Andrea Caesar - Daniel Mark Caesar - son - 5/13
 Joane Cooper - Katy - daughter - 5/21
 Rose Marie Cote - Paul Cote - husband - 5/27
 Jane Cox - Bill - son - 5/24
 Franklin & Patricia Cox - Christen Fox, - daughter - 5/26
 Bud Cunnane - Patrick - son - 5/2
 Dawn Dellabarba - Brett - son - 5/5
 Janie Ebersole - Ashley Sankus - daughter - 5/16
 Renee & Walter Eells - Patrick - son - 5/31
 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
 Mary Ann Flocco - Barbara - sister - 5/17
 John Gailey - Alex - son - 5/18
 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
 Marian Melchiorre - John Anthony Peticca, Jr - grandson - 5/11
 Mike & Jen Meluskey - Carolyn Meluskey - daughter - 5/22
 Mary O'Halloran - Thomas M. O'Halloran - brother - 5/28
 Winnie & James O'Halloran - Thomas M. O'Halloran - son - 5/28
 Holly Kuiatkouski and Paul Falkestein - Anna - daughter - 5/26
 Anna Packer - Anna M Packer - daughter - 5/22

Anniversaries - Cont'd

John Peticca - John Anthony Peticca Jr - son - 5/11
 Sharyn & Joe Pozzuolo - Joey Brad Pozzuolo - son - 5/19
 Joe & Kim Pratt - Paul - son - 5/16
 Christine and Richard Purkiss - Adam Clark - son - 5/7
 Joanne Quirion - Marissa - daughter - 5/21
 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
 Helen (Barb, daughter) Smith - Bob Smith - son - 5/15
 E. Pearl & Ernest Smith - Tony - son - 5/5
 Harry & Merrily Spiess - Charles Smith - grandson - 5/29
 John & Rose Stanley - Susan Stanley - daughter - 5/29
 Pety Suy & Matthew Kuchler - Ethan - son - 5/3
 Anna Maria Tamaro-Bintliff - John - son - 5/3/2020
 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 & Cecila Zisk - Jacob - son - 5/20

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 POMC Cincinnati OH

BIRTHDAYS

Courtney Aaron - brother - Justin - 5/18
 Dianne Algeo - Granddaughter - Skylar - 5/4
 Marilyn Anton - nephew - Steven Schneibolk - 5/7
 Don & Monica Barber - son - Steven W. Barber - 5/19
 Stephen & Barbara Billings - daughter - Laura Elizabeth Billings - 5/22
 Bob & Marge Blasucci - son - Adam - 5/31
 Shirley & Lex Bono - son - Greg - 5/19/1992
 Krisha Byrd - son - William - 5/29
 Loreta & Ken Cericola - son - Anthony Cericola - 5/3
 Mary 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
 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
 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
 Palma Panichello - son - Joseph Panichello - 5/21
 Holly Kuitkouski and Paul Falkestein - daughter - Anna - 5/21
 Barbara Purtell-Frank - son - Michael John Keller Purtell - 5/28
 Thomas & Jeri Bubbles - Reinert - father (Bubbles) - Albert Volpe - 5/4
 Carl Rudegear - 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 - brother - Steven - 5/7



BIRTHDAYS (continued)

Pamela Schneibolk – son — Steven — 5/7
 Enjol Segneri - boyfriend - Shane - 5/16
 Margaret & Matthew Strickler - son - Timothy Strickler - 5/4
 Suzanne Teleha - son - Peter Teleha - 5/20
 Nancy Venafrá - 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

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

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 we would judge us as unfairly as we judge ourselves. We must first learn to love our-selves again, so we can love others. We love our children, even flaws. We must respect our children enough to know they love us, even when we are the 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.

Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge

Flowing more gently
 My “River of Tears”
 It’s banks holding grief
 of nine long years
 Ripples of memories
 so many kind
 In my heart they are
 always - “I Find”.
 Memories of kissing away
 childhood hurt
 Praying life’s pitfalls
 you would avert.
 You chose to leave your
 sadness on earth
 For Heaven’s peace and
 Eternal Rebirth.

**In memory of my son, Mark J. Cote
 Mother, Rose M. Cote, TCF VALLEY
 FORGE**

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

WOULD THEY COME BACK ?

We miss them so, but would they come back? When I see the beauty of the birds soaring ecstatically in the sky, somehow claiming the beauty as their own; I watch them carefully, sometimes they are playfully cutting into the wind to forge in their direction of choice. I think of our loved ones up in heaven, and I feel they are as happy as the birds soaring and dipping and floating with wings spread wide. There too, however, they have important work to do: Greeting the new loved ones into the kingdom of heaven and acting as God's angels to watch. I sense that they wouldn't come back if given a choice. It would be like a caged bird who had had his wings clipped to protect him from flying outside into an uncaring world: Walking on the floor in stoic resignation.

Bea Kroon — TCF, Bradenton, FL

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



The
Compassionate
Friends Inc.

Valley Forge Chapter
of the Compassionate Friends
Rhonda Gomez
Chapter Leader
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore PA 19343

*A bereavement organization
For parents, siblings and families
We offer friendship, love and understanding
We talk, we listen, we share, we care.*



The Compassionate Friends Credo

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. 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.

May 2024

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