



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

OCTOBER 2014

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

Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of interest

Oct 2 General Sharing

Oct 9-11, 2015 E. PA Regional Conference
(see page 2)

Nov 6 General Sharing & Death by Suicide

Oct 9-11 2015 E. PA Regional Conference

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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 (which we call love gifts) 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.

If you donate to **United Way** at your place of work, and wish your contribution to go to the Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, you may do so by entering: **The Compassionate Friends - Valley Forge Chapter United Way ID# 04-104.** on your pledge form.

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
SEND TO: CHAPTER LEADER
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.

INSIDE VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER

NEW MEMBERS

Christy O'Brian, daughter *Evie* (18)
Susan Pollock, son *Brenden* (22)

REFRESHMENTS

Cathy & Ben Breskman, in memory of our son *Brian* (19)
Rhonda & Frank Gomez, in memory of our son *Frankie's* birthday 9/30

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.

LOVE GIFTS

Phyllis & Jim Casey, in loving memory of our son *Jimmer Casey*. In lieu of a gift to their friends Judy & Bill Puchmeyer, who are celebrating a special occasion.
Nina Bernstein, in loving memory of my son *Andrew's* 30th birthday.
Myer Bobrow Foundation in loving memory of *Steven Schneibolk*, son of Pamela Schneibolk, and grandson of Marie & Ken Hofmockel.
Marcia & Harold Epstein, in loving memory of our grandson *Andrew Voluck* on his birthday 10/12.
Rachel & Jacob Himmelstein, in honor of our son *Benjamin* on his birthday 9/25.
Gloria & Jerry Koval, in loving memory of our son *Steven Koval*, on his anniversary 9/3.
Ruth & Maurice Onraet in loving memory of all the children gone too soon, and their families.
Joy Settles, in loving memory of my son *R. Gary Korn* on his birthday 10/5.
Marie & Samuel Schmeltzer, in loving memory of our son *Sam "Sonny" Schmeltzer* on his birthday 9/11. Thank you for all the wonderful work th you do, God bless.
Rose Yanni, in loving memory of my wonderful nephew *David Yanni* on his anniversary 10/25.

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 fgomez@hybridpoplars.com**

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.**

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Maryellen & Dick Abell, son *Brian Abell* 10/14
Chip Arena, son *Nick* 10/10
Carole Bailey, son *Matthew J. Bailey* 10/6
Victoria Bayle, son *Bobby D Bayle III* 10/5/
Nina Bernstein, son *Andrew Voluck* 10/12
Martha & Albert Caesar, son *Daniel Mark Caesar* 10/18
Diana Clark, grandson *Alexander* 10/16
Carole and Kevin Creighton, son *Ryan Kent Creighton* 10/7
Virginia Di Fronzo, daughter *Sis* 10/7
Harold & Marcia Epstein, grandson *Andrew Voluck* 10/12
Gwen & Walt Gearhart, grandson *Jamie Rogers* 10/29
Rita Gibbons, daughter *Patricia Gibbons* 10/26
Virginia Hagen, son *Matthew D. Hagen* 10/20
Joanne Haley, son *Douglas Haley* 10/4
Carl & Catherine Helwig, son *Michael Helwig* 10/9
Janet Higgins, son *Nicholas* 10/10
Lynn Kivlen, son *Brien Kivlen* 10/12
Barb & Larry Lauchle, son *Gray* 10/23
Maryann Lockyer, son *Keith* 10/23
Maureen Lok, daughter *Jessica* 10/24
Jennifer & Michael Magee, sister *Jacqueline Ann Rogers* 10/3
Dan Markle, brother *Matt Markle* 10/30
James & Mary Beth Mattiford, son *Scott Mattiford* 10/15
Mark & Kathryn McNally, daughter *Beth Ann McNally* 10/1
Alexandra Milas, sister *Demitra Vallianos* 10/16
Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy, daughter *Barilyn Mountjoy* 10/3
daughter *Maralin Mountjoy* 10/3
Kathy Nicholson, son *Frank* 10/26
Peggy O'Brien, son *Rick O'Brien* 10/4/
Deborah Osting, son *Christopher Daniel Osting* 10/24
Roy Redman, daughter *Linda Inez Redman* 10/22
Thomas & Jeri Reinert, son *Thomas Reinert, Jr.* 10/21
Ginger & Merle Renner, daughter *Deanna Dawn Renner* 10/11
Carol Robinson, son *Jim Kearney* 10/4
Skipp & Kathy Robinson, daughter *Carrie Robinson* 10/28
Mike & Diane Rogers, daughter *Jacqueline Ann Rogers* 10/3

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS continued

Donna Rogers, son *Jamie Rogers* 10/29
JoAnne Sands, son *Tyler* 10/16
Joy Conard Settles, son *R. Gary Korn* 10/5
Robert & Nell Shoemaker, daughter *Brynn Shoemaker* 10/5
Janis Siravo, son *Christian* 10/7
Bettsy Townsend, daughter *Wendy Townsend Besche* 10/25
Janice Vanderslice, son *Gregory Vanderslice* 10/4
Lucia Watters, daughter *Luanne Zambino* 10/14
Sandra & Harry Wolfheimer, daughter *Ann Marie Wolfheimer* 10/10
Rose Yanni, nephew *David Yanni* 10/26
Frank & Dolores Yanni, son *David Yanni* 10/26

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Marilynn Anton, nephew *Steven Schneibolk* - 10/02
Herb and Fran Barnett, son *Andrew* - 10/16
Victoria Bayle, son *Bobby D Bayle III* - 10/2
William Bodulich, son *William W. Bodulich* - 10/15
Gina Cappelli, son *Dan Foley* - 10/9
Tom & Marge Del Rosario, son *Dominic* - 10/17
Virginia Di Fronzo, daughter *Sis* - 10/4
Joseph & Patsy Dooley, son *Peter J. Dooley* - 10/1
Shirley & Herb Druker, daughter *Heidi* - 10/25
Jim and Patty Duffy, son *Michael Duffy* - 10/28
Bonnie Gardner, daughter *Michelle* - 10/19
Thomas & Anne Glenn, daughter *Lauren Glenn* - 10/15
Carol Graber, son *Bobby* - 10/28
Herb & Karen Grant, son *Shaun* - 10/21
Cathy Grosshanten, son *Gary* - 10/18
Thomas & Virginia Hoesch, son *William E. "Buddy" Hoesch* - 10/7
Marie & Ken Hofmockel, grandson *Steven Schneibolk* - 10/2
Joan Hornsby, daughter *Jackie* - 10/5
Jean Jones, grandson *Bobby* - 10/28
Margaret & Edward Kiefski, Sr., son *Edward Kiefski, Jr.* - 10/25
Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy, daughter *Barilyn Mountjoy* - 10/3
daughter *Maralin Mountjoy* - 10/3
John B. & Lillian Neff, son *Patrick Neff* - 10/17
Gary & Patricia Otto, son *Benjamin Otto* - 10/17
Joan Palumbo, son *Michael* - 10/13
Barbara Pearl, son *Jason Seth Pearl* - 10/16
Betty Jane Peters - Neilson, son *Martin A Peters* - 10/22

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED

Ruth Pluck, niece *Jackie* - 10/5
Robert & Barbara Pontician, son *Rob Pontician* - 10/28
Barbara Purtell-Frank, son *Michael John Keller Purtell* - 10/29
Marge Randolph, son *Doug Fixter* - 10/12
Ginger & Merle Renner, daughter *Deanna Dawn Renner* - 10/22
Robert & Nancy Ricciardi daughter *Jessica Lee Ricciardi* - 10/7
Ilene & Sy Rockower, daughter *Amy Rockower* - 10/17
Thelma Rosen, brother *David Beeler* - 10/31
Barbara Rossman, daughter *Kickole Lyn* - 10/12
Ron & Sandy Ruth, son *Brian David Ruth* - 10/21
JoAnne Sands, son *Tyler* - 10/16/
Carol Sannella, husband *Robert J. Sannella* - 10/21
Pamela Schneibolk, son *Steven* - 10/2
Phyllis Sisenwine, daughter *Jill* - 10/9
Susan Snyder, son *Brian* - 10/22/
Ruth Thomas, son *David George Thomas* - 10/28
Barbara Torrens, brother *Robert Birmele* - 10/21
Weldon & Marie Tyson, daughter *Lisa M. Tyson* - 10/26
Tina Ulshafer, son *Jimmy* - 10/30
Henry & Elizabeth Weaver, grandson *Donald Smith, Jr.* - 10/16
Jackie Wesley, daughter *Teresa Ellen Wesley Hough* - 10/2
Theresa Wigand, daughter *Dawn* - 10/18
Paul & Marcia Woodruff, son *Danny Woodruff* - 10/29

A death by suicide triggers great amounts of anger and guilt. However, some of those feelings can be balanced by struggling to see that the suicide was not so much a deliberate, hostile act, but a gesture of utter hopelessness and despair. Reminders that the person was so driven by emotional whirlwinds that it was impossible to sense any ray of hope can temper, considerably, the emotional impact of a death by suicide.

One of the best responses to a suicide that I have ever heard came through a sermon delivered by the pastor of a young man who shot himself. With great eloquence, his pastor was able to convey tremendous hope through these words:

“Our friend died on his own battlefield. He was killed in action fighting a civil war. He fought against adversaries that were as real to him as his casket is real to us. They were powerful adversaries. They took toll of his energies and endurance. They exhausted the last vestiges of his courage, and only God knows how this child of His suffered in the silent skirmishes that took place in his soul”

Victor M. Parachin

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON GRIEF IS INVISIBLE,
HELP OTHERS TO UNDERSTAND IT**

Often the same holidays that once brought us much joy can now compound our depression, and be an abrasive time for the newly bereaved. We find it difficult to count our blessings, when such an integral person is gone from our lives, and with them went the sunshine of our tomorrows. Even those of us who are blessed with having surviving children, find it difficult to express our thankfulness. We are so all consumed with such enormous feelings of love and loss, that we cannot think past our pain. It is important to forgive ourselves for our feelings, for they are human and normal. I believe they are acceptable with our Supreme Being, for he is probably the only one who genuinely knows the depth of our despair, how long and hard the journey of grief is, and how the pain penetrates our very soul.

Our support system ends about the same time the insulation of shock wears off. If we were an amputee, those around us could see not only do we have to adjust to making a new and different life for ourselves, but also live with the fact we are no longer whole. Our loss is not visible, so it is not fair to expect or blame our friends and family for not knowing what to do or say. They try to shield themselves from our pain, and the uncomfortableness. This leads to wanting to rush us through our grief so they can feel better faster. Many of us may have responded in the same manner prior to learning about grief first hand. We hurt ourselves when we cut off family and significant friends. It is much more helpful to express our needs in a loving manner, and educate the world on grief of bereaved parents and siblings. Most will appreciate your telling them how to help you. But, if we express our needs in an abrasive manner, we cannot expect a positive response. One of the major difficulties is we don't know how to help ourselves, and are not honest about how we feel on a daily basis.

Many times we try to run away from our feelings, for they frighten us. We should not lay an issue aside, until we have dealt with it. We need to intentionally plan time to talk about our child or sibling, our frustrated love, the shattering of our future dreams, and how this has reduced us to feeling non-productive and a sub-standard human being. It can take a lot of sharing of feelings to learn to love ourselves again. Once we love ourselves, it is much easier to love others.

It took a lot of healing before I could be glad there was a tomorrow. It took a lot of guilt before I could realize a moments rest, or a laugh, was not forgetting my child. We can learn to make the death less significant, the love for our child and the life they had be the purpose for remembering. Once we reach this plateau, memories are comforting, the gut-wrenching pain subsides, and we make life meaningful once again. We wish you the strength to bear your grief, and find a meaningful tomorrow. God Bless, **Marie Hofmockel**, TCF Valley Forge

"In remembering our children,
In sharing with each other,
In supporting each other,
We ease our pain,
We share each step,
We help smooth the road,

And we serve as witnesses
to the fact that we can
make it beyond grief,
As we support each other."
Roy Peterson, TCF

TAKE THE TIME . . . TO HURT, TO CRY. . .

Wordless and worldless -- Endless and forever, grief goes on --

It takes the best -- And leaves the rest an empty shell -- Life is Hell.

David was dead four months when I wrote that in my journal. Time is my enemy. As I envisioned the future of my life, I saw only a vast expanse of desert - dry, parched, and empty.

It is now a year and a half since David's death, and I recognize that time has become my friend. Now, when I look to the future, I see hills and valleys - struggles, to be sure, but, also, moments spent at the summit. What has happened? Time is healing.

Take the time . . .

To hurt . . . The pain is great and the temptation to run away is great. But, there is no avoiding, no escaping the hard feelings. If you cover them over, they only re-surface later in a potentially more destructive way.

To cry . . . It may feel like once started, you can never stop. But you have every reason to cry, and when you have cried enough, you will stop.

To "fall apart." . . . If you have a broken leg, you would not expect yourself to function at full capacity right away. Your wound is much greater - you have a broken heart. Confusion, inability to concentrate, lethargy, imagined glimpses of your dead child are a normal part of the grieving process and do not mean that you are going crazy.

To be "selfish." . . . Mourning is an egocentric time, a time for turning inward and introspection.

To "identify" . . . and seek out resources in your environment that can help: friends, clergy, Compassionate Friends, a counselor. Talk to them.

Having done all that - having lingered in the valley of the shadow - it is time to begin the climb out.

Take the time . . .

To engage again in activities that were once pleasurable. They may hold no joy the first few times; someday they will and that will be all right.

To laugh without guilt. Savor the good moments in the day, brief though they may be. Through your child, you can re-discover the beauty of a sunset.

To care for your health. Grieving is a physio-, as well, as psycho-logical stress. Your body needs protection.

To be patient. Wanting to live again and learning to live again takes time. The path out of the other side of the valley is steep, and we all often stumble. But with time - time spent doing the work of grief - you can find the path to a world made richer by your love.

Bronna Romooff, PHD - Albany, NY, TCF

WHAT TO DO WITH ANGER

Anger is one of the most difficult emotions for me to express. Reared as a "proper" young lady, I was taught that anger was not becoming. Many of the women I have spoken to were similarly taught.

I found, however, I did not have the tools to deal with the deep anger that came shortly after the death of my daughter. My anger was spilling over to people who did not deserve it, or I vented excess anger by overreacting to some situations.

With the loving care and patience of several people, I developed some tools that helped me express my anger. Rather than trying to suppress my angry feelings, I learned to release them in constructive ways. Hopefully, some of these coping techniques will be helpful to others.

Exercise - This is a great way to release anger, plus get into shape! I joined the YMCA, swam twice a week, did "Y's Ways to Fitness" three times a week and walked three to five miles each day. At first, I was concerned about doing so much exercise because I have a very bad back, so I took it easy and worked my way up to my present routine. I always feel much better after a good workout, and I had the extra benefit of getting out of our home and back into society. After my daughter's death, my life felt so out of control; but as I became more fit, I regained some control. This renewed strength aided my recovery.

Writing - When the anger bubbled up in me, I would write. Many times I didn't know where to begin, so I just started by writing, "I am angry because..." Soon, my thoughts were coming faster than I could write them down. After I had expressed my anger in writing, I often discovered that the sources of my anger were different than I had imagined. It usually sifted down to just being angry about my daughter's death. The technique of writing about your feelings is especially nice because you can just throw away or burn your words and the anger with them.

Painting - There is nothing like taking bright oils or acrylics and stroking them over an open canvass. I had not painted in over fifteen years, but I went up into the attic and got down the easel, brushes and paints. I always felt better after a good painting session. Those times were very private for me and no one ever saw my creations, but they were helpful in expressing anger.

Talking - Sometimes I would call a friend and just rant and rave. My friend was a very good and non-judgmental listener. She realized that most of what I said in anger I did not mean. She never gave advice or held me to any "anger" statements, she just lovingly listened.

This technique calls for a careful choice of friends who can maintain confidentiality and not be afraid of anger. It is even more helpful if the friend has had a similar loss.

Energy - Convert anger into energy and use that energy to change the world. Angry with the limited support that mothers of children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) had in the communities, I converted that anger into action. I joined several nation-wide support groups and helped to bring their support into our community.

My anger was further converted into energy which I used to raise money for SMA research. I baked over seven hundred loaves of bread (a lot of anger there!) for a fund raiser. My friends saw my energies and joined to help. Together, our efforts raised over \$6,000 in under six weeks. Reaching out to others can help in healing. If something good can come from our tragedies, it can add meaning to their deaths.

Eggs - Yes, eggs! When I just could not resolve my anger with any of the above techniques, I would take a dozen eggs and black felt-tipped pen and go into the back yard. Writing the reason I was angry on the egg, I threw it at the back fence. At first, I thought this was a little crazy, but after throwing the first egg and watching it shatter, I felt so much better!

I always used just one word to describe my anger. It might be: Death, SMA (the disease my daughter died of), Husband, a friend's name, God. No one need know what you write on the egg! Afterwards, the birds would have a treat eating the eggs; and listening to their happy noises while having their treat, eased my anger.

These are some of the techniques I used to express my anger. It is OK to be angry, and it is important to express, not suppress anger. Suppressed anger can result in deep depression.

It is also all right to be angry with God. He is forgiving and understands our emotions. He would rather have us angry with Him than shut Him out.

EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

A LETTER TO MY BROTHER

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

*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

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

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

THANK YOU REV. SIMON STEPHENS AND TCF FOR:

(Rev. Simon Stephens is the founder of The Compassionate Friends)

- TENDER**
- (1) **HOPE** - when I believed in **none anywhere.**
 - (2) **REASSURANCE** - I'm **not** "crazy"! Confusion, displacement, preoccupation, forgetfulness, timelessness, panic, my journeys into **HELL** - all part of "normal" parental grieving. OK to feel **and** express feeling, or remain silent.
 - (3) **ENERGY** - An infusion via news letters, a note or phone call when I'm exhausted, depleted, flat, not able and not caring to function.
 - (4) **UNDERSTANDING** - my bitterness and rage, there by miraculously reducing both.
 - (5) **CONTINUING GENTLE REMINDER** - to accept that most despairing of facts - **MY CHILD DIED!**
 - (6) **WATCHFULNESS** - Strive not to get stuck in denial, anger, etc. My child would not want this for me.
 - (7) **RESPIRE** - a release of tension from desperately "holding myself together".
 - (8) **COMPASSION** - " I know your pain". TCF members truly do.
- COMFORTING**
- (9) **FORGIVENESS OF SELF** - for real and imagined commissions and omissions as I'm forced to review my life, accept my humanity.
 - (10) **LOVE** - doesn't die. My significant others do not replace my child but do expand my caring.
 - (11) **SELF ESTEEM** - Slow rebuilding of a DESTROYED SELF. I will be worthwhile again and able to help others someday.
 - (12) **AWARENESS - I AM BLESSED** - My child lived and we loved.
 - (13) **FAITH** - My child, and your child, is in another dimension in **PEACE** and **LOVE**.
- FRIENDSHIP**
- (14) **SHARING** - I'm not alone. In my stark despair, others reach out or will reach out. Grief is very personal, but others are in a parallel lane.
 - (15) **ENCOURAGEMENT** - I'll fall back but I'll move forward again.
 - (16) **PATIENCE** - First with myself, then with others; only **TIME, TIME, TIME** can dull this agony.
 - (17) **REFUTES** - my desire for and attempts at isolation.
 - (18) **ACCEPTANCE** - I'm a **DIFFERENT SELF FOREVER** -the death of my child was the death of so much of me.
 - (19) **HUMOR** - can again be part of me despite the underlying devastation, the never ending awareness of this most searing, irreplaceable loss. My child smiles with me.
 - (20) **THANK YOU - TCF LEADERS** for giving so much of yourselves, for all your work behind the scenes.

Ellen Bruno / Valley Forge, PA TCF
dedicated to her son **J.B.** who died at the age
of 29 of a massive heart attack 9/15/84

I AM STANDING ON THE SEASHORE
 A SHIP SPREADS HER WHITE SAILS TO THE MORNING BREEZE
 I AM STANDING ON THE SEASHORE AND SHE STARTS FOR THE OPEN OCEAN
 I STAND WATCHING HER UNTIL SHE FADES ON THE HORIZON
 AND SOMEONE AT MY SIDE SAYS "SHE IS GONE".

"GONE WHERE? I ASK.
 THE LOSS OF SIGHT IS IN ME, NOT IN HER..
 JUST AT THE MOMENT WHEN SOMEONE SAYS,
 "SHE IS GONE"
 THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ARE WATCHING HER COMING.
 OTHER VOICES TAKE UP THE GLAD SHOUT,
 "HERE SHE COMES"
 "NO ONE IS ALONE FOR LONG!"

Author Unknown

FALLING APART

I seem to be falling apart.
 My attention span can be measured in seconds.
 My patience in minutes,
 I cry at the drop of a hat.
 I forget things constantly.
 The morning toast burns daily.
 I forget to sign the checks.
 Half of everything in the house is misplaced.
 Anxiety and restlessness are my
 constant companions
 Rainy days seem extra dreary.
 Sunny days seem an outrage.
 Other people's pain and frustration seem
 insignificant.
 Laughing, happy people seem out of place in
 my world.
 It has become routine to feel half crazy.
 I am normal, I am told.
 I am a newly grieving person *.Eloise Cole*

"HOLD ON"

For those of you who are hurting too deeply, whose pain is too fresh, whose child's death is still too close to hear me, I'd like to give you the message "hold on, hold on tight." Right now for you, there seems to be little sunshine, little hope and no energy to choose life. So hang on tight.

And if you know someone who is struggling just to hang on, reach out to them right now. Loan them some of your strength, knowing they will loan you some of theirs when you need it. That's what TCF is all about; helping each other through the anger, the pain, the emptiness, the silence, helping each other rediscover life.

We have to learn to dream new dreams and hope new hopes, and it is here with the love and support of our new family of friends, that our journey begins.

Author Unknown

Now that your life knows every darkness and sorrow,
 Now that your time trembles with mourning and pain,
 Now that your eyes see only empty horizons,
 Now that your hand touches the center of grief. ---
 Leave yourself open to comfort and caring,
 Leave yourself open to softness and friendship.
 Leave yourself open to kindness and blessing,
 And try to listen for the still music of hope. *Seattle King County Chapter*



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS, INC.**

Valley Forge, PA Chapter
Rhonda & Frank Gomez
Chapter Leaders
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**...A bereavement organization
For parents, siblings & 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.

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