

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 - 10/6/2022

Next Meeting - 11/3/2022

Butterfly Release is September 17,
2022 at the Lower Merion
Township Bldg. Sat 3 P.M.

Reminder — The Candle Lighting
Service be December 11, 2022.
This is a remembrance service for
our children, grand-children, and
siblings.



October 2022

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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 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

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.

Florence and Martin (Marty) Mack— son, Martin III age 33

Victoria Gerber— daughter, Brea age 21

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.

Susan Utain

LOVE GIFTS

Anna B. Thompson

Carol Meehan, in honor of my son, Patrick

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, TN
Survivors of Suicide Group

TO THOSE WHO REALLY HURT KNOW . . . that your grieving is the most difficult thing you will ever have to do. **UNDERSTAND** . . . that part of grief is bad days and bad nights. And intense pain and terrible sadness. You must **ACCEPT** this as part of your healing. But, **KNOW ALSO** . . . that there are gifts in your grief. They are not easy to find. And you will earn them with your tears. As you think about it . . . deep within your heart you **KNOW** that this is true. **THIS** is why you can endure it. Slowly . . . you will find new patterns. You will force yourself to take first steps. You will accomplish little victories. (None of us will tell you it was easy.) **GRIEVE WELL**, my friend. For grief well-grieved is truly life well-lived. And once accomplished, you will discover untold new dimensions in your life . . . **BECAUSE** a child died.

Shirley Melin TCF, Aurora, IL

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

Marilynn Anton - Steven Schneibolk - nephew - 10/2
 Victoria Bayle - Bobby D Bayle III - son - 10/2
 Cindy Brickley - Timothy - son - 10/20
 Sally Cahill - Tim - grandson - 10/20
 Gina Cappelli - Dan Foley - son - 10/9
 Tina & Mike Cusamano - Amanda Angelucci - daughter - 10/1
 Tom & Marge Del Rosario - Dominic - son - 10/17
 Virginia Di Fronzo - Sis - daughter - 10/4
 Joseph & Patsy Dooley - Peter J. Dooley - son - 10/1
 Shirley & Herb Druker - Heidi - daughter - 10/25
 Jim and Patty Duffy - Michael Duffy - son - 10/28
 Peggy Furey - Kevin Furey - son - 10/8
 Bonnie Gardner - Michelle - daughter - 10/19
 Thomas & Anne Glenn - Lauren Glenn - daughter - 10/15
 Charlotte and Michael Gormish - Douglas Moyer - brother - 10/19
 Carol Graber - Bobby - son - 10/28
 Herb & Karen Grant - Shaun - son - 10/21
 Mary Green - Paul Green - 10/12
 Cathy Grosshanten - Gary - son - 10/18
 Thomas & Virginia Hoesch - William E. "Buddy" Hoesch - son - 10/7
 Joan Hornsby - Jackie - daughter - 10/5
 Jean Jones - Bobby - grandson - 10/28
 Margaret & Edward Kiefski, Sr. - Edward Kiefski, Jr. - son - 10/25
 Maureen and Pat McCormick - John McCormick - son - 10/4
 Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy - Barilyn Mountjoy - Maralin Mountjoy - daughters - 10/3
 John B. & Lillian Neff - Patrick Neff - son - 10/17
 Gary & Patricia Otto - Benjamin Otto - son - 10/17
 Dianne Owen - Skylar - Granddaughter - 10/8
 Joan Palumbo - Michael - son - 10/13
 Betty Jane Peters - Neilson - Martin A Peters - son - 10/22
 Ruth Pluck - Jackie - niece - 10/5
 Robert Pontician - Rob Pontician - son - 10/28
 Barbara Purtell-Frank - Michael John Keller Purtell - son - 10/29
 Marge Randolph - Doug Fixter - son - 10/12
 Robert & Nancy Ricciardi - Jessica Lee Ricciardi - daughter - 10/7
 Ilene & Sy Rockower - Amy Rockower - daughter - 10/17
 Mary Rose - Donald - Husband - 10/7
 Barbara Rossman - Kickole Lyn - daughter - 10/12
 Ron & Sandy Ruth - Brian David Ruth - son - 10/21

Anniversaries - Cont'd

Jo Anne Sands - Tyler - son - 10/16
 Carol Sannella - Robert J. Sannella - husband - 10/21
 Pamela Schneibolk - Steven - son - 10/2
 Susan Snyder - Brian - son - 10/22
 Ruth Thomas - David George Thomas - son - 10/28
 Kimberlee Tonetti - Jack - son - 10/30
 Barbara Torrens - Robert Birmele - brother - 10/21
 Weldon & Marie Tyson - Lisa M. Tyson - daughter - 10/26
 Tina Ulshafer - Jimmy - son - 10/30
 Susan Utain - Alex - son - 10/29
 Elizabeth & Henry Weaver - Donald Smith, Jr. - grandson - 10/16
 Beth Williams - Joey Burke - son - 10/4
 Paul & Marcia Woodruff - Danny Woodruff - son - 10/29

You Don't Just Lose Someone Once

You lose them over and over,
 sometimes many times a day.
 When the loss, momentarily forgotten, creeps
 up,
 and attacks you from behind.
 Fresh waves of grief as the realization hits
 home,
 they are gone.
 You don't just lose someone once,
 you lose them every time you open your eyes
 to a new
 dawn and as you awaken,
 so does your memory,
 so does the jolting bolt of lightning that rips
 into your
 heart,
 they are gone.
 Again.
 Losing someone is a journey,
 not a one-off.
 There is no end to the loss,
 there is only a learned skill on how stay afloat.

Patricia Grossman, TCF Valley Forge, PA

I'll Lend You a Child by Edgar Guest

"I'll lend you for a little time a
 child of mine" He said.
 "For you to love the while she lives,
 And mourn for when she's dead."
 It may be six or seven years
 or twenty-two or three,
 But will you, "till I call her back,
 take care of her for me?
 She'll bring her charms to gladden you
 And should her stay be brief,
 You'll have her lovely memories
 as solace for your grief.
 I cannot promise she will stay,
 since all from heaven return:
 But there are lessons taught down there
 I want this child to learn.
 I've looked the wide world over
 In my search for teacher true
 And from the throngs that crowd life's loves,
 I have selected you.
 Now will you give her all your love,
 nor think the labor vain
 Nor hate me when I come to call
 To take back again?"
 I fancied that I heard them say,
 "Dear Lord, Thy will be done.
 For all the joy Thy child shall bring,
 The risk of grief we'll run."
 We'll shelter her with tenderness,
 we'll love her while we may.
 But should the angels call for her
 much sooner than we'd planned,
 We'll brave the bitter grief that comes
 and try to understand.

BIRTHDAYS

Bill Padove & Jen Scaless - son - Zachary - 10/22
 James & Mary Beth Mattiford - son - Scott Mattiford - 10/15
 Maryellen & Dick Abell - son - Brian Abell - 10/14
 Carole Bailey - son - Matthew J. Bailey - 10/6
 Victoria Bayle - son - Bobby D Bayle III - 10/5
 Nina Bernstein - son - Andrew Voluck - 10/12
 Marbeth Blocklinger - grandson - Parker - 10/14
 Jacqueline Bonney - daughter - Genevieve - 10/28
 Joe & Maryann Bucci - son - Dante - 10/7
 Andrea Caesar - son - Daniel Mark Caesar - 10/18
 Diana Clark - grandson - Alexander - 10/16
 Lauren Cole - brother - Chris - 10/10
 Theresa L Cole - son - Christopher Michel - 10/10
 Carole and Kevin Creighton - son - Ryan Kent Creighton - 10/7
 Nancy Dalton - son - Jay - 10/25
 Virginia Di Fronzo - daughter - Sis - 10/7
 Harold & Marcia Epstein - grandson - Andrew Voluck - 10/12
 Peggy Furey - son - Kevin Furey - 10/9
 Gwen & Walt Gearhart - grandson - Jamie Rogers - 10/29
 Daniel Gentry - daughter - Emily - 10/9
 Victoria Gerber - daughter - Brea - 10/31
 Virginia Hagen - son - Matthew D. Hagen - 10/20
 Linda Haines - son - Zackary Monroe McCarthy - 10/5
 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
 Tracy Lukens - son - Parker - 10/14
 Jennifer & Michael Magee - sister - Jacqueline Ann Rogers - 10/3
 Dan Markle - brother - Matt Markle - 10/30
 Mark & Kathryn McNally - daughter - Beth Ann McNally - 10/1
 Alexandra Milas - mom's sister - Demitra Vallianos - 10/16
 Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy - daughter, Barilyn and daughter, Maralin - 10/3
 Kelly & Hank Murray - son - John Murray - 10/30
 Peggy O'Brien - son - Rick O'Brien - 10/4
 Deborah Osting - son - Christopher Daniel Osting - 10/24
 Dale Pearlstein - son - Jeffrey - 10/18
 Roy Redman - daughter - Linda Inez Redman - 10/22
 Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert - son - Thomas Reinert, Jr. - 10/21
 Carol Robinson - son - Jim Kearney - 10/4
 Mike & Diane Rogers - daughter - Jacqueline Ann Rogers - 10/3
 Donna Rogers - son - Jamie Rogers - 10/29
 Jo Anne Sands - son - Tyler - 10/16



Birthdays — continued

Joy Conard Settles - son - Lt. Gary Korn - 10/5
Robert & Nell Shoemaker - daughter - Brynn Shoemaker - 10/5
Janis Siravo - son - Christian - 10/7
Kimberlee Tonetti - son - Jack - 10/26
Betsy Townsend - daughter - Wendy Townsend Besche - 10/25
Susan Utain - son - Alex - 10/9
Lucia Watters - daughter - Luanne Zambino - 10/14
Mimi & Tom Weber - Michael - 10/8
Beth Williams - son - Joey Burke - 10/28
Sandra & Harry Wolfheimer - daughter - Ann Marie Wolfheimer - 10/10
Frank Yanni - son - David Yanni - 10/26

Marie Hofmokol passed away on August 4, 2022. It almost 1 and 1/2 years after her husband passed. They both were chapter leaders and regional coordinators. They loved doing things for other people. They were both caring and loved what they were doing. She was laid to rest on September 3, 2022 beside her husband at Valley Forge Gardens.

If you like make a Memorial Donation Please make payable to The Compassionate Friends—Valley Forge and send to Rhonda Gomez at 12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore, PA 19343.

AUTUMN TEARS

We look back on September and we realize that somehow we made it through those dreaded first days of school. Whether it was the anticipation or the actual days that were the worst, we survived. We used our faith, our support systems or just plain hard work and made it over yet another hurdle. We watched small children heading for their first day of kindergarten, listened to excited teenagers talk of high school, and heard stories of children leaving home to attend post-secondary school. Somehow we rode the waves of grief and found ourselves ashore again.

As these waves subside new ones will build as we head into the holidays that speak of, and to children. Halloween will soon approach and for some painful memories. Thanksgiving arrives to loom ahead. These special days are forever reminders of our loss...the costumes we'll never sew, the empty chair at turkey dinner, the fun and magic we'll never share with someone we love. Forever reminders that our child has died.

To survive when these events and anniversary days come around let's find time to think of the good memories we have...the announcement of our long awaited pregnancy at Thanksgiving dinner, the look of excitement on our son's first Halloween night, the vision of our daughter helping prepare the turkey dinner. These holidays will always be reminders that our child died...Let us also make them reminders that our child lived! They left us memories more precious than any others to hold and celebrate.

Penny Young TCF Powel River, B.C

SHARED THOUGHTS ON HEALING, BUT NEVER FORGETTING

We lost our son Douglas 30 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 and trying to comfort other's pain. This played a big role in my becoming functional again. For the most part, my life is productive, and filled with anticipation of 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. Ken & I were the Chapter Leaders, and 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 grief **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 thinking "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.**

I still need to spend quiet time with my beloved son Douglas and grandson Steven, but the intense sharp pain has softened, and does not control very being.

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

A DEATH BY SUICIDE

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.

Author Unknown

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.

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.**

October 2022

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