

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 (610) 304--0871

Meeting Schedule and other Meetings -

September 28 - our butterfly release

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, the church has time reserved for other things.



October 2024

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www.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 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.

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 (610) 304-0871 or you may sign the refreshment chart located on the refreshment table.

The Chapter

LOVE GIFTS

Carol Meehan — William Meehan, her husband, dob 6-26, dod 4-21

Patrick Meehan, her son, dob 3-11, dod 2-11

I was down, - all way below the bottom of the bottom.

I don't know how I got up.

I remember weeping a long time — until someone wept with me.

Then — my weeping stopped..

Marilyn Pheminster TCF Rockford, IL

A Thought for The Day

A Thought for The Day It is not easy returning to the world of normalcy when your world is upside down. It is not easy to stop being a mother or father to your child that has died. The thought for the day is a word – patience – patience with yourself who suddenly and powerlessly has been thrown into this horrid nightmare; patience with your spouse who always seems to be having an up day when you are having a down day; patience with relative and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt, with hollow advice and logical words; and patience with time, for it takes time to adjust, and time can move so slowly. PATIENCE!

Rose Moen TCF/Carmel – Indianapolis, IN

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

- Bill Padove & Jen Scaless - son - Zachary - 10/22**
- 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**
- Laureen Cole - brother - Chris - 0/10**
- Theresa L Cole - son - Christopher Michel - 0/10**
- 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 - 10/8**

ANNIVERSARIES-cont'd

Marge Randolph - Doug Fixter - son - 10/12
 Robert & Nancy Ricciadi - 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
 Jo Anne Sands - Tyler - son - 10/16
 Carol Sannella - Robert J. Sannella - husband - 10/21
 Pamela Schneibolk - Steven - son - 10/2
 Susan Snyder - Brian David - 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

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

BIRTHDAYS

Bill Padove & Jen Scaless - son - Zachary - 10/22
 Maryellen & Dick Abell - son - Brian Abell - 10/14
 Carole Bailey - son - Matthew J. Bailey - 10/6
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 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 - 078
 Maureen Lok - daughter - Jessica - 10/24
 Tracy Lukens - son - Parker - 10/14
 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 - mom's sister - Demitra Vallianos - 10/16
 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
 Jennifer & Michael Rogers - sister - Jacqueline Ann Rogers - 10/3
 Jo Anne Sands - son - Tyler - 10/16
 Joy Conard Settles - son - R. Gary Korn - 10/5
 Robert & Nell Shoemaker - daughter - Brynn Shoemaker - 10/5



BIRTHDAYS (continued)

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

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 ere 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

REFLECTIONS

With of my sister come some painful realizations; that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness. Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time—itime to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger

SHARED THOUGHTS ON HEALING, BUT NEVER FORGETTING

We lost our son Douglas 32 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 it's 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 your very being.

Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge, PA

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 grieve and found ourselves again. As these waves subside new ones will build as we head into the holidays that speak of children, and 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.

Penny Young, TCF POWEL RIVER. BC



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.

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