

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

September 5 General Sharing
September 7 Butterfly Release
October 3 General Sharing
December 5 Lighting Service



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 new bereaved. Please include any special tribute you wish printed in the newsletter along with your gift.

If you donate to the 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.

Please make all checks Payable to:

TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER

Send to Rhonda Gomez

September 2019

Chapter Leaders:

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

Webmaster, Database Record Keeper and newsletter editor

Frank Gomez Frank@tcfvalleyforge.org

Love Gift acknowledgements:

Connie Nolan

Treasurer: Emil Nunez

Librarian Carole Bailey.

National Headquarters

PO Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Compassionatefriends.org
Nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

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 PEOPLE

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.

Elida Kauffman –son, **Daniel** (40)

Bridget & David Ellison—daughter, **Caroline** (18)

Siarid Hirshborn—daughter, **Samantha** (35)

John & Cecilia Zisk –son, **Jacob** (37)

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.

LOVE GIFTS

12/3/18

Michael and Charlotte Gormish – in memory of Michael's brother Douglas Moyer
Shirley and Philip Kennedy – In memory of their son, Philip
Merrily and Harry Spiess – In memory of F. Ryan Spiess and Charlie Smith
Esperanza and Libardo Toro – for Compassionate Friends

12/13/18

Maryellen and James Madden – For TCF Valley Forge Chapter in memory of our daughter Anne Marie Madden
Joan Kellett – for her son's birthday
Priscilla Thoroughgood – remembering Eilod and Kendra

1/5/19

Fred and Irene Sutton – to honor Ken and Marie Hofmockel
Fred and Irene Sutton – In memory of Jim Sutton
Nancy and Gerry Hall – In memory of our beloved son, Douglas Byron Hall
Nina Bernstein – In loving memory of her son, Andrew .

1/15/19

Carol Sannella – In memory of my son, David, and my husband, Bob
Lee and Pat Grossman – In memory of Shirley Hirsch
Lee and Pat Grossman—In memory of our blessed daughter Rachel Leah.
Charlotte and Michael Gormish—In memory of Michael's brother Douglas Moyer

2/5/19

Nancy Jones - In memory of Jeff Pileicki's anniversary, son of Karen Pileicki and grandson of Nancy and Jerry Jones. We love and miss you so very much.

3/19/19

Rose Cote – for her son, Mark Cote's anniversary

4/19/19

Joan and Sheldon Plam – In loving memory of our precious son, Michael Tobiah Plam. We love you and miss you –always. Love, Mom and Dad

Charlotte and Michael Gormish – in honor of Michael's brother, Douglas Moyer

5/19/19

Charlotte and Michael Gormish—In honor of Michael's brother, Douglas Moyer.

6/19/19 and 7/19/19

Charlotte and Michael Gormish – in honor of Michael's brother, Douglas Moyer

Palma and Sam (deceased) Panichello– In loving memory of our son, Joseph, always in our hearts and never forgotten. I think of him and his father every day.

BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND PROGRAM



Saturday September 7, 2019 at 3 PM

Upper Merion Township Park (Back of Police station)

175 West Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia PA 19406

Diagonally across from our monthly meeting place at Good Shephard Church.

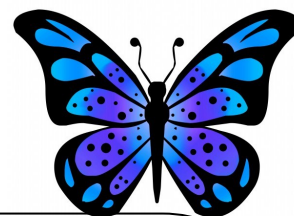
This event will be held in back of the township building, at the Gazebo rain or shine.

Cost \$ 5.00 per butterfly—Registration now being accepted

There is no admission or parking fee.

Water will be supplied by the chapter. Please bring folding chairs or a blanket to sit on.

A family may order one butterfly to share or order one butterfly for each family member. You may order as many butterflies as you wish. All butterflies must be pre-ordered. If you are unable to attend on this date, we can release the butterfly that you have purchased in your loved one's name. The



REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to Them

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to Them

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to Them

Total number of butterflies ordered _____ \$5.00 each—Sorry we don't accept credit cards

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Compassionate Friends and mail to Rhonda Gomez 12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore PA 19343

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.

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Aaron Courtney, brother Justin -9/17
 Laura Bedrossian, son Teddy -9/24
 Jeff & Donna Brown, son Kenneth Bernstiel -9/12
 Suzanne Carcarey, son Eddie -9/21
 Phyllis & James Casey, son Jim "Jimmer" Casey -9/17
 Laureen Cole, brother Chris -9/10
 Theresa L Cole, son Christopher Michel -9/10
 Catherine Dardozzi, son James Dardozzi -9/7
 Michelle G Doll, son Justin -9/4
 Sarah Fishel, daughter Allyson -9/15
 Suze Goldberg, uncle Neal -9/3
 Judi Griffith, son Steve -9/4
 Brooke Hackman, son Brian -9/1
 Brittany Hackman, brother Brian -9/1
 Virginia Hagen, son Matthew D. Hagen -9/28
 Jeanne R Helmers, daughter Betsy Helmers -9/7
 Nancy Lee & Jerry Hess, son Jerry R.L. Hess -9/28
 Rick & Susan Hildeberg, daughter Amy -9/16
 John Horulko, son Daniel -9/30
 Monica Horulko, son Daniel -9/30
 Gwen Kearns, son Dennis J. Kearns, Jr. -9/28
 Deborah Keevill, son Brandon -9/1
 Donna Kendall, daughter Jennifer -9/24
 Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy, son Philip V. Kennedy -9/23
 Gloria and Jerry Koval, son Steven -9/3
 Joanne & Thomas Lennen, son Scott C. Lennen -9/2
 Maureen Lok, daughter Jessica -9/25
 Eileen & Chris McKeown, son Eric -9/18
 Alfred J. & Joan Michini, son Alfred J. Michini, II -12/14
 Betsy Oakes, son Bruce Schaeffer -9/2
 Marie O'Connon, son Curran J -9/8
 Elsie Oreski, son Gregory T. Oreski -9/3
 Teresa and Ron Perkins, daughter Allison -9/22
 Kathy & Jim Petrokubi, son Andrew -9/26
 Mary Jane Pollart, son Mark Andrew Steffler -9/7
 Steve & Joann Reynolds, son Chris -9/15
 Donald & Freda Rhinier, son Glenn D. Rhinier -9/16
 Bonnie Rosen, son Troy -9/29
 Lynn Saxon, son Michael -9/17
 Marie Schmeltzer, son Sam "Sonny" Schmeltzer -9/11

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES (Con'd)

Charles & Tish Shaw, son Charles "Corky" Shaw -9/29
 Fietta Sherlock, son Jeremy -9/17
 Helen Smith, son Bob Smith -5/15
 Jean Sykora, son Mark -9/27
 Renee Teufel, son Gregory -9/24
 Barbara Tuller, son Charles -9/24
 Abigail Schwartz, mother Barbra -12/26
 Weldon & Marie Tyson, son Ronald C. Stewart -9/21
 Nancy Venafra, son Justin Aaron -9/9
 Sharon Venezia, son Justin Negron -9/17
 Laretta Wagner, daughter Traci Wagner -9/10
 Kelly & Gary Walens, son Kevin McGinley -9/28
 Lucia Watters, daughter Luanne Zambino -9/15
 Muriel Wilson, son John F. Shaffer -9/25
 Gisela Witte, son Bruce G. Edlund -9/22

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Jim & Michelle Angelini, son Danny 9/12
 David Bonga, daughter Amanda 9/15
 Robyn Buseman, daughter Maya Buseman-Williams 9/30
 Scott & Gail Campbell, daughter Chelsea 9/1
 Chris Carlton, brother Eric 9/5
 Barbara Cohen, son Mark Y 9/18
 Judy & William Cosgrove, son Michael Cosgrove 9/4
 Reno & Bonnie Crescimone, son Jonathan 9/5
 Alex Crisanti, Jr., son John Crisanti 9/6
 Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr., son G. Robert Daily, Jr. 9/19
 Michelle G Doll, son Justin 9/1
 Bob & Connie Ercole, son David 9/26
 Molly Gehring, son Daniel 9/12
 Frank & Rhonda Gomez, son Frank Jr. 9/30
 Gail & Calvert G. Hess, Jr., son Calvert G. Hess, III 9/4
 Walt & Adele Higgins, son/stepson Brian 9/22
 Michelle Hillstrom, daughter Jen 9/26
 Jacob & Rachel Himmelstein, son Benjamin Himmelstein 9/25
 Lesley Jones, son Christopher 9/14
 Gwen Kearns, son Dennis J. Kearns, Jr. 9/18
 Jacquie Kilroy, son Shilen Kenneth 9/4
 Suellen & Stephen King, daughter Danelle Rossi 9/18
 Kevin & Janet Landis, son Daniel 9/10
 Frank & Bernadette McAllister, son Christopher J. McAllister 9/4
 Linda & Jim McGrath, son Paul Drew McGrath 9/26
 Jeffrey & Christine Miller, daughter Teresa Leanne Miller 9/12
 Betty (Elizabeth) Miller, son Raymond "Jim" 9/1
 Barbara & Jeff Norris, son Greg 9/21
 Mary O'Halloran, brother Thomas M. O'Halloran 9/1
 Winnie & James O'Halloran, son Thomas M. O'Halloran 9/1

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS (con'd)

Elizabeth Orbann, daughter Linda Elizabeth Johnson 9/15
 Linda & Andrew Peoples, Jr., son Brian A. Peoples 9/7
 Ruth Richardson, grandson Nicholas Richardson 9/1
 Gina & Brian Richardson, son Nicholas Richardson 9/1
 Donald & Mary Rose, daughter Marjorie Rose-Cotteta 9/30
 Cathy Seehuetter, daughter Nina Seehuetter 9/24
 Cathy Siciliano, son Anthony 9/15
 Walter & Irene Stolarczyk, daughter Barbara Stolarczyk 9/11
 Sharon Venezia, son Justin Negron 9/9
 Shelly Wagner, son Andrew Wagner 9/29
 Kelly & Gary Walens, Son Kevin McGinley 9/22
 Terry & Susan Weikel, daughter Jennifer 9/26
 Kathryn & Pat White, son Steven White 9/16

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

We are asking, would you please receive your newsletter by email. We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefitting 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"**.

We consider this an important function of our program. 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 wish to receive your newsletter by email please send Frank Gomez (frank@tcfvalleyforge.org) your full name.

Reflections from a Chapter Leader

by David Hendricks, Chapter Leader for TCF Houston Northwest

It's been over 22 years since my son David died in an automobile accident at age 35. It's been more than 19 years since I became chapter leader and facilitator at our TCF chapter. Over these many years at our meetings, I have witnessed bereaved parents who could barely come through the door, barely breathe, whose emotions were at the surface and who needed to be with other parents who had lost children.

These same parents who could not imagine life without pain or having fun or even laughing, somehow can make it to a different place where there is joy and where the good memories dominate the bad ones.

This transition takes between three to six years, but the new normal usually comes about in years four and five. That's when they quit coming to TCF meetings because the pain of the meetings is greater than the good they get out of them.

I call it graduation. Just when these parents are great contributors and valuable in our meetings, they quit coming. From a Chapter Leader and Facilitator point of view, I really miss these "graduates", but I am glad that their new normal allows them to not need TCF. But TCF still needs them.

Before our meetings start, there are smiles and sometimes laughter among some of the "veterans". This can be a shock to the newly bereaved. I point out to them that we are also bereaved parents, and that the smiles and laughter that seems out of place show that there is hope for a better future.

Before our meetings start, there are smiles and sometimes laughter among some of the "veterans". This can be a shock to the newly bereaved. I point out to them that we are also bereaved parents, and that the smiles and laughter that seems out of place show that there is hope for a better future.

I emphasize to our group that it is important to manage your expectations. I tell the newly bereaved that the grief journey is not measured in days, weeks or months. It is measured in years. The airlines tell you if the oxygen masks drop, put yours on first so you will be able to help others. In the same way, take care of yourself first. Do whatever it takes to deal with your loss. Only then will you be able to deal with the rest of your life.

The early time frame of grief comes with generally well intentioned comments from friends, relatives, co-workers and strangers: "Are you feeling better," "Have you recovered", "Are you over it", "He's in a better place", "It's just God's will", "At least you have other children", "I know how you feel; I lost my dog last month", and "I want the old person back."

Sometimes we ignore the questions and comments. Sometimes we try to explain our feelings. Sometimes we just explode, inwardly or outwardly. We face these questions, we face our grief, we face all our relationships, and we face ourselves. Grief work is hard. We say our grief is so intense because the love of our child is so intense.

There are no short cuts on working through our grief. One of the benefits (if I can use that word) of coming to TCF meetings is "empathy." Most of our grief is focused inward. At a TCF meeting, we listen to other parents tell their story, and our grief is turned outward as we feel their pain. This empathy is physically and emotionally beneficial. It changes us from being totally inward focused to being open to fellow travelers and to their stories and issues. Everyone listens and is attentive at a TCF meeting, even if we've heard the story many times.

There is an abundance of tools to help us in our grief journey: TCF meetings, therapy and counseling, journaling, scrapbooking, TCF chat rooms, TCF Facebook, articles, books, medication, and meditation. As we work through our grief, we are often presented with "redemptive possibilities." These are things we can do now that we probably would never have thought of if our child were still alive.

These include setting up a foundation, starting a scholarship, working with a group or activity your child was involved in, volunteering at a place to honor your child, special projects, special events, providing material goods where they are needed, and many other opportunities once our eyes are open. Don't expect to find redemptive possibilities when your grief is fresh. It takes time for our eyes to be open to them.

So it is possible, given enough time and enough work, to find joy in your life, to laugh again, to be open to new things, and to not having your first thought of the day and the last thought at night to be of the loss of your child. I have seen it over and over again. To the newly bereaved (and I mean for at least the first two years), the previous paragraph reads like fiction. But it is true. Nothing can compensate for your loss, but the "new you" will be able to navigate through life.

We never get over the loss of our child, and there is no such thing as closure. We just get through the loss and emerge as the "new you". Keep watching for the redemptive possibilities.

To all the "veterans" of this process, remember those who were there for you when your grief was new. Please consider coming back for a visit or two. Your experience and wisdom are very beneficial to our entire group.

So, the message of these reflections is hope. Hope for a new you, as you feel your way along this grief journey. As you travel down that long, unfamiliar grief road from which there is no return, be gentle with yourself and work hard, and remember there is hope.

Dear readers: This is the first time that I go into the newsletter publishing. I am not a programmer, so I will have plenty of problems doing the reports that are printed in this newsletter. Above all, I will need you to send me articles that should be included in it. This issue is 8 pages, the entire newsletter should be 12 pages and I hope to make it that on the next issue. Thank you.

Frank Gomez



Valley Forge PA Chapter
 Frank & Rhonda Gomez
 Chapter Leaders
 12 Brook Circle
 Glenmoore PA 19343

NON-PROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 SOUTHEASTERN PA
 PERMIT # 635

***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.