

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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

## FEBRUARY 2010

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

#### Meeting Schedule Please Mark Your Calendar

- Feb 4 General Sharing
- Mar 4 General Sharing  
Death by Suicide
- July 2-4 33rd National Conference, Arlington, VA  
(see page 3)

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 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.**

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER  
SEND TO: RECORD KEEPER, DIANA CLARK  
PLEASE SEND ALL OTHER CHAPTER MAIL  
TO CHAPTER CO-LEADERS  
ANN MURRAY or RHONDA GOMEZ**



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compassionatefriends.org

## NEW FRIENDS

Jane Gant, daughter *Nicole* (42)

We welcome our newly bereaved friends, and are sorry for the cause that brings you. Having been in the depths of despair, we know that it is difficult to share our pain and personal feelings. It is important that you attend three or four meetings before evaluating the benefit of our group to you. Our meetings offer confidentiality, unconditional love, compassion and understanding to all of you.

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## LOVE GIFTS

**John & Antoinette DiDonato** in loving memory of our precious sons *Kenneth J. DiDonato* (38) & *John W. DiDonato, Jr.* (61). Always in our hearts and thoughts.

**Robert & Kathleen Grossi** in loving memory of our son *Jim* on his 20th anniversary.

We love & miss you, Mom, Dad, Teresa's family & Patty & family.

**Catherine & Carl Helwig** in loving memory of our son *Michael* (24)

**Nancy & Gerald Hall** in loving memory of our son *Douglas Hall* (27)

**Dorothy Johnson-Speight** in loving memory of my son *Khaalig Johnson* (24) and my daughter *Carlena Speight* (2 1/2).

**Vern & Joyce Kaiser** in loving memory of our son *Brian* (30).

**Joan Kellett** in loving memory of my son, *Danny* (27)

**Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner** in loving memory of our daughter *Anna* (27)

**Lynette Lampmann** in remembrance of my beloved son *Shawn Lampmann* (43)

Sadly missed and loved every day. Forever in my heart. Mom.

**Bob McCullough** in loving memory of my precious daughter *Caroline* (2)

**Phillip & Patricia Newton** in loving memory of our son *Seth* (18)

**Connie & Richard Nolan** in loving memory of our son, *Christopher* (34)

**Judy Snyder** in loving memory of my son *David* (33)

**Mary Lou Sparacino** in loving memory of my sister *Phyllis Leech*, who died at the age of 60 in 2002, and my brother *Louis Leech*, who died at the age of 52 in 2006.

**Patsy Ann Spitz** in loving memory of my son *Paul Spitz* (19) and *Brian Ruth* (23) and *Eric Delabia*

**Dr. Earl W. & Joan Reigel** in loving memory of our daughter *Melissa Kenée Reigel* who died at the age of 18 in 1989.

**Elise Rice** in loving memory of my son *Raymond A. Rice* (33)

**Margaret & Robert Rooney** in loving memory of our daughter *Sharon Rooney* (16).

**Fred & Irene Sutton** in loving memory of our son *Jim* (21)

**Henry & Elizabeth Weaver** in loving memory of our grandson *Donald Everett Smith, Jr.* (18)

**DEC & JAN REFRESHMENTS**

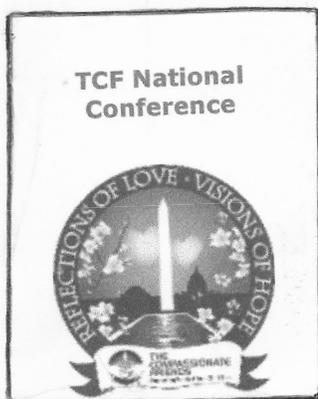
**Diana Clark and Rhonda & Frank Gomez, for all the children & siblings**

Anyone wishing to donate refreshments (cheese & crackers, fruit, cakes, cookies, etc. ) in memory of loved ones, please call **Rhonda Gomez or Ann Rapoport (484)919-0820, or you may sign the refreshment chart** located on the refreshment table. Beverages are provided by the chapter.

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**TCF 33rd National Conference  
Arlington, VA**

July 2, 7:30AM - July 4, 11:30AM



**"Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope"** is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference which will be held in Arlington Virginia July 2-4, 2010. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City promising a beautiful venue for the 33rd TCF National Conference. Independence Day will not only feature our Walk to Remember, but will include a world-class display of fireworks over the National Mall, visible from Arlington.

There will be many workshops and well-known speakers to give you a week end of healing and sharing with our TCF families. There will be many friends that are waiting to meet you. We hope you will plan to attend. The conference is within driving distance, car pooling is suggested.

**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 have over 100 families receiving the newsletter in email format, which saves us the expense of printing and postage. The Valley Forge newsletter is our major expense. The combined cost of printing and postage is approximately 60 cents per newsletter. We have been mailing roughly 650 copies per month. Many TCF Chapters have an underwriter to cover the expense. We do not have a sponsor to contribute toward this cost. This service depletes most of our income from the Love Gifts we receive.

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, and later decide you want to receive it by postal service, 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: **Additions or corrections to this list should be given to the editors, Marie & Ken Hofmockel.**

**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.**

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Madeleine Adler, son *J. Peter Adler* 2/5  
William & Charlotte Bodulich, son *William W. Bodulich* 2/14  
Ann Bruner, sister *Katy Wade* 2/8  
Cecile Buonocore, son *John Buonocore, III* 2/16  
Donna & Gregory Class, daughter *Megan Maria Class* 2/7  
Liz & Scott Conaghan, brother *Jan* 2/6  
Bud Cunnane, son *Patrick* 2/14  
Marie D'Angelo, son *Mark Anthony* 2/15  
Jim & Ruth Fairley, son *David Fairley* 2/5  
Rochena & Pat Fatale, son *Mark Longan* 2/21  
Charlie & Jill Fick, son *Michael Sternberg* 2/10  
Robert & Kathy Gelinis, daughter *Krystal Gelinis* 2/6/  
John Gething, son *Adam Gething* 2/17  
Laura Giordano, son *Peter* 2/12  
Marian Glennie, daughter *Susan Martini* 2/28  
Sandra Greenly, son *Michael Greenly* 2/18  
Cathy Grosshanten, son *Gary* 2/16  
Toni & Joseph Hanusey, son *Joseph Hanusey, Jr.* 2/26  
George & Kay Hartman, son *Thomas R Hartman* 2/4  
Jean & James Hayden, son *LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden* 2/17  
Othell & William Heaney, son *Kevin* 2/14  
Nora & Peter Heiss, daughter *Noreen Schmucker* 2/15  
Kimberlee Hills, brother *Chuck Hills* 2/10  
Charles Hills, son *Chuck Hills* 2/10  
Thomas & Virginia Hoesch, son *William E. "Buddy" Hoesch* 2/16  
Marlene Hoffman, brother *Barry Hoffman* 2/4  
Sally Ivory, son *Jimmy Ivory* 2/4  
Joan Jagers, son *John Costello* 2/17  
Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy, son *Philip V. Kennedy* 2/22  
Margaret & Edward Kiefski, Sr., son *Edward Kiefski, Jr.* 2/11  
Lynette Lampmann, son *Shawn* 2/10  
Carole LaSorsa, son *Stephen* 2/17  
Joseph & Kathy Leahan, daughter *Samantha* 2/14  
Herb & Adaline Leir, daughter *Kimberley Dawn Leir* 2/8

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS continued**

**Liz & Joe Loeper**, son *Jamey* 2/27  
**Sharon Martin**, brother *Shawn Lampmann* 2/10  
**Julie & Richard May**, son *William L. May* 2/25  
**Jennifer McGowan Clark**, brother *Joseph McGowan* 2/25  
**Sue McMaster**, cousin *Laura* 2/28  
**Audrey Morasco**, son *Christopher Morasco* 2/22  
**Mary Mulholland**, son *Joseph McGowan* 2/25  
**John & Mary Ann Murphy**, daughter *Maureen Murphy* 2/13  
**Dale & Helen Ninneman**, son *Dale Ninneman II* 2/24  
**Connie & Richard Nolan**, son *Christopher Nolan* 2/9  
**Emil Nunez**, son *Oliver Nunez* 2/12  
**Roberta Pertuch**, grandson *Wilhelm Raucher* 2/19  
**Robert & Jean Phillips**, son *Robert Phillips* 2/23  
**Carol Phipps**, daughter *Casey* 2/18  
**Mike & Cheryl Raniszewski**, daughter *Amanda Nicole Raniszewski* 2/12  
**Joan & Earl Reigel**, daughter *Melissa Reigel* 2/19  
**Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert**, mother (Bubbles) *Theresa Volpe* 2/27  
**Tony & Toni Riccardi**, son *David Riccardi* 2/17  
**Jacqueline Rider**, son *Matthew Rider* 2/14  
**Barbara Rossman**, daughter *Kickole Lyn* 2/13  
**Linda Sandlin**, brother *LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden* 2/17  
**Bernice Scheinfield**, son *Richard Scheinfield* 2/18  
**Melinda & Craig Schewe**, son *Nathan Schewe* 2/12  
**Judy & Lin Schleicher**, daughter *Quinna Marie Schleicher* 2/2  
**Frank and Kay Shinnners** , son *Erik Shinnners* 2/22  
**Charles & Norma Skibbe**, son *Mark Steven Skibbe* 2/20  
**Janemarie Smith**, daughter *Beth Jovanovic* 2/6  
**Margaret & Wade Stallard**, son *Wade Hampton Stallard, III* 2/21  
**Elaine & Joe Stillwell**, son *Denis E. O'Connor, III* 2/4  
**Robert & Nancy Thompson**, friend *J. Peter Adler* 2/5  
**Esperanza & Libardo Toro**, daughter *Maria Eugenia Toro* 2/9  
**Barbara Torrens**, brother *Robert Birmele* 2/18  
**Henry & Elizabeth Weaver**, grandson *Donald Smith, Jr.* 2/24  
**Gisela Witte**, son *Bruce G. Edlund* 2/24  
**Tammy Wood/ Jerry McKenna**, son *Richie Wood* 2/24  
**Herb Zucker**, daughter *Eileen Zucker Horn* 2/8

**FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

**Marilynn Anton**, cousin/godmother *Douglas Hofmockel* - 2/7  
**Lillian Aquilante**, son *Nicholas* - 2/11

**FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES (continued)**

**Jeannette Barnett**, daughter *Jeannette Rojo* - 2/18  
**Nina Bernstein**, son *Andrew Voluck* - 2/9  
**Peg Brown**, son *Ken* - 2/9  
**Donna & Gregory Class**, daughter *Megan Maria Class* - 2/9  
**Allison Crowder**, daughter *Amber* - 2/21  
**Harold & Marcia Epstein**, grandson *Andrew Voluck* - 2/9  
**Danielle Evelyn**, son *Samir* - 2/12  
**Nick & Fran Fioravanti**, son *Nicholas J. Fioravanti, Jr.* - 2/22  
**Rita & Thomas Gibbons**, daughter *Patricia Gibbons* - 2/1  
**Jack & Freda Gross**, daughter *Linda Joy Gross* - 2/25  
**Charles and Cindy Hafner**, daughter *Carolyn Hafner* - 2/4  
**Yvonne Heatley**, brother *Brian J. O'Rourke* - 2/25  
**Christine Hertzog**, son *Nicholas* - 2/14  
**Kimberlee Hills**, brother *Chuck Hills* - 2/24  
**Charles Hills**, son *Chuck Hills* - 2/24  
**Marlene Hoffman**, brother *Barry Hoffman* - 2/12  
**Marie & Ken Hofmockel**, son *Douglas Hofmockel* - 2/7  
**Robert Huss**, son *Daniel* - 2/27  
**Barbara & Michael Kaner**, son *Max Steven Kaner* - 2/7  
**Sandi Kensicki**, sister *Rose* - 2/5  
**Tobie & Herman Kessler**, daughter *Beth Kessler Waasdorp* - 2/9  
**Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner**, daughter *Anna Kreiner* - 2/10  
**Lynette Lampmann**, son *Shawn* - 2/13  
**Sue Lawlor**, son *Jim* 8/24/1977 - 2/17  
**Marie MacCaughern**, daughter *Theresa Peazzoni* - 2/7  
**Mary MacFarland**, son *Marc* - 2/12  
**Carl & Josie Malitsky**, daughter *Cynthia Malitsky* - 2/8  
**Sharon Martin**, brother *Shawn Lampmann* - 2/13  
**James & Mary Beth Mattiford**, son *Scott Mattiford* - 2/26  
**Debra McKinley - Hastings**, brother *Ken* - 2/17  
**William & Carol Meehan**, son *Patrick W. Meehan* - 2/11  
**Alexandra Milas**, mom's sister *Demitra Vallianos* - 2/17  
**Jeffrey & Christine Miller**, daughter *Teresa Leanne Miller* - 2/20  
**Leonard & Thelma Miller**, son *Lowell Bruce Miller* - 2/23  
**Kathleen Mitchel**, brother *Jeffrey Hathaway* - 2/27  
**Fran & Kathy Moran**, daughter *Denise Nicole Moran* - 2/3  
**Rose M. Morott**, daughter *Katherine A. Berg* - 2/8  
**Anthony & Mary Morrell**, son *Andrew Michael Morrell* - 2/2  
**Dale & Helen Ninneman**, son *Dale Ninneman II* - 2/29  
**Joseph O'Neil**, daughter *Beverley A. Schlotterer* - 2/8  
**Kevin O'Rourke**, brother *Brian J. O'Rourke* - 2/25  
**Melanie O'Rourke**, brother *Brian J. O'Rourke* - 2/25  
**John & Therese O'Rourke**, son *Brian J. O'Rourke* - 2/25

**FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES (continued)**

- Stephanie Phelan**, brother *Brian J. O'Rourke* - 2/25  
**Carol Phipps**, daughter *Casey* - 2/16  
**Thomas & Jeri Reinert**, son *Thomas Reinert, Jr.* - 2/19  
**Susan Reynolds**, son *Craig Anderson* - 2/3  
**Jacqueline Rider**, son *Matthew Rider* - 2/14  
**Morris Romano**, daughter *Diane Romano Donovan* - 2/11  
**William Russell**, son *Andrew Russell* - 2/6  
**Sandra & John Salemmo**, son *John C. Salemmo, Jr.* - 2/12  
**John & Marie Sanders**, son *Robert Sanders* - 2/10  
**Ruth Schmitt**, son *Robert Schmitt, Jr.* - 2/11  
**Pamela Schneibolk**, brother *Douglas Hofmockel* - 2/7  
**Priscilla Shober**, son *Jeffrey R. Shober* - 2/2  
**Aileen Snader**, son *Scott R Snader* - 2/11  
**Diana Sody**, grandson *Craig Sody* - 2/3  
**Penny & Steve Stanaitis**, daughter *Mikayla Faith* - 2/20  
**Nancy Sullivan**, granddaughter *Megan Sullivan* - 2/10  
**Ellen & Frank Svitek**, daughter *Kate Elizabeth Svitek* - 2/9  
**Greg Swider**, sister *Kelly Swider* - 2/8  
**Mary Ellen Swider**, daughter *Kelly Swider* - 2/8  
**Elaine & Tim Thomas**, son *Seth Peterson* - 2/9  
**Alan & Jean Thomas**, son *Alan W. Thomas, Jr.* - 2/16  
**Marilyn Toole**, son *Ted Toole* - 2/26  
**Ann VanLandingham**, daughter-in-law *Rita VanLandingham* - 2/12  
**Eden & Barbara Warren**, daughter *Karen M. Moncuso* - 2/18  
**Carolyn Ways**, son *Robert Goodman* - 2/25  
**Laura & Leo Weishew**, brother *Steven McGowan* - 2/2  
**Rose Yanni**, nephew *David Yanni* - 2/10  
**Frank & Dolores Yanni**, son *David Yanni* - 2/10

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**BUTTERFLIES**

Fuzzy caterpillar represents  
the life lived here on earth.  
The cocoon but the transition  
prior to promised rebirth.

Now butterfly so beautiful  
flutters gently.  
Reassuring our sad aching hearts  
and easing bleak despair

For the butterfly reminds us  
in silent tranquility.  
To believe there's more than life  
on earth, there's all eternity.

***Karen Story***  
TCF, Montgomery, AL

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON HEALING LOVE**

When we think of our deceased children and siblings, it is most often attached to our fond memories and love. Sometimes it can even be inter-mingled with anger, particularly if they contributed to their death. The anger is not caused by hate, but by the fact we are now deprived of showing and sharing our love to them. These same tender feelings that brought us joy while our loved ones were alive, cause us to grieve. Our heart knows there will be no more new memories, that is why we hold and cherish those we have so dearly. It is the love remembered that gives us hope in the midst of our sorrow.

It is more the life and love of our children and siblings, rather than the death, that gives us the need to go to Compassionate Friends. It provides a safe haven to speak of those we love, and to share the memories. If the child was too young for physical memories, there are still memories of anticipation of what our child might have been. What to do with our unfinished love, and pain of not seeing the child or sibling experience life outside the womb, or a short childhood, all needs to be shared with love and understanding.

One of the reasons our children and siblings are so sadly missed is because of the love and kindness they showed. Remembering this helps to keep them close and alive in our hearts. One way of honoring our loved ones is by showing love to those around us, particularly our family. Sometimes, this can be very difficult when we are grieving, for the natural thing to do is to lash out at anyone, or anything, that crosses our path. Most of the time a response will be returned in a similar temperament, for the tone we have set with our dialogue.

The whole family is hurting. Parents dreams have been shattered, we have fallen apart to the degree we feel our life can never be put back together again. We know we are not functioning as the stable parent we were, the guilt of letting our surviving children down adds to our pain. We want so badly to remove the pain from the whole family, but we don't even know how to help ourselves. This helpless feeling lowers our self-esteem. The siblings have lost their parents, as they knew them. Many have to cope with a new family structure of being an only child, or now the oldest, or youngest. It takes a lot of love and understanding to get through the horrendous ordeal. Love is a gift that must be exchanged to be effective, we all need it to heal. This is a time for caring, touching and hugging one another. We hope you can give and receive your share.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel* , TCF Valley Forge

The heart knows many songs  
And sings them well  
The heart holds images  
And sees them, even  
When life is much too dark  
To light the eyes.  
The heart knows many songs  
We cannot hear.  
The heart is wise.

**Sascha**

**HOPE**

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And signs the tune without the words  
And never stops at all.

**Emily Dickinson**

**On Sibling Grief  
From a Grieving Sibling**

I am a surviving sibling. Fifteen months ago I was not even familiar with the term...now I am one! How am I doing? What are the guidelines to measure my progress? Why can't I remember when I was told of my brother's death...or the days following the accident for that matter? Did I go crazy? Was it yesterday, or was it over a year ago? Did I laugh just today when I never thought I would laugh again? What is this peaceful feeling that I feel from time to time? Is it healing?

Lee, 29, was my little brother. I remember trying to alternately protect or tease him, make him laugh or make him cry. He was like having a real live baby doll to play with since I was 10 years older than he. (Our Mother said he was the cleanest little boy in the neighborhood. I guess having 3 older sisters is the reason for that!!!)

How can I explain the pain I felt on learning of his accident. I wanted to go to him right away to see that he was OK, but our cousin, Judy, said that wasn't possible. I guess that was when I was told that he was dead...but I don't remember that. I only remember screaming.

When was it that I began to heal? Probably at the same time that I thought I was going totally, certifiably crazy! Then, someone told me about The Compassionate Friends and what they did. I wondered if they could help me but doubted that they could. After all, how could they understand how much I hurt at having lost my precious baby brother or how close we had always been and how he always helped me. Why should they even care about me? But, you know what...they did help. With the help and support of this group of wonderful caring people, I am alive today and working toward a fruitful life. I will never be the same as I was before June 18, 1992, but I truly believe I have become a better person.

While Lee's life taught me so much, his death taught me some invaluable lessons. I have learned to become more aware of life and my own mortality and am more attuned to other needs. I no longer take anything for granted. I miss him terribly but take solace in the belief that he is happy in his new world and that one day we will be reunited.

Sibling grief takes a tremendous amount of time and work. Sometimes just thinking of my brother, looking at his picture, or hearing his favorite song, "God Bless America," reduces me to a teary mess. Sometimes these same things make me smile. But, I am surviving and have developed a new perspective on life. I am closer to and cherish my family more than ever and realize how very important they are. I am dedicated to helping other surviving siblings work through their grief. I pray daily for peace, not only for myself and my family, but for everyone making this journey through grief. One thing that I have found to be most helpful during the past fifteen months of grief work has been to talk about and to be honest about my feelings. I encourage siblings (and parents) to try to hook up with a support group such as The Compassionate Friends to talk out your feelings and concerns. After all, we've already paid an extremely high price to join this group...the life of our loved one...so why not take

You may even find yourself helping someone else (even though you might not believe that now.)

*Sunday Lee Stanton*  
Wyoming Valley, PA

**Random Reflections**

It's been a year now  
And the books say I should be  
Getting back to "normal."

But I still can't pass your picture  
On the bookcase without  
Touching your face.

I still wake up in the night  
Sometimes and can almost  
Hear your voice in the quiet.

I still run to the window when the  
Dogs bark at night with the hope  
In the back of my mind that somehow  
You've wandered into the yard.

I still whisper your name into the wind  
When I walk down our lane in the still  
Of evening and strain to hear an answer.

When I'm troubled and upset  
I still talk to you like  
I always did and  
Imagine the advice you'd give me.

I still stop on our dark country road  
Sometime and turn off the car engine  
And lights and wait and hope that  
I can see or hear you.

It's been a year now and the  
Memories are still so vivid  
That I can almost touch them.

It's been a year now and I know  
With all my heart that your  
Presence will never fade in my mind.

*Tammy Walmann* – Miami Co., KS

**THE MAZE OF GRIEF**

I've heard many bereaved parents say – and have said it myself – that when their child died their life turned upside down. Everything becomes mixed up; we are in unfamiliar territory. Vainly we seek for the familiar, for “normalcy”, for something to hold on to. Sometimes we even seem to lose our faith, as we may feel that God has let us down. We seek to reorient ourselves to our new surroundings.

This process of reorientation is called grieving. It may be like feeling our way through a dark labyrinth. Many times we come to dead ends and may have to feel our way back to a broader way. In this dark maze of grief we seek for someone to guide us. Those closest to us are no help. They too are lost in this labyrinth, searching for a way out, an escape from the pain. But all the avenues of escape – sleep, drugs, work, alcohol, avoidance – only leads us deeper into the maze where we feel even more disoriented and lost.

Conversely, the best way out of the labyrinth is through the pain. And the best guide is another bereaved parent, one who has walked the dark maze and knows all about the blind alleys, the dead ends and the false promises of escape. The best way out is through talking; telling your story again and again to a friend who will listen, not judge you, and understand. One who will not tell you to “forget about your child and get on with your life,” or “keep busy and don't think about it,” or that you “should be over it.” A friend who will let you say your child's name, cry an ocean of tears and say all those “crazy” things that you think about after your child dies. In this way you become reoriented to this new life without the physical presence of your child – although he/she is always with you in your heart and memory.

This is what Compassionate Friends is all about. Parents and siblings who are further along in their grief, reaching back and helping newly bereaved parent and sibling find their way through the maze of grief. Reach out and take a hand...you need not walk alone. Peace,

*Helen Bash*



**ONE DAY AT A TIME**

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry - two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is *yesterday*, with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, and its aches and pains.

Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed. We cannot erase a single word we said. Yesterday is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is *tomorrow*.

Tomorrow is beyond our immediate control. Tomorrow's sun will rise, whether in splendor or behind a mask of clouds. But it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in tomorrow.

This leaves only one day - *today*.

Anyone can fight the battles of just one day. It is when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternity's - yesterday and tomorrow - that we break down.

Let us therefore live *one* day at a time

*Author Unknown*

(For all of the children loved and remembered  
By the Valley Forge Chapter)

**Love's Remembrance**

Tonight, I light a candle  
for you, my beloved child.  
And as your name is spoken aloud,  
a testament that you lived,  
I will gratefully remember, the clearness of you eyes  
Your sweet newborn smell  
Your kindness as you grew.  
Your measured steps toward adulthood, cut short  
many hearts filled with memories, your legacy.  
Tonight, I light a candle  
for you , my beloved child.  
And as the room is lighted  
by many candles fired with love,  
I will remember not your death, but your life.  
And in your candle's warmth  
I will pray that memories and love and eternity  
will blend together,  
bonding us forever, my beloved child.

By **Elaine Madden**  
*Andrew Madden's* mother  
1978 - 1995

**SLOW DANCE**

Have you ever watched kids  
On a merry-go-round  
Or listened to the rain  
Slapping on the ground?  
Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight  
Or gazed at the sun into the fading night?  
You better slow down  
Don't dance so fast  
Time is short  
The music won't last.  
Do you run through each day on the fly  
When you ask, "How are you?"  
Do you hear the reply?  
When the day is done,  
Do you lie in your bed  
With the next hundred chores  
Running through your head?  
You better slow down  
Don't dance so fast  
Time is short  
The music won't last.  
Ever told your child,  
We'll do it tomorrow  
And in your haste, not see his sorrow?  
Ever lost touch,  
Let a good friendship die  
'Cause you never had time  
To call and say "Hi"?  
You better slow down  
Don't dance so fast  
Time is short  
The music won't last.  
When you run so fast to get somewhere  
You miss half the fun of getting there.  
When you worry and hurry through your day,  
It is like an unopened gift  
Thrown away  
Life is not a race.  
Do take it slower  
Hear the music  
Before the song is over.

*Author Unknown*