



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

MAY 2015

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

May 7 General Sharing & Death by Suicide

Jun 5 General Sharing

July 10-12 TCF National Conference, Dallas, TX
See page 3

Oct 9-11 2015 E. PA Regional Conference
See page 3 for information

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**

Chapter Leaders

Rhonda & Frank Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore, PA 19343
(484) 919-0820 Chapter cell phone
email: sugar@tcfvalleyforge.org

Database Record Keeper

Frank Gomez

Webmaster

Frank Gomez
Email: frank@tcfvalleyforge.org

Newsletter Editors

Marie & Ken Hofmockel
340 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406
(610)337-1907
email: kendall.hofmockel@gmail.com

Love Gift Acknowledgements

Connie Nolan

Treasurer

Emil Nunez

Librarian

Carole Bailey

Chapter Advisors

Marie & Ken Hofmockel

Regional Coordinators

Ann Walsh 717-515-3000
Bobbi Milne 215-801-2840

National Headquarters

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll Free: (877)969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org
email: national_office@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.

INSIDE VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER

NEW MEMBERS

Fran Miller, son *Christian* (21)

REFRESHMENTS

Ellen & James Burbano in memory of their son, *Eric* on his birthday 4/19.

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

Patricia & Lee Grossman in loving memory of our daughter, *Rachel Yizkov*

William & Carol Meehan in loving memory of our son,
Patrick W. Meehan on his birthday 3/11

Barbara Purtell-Frank in loving memory of my son *Michael John Keller-Purtell*
on his birthday 5/28. Always on my mind, forever in my heart.

Irene & Fred Sutton in loving memory of our son, *Jim Sutton* on his anniversary 4/16.

Deborah Walter in loving memory of my son, *Evan* on his birthday 4/18
& anniversary 5/10.

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**

We wish you a Mother's Day of fond memories of the love your child gave to you and those around them.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

As you know a Regional Conference is being planned for October 9-11, 2015 at the Radisson Hotel in King of Prussia, PA.

We hope you will take the opportunity to share the conference weekend with us. It will be an indescribable experience with bereaved families who have "been there", and know the depth of the pain. There are no strangers, or social barriers, everyone becomes an instant friend. We share our emotional feelings with one another.

There will be seasoned bereaved families, who have proven life can be meaningful once more. They have learned to love, laugh, and live again, and know the love and memories of our children and siblings have not diminished.

If you are interested in serving on the planning committee, please join us at the next planning meeting scheduled for May 17, 2:00PM. This, and all planning meetings, will be held at the Radisson Hotel, King of Prussia, PA in the Conestoga Room (lower level).

38th NATIONAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Is available by mail from:

PO Box 3693, Oak Brook, IL, 60522-3696

or call:

877-969-0010 or FAX 630-990-0246

On line registration available at www.compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends National Conference 2015



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.**

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Marilynn Anton, nephew *Steven Schneibolk* 5/7
Donald Barber, son *Steven W. Barber* 5/19
Laura Bedrossian, son *Teddy* 5/9
Stephen & Barbara Billings, daughter *Laura Elizabeth Billings* 5/22
Shirley & Lex Bono, son *Greg* 5/19
Loretta & Ken Cericola, son *Anthony Cericola* 5/3
Mary & John Chelius, son *John J. Chelius, Jr.* 5/2
Joanne & Tom Christman, son *Kyle R. O'Neill* 5/23
Kathy Concannon, daughter *Tracey* 5/31
Joanne De Felice, son *Joseph* 5/27
Anton & Maureen DeMaioribus, daughter *Ann DeMaioribus* 5/17
Vanessa Diaz, friends child *Samir* 5/16
Danielle Evelyn, son *Samir* 5/16
Carol Graber, son *Bobby* 5/17
Judi Griffith, son *Steve* 5/27
Samuel & Mary Lou Hardman, son *Samuel J.* 5/19
Frank Harms, son *Tyler* 5/20
Robin Hayman, son *Bradley Hayman* 5/11
Marie & Ken Hofmockel, grandson *Steven Schneibolk* 5/7
William & Marilyn Hudson, son *Robert Hudson* 5/11
Brad Ingerman, son *Justin* 5/18
Jean Jones, grandson *Bobby* 5/7
Donna Kendall, daughter *Jennifer* 5/7
Loretta Kline, son *Keith Edward Kline* 5/11
Susan Lipson, nephew *Justin Ingerman* 5/18
Maryellen & James Madden, daughter *Anne Marie Madden* 5/18
Anne McClenachan, brother *Andy McClenachan* 5/30
Michael & Maria McFadden, daughter *Rachel McFadden* 5/14
Susan McKelvey, son *John* 5/20
Mike & Jen Meluskey, daughter *Carolyn Meluskey* 5/13
Cheryl Mezzaroba, son *Lon Mezzaroba* 5/18
Leonard & Thelma Miller, son *Lowell Bruce Miller* 5/14
Christy O'brian, daughter *Evie* 5/2
Elsie Oreski, son *Gregory T. Oreski* 5/22
Betty & Richard Owens, Sr., son *Richard H. Owens, Jr.* 5/12
Sam & Palma Panichello, son *Joseph Panichello* 5/21

MAY BIRTHDAYS continued

Holly Kuiatkouski and Paul Falkestein, daughter *Anna* 5/21
Lyla T. Poulson, brother *Joe* 5/18
Barbara Purtell-Frank, son *Michael John Keller Purtell* 5/28
Andrew Randolph, brother *James* 5/26
Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert, father *Albert Volpe* 5/4
Pamela Schneibolk, son *Steven* 5/7
Janet & Jonathan Schultz, friend *Scott Alan Rosenthal* 5/26
Ann Sherwood, son *David Foster Sherwood* 5/3
Priscilla Shober, son *Jeffrey R. Shober* 5/27
Melissa Smith, daughter *Ava* 5/18
Margaret & Matthew Strickler, son *Timothy Strickler* 5/4
Suzanne Teleha, son *Peter Teleha* 5/20
Hans & Margaret Van Naerssen, son *Eric* 5/21
Ann VanLandingham, daughter-in-law *Rita VanLandingham* 5/17
Lauretta Wagner, daughter *Traci Wagner* 5/23
Patricia White, daughter *Diane Patricia White* 5/1
Donna White, sister *Diane White* 5/1
Muriel Wilson, son *John F. Shaffer* 5/12
Joan & Ed Young, son *Jed Young* 5/18

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Madeleine Adler, son *J. Peter Adler* - 5/30
Donald Barber, son *Steven W. Barber* - 5/30
Rob and Janet Beiswenger, son *Jared* - 5/18
Gloria Bello, son *Joseph* - 5/21
Ben & Cathy Breskman, son *Brian* - 5/26
Martha & Albert Caesar, son *Daniel Mark Caesar* - 5/13
Joane Cooper, daughter *Katy* - 5/21
Rose Marie Cote, husband *Paul Cote* - 5/27
Jamie (Germaine) Cote Weaver, father *Paul* - 5/27
Franklin & Patricia Cox, daughter *Christen Fox*- 5/26
Jane Cox, son *Bill* - 5/24
Bud Cunnane, son *Patrick* - 5/2
Janie Ebersole, daughter *Ashley Sankus* - 5/16
Justine Ellinger, daughter *Keira Ellinger* - 5/7
Charlie & Jill Fick, son *Michael Sternberg* - 5/14
Colleen and Dan Fledderman, daughter *Amy* - 5/25
William & Marilyn Hudson, son *Robert Hudson* - 5/11
Joan Kingslake, son-in-law *Guy Thornton Woods* - 5/6/97
Loretta Kline, son *Keith Edward Kline* - 5/20
Pat Kuchler, son *Michael* - 5/3

MAY ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED

Dan Logan, daughter *Joanie* - 5/28
John & Nancy Logue, daughter *Kaitlyn Logue* - 5/3
Tom & Charmaine Malik, son *Danny Malik* - 5/12
Michelle Mazzio, son *Brendan Mazzio* - 5/20
Robert McCullough, daughter *Caroline Patricia McCullough* - 5/27
Marian Melchiorre, grandson *John Anthony Peticca, Jr* - 5/11
Mike & Jen Meluskey, daughter *Carolyn Meluskey* - 5/22
Mary O'Halloran, brother *Thomas M. O'Halloran* - 5/28
Winnie & James O'Halloran, son *Thomas M. O'Halloran* - 5/28
Anna Packer, daughter *Anna M Packer* - 5/22
Holly Kuiatkouski and Paul Falkestein, daughter *Anna* - 5/26
Lyla T. Poulson, daughter *Kimberly Poulson* - 5/21
Sharyn & Joe Pozzuolo, son *Joey Brad Pozzuolo* - 5/19
Joe & Kim Pratt, son *Paul* - 5/16
Christine and Richard Purkiss, son *Adam Clark* - 5/7
Joan & Earl Reigel, daughter *Melissa Reigel* - 5/4
Lynn & Stephen Scartozzi, daughter *Christine Marie Scartozzi* - 5/28
friend *Christopher Harvey* - 5/6
Linda Sciarra, son *John Anthony Peticca Jr* - 5/11
Cathy Seehuetter, daughter *Nina Seehuetter* - 5/11
E. Pearl & Ernest Smith, son *Tony* - 5/5
Helen Smith, son *Bob Smith* - 5/15
Andy & Alexandra Smith, son *Charlie* - 5/30
Karl & Sue Snepp, son *Dave Snepp* - 5/31
Harry & Merrily Spiess, grandson *Charles Smith* - 5/29
Catherine & Gerry St. John, son *Greg* - 5/12
John & Rose Stanley, daughter *Susan Stanley* - 5/29
Pety Suy Matthew Kuchler, son *Ethan* - 5/3
Robert & Nancy Thompson, friend *J. Peter Adler* - 5/30
Mek Wagner, daughter *Paige* - 5/13
Deb Walter, son *Evan* - 5/10
Terry & Susan Weikel, daughter *Jennifer* - 5/11

A LETTER TO HEAVEN

A letter to heaven for my dear sweet precious grandson, John. I never knew anything could hurt so much. Losing you just put a hole in my heart. Nothing could have prepared me for the guilt, feeling like I failed you. Like you John, I too am suffering the way you did for years. No one will ever take your place in my heart. If only we had a second chance to do things right. Someday we will be together again. That's my only consolation. Until we meet again, always on my mind and always in my heart.

Love you forever and ever. Granny Dukes (Mom Mom)

Marian Melchiorre, TCF-VF Chapter

SHARED THOUGHTS ON THE LOVE THAT MAKES US PARENTS

For many, the month of May can be a very traumatic time. The warm days and the beauty of spring is expected to renew us, but often our depression lingers or deepens, for we are not ready to move on with the season. Many of us feel we are not finished mothering our child when they die. Mother’s Day magnifies the fact that we can never complete that unfinished privilege, and can not find a place for our unfinished love.

On the sad days when there is not enough energy to help ourselves, it is normal to want to stay where we are in our grief. It takes more strength than we have to move on. Our grief can become so overwhelming that we have to fight to get through the day. Sometimes no progress is felt in our grief, but it can be a tremendous accomplishment just to survive. Each day of survival helps us to recovery. Often we expect too much of ourselves. Grieving parents are very fragile, confused, and vulnerable to slipping while climbing out of the pit of grief. Even reversals show progress when we can get back to where we were before the slip.

It takes a lot of grief before our days can have more good hours than bad. But it does come. Most of us cannot even imagine that progress in our early grief. Eventually, we can make peace with our loss and our painful memories become warm treasures. Even though we always think of our child daily, it is with thankfulness that they were a part of our lives.

The only real joy comes from having known our child. Our grief becomes so overwhelming, it crowds out the joy, and deteriorates us to the level of feeling we can never enjoy life again. It is necessary for all of us to go through stages of grief. Once we have finished our grief work (which is much more than a few months), the memories of those we love become superior to the death, or cause of death. We except that the real joy was having them in our lives, knowing them, and the mark they left on us.

When our child was born or adopted we became a parent, that relationship cannot be revoked. We are still their mother and father. Often those who lose only, or all children, struggle with their parental title. We are their parents, and they will always be our children. Love is what makes this bond, and that did not diminish because they died. We still have the pride and joy of being their parent, as long as the love remains, and we know that is forever.

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

I WILL NOT FORGET

I will not forget you.
Boy with hazel eyes.
I will see you shining
In every new sunrise.

I will not forget
Your grin with dimples deep.
I'll hold you in my dreams
While in my deepest sleep.

I will not forget
Your laughter or your smile.
You'll be right beside me
And walk my every mile.

I will not forget you
Child with golden hair.
I will feel your presence
You are every where.

I will not forget you
Sweet memories make me glad.
I will not forget you
Not all the love we had.

No, I will not forget you
Your spirit fills my soul.
I will not forget my son
Your memory keeps me whole.

Jacqueline Brown, Peace Valley TCF, New Britain, PA

**To Mommy on Mother's Day 2015
From Your Beloved Angel in Heaven**

As I sit in Heaven & watch over you every day,
I try to let you know with signs I never went away.

I hear you when you are laughing and watch you when you sleep,
I even place my arm around you, to calm you as you weep.

I see you wish the days away, begging to have me home,
so I try to send you signs, so you know you are not alone.

Don't feel guilty that you have life that was denied to me.
Heaven is truly Beautiful, just you wait and see.

So live your life, be free,
and know with every breath you take, you'll be taking one for me.

With All My Love,
Your Loving Daughter & Beloved Angel ~ *LUANNE*

by, **Lucia Watters** - TCF Delaware County, PA

WHAT A GRANDMOTHER IS

A grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own, so she likes other people's little girls. A grandfather is a man-grandmother, he goes for walks with boys, and they talk about fishing and tractors and things like that.

Grandmas don't have to do anything except be there. They are old so they shouldn't play hard or run. It is enough if they drive us to the market where the pretend horse is and have lots of dimes ready. Or as they take us for walks they slow down past things like pretty leaves or caterpillars. They should never say "hurry up." Usually they are fat, but not too fat to tie the kid's shoes. They wear funny underwear and they can take their teeth and gums off. It is better if they don't typewrite or play cards except with us. They don't have to be smart, only answer questions like why dogs chase cats or how come God isn't married.

They don't talk baby talk, like visitors do, because it is hard to understand. When they read to us they don't skip words or mind if it is the same story again.

Everyone should try to have one, especially if you don't have television because grandmas are the only grownups who have got the time.

Thoughts of a 6 year old girl , TCF Atlanta

FIRST STEP

When my brother died in a car accident seven years ago, I was reminded of a 17 year-old boy I knew in high school who had lost his father suddenly. I hadn't known anyone who'd lost a parent before then, and I was curious about how he had acted at the funeral. It made quite an impression on me when I heard that he was calmly speaking with his friends and thanking them for their support. I told myself then, that if I were ever in that situation, I would also be strong.

As I stood in the kitchen seven years ago with *He didn't make it* echoing in my head, I remembered the boy whose father had died, I wanted to be brave like him, to be strong for those around me. I wanted to show everyone that I was resilient, and I wanted to deliver what everyone was telling me to deliver. All the calls and visits began or ended with someone saying, "Be strong for your parents. They need you to be strong for them now." There was also a popular song playing on every station with the lyrics "You got to be cool. You got to be calm. You go to stay together ... You got to be strong. You got to be wiser." I made it my mantra. I couldn't sleep, so I'd silently chant to myself, You've got to be strong. You've got to be strong.

At first my parents thanked me for showing strength. They were amazed that I was able to walk around and shake hands and thank people for coming to the wake. I tried to reassure everyone while my parents struggled to respond to the sympathy of friends and family members. They didn't feel capable of much conversation. I spoke at the funeral while they listened, teary-eyed, in the pew. I thought I was reaching deep, pulling out powers of resilience that had been dormant in me. I was proud of myself for putting others at ease.

At the same time, there were questions slowly rising to the surface of my consciousness.

What about you, Scott? When do you take care of yourself? What do you need? I felt guilty worrying about myself when, according to everyone around me, my parents were depending on me. Not that I ever took the time to actually discuss it with them - I just assumed I was supposed to be the unbending oak. I cried every day, but I made sure I didn't cry in front of them. I left the room if I felt tears building. I tried to push the questions into a dark, distant corner of my mind. I'd answer the phone and hear, "It must be hard for them. Please tell; your parents that our prayers are with them." When I hung up, I couldn't help wondering why the callers didn't say, "It must be hard on the three of you. Our prayers are with you."

Then my parents began expressing their concern for me. Sensing my isolation, they began to realize that my grief was being overlooked. They realized that they were getting all the support while I was being told to support them. They said they worried about me. They asked who was supporting me. Their empathy helped me accept and admit to my private concerns. I could only be strong for so long. I didn't want to be selfish, but I knew that my brother's death was an extraordinary circumstance. I missed him terribly, and each day I felt more exhausted. Nature was telling me something. I had to stop moving, stop reassuring, and stop acting for the sake of others. I had to admit that I didn't know how to handle grief. I had to stop being the steady, reassuring voice in our family and let the sadness come over me. I had to cry and find some time to be alone. I didn't have to learn to live with the full reality of my loss overnight, but I had to let the grief take me and begin to learn. That's when my journey, as a surviving sibling, began.

Scott Mastley - TCF, Atlanta GA

Some Common Thoughts Following the Death of Your Child

- It is not uncommon to feel bitterness or a sense of injustice when one loses a child. So if you find yourself thinking, Why me?, Why my child?, Why our family?, You are in good company.
- Some parents describe “an irrational sense of self-blame” following the death of a child. I never was able to figure out what a rational sense of self-blame might be. But I do know that many of us blame ourselves. We replay the what-ifs of our child’s life and death a thousand times a day. Almost always self-blame is misplaced.
- Grief over the loss of a child lasts longer than any other kind. It heals more slowly and causes the most monumental disruption for those who survive. This is because a child is a part of what psychologists call our internal psychological structure - meaning that in a way, part of the parent dies too.
- Most experts believe that loss and helplessness are the greatest tests any human can face. A child’s death is off the charts in both categories.
- You may be strong, smart, and highly resilient. But nothing can prepare you for the loss of a child.
- One reason the loss feels so enormous is that a child’s death violates an implicit generational contract that our own children will survive us.
- A child’s death also challenges the fundamental instinct of parents to protect their child. That is what we are supposed to do, isn’t it? To make the world safe? The feeling that we have failed to do so can haunt us, compounding our sadness.
- In an era of medical miracles, we are less culturally conditioned to expect a child’s death than in previous generations. On the contrary, the prevailing assumption is that science and technology can and will work wonders.
- Some experts estimate that in the face of a child’s death two years is a reasonable grieving period. Others double that figure. The truth is, it takes as long as it takes - sometimes a whole lifetime. But if you are lucky, the grief will transmute. Even its physical properties will transform. Its weighty presence abates. The grief becomes gentler - less terrifying - and sometimes, paradoxically, rather sweet.

Taken from *After the Darkest Hour the Sun will Shine Again*
By **Elizabeth Mehren**

THE GRIEF OF MENTAL ILLNESS

I know now that my daughter, Laurie was mentally ill. I did not understand the meaning of this 20 years ago when her depression and “strange” behavior preceded a suicide attempt while in college. Despite all the help we could get for her, she succeeded in completing suicide five years later, at the age of 25, in 1980.

Her psychiatrist then agreed to talk to me -- he said, with tears in his eyes, she had been a serious schizophrenic patient. For reasons of patient confidentiality, I was not privy to this information earlier. WHY couldn't I have learned about this before it was too late?

The grief I felt as a bereaved parent was compounded by the truth of her illness. There is a stigma with mental illness. Society has been slow to understand and to accept mental illness. There is grief with mental illness -- for the loss of the child that we wanted to be normal. Why did this have to happen to my child?

Was this my fault? Guilt rears its ugly head. Why didn't I see the early signs that she needed help? I felt anger -- wanting to blame others for what happened. I was frustrated -- with the professionals who could not/did not “fix it.” I was disillusioned with the public and private mental health system and its limited resources for the mentally ill and their families. Laurie fell between the cracks and is gone.

Thirteen years later I have come to terms with her suicide. I know now there are many reasons for mental illness, most of which are beyond my control. Mental illness is a disease. It can be the result of genetics, a chemical imbalance in the brain, or a nutritional deficiency/allergy -- NOT bad parenting.

I have learned that in grief and in loss, most people want to/need to “talk about it.” The magic of sharing feelings and experiences with others who understand (because they've been there), is a healing process. For me, The Compassionate

Friends, a national peer-support organization for bereaved parents and siblings, has provided this outlet on a local and national level. I have also participated in a local chapter of The Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and have learned so much more about mental illness through sharing with others who are coping with this stigma and grief. The National Alliance for Mentally Ill slogan in 1991 was “the most shocking thing about mental illness is how little people understand it.” How true! How sad!

After Laurie's suicide, initially the most therapeutic healing for me was to publish a book of her writings, material I found expressing her thoughts, visions and frustrations from the ages of 15 to 25. This actual documentation of a mentally ill young person is poetic, loving, humorous, depressing and spiritual. Perhaps her words will help others to see and understand this disease. Her words express intuitive insights in a most articulate way, despite the message of helplessness and hopelessness. As a bereaved parent I felt a strong motivation to perpetuate the memory of Laurie in a positive way.

Public education, and acceptance of mental illness as a disease is helping to change attitudes. We are learning to be more open and honest about it. We are learning to cope and go on with our lives.

Maybe it was the mother in me, but I never thought I would lose her. Now through the grief and later understanding of this disease, I have found a new purpose in my life. Reaching out to help others caught in the quagmire of grief from mental illness, from suicide, from the death of a child, through support groups and writings, in turn has been a healing process for me too. I know that Laurie's 25 years on this earth have made a difference.

Carol Katz



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS, INC.**

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

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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.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2007