

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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

## September 2009

### 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

**Sep 3 General Sharing & Death by Suicide**

**Oct 1 General Sharing**

**Oct 10 Saturday, 12:30PM Fall Luncheon  
With guest speaker Alan Pederson  
( 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, FRANK GOMEZ**

**PLEASE SEND ALL OTHER CHAPTER MAIL  
TO CHAPTER CO-LEADERS  
ANN MURRAY or RHONDA GOMEZ**



### Valley Forge Chapter

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We offer our love and compassion to the family of Suzanne McClenachan. Sue died on July 27, 2009. She is survived by two daughters, and four grandchildren. Sue joined the Valley Forge Chapter of TCF shortly after the death of her son, Andy, in 1988. She was a faithful member of our chapter, served as secretary on the chapter's steering committee in the 1990s. She contributed much toward reaching out to bereaved families.

### NEW FRIENDS

**Dorothy Seifert**, son *Richard* (36)  
**Phyllis Sisenwine**, daughter *Jill* (38)

**We welcome our newly bereaved friends. We are sorry for the cause that brings you. We offer confidentiality, unconditional love, compassion and understanding to all of you.**

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### AUGUST REFRESHMENTS

**Nina Bernstein**, for *All the Children of Compassionate Friends*  
**Danielle Murtha**, in memory of my brother, *Jake* (5)  
**Mary Lou Harrison**, in memory of my son, *Scott's* birthday Aug 4th.

Anyone wishing to donate refreshments (cheese & crackers, fruit, cakes, cookies, etc. ) in memory of loved ones, please call **Ann Rapoport or Rhonda Gomez (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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### LOVE GIFTS

**Agnes & Alex Crisanti, Jr.** in memory of our son *John Crisanti's* 42<sup>nd</sup> birthday, Sept 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Catherine Dardozi**, in memory of my son *James Dardozi* on his anniversary, Sept 7<sup>th</sup>  
 And in memory of my grandson *Evan Schmidt* who died Sept 1995  
**June & Tsuneo Fujita**, in loving memory of our daughter *Sharon Kimi Fujita*  
**Mary Lou Harrison**, in sweet, loving memories of our happy times, my son;  
*L. Scott Harrison*, on his Aug 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. All my love, Mom  
**Barbara Jacobs**, in loving memory of my daughter *Pamela Faye* on her anniversary, Sept 17<sup>th</sup>  
**Gwen & Dennis Kearns**, in memory of our son *Dennis J. Kearns, Jr.* on his birthday, Sept 18<sup>th</sup>  
 and his anniversary, Sept 28<sup>th</sup>  
**Willard & Patricia McLain**, in memory of *Gary J. McLain's* 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
 from his parents **Bill & Pat** and his sisters, **Denise, Linda & Brenda.**  
**Winnie & James O'Halloran**, in loving memory of our son *Thomas O'Halloran* on his birthday,  
 Sept 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Rusty & Anthony Puglisi**, in loving memory of our son *Michael Puglisi* on the anniversary of his  
 death, Sept 10<sup>th</sup>. We will always love and miss you and will forever remain proud of your many  
 accomplishments, and of the unknown battles you fought and won during your short life. Rest in  
 peace, son.  
**Donald & Mary Rose**, in memory of our daughter, *Marjorie Rose-Cotteta* on her birthday Sept 30<sup>th</sup>  
**Fred & Irene Sutton**, in loving memory of our son, **Jim Sutton**  
**Donna White**, in loving memory of my beautiful sister *Diane White* (23)  
**Charles Tapiero**  
**Roxborough Manayunk Lioness**

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER**

**FALL LUNCHEON (\$10.00 per person)**

**OCTOBER 10TH (SATURDAY) 12:30PM**

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Valley Forge & Henderson Roads, King of Prussia, PA**

**GUEST SPEAKER - ALAN PEDERSEN**

Alan Pedersen has been performing for more than 25 years. An accomplished singer and award winning songwriter, he spent several years writing and recording music in Nashville, Tennessee. Alan has had several songs recorded by other artists.

His writing has not been limited to music, he has written commercials, radio news copy, and collaborations for television shows and other comedy projects. His performing credits are numerous as well. Alan has worked as an actor, stand-up comedian, keynote speaker/emcee, and in radio as a network news and sports reporter for Westwood One Communications.

Currently living in Englewood, Colorado, Alan is the father of four boys and an angel. In August of 2001 Alan's life took a tragic turn, his 18-year-old and only daughter Ashley was killed in an automobile accident. This tragedy would take his life in a direction he never imagined. Struggling for months to find answers and trying to cope with tremendous pain and anger, he entered a grief program in Denver, Colorado and began attending monthly meetings of a support organization (The Compassionate Friends.)

Alan credits these organizations with saving his life and inspiring him to honor his daughter's life by helping others. In July of 2003, Alan released a CD of songs he had written about his walk through the valley of grief, titled Ashley's Songbook. In 2006, he released a follow up CD titled "A Little Farther Down The Road." Alan now helps others by sharing his story of faith and hope. His message is simple; grief and loss offer the opportunity for ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. He believes that healing begins when we once again give of ourselves by helping others.

Alan speaks and plays his music for churches and grief organizations around the country. In 2008 Alan released his third CD of original music about the journey bereaved families must walk.

Alan has performed at National Conferences for The Compassionate Friends, Bereaved Parents of the USA, and the World Gathering on Bereavement. Alan will travel and speak to chapters of TCF, BP-USA, and other grief organizations dedicated to helping families grieving the loss of a child.. See his website: [www.everashleymusic.com](http://www.everashleymusic.com)

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You do not need to be a member of the TCF Valley Forge Chapter to attend. For further information contact: Ann Murray email: [ann@tcfvalleyforge.org](mailto:ann@tcfvalleyforge.org) or (484) 919-0820 cell phone or Rhonda Gomez email: [sugar@tcfvalleyforge.org](mailto:sugar@tcfvalleyforge.org) or (484) 919-0820 cell phone  
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Please return the lower part of this page to Rhonda Gomez, 12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore, PA 19343. The cost of the luncheon is \$10.00 per person. Sorry we cannot accept credit cards.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of persons attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

**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.**

**SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSERIES**

**Laura Bedrossian, son *Teddy* - 9/24**  
**Jeff & Donna Brown, son *Kenneth Bernstiel* - 9/12**  
**Ann Bruner, sister *Katy Wade* - 9/27**  
**Jean Burns, son *Timothy* - 9/4**  
**Suzanne Carcarey, son *Eddie* - 9/21**  
**Phyllis & James Casey, son *Jim "Jimmer" Casey* - 9/17**  
**Tom & Irene Cornely, son *Tom* - 9/1**  
**Marie D'Angelo, son *Mark Anthony* - 9/12**  
**Louis Dardozzi, son *James* - 9/7**  
**Catherine Dardozzi, son *James Dardozzi* - 9/7**  
**Michelle G. Doll, son *Justin* - 9/4**  
**Sandra Estep, daughter *Stacy Drapikowski* - 9/7**  
**Sarah Fishel, daughter *Allyson* - 9/15**  
**Dan & Robyn Fisher, son *Robert "Bo"* - 9/4**  
**Mary B. Frederick, friend *Michael Puglisi* - 9/10**  
**David & Amy Freese, son *Derek Freese* - 9/9**  
**Susan Goldberg, brother *Neal* - 9/3**  
**Sherry Goldberg, son *Neal* - 9/3**  
**Judi Griffith, son *Steve* - 9/4**  
**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**  
**Walt & Adele Higgins, son/stepson *Brian* 9/22**  
**Barbara Jacobs, daughter *Pamela Faye* - 9/17**  
**Margaret C Jones, son *Christopher* - 9/15**  
**Gwen & Dennis Kearns, son *Dennis J. Kearns, Jr.* - 9/28**  
**Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy, son *Philip V. Kennedy* - 9/23**  
**Gloria and Jerry Koval, son *Steven* - 9/3**  
**Karen & Francis Legieko, son *John Francis Legieko* - 9/25**  
**Joanne & Thomas Lennen, son *Scott C. Lennen* - 9/2**  
**Maureen Lok, daughter *Jessica* - 9/25**  
**Willard & Patricia McLain, son *Gary J. McLain* - 9/23**  
**Robert & Jean McWilliams, daughter *Jean Marie Opella* - 9/19**  
**Alfred J. & Joan Michini, son *Adam Jonah Michini* - 9/7**  
**Kimberly Kearns Minetola, brother *Dennis Kearns, Jr.* - 9/28**

**SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES continued**

**Roger Morris**, daughter *Katie* - 9/22  
**Kimberly Nashed**, daughter *Nouri Cummings Nashed* - 9/10  
**Betsy Oakes**, son *Bruce Schaeffer* - 9/2  
**Marie O'Connon**, son *Curran* - 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  
**Michelle Pollart**, brother *Mark Andrew Steffler* - 9/7  
**Mary Jane Pollart**, son *Mark Andrew Steffler* - 9/7  
**Rusty & Anthony Puglisi**, son *Michael Puglisi* - 9/10  
**Edna Reese**, daughter *Diane Clark Bruno* - 9/13/2000  
**Steve & Joann Reynolds**, son *Chris* - 9/15  
**Donald & Freda Rhinier**, son *Glenn D. Rhinier* - 9/16  
**Bonnie Rosen**, son *Troy* - 9/29  
**Marie & Sam Schmeltzer**, son *Sam "Sonny" Schmeltzer* - 9/11  
**Michelle & Bill Schmidt**, brother *James Dardozzi* - 9/7  
**Janet & Jonathan Schultz**, brother *Marc Ernest Stein* - 9/9  
**Abigail Schwartz**, brother *Jake* - 9/13  
**Charles & Tish Shaw**, son *Charles "Corky" Shaw* - 9/29  
**Ann Sherwood**, daughter *Martha Sherwood Fransway* - 9/6  
**Helen Smith**, son *Patrick Kenneth "Kenny" Smith* - 9/17  
**Anne & Charles Swann**, daughter *Katherine Anne Swann* - 9/7  
**Jean Sykora**, son *Mark* - 9/27  
**Renee Teufel**, son *Gregory* - 9/24  
**Emil & Joy Tkachick**, son *David L. Tkachick* - 9/5  
**Barbara Tuller**, son *Charles* - 9/24  
**Weldon & Marie Tyson**, son *Ronald C. Stewart* - 9/21  
**Sharon Venezia**, son *Justin Negron* - 9/17  
**Muriel Wilson**, son *John F. Shaffer* - 9/25  
**Gisela Witte**, son *Bruce G. Edlund* - 9/22

**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

**Marlene & Donald Bieber**, son *Nathan A. Bieber* 9/11  
**Lois Bishop**, daughter *Kaitlyn Bishop* 9/26  
**John & Joyce Bryant**, son *John Russell Bryant* 9/24  
**Robyn Buseman**, daughter *Maya Buseman-Williams* 9/30  
**Scott & Gail Campbell**, daughter *Chelsea* 9/1  
**Pattie Cook**, sister *Jacqueline Raimondi* 9/11  
**Judy & William Cosgrove**, son *Michael Cosgrove* 9/4  
**Reno & Bonnie Crescimone**, son *Jonathan* 9/5  
**Agnes & Alex Crisanti, Jr.**, son *John Crisanti* 9/6  
**Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr.**, son *G. Robert Daily, Jr.* 9/19

**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS — continued**

Louis Dardozi, grandson *Evan* 9/29  
Catherine Dardozi, grandson *Evan Schmidt* 9/29  
Robert Dilbeck, wife *Dolores Dilbeck* 9/4  
Michelle G. Doll, son *Justin* 9/1  
Julie & Joe Fabrizio, brother *John Russel Bryant* 9/24  
Sharon & Francis Gailey, son *Francis E. Gailey, III* 9/28  
Molly Gehring, son *Daniel* 9/12  
Rhonda and Frank Gomez, son *Frank Jr.* 9/30  
Charles and Cindy Hafner, daughter *Carolyn Hafner* 9/22  
Jeanne R Helmers, sister *Mary Ann Helmers Kemme* 9/16  
Gail & Calvert G. Hess, Jr., son *Calvert G Hess, III* 9/4  
Walt & Adele Higgins, son/stepson *Brian* 9/22  
Bill & Evi Hill, daughter *Jennifer Hill* 9/30  
Michelle Hillstrom, daughter *Jen* 9/26  
Jacob & Rachel Himmelstein, son *Benjamin Himmelstein* 9/25  
Lesley Jones, son *Christopher* 9/14  
Gwen & Dennis Kearns, son *Dennis J. Kearns, Jr.* 9/18  
Tobie & Herman Kessler, daughter *Beth Kessler Waasdorp* 9/16  
Suellen & Stephen King, daughter *Danelle Rossi* 9/18  
Marcia Kling, son *CJ* 9/20  
Becky & Alan Logsdon, son *Nathaniel Logsdon* 9/25  
Elaine & James Madden, son *Andrew Madden* 9/26  
Frank & Bernadette McAllister, son *Christopher J. McAllister* 9/4  
Jacqueline McDonald, daughter *Jacqueline Raimondi* 9/11  
Linda & Jim McGrath, son *Paul Drew McGrath* 9/26  
Alfred J. & Joan Michini, son *Adam Jonah Michini* 9/28  
Betty & Dick Miller, son *Raymond "Jim"* 9/1  
Jeffrey & Christine Miller, daughter *Teresa Leanne Miller* 9/12  
Kimberly Kearns Minetola, brother *Dennis Kearns, Jr.* 9/18  
Barbara & Jeff Norris, son *Greg* 9/21  
Marianne & William O'Connor, daughter *Kelly Ann O'Connor* 9/17  
Winnie & James O'Halloran, son *Thomas M. O'Halloran* 9/1  
Mary O'Halloran, brother *Thomas M. O'Halloran* 9/1  
Elizabeth Orbann, daughter *Linda Elizabeth Johnson* 9/15  
Linda & Andrew Peoples, Jr., son *Brian A. Peoples* 9/7  
Mary & Salvatore Perna, grandson *Nathan A. Bieber* 9/11  
Diane Perrymore, son *Keith* 9/8  
Mary Lou Piepenbrink-Riordan, daughter *Nancy Ann Piepenbrink* 9/18  
Robert & Nancy Ricciardi, daughter *Jessica Lee Ricciardi* 9/23  
Ruth Richardson, grandson *Nicholas Richardson* 9/1  
Gina & Brian Richardson, son *Nicholas Richardson* 9/1  
Jacqueline Rider, daughter *Michelle Connelly* 9/24

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS continued

Margaret Rodalewicz, son *Shane Wooley* 9/23  
Donald & Mary Rose, daughter *Marjorie Rose-Cotteta* 9/30  
Joan Santillo, daughter *Cathy Gambone* 9/9  
son *Brian Gambone* 9/8  
Margaret & Tom Saunders, daughter *Katie* 9/27  
Michelle & Bill Schmidt, son *Evan Peter Schmidt* 9/29  
Cathy Seehuetter, daughter *Nina Seehuetter* 9/24  
Carroll & Christine Siquett, daughter *Tammy Marie Siquett* 9/24  
Helen Smith, son *Patrick Kenneth "Kenny" Smith* 9/5  
Walter & Irene Stolarczyk, daughter *Barbara Stolarczyk* 9/11  
Emil & Joy Tkachick, son *David L. Tkachick* 9/11  
Sharon Venezia, son *Justin Negron* 9/9  
Shelly Wagner, son *Andrew Wagner* 9/29  
Bethany & Alvin Walton, brother/son *A.J.* 9/17  
Shirley Weir, daughter *Lee Ann Weir Beckmann* 9/12  
Elinor Wenk, son *Raymond Wenk, Jr.* 9/24

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GONE TOO SOON

Sometimes we enjoy a time  
Of beauty and quiet.  
Maybe it is a day, or an hour,  
Or just one perfect moment.

Only to be gone too soon.

Warm sunny day spent with our children  
Sitting and chatting,  
Playing cards or reading,  
Creates a peaceful day.

Only to be gone too soon.

A few hours or an afternoon  
Enjoying a playground  
Or a walk on the beach,  
Forms lasting relationships.

Only to be gone too soon.

We love our children  
Our souls are one.  
We feel we will spend time with them forever  
Never realizing that our children are,

Only to be gone too soon.

Our children are like beautiful sunsets  
Remaining in our memories forever,  
They live with us awhile,  
And love us.

Only to be gone too soon.

*Judith Friedman*  
To honor her daughter, *Cindy* (35)

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON HEALING, BUT LEAVING A RESIDUE**

Sometimes we have to do a lot of reflecting to know where we are in our grief. It is good to look back where we have been. I can well remember no matter how bright the sun would shine, the darkness always remained. It was difficult to envision that one day, we would speak of Douglas and the fond memories would overshadow the pain. It takes time to accept that our life will never be the same again. It will be different, and we have to learn to live with the change. It takes a lot of courage to want a full life again. In the beginning it is easier to just take one day at a time, and not even think of the future. Losing our child or sibling can take the spark out of any plans we may have had. We are numb, and can not feel the joy we once knew.

It takes a long time to just get through a day. After much talking about our loss, and dealing with our grief, we begin to think of a tomorrow. Sometimes we become very impatient with our progress. Perhaps one of the best ways of measuring it is to take a look as to how we view others. We can feel progress when we forgive others for painful comments, made out of ignorance. We know we are going in the right direction, when we accept how others grieve, and know it is the best way for them.

We will always have sensitive areas that bring back old memories. Birthdays and anniversaries are particularly difficult, for the birthday iterates that they can not grow any older, and enjoy the next stages of their life. The anniversary puts more time between our loved one and us. Family events and holidays pull at our heart strings, for they are no longer there to make the gathering complete. It magnifies the missing link. I find it very difficult to see Doug's friends with their families, for I know he did not get to experience this happy and mature segment of life. We will always have a residue of events that remind us of things our children, or siblings, can no longer be a part of. But after many years the pain is no longer gut-wrenching, but it does sometimes cause us to stop and miss what we no longer have. I don't think we would want this missing to go away completely. It is much more brief and not nearly so intense. We can concentrate on other things in life, and still remember our child or sibling. Eventually we can learn to laugh again, and even appreciate a sunrise or sunset, and know it was put there for us.

One of the most positive things we do is to reach out to others, to help to ease another's pain. Giving of ourselves brings much healing. It helps us to realize how far we have come, when we can touch the lives of the newly bereaved. We encourage you to phone one another, and know the gift of love brought about through sharing your pain.

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

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**WHY BUTTERFLIES?**

Since the early centuries of the Christian Church, the butterfly has symbolized the resurrection and life after death. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and more free existence.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since children are intuitive, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message.

TCF has adopted the butterfly as one of their symbols, a sign of hope to us that our children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom.

- *author unknown*

## HOW DOES A GRIEVING KID DEAL WITH SCHOOL?

Going back to school is always tough, but when there has been a death in your family, it's really hard. You wonder how your friends will treat you. You don't think you can concentrate or listen very well because your mind feels all confused. You worry how the rest of your family will be without you around. You feel so different, and school is sure to be just the same!

Sometimes kids and teachers don't know what to say, so they say something dumb or don't say anything at all. Some days it can seem almost impossible to keep from crying in front of people. Everyone thinks you should be "over it" right away.

Dana (age 12): "Fortunately the kids treated me very considerately. But the teacher wasn't as nice. She thought I was using my father's death to make her go easy on me. But as all of us know, That's not how it is. We can't help it if we get upset. But some people don't understand."

School can be very hard for a kid who is grieving the death of a loved one. Some things that might help a little are: Talk with your teacher about what you want the class to know about the death and who should tell them. Make a plan with your teacher so you can leave the room if you start feeling very upset. Try to find a safe quiet place to go: the library, the nurse's office, etc. If people ask you questions that you don't want to answer, say something like; "I'd rather not talk about that right now." Try to find at least one person who you feel comfortable talking to when you want to talk. Or start to write your thoughts in a journal...

If you are bothered by what other kids say, try to talk to them and get them to understand that you need their support. If that doesn't work, talk with your teacher or a parent. If you think that your teacher doesn't understand, do your best to talk with her, and bring in an understanding adult to help if necessary.

To keep up with your homework, maybe you could study with a friend or get an older student to help you, or ask your teacher for some extra time. As long as you are really trying, that's all anyone should ask of you.

As you go through the school year there will be some good days and some tough ones. Don't be upset with yourself if you don't do as well as usual on grades, or you have trouble getting along with your same old friends. Be patient with yourself, because you want everyone to do the same for you.

Grief is a big long process that changes people, and change can be tough. But change can bring good things too. Perhaps you will find yourself appreciating the little things more, or being kinder to people, or wanting to make the most of your time, or developing an ability to express yourself creatively. These are things you don't normally learn in school, but these are things you learn from living.

*Dana Ward, Erin Helmer & Barb Coe*

**“AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL”**

Fred’s courage still lives on  
even though he could not,  
He suffered greatly  
but still never gave up trying,  
His love for life should inspire us all.

I know that he is in a better place  
where he can accomplish his dream,  
Which is to drive that Mustang **“ONE LAST TIME”**

Love, **Carly**

He was the most liked person  
I’ve ever known,  
Every one that knew him loved him.  
Even though I will miss him greatly

Submitted by, **Fred Michini, Sr.** For his son,  
**Fred Michini, II, (23)**  
**TCF - Valley Forge, PA**

**GRIEF**

There is no right way.  
There is no wrong way.  
I must learn to do it my way  
and, you my friend,  
must learn to do it your way.  
**Tina Goodale, TCFValley Forge, PA**

Memory is a form of immortality.  
Those you remember never die.  
They continue to walk and talk with you.  
Their influence is with you always.  
**Wilfred A. Peterson**  
**TCF, Toms River, NJ**

**THE SUMMER OF 2005**

My dear little sweet boy, I watched you grow up, and your life was baseball. And you were so great and I was so proud. And then you turned 18 and still played baseball. You helped the team win the championship that year, and everybody loved you and still do.

And then 5 months later we got the worst phone call. They said that my baby was dead. Oh how I died too. I will never be the same person I was before because you are gone. I wake up in the morning; the first thing on my mind is you. I go to bed, the last thing on my mind is you. Oh how I miss those baseball games. I just all together miss you. You will always be in my heart, until we are together again.

All my love Bobby  
Love always, - Mom-  
**Linda Spinks**, mother of **Robert Spinks (18)**  
TCF - Valley Forge, PA

What we have once enjoyed we can never lose.  
All that we love deeply becomes part of us.  
**Helen Keller**

When your mind cannot find an answer,  
open your heart and ask for peace.  
**Sasha Wagner**

Please don’t ask me to keep in step - -  
It’s hard enough just to stay in line!  
**TCF, Pikes Peak, CO**

Yesterday is experience - Tomorrow is hope -  
Today is getting from one to the other as  
best you can. **Author Unknown**

**ONE HAND ON THE STARS**

How do we count the lives they touched,  
The light they shed for years?  
How do we see the difference they made  
When we're looking through our tears?

How do we know the things that are  
That never should have been  
Without their valiant hearts that dared  
To fight, and fight again?

How do we know what flowers will bloom  
From seeds of yesterday,  
What songs are sung and dreams begun  
Because they passed this way?

How do we measure the shining place  
That time can never pale  
In all the hearts that cheered them on  
And willed them to prevail?

How did their spirit soar beyond  
The suffering and the scars  
To live with one hand clutching hope  
And the other on the stars?

We may not know what they left behind  
On the difficult path they trod...  
But we know this much; their life's brief touch  
Was from the hand of God.

*- Author Unknown*

We thought of you with love today  
But that is nothing new.  
We thought about you yesterday  
And days before that too.

We think of you in silence  
We often speak your name.  
All we have now are memories  
And your picture in a frame.

Your memory is our keepsake  
With which we will never part.  
God has you in his keeping  
We have you in our heart.

In life we loved you dearly.  
In death we love you still.  
In our hearts you hold a place  
No one can ever fill.

It broke our hearts to lose you  
But you didn't go alone.  
For a part of us went with you  
The day God took you home.

*- Author Unknown*

**In prosperity, our friends know us;  
in adversity, we know our friends.**  
*John Churton Collins*

**GRIEF IS LIKE A RIVER**

My grief is like a river  
I have to let it flow,  
But I myself determine  
Just where the banks will go.  
Some days the current takes me  
In waves of guilt and pain,  
But there are always quiet pools  
Where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger  
My faith seems faint indeed  
But there are other swimmers  
Who know that what I need  
Are loving hands to hold me  
When the waters are too swift,  
And someone kind to listen  
When I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is like a process  
Of relinquishing the past.  
By swimming in Hope's channel,  
I'll reach the shore at last.

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