



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## APRIL 2017

### 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 Founders 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

April 6 General Sharing

May 4 General Sharing

July 28-30 40th TCF National Conference  
"Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope"  
Orlando, Florida.

Conference Registration see page 3 & 4  
Conference Hotel Reservation see page 2

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  
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#### Love Gift Acknowledgements

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#### 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**

**Kisha Byrd**, son *William* (26)

We welcome our newly bereaved friends, sorry for the cause that brings you. We have all 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.

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**REFRESHMENTS**

From the **TCF Valley Forge Chapter** in loving memory of *all the children & siblings*

**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.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Catherine Dardozzi** in loving memory of my son, *James* on his birthday 3/7.

**Marco & Patricia Giubilato** in loving memory of our daughter, *Robin Giubilato Zarelli* on her birthday, March 18.

**Jack & Freda Gross** in memory of our precious daughter, *Linda Joy Gross*, on her birthday 12/28, and her angel anniversary 2/25.

**Rachel Himmelstein** in loving memory of my son, **Benjamin Himmelstein**

**Jo Anne Sands** in loving memory of my son, *Tyler Sands* to be used for funding the newsletter.

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**TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE HOTEL REGISTRATION**

Conference Hotel Registration should be made directly to the Hotel.

Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek  
14100 Bonnet Creek Resort Lane  
Orlando, Florida 32821  
Phone: 1-407-597-3600

At this point the only rooms available are  
Two Queens or a King size. The price is  
\$145 plus 12% tax for either of these choices.

**Phyllis and Gary Adler Helping with Suicide**

They have been working to find a representative to help them obtain a bill for people suffering from depression. They finally were able to find a congressman, from Delaware County and with his help since 2013 was able to do so. In October 2016, they were invited to Harrisburg to see Governor Tom Wolfe sign the bill. The bill is a suicide prevention bill by Bill Adolf and was named the "Matt Adler Suicide Prevention Bill or House Bill 64", which was passed in 2016. This bill gives 18 months for a therapist dealing with a depressed person with suicide indications to obtain training for 1 hour of CEU's to focus on suicide prevention in order to help them.

Phyllis and Gary Adler had a son, Matt, who was married and had 2 children, that died from suicide. It was the mission of Matt's wife and her encouragement to her in-laws to try to get this subject noticed in areas of the country. Our thanks to Phyllis and Gary.



40<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM  
 PO Box 3696 • Oak Brook, IL • 60522-3696  
 877.969.0010 • 630.990.0246 fax

Online registration available at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Please return this form complete, along with your check (*made payable to TCF*) or credit card information for the full amount to the above address.

CONFERENCE REGISTRANTS

Person 1 Name _____	Circle code(s) as appropriate BP CS TS AS G R F WP PR RC CL RC SC	First time at a TCF Conference? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Person 2 Name _____	BP CS TS AS G R F WP PR RC CL RC SC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Person 3 Name _____	BP CS TS AS G R F WP PR RC CL RC SC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Person 4 Name _____	BP CS TS AS G R F WP PR RC CL RC SC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

BP-Bereaved Parent, CS-Child Sibling (9-12), TS-Teen Sibling (13-17), AS-Adult Sibling (18+), G-Grandparent, R-Relative, F-Friend, WP-Workshop Presenter, PR-Professional, RC-Regional Coordinator, CL-Chapter Leader, NE-Newsletter Editor, SC-Steering Committee

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please provide a separate registration form for registrants not residing at the same address. Make additional copies of this form.)*

Please fill in below the name(s) of your deceased child(ren), sibling(s), or grandchild(ren), birth and death dates, and cause of death.

Child's Full Name <small>(Also note the first name you want on nametag, if different)</small>	Date of Birth <small>(Mo/Day/Yr)</small>	Date of Death <small>(Mo/Day/Yr)</small>	Cause of Death
_____	____/____/____	____/____/____	_____
_____	____/____/____	____/____/____	_____
_____	____/____/____	____/____/____	_____
_____	____/____/____	____/____/____	_____

*(If more space is needed, please attach a separate page.)*

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

Adult Registration (ages 18 +) \$95.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child Registration (ages 9-17) \$45.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Full-Time College Student/Active Military (student ID/Military ID required at check-in) \$45.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 A. Total Registration Fees \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CONFERENCE MEALS

Friday Afternoon Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ Totals Meals x \$39.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Saturday Evening Dinner \_\_\_\_\_ Totals Meals x \$59.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. Total Conference Meals \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTE:** Persons wishing to eat at the Conference meals must be registered for the Conference. Sorry, no exceptions. As reservations for meals are made in advance, no meals may be purchased on-site.

SIBLINGS

Sibling Attendee \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt Size YS YM YL S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL

Sibling Attendee \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt Size YS YM YL S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL

Friday Sibling Event: Denim and Diamonds \_\_\_\_\_ Total Attending x \$30.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

C. Total Special Sibling Event \$ \_\_\_\_\_

WALK TO REMEMBER

Walk to Remember \_\_\_\_\_ Total Attending x \$25.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Each Participant MUST sign the waiver.

In consideration of being accepted as a participant in the The Compassionate Friends Inc., Walk to Remember (WTR), I hereby affirm, acknowledge, and agree to the following: (1) That I assume all responsibility for any and all damages to, or theft of, my personal property or any bodily injury (including death) that may occur to me, and further, I assume responsibility for property damage and bodily injury (including death) that I may cause to others, in each case arising or resulting from, incidental to, or as a consequence of, my participation in the WTR; (2) That I, for myself, my heirs, my executors and administrators, release and hold harmless from and waive all claims, damages, and rights of action, present or future, whether the same be known or unknown, anticipated or unanticipated, foreseen or unforeseen, arising or resulting from, incident to or as a consequence of, my participation in the WTR, which I may now or hereafter have against The Compassionate Friends, Inc., any business or companies along the route and any and all sponsors and volunteers for said event, and the respective directors, employees, and agents of all of the foregoing; (3) That I grant the permission for use of my name and/or picture in any broadcast, photograph, video, or other account of the WTR; and (4) That I am aware of the physical demands and hazards of participating in a two-mile walking event such as the WTR.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Shirt Size (circle one): YS YM YL S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent or guardian if under 18)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Shirt Size (circle one): YS YM YL S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent or guardian if under 18)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Shirt Size (circle one): YS YM YL S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent or guardian if under 18)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Shirt Size (circle one): YS YM YL S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent or guardian if under 18)

D. Total Walk to Remember \$ \_\_\_\_\_

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

A. Total Registration Fees \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. Total Conference Meals \$ \_\_\_\_\_

C. Total Special Sibling Event \$ \_\_\_\_\_

D. Total Walk to Remember \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL DUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Check  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  American Express

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Registration ends July 7, 2017. After that date, attendees must register on-site. There will be no refunds after July 7, 2017. Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel.

**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.**

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

- Leslie Brown, son *Scott* 4/3**
- Ellen & James Burbano, son *Eric* 4/19**
- Gina Cappelli, son *Dan Foley* 4/20**
- Phyllis & James Casey, son *Jim "Jimmer" Casey* 4/18**
- David Castle, best friend *Eric* 4/19**
- Linda DiPasquale, son *Thomas* 4/26**
- Janie Ebersole, daughter *Ashley Sankus* 4/19**
- Ginny Ebert, son *Jason* 4/17**
- Scott & Charlene Fazekas, son *Eric Scott Fazekas* 4/25**
- Maureen & Jim Fleagle, son *Brian* 4/20**
- Carol Fritz, daughter *Kate Pawlowski* 4/3**
- Joe & Katie Glinski, son *Joey* 4/10**
- Stephanie Grier, son *John "JD" Grier* 4/15**
- Nancy & Gerald Hall, son *Douglas Byron Hall* 4/15**
- Kristen Hallman, brother *Joey* 4/10**
- Othell & William Heaney, son *Roger Heaney* 4/17**
- Jeanne R Helmers, daughter *Betsy Helmers* 4/7**
- Cynthia Hornyak, daughter *Meredith* 4/1**
- John Horulko, son *Daniel* 4/6**
- Monica Horulko, son *Daniel* 4/6**
- Robert Huss, son *Daniel* 4/18**
- Dennis & Lois Ianovale, son *Dennis* 4/18**
- Carl and Dorothy Johnson-Speight, daughter *Carlana Speight* 4/6**
- Millie Jones, grandson *Shawn Dian* 4/18**
- Roxanne Kamilatos, daughter *Dina* 4/29**
- Susan Kelleher, son *Jake* 4/24**
- Janet & Dave Keller, granddaughter *Elily Lou Miller* 4/4**
- Karen Lapera, son *Michael* 4/3**
- Bob & Laura Latshaw, son *Scott* 4/22**
- Karen & Francis Legieko, son *John Francis Legieko* 4/8**
- Susan & Richard Leoni /Cutler, son *Kevin* 4/3**
- Lynne & John Malloy, son *David Gross* 4/13**
- Betty Manzi, grandson *Ronnie T. Seal, Jr.* 4/17**
- Elaine Marino, son *Mark Joseph Marino* 4/20**

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS continued**

**Michelle Mazzio, son *Brendan Mazzio* 4/18**  
**Robert & Marjorie Meckley, son *Douglas Meckley* 4/25**  
**Fran Miller, son *Christian* 4/7**  
**Bob & Janet Milnazik, daughter *Kim* 4/24**  
**Sheila & Mike Mullin, son *Matthew* 4/10**  
**Ashlie Nawrocki, sister *Chereen* 4/3**  
**Rosemary Peterson, son *Donald R. Peterson* 4/18**  
**Thomas & Mary Jane Poore, son *Bradley Poore* 4/25**  
**Joe & Kim Pratt, son *Paul* 4/7**  
**Thelma Rosen, son *Thomas Grisafi* 4/24**  
**Marie Shippen, son *Michael Morgan* 4/19**  
**Art & Carol Silverman, daughter *Cheryl Beth Silverman* 4/23**  
**Barry & Sigrid Snow, son *Robert Snow* 4/28**  
**son *Kevin Snow* 4/19**  
**James & Betty Treichler, son *James Treichler Jr.* 4/21**  
**Ann VanLandingham, son *Eric VanLandingham* 4/21**  
**Marissa Wadsworth, son *TJ Wadsworth* 4/8**  
**Deb Walter, son *Evan* 4/18**  
**Ellen & Dale Weaver, son *Jeffrey M. Weaver* 4/12**  
**Linda Weaver, daughter *Krista "Binky" Weaver* 4/29**  
**Jackie Wesley, daughter *Teresa Ellen Wesley Hough* 4/25**  
**Terry & Bob Wolfe, son and stepson *Steven Moyer* 4/22**  
**Joan Zdun, son *Erick George* 4/14**

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**

**George & Anne Beerley, daughter *Jennifer Beerley* - 4/19**  
**Leslie Brown, son *Scott* - 4/4**  
**Diana Clark, grandson *Alexander* - 4/5**  
**Judy & William Cosgrove, son *Michael Cosgrove* - 4/17**  
**Anton & Maureen DeMaioribus, daughter *Ann DeMaioribus* - 4/23**  
**Ed & Sue Duffy, son *Peter* - 4/11**  
**Nancy & David Dykty, brother *Jim Sutton* - 4/16**  
**Rhonda and Frank Gomez, brother *Paul* - 4/26**  
**Joanne Haley, son *Douglas Haley* - 4/3**  
**Nancy Hartzell, son *Adam* - 4/8**  
**Walt & Adele Higgins, son/stepson *Brian* - 4/17**  
**Sharon Hirst, son *Tom* - 4/16**  
**Susan Kelleher, son *Jake* - 4/14**  
**Janet & Dave Keller, granddaughter *Elily Lou Miller* - 4/4**  
**Joan Kellett, son *Daniel Thomas Kellett* - 4/29**

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED**

**Lynn Kivlen**, son **Brien Kivlen** - 4/26  
**Terry Kozlewski**, son **Frankie** - 4/1  
**Elaine Marino**, son **Mark Joseph Marino** - 4/21  
                   'daughter in law' **Lisa Marino** - 4/12  
**Jennifer McGowan Clark**, brother **Joseph McGowan** - 4/15  
**Susan McKelvey**, son **John** - 4/23  
**Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy**, daughter **Marian Mountjoy** - 4/16  
**John Mscisz**, grandson **Liam John Williamson** - 4/6  
**Mary Mulholland**, son **Joseph McGowan** - 4/15  
**Sheila & Mike Mullin**, son **Matthew** - 4/25  
**Barbara & Jeff Norris**, son **Greg** - 4/1  
**Terri Pfeiffer**, son **Matthew** - 4/20  
**Maureen & David Rich**, daughter **Mallory Kirby Rich** - 4/26  
**Harry & Carol Schultz**, son **Brian Andrew Schultz** - 4/18  
**Joy Conard Settles**, son **R. Gary Korn** - 4/30  
**Jeffrey Smith**, son **Jacob Smith** - 4/5  
**Barry & Sigrid Snow**, son **Robert Snow** - 4/28  
**Edward & Mary Stimson**, son **Keith Stimson** - 4/7  
**Dave & Lynn Strange**, son **Bradley** - 4/21  
**Fred & Irene Sutton**, son **Jim Sutton** - 4/16  
**Tracey Sutton-Vitabile**, brother **Jim Sutton** - 4/16  
**Allan Thomas**, wife **Zinta Thomas** - 4/23  
**Harry & Lynne Urian**, son **Mike** - 4/22  
**Joan & Ed Young**, son **Jed Young** - 4/2  
**Joan Zdun**, son **Erick George** - 4/4

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**A MOMENT OF HELP**

After I lost my son Nino to a drowning accident, a young scientist walked into my office at Denver University. He was always extremely detached in his interactions with people, so I was not surprised that he asked almost casually whether I was feeling better.

I could not answer his question, because I had already started to cry. "Would you rather not have had a son at all?" he wanted to know. I shook my head and cried harder.

He handed me his handkerchief and said firmly, "I suppose you need to cry yourself well." And without even a hint of emotion, he sat down facing me.

In the presence of so much detachment, I managed to recover my "composure." But the visitor took my hand and held it silently, until I began to cry again. Then he said, "Keep crying. You are not well yet."

I will not forget this encounter. It told me two things when I very much needed to hear them. First; the expression of grief is necessary. And second; after a great sorrow, we can expect - in time - to be "well" again.

*Sascha Wagner*

## SHARED THOUGHTS ON HOW DEATH CHANGES OUR WORLD

Sometimes grief is more comfortable when we can hide out in the winter. It seems to be a more acceptable season to be lethargic, low-spirited, and less productive. Now, that the dormant plants are popping up, preparing for their glorious showing, it can add to our depression. We can not match the energy, proudness, or courage the blossoms display as they return to show off their beauty. We often feel if anything is going to return to life again, it should be our child or sibling. Spring can cause resentment, when there are no signs of our loved ones returning to life.

For those of us who believe in eternal life, Easter offers much hope, and is paramount in accepting the death of our child or sibling. But, that does not erase our missing, yearning, anger, and all those human emotions we experience when the separation of our child or sibling takes place. It is very difficult when they precede us in death. Most of us don't even try to understand or find reason in it.

Our world changed when that special loved one entered our lives, they became part of our reason for living. When they left, our world became shattered. Time to grieve and lament over our loss is important. Time and distance alone doesn't heal. As painful as it is, we need to remember their living, loving, and impressions they left on the world, and particularly on us. Facing the profound sadness that we have to live without our child seems an impossible task, and to expect to enjoy life again is out of our realm of thinking.

Grief seems to intensify everything we are. This can cause our anger, impatience and emotions to get in our way of daily living. It can erode our trust and destroy our self-esteem. It is impossible for us to be at our best for communicating with those around us. Particularly, when we appear outwardly in control, and give a false impression to those trying to help us.

It takes a lot of healing to become functional again. Healing is loving again, both ourselves and others. There are those who can help us get through our tragedy, but it needs to be someone who can share our sorrow, not those we have to shelter from our pain. It is very important that we express our gratitude for their concern, so they know what is helpful to us.

For those fresh in their grief, barely getting through each day, it is impossible to envision ever reinvesting in life again. I know, for I have been there. But the pain does soften, and one day, you too, will be glad there is a tomorrow. Life will never be the same, but it can be productive, rewarding, and I hope you will one day look to your future with anticipation for what it holds for you. But, for now, my thoughts and prayers are with you as you struggle with your pain.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel*, TCF Valley Forge

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**A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take it and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away.**

*Diana Carik*



**EVERYTHING IS A FIRST**

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me -- NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere -- love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say -- nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer; "I am mad, Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong"

*Lisa Ann Jones,*  
Avoca, PA

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*Tears don't erase all the hurt,  
Tears don't bring the dead to life,  
But tears do help to ease the pain.*

*Phillip W. Williams*

**A LETTER TO MY BROTHER**

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer.

How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you, I think of you everyday and feel you in my heart always.

Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness.

I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

*Robin Holeman*  
Tuscaloosa, AL TCF

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**The depth of your sorrow diminishes slowly and, at times, imperceptibly. Your recovery is not an act of disloyalty to the one who has died. Nor is it achieved by forgetting the past. Try to strike a delicate balance between a yesterday that should be remembered and a tomorrow that must be created.**

*Author Unknown*

Someone on reddit wrote the following heartfelt plea online.

**“My friend just died. I don’t know what to do.”**

A lot of people responded. Then there is one old guy’s incredible comment that stood out from the rest that might just change the way we approach life and death.

“Alright here goes. I’m old. What that means is that I’ve survived (so far) and a lot of people I’ve known and loved did not. I’ve lost friends, best friends, acquaintances, co-workers, grandparents, mom, relatives, teachers, mentors, students, neighbors, and a host of other folks. I have no children, and I can’t imagine the pain it must be to lose a child. But her is my two cents.

I wish I could say you get used to people dying. I never did. I don’t want to. It tears a hole through me whenever somebody I love dies, no matter the circumstances. But I don’t want it to “not matter”. I don’t want it to be something that just passes. My scars are a testament to the love and the relationship that I had for and with that person. And if the scar is deep, so was the love. So be it. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are a testament that I can love deeply and live deeply and be cut, or even gouged, and that I can heal and continue to live and continue to love. And the scar tissue is stronger than the original flesh ever was. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are only ugly to people who can’t see.

As for grief, you’ll find it comes in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you’re drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everthing floating around you reminds you of the beauty and magnificence of the ship that was, and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage and you hang on for a while. Maybe it’s some physical thing. Maybe it’s a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it’s a person who is also floating. For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive.

In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don’t even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks, maybe months, you’ll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come, they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function. You never know what’s going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee, it can be just about anything...and the wave come crashing. But in between waves, there is life.

Somewhere down the line, and it’s different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come, they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas, or landing at O’Hare. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you’ll come out.

“Take it from an old guy. The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don’t really want them to. But you learn that you’ll survive them. And other waves will come. And you will survive them too. If you’re lucky, you will have lots of scars from lots of loves. And lots of shipwrecks.”

*Author Unknown*

## LOSING A CHILD

Do you want to know what it is like to lose a child?  
Sit down, let's talk, this could take quite a while.  
At first you are in shock, and then you are in denial.  
And pretty soon reality puts your emotions on trial.  
You lose so much, but the first you lose is your smile.  
To others you seem okay, but you really are not.  
The grief that you feel is only the start  
Because your child now lives only in your heart  
You treasure each picture that is all you have got  
You cling to memories that you thought you forgot  
You know your life will never again be the same.  
You pretend things are okay, and you hide your pain.  
You just want someone to mention his name.  
So you can imagine that he is beside you again.  
Sometimes you feel like you are going insane  
You still feel all alone, even when in a crowd.  
Others can speak of their children of whom they are proud,  
But to talk about your child, somehow isn't allowed  
So your child's memories are hidden under griefs cloud  
You just want to mention his name out loud.  
With each day you are reminded of all you have lost.  
And how much your loss has ultimately cost  
Your child's hopes and dreams have been tossed  
So before you judge, keep your fingers crossed  
That you never know the pain of a child's loss.  
You hold back tears, because they would be a stream  
You cry every day, but you really want to scream.  
"My child mattered, how can people be so mean?"  
You pray for a visit, or vision in the form of a dream  
So before you tell me some over used silly cliche'  
Like "He is in a better place" or "things are better this way"  
Think about what you are about to say  
I really mean it when I tell you, that I hope and pray  
That you never know how I feel each and every day.

Taken from **Brandywine Hundred Chapter Newsletter**

*Author Unknown*



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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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