

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Inside Valley Forge

Meetings are on the first Thursday of every month, at 7:45 PM (ending at 9:30 PM). We meet at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Founders Hall, Valley Forge Road and Henderson Rds., King of Prussia, PA.

For info call Rhonda (484) 919-0820

April 2023

Chapter Leader:

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

Email: rhonda@tcfvalleyforge.org

Newsletter Publisher:

Rhonda Gomez

Love Gift Acknowledgements:

Connie Nolan

Treasurer: Joe Purifico

Librarian: Carole Bailey

National Headquarters

48660 Pontiac Trail

3930808

Wixom, MI 48393

Email: Compassionatefriends.org

Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of Interest.

Meeting - 4/6/2023

Next Meeting - 5/4/2023

The 46th Annual Conference will be July 7-9 2023 at Denver, Colorado. You can save \$65.00 if you register today. You can register as soon possible on the website, at The Compassionate Friends.



We encourage newsletter writings from our members. You may also submit articles written by others. Please include the author of all articles submitted. The cut off date for newsletter entries is the 15th of the preceding month. Articles should be sent to the newsletter editor.

There are no dues or fees to belong to the Compassionate Friends, or to receive our newsletter. Your tax deductible donations (which we call love gifts) given in memory of your loved one enables us to defray the cost of the chapter expenses, particularly the newsletter, meetings and our outreach to the 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 Rhonda Gomez

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 FRIENDS

We welcome our newly bereaved friends, sorry for the cause that brings you. We all have been in the depths of despair, and offer unconditional love and understanding to all of you, it sometimes takes several meetings to feel the full benefit of group sharing. We offer confidentiality, unconditional love and understanding to all of you.

Paul Shoenberger

REFRESHMENTS

Refreshments may be donated in memory of loved ones. Please call Rhonda (484) 919-0820 or you may sign the refreshment chart located on the refreshment table.

Susan Utain

LOVE GIFTS

PLEASE ASK

Someone asked me about you today,
 It's been so long since anyone has done that.
 It felt so good to talk about you
 ...to share my memories of you
 ...to simply say your name out loud.
 She asked me if I minded talking about what
 happened to you or would it be too painful to
 speak of it.
 I told her I think of it everyday and speaking about
 it helps me to release the tormented thoughts
 whirling around in my head.
 She said she never realized the pain would last this
 long
 She apologized for not asking sooner.
 I told her, "Thanks for asking."
 I don't know if it was curiosity or concern that
 made her ask, but I told her,
 Please do it again sometime soon."

Barbara Taylor Hudson, Cincinnati, OH

SILENT GRIEF

Grief is sometimes silent – like
 snowflakes falling on a dark winter's
 night – but never peaceful or serene or
 pretty like the pure white snow. When
 grief is silent, the tears seem to turn to ice,
 like the snowflakes, before they reach our
 eyes.

Grief is sometimes raging – like a
 monstrous thunderstorm – with all its fury
 and bolts of lightning striking our hearts
 at every angle. When grief is raging, the
 tears come in torrents, like the rain, and
 flood our soul.

Grief, whether it be silent or raging -
 hurts.

Verna Smith TCF, Ft. Worth, TX

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.

Anniversaries

Bill Padove & Jen Scaless - Zachary - son - 4/26
 Denis Nicholson Asselin & Judy - Nathaniel - son - 4/15
 George & Anne Beerley - Jennifer Beerley - daughter - 4/19
 Leslie Brown - Scott - son - 4/4
 Terry & Sam Capizzi - Sammy - son - 4/6
 Diana Clark - Alexander - grandson - 4/5
 Judy & William Cosgrove - Michael Cosgrove - son - 4/17
 Ed & Sue Duffy - Peter - son - 4/11
 Nancy & David Dykty - Jim Sutton - brother - 4/16
 Diane Goldberg - Sammy - nephew - 4/6
 Frank & Rhonda Gomez - Paul - brother - 4/26
 Joanne Haley - Douglas Haley - son - 4/3
 Nancy Hartzell - Adam - son - 4/8
 Mike & Lorie Henry - Blair - Granddaughter - 4/7
 Walt & Adele Higgins - Brian - son/stepson - 4/17
 Sigrid Hirschhorn - Samantha - daughter - 4/6
 Sharon Hirst - Tom - son - 4/16
 Janet & Dave Keller - Elily Lou Miller - granddaughter - 4/4
 Joan Kellett - Daniel Thomas Kellett - son - 4/29
 Lynn Kivlen - Brien Kivlen - son - 4/26
 Terry Kozlowski - Frankie - son - 4/1
 Elaine Marino - Mark Joseph Marino - son - 4/21 and Lisa Marino - daughter in-law - 4/12
 Jennifer McGowan Clark - Joseph McGowan - brother - 4/15
 Susan McKelvey - John - son - 4/23
 Sharmell & Chris McMurray - Ryan - son - 4/26
 Carol Meehan - William - husband - 4/21
 Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy - Marian Mountjoy - daughter - 4/16
 Crystal Moyer - 4/13
 John Mscisz - Liam John Williamson - grandson - 4/6
 Mary Mulholland - Joseph McGowan - son - 4/15
 Marian Mullahy - Matt - brother - 4/2
 Sheila & Mike Mullin - Matthew - son - 4/25
 Barbara & Jeff Norris - Greg - son - 4/1
 Dale Pearlstein - Jeffrey - son - 4/17
 Terri Pfeiffer - Matthew - son - 4/20
 Marcella Rice - Raymond Anthony - son - 4/15
 Maureen & David Rich - Mallory Kirby Rich - daughter - 4/26
 Harry & Carol Schultz - Brian Andrew Schultz - son - 4/18

Anniversaries - Cont'd

Joy Conard Settles - R. Gary Korn - son - 4/30
 Jeffrey Smith - Jacob Smith - son - 4/5
 Robert & Sigrid Snow - Barry Snow - son - 4/28
 Edward & Mary Stimson - Keith Stimson - son - 4/7
 Fred & Irene Sutton - Jim Sutton - son - 4/16
 Tracey Sutton-Vitabile - Jim Sutton - brother - 4/16
 Allan Thomas - Zinta Thomas - wife - 4/23
 Harry & Lynne Urian - Mike - son - 4/22
 Joan & Ed Young - Jed Young - son - 4/2

NOT GUILT, REGRET

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn't we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us. Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn't feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt - we feel regret.

**Kitty Sanders, Nashville, TN
 Survivors of Suicide Group**

THE SOUND OF PAIN

There's a sound that can only be heard by those with broken hearts;
 I believe it's the sound of God working, to mend that hurting part.
 We have all come to know what this pain can do;
 We've lost one we love, and learned agony we never knew.
 And it doesn't go away, not in a day, a month, or even two years,
 No matter where we are and no matter what we do, the pain is always near.
 So how do we continue to live when our lives have been turned upside down?
 How do we continue to smile and laugh – to see what lies beyond that sound?
 I don't have all the answers, and sometimes it seems I never will;
 All I know for sure is that the sound means God is with us still.
 Years will keep going by, but I know we shall never, never forget him;
 Our precious, beautiful Peter, whose life light will never ever dim.

Stacey Mastrocola Sullens
 For Her brother, **Peter A. Mastrocola, III**
June 7, 1975 — August 10, 1995

BIRTHDAYS

Barbie Blake - Chad Blake - son - 4/15
 Leslie Brown - Scott - son - 4/3
 Ellen & James Burbano - Eric - son - 4/19
 Gina Cappelli - Dan Foley - son - 4/20
 Phyllis & James Casey - Jim Jimmer Casey - son - 4/18
 Linda DiPasquale - Thomas - son - 4/26
 Janie Ebersole - Ashley Sankus - daughter - 4/19
 Ginny Ebert - Jason - son - 4/17
 Scott & Charlene Fazekas - Eric Scott Fazekas - Son - 4/25
 Maureen & Jim Fleagle - Brian - son - 4/20
 Stephanie Grier - John JD Grier - son - 4/15
 Nancy & Gerald Hall - Douglas Byron Hall - son - 4/15
 Kristen Hallman - Joey - brother - 4/10
 Othell & William Heaney - Roger Heaney - son - 4/17
 Jeanne R Helmers - Betsy Helmers - daughter - 4/7
 Cynthia Hornyak - Meredith - daughter - 4/1
 John Horulko - Daniel - son - 4/6
 Monica Horulko - Daniel - son - 4/6
 Margaret Huss - Daniel - son - 4/18
 Dennis & Lois Ianovala - Dennis - son - 4/18
 Carl and Dorothy Johnson-Speight - Carlena Speight - daughter - 4/6
 Roxanne Kamilatos - Dina - daughter - 4/29
 Janet & Dave Keller - Elily Lou Miller - granddaughter - 4/4
 Karen Lapera - Michael - son - 4/3
 Bob & Laura Latshaw - Scott - son - 4/22
 Susan & Richard Leoni/Cutler - Kevin - son - 4/3
 Betty Manzi - Ronnie T. Seal, Jr. - grandson - 4/17
 Elaine Marino - Mark Joseph Marino - son - 4/20
 Michelle Mazzio - Brendan Mazzio - son - 4/18
 Marjorie Meckley - Douglas Meckley - son - 4/25
 Bob & Janet Milnazik - Kim - daughter - 4/24
 Sheila & Mike Mullin - Matthew - son - 4/10
 Ashlie Nawrocki - Chereen - sister - 4/3
 Thomas & Mary Jane Poore - Bradley Poore - son - 4/25
 Joe & Kim Pratt - Paul - son - 4/7
 Marcella Rice - Raymond Anthony - son - 4/15 and Elise B. Rice - mother - 4/30
 Art & Carol Silverman - Cheryl Beth Silverman - daughter - 4/23
 Robert & Sigrid Snow - Barry Snow - son - 4/28 and Kevin Snow - son - 4/19
 Marissa Wadsworth - TJ Wadsworth - son - 4/8
 Deb Walter - Evan - son - 4/18
 Ellen & Dale Weaver - Jeffrey M. Weaver - son - 4/12
 Terry & Bob Wolfe - Steven Moyer - son and stepson - 4/22



SHARED THOUGHTS ON CARING FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Frequently the change of seasons adds to our depression. In the spring we look forward to the new plant life popping up all around us, bearing the fact its dormant life was only temporary. Often, when the evidence of spring does not lift our spirits as it has in the past, it iterates to the low level our depression has descended. We begin to question why our beloved children and siblings can not return to us. It can even make us feel we are less important than the nature we view.

When we are in the pit of depression, we can not see beyond our loss. It is important to have someone who will not immediately encourage us to see a doctor to prescribe anti-depressant drugs, so they can shift the responsibility of helping us to someone else. We need someone who is willing to listen to our rambling and repetitive talking about our loss, and will not pass judgment, even though they do not understand us. But hopefully, they will gently encourage positive thinking. We need to be accepted for what little we can give in return. When we lean on those who help us, it is essential to let them know we are doing the best we can in our very abnormal situation, and appreciate their allowing us to talk about that which is very healing in our grief.

Relationships with our family members are also important. Our remaining children need to know they are as equally important, and loved as much as our deceased. By putting our dead child on a high pedestal the remaining siblings can feel they are not as precious to us. It is best to be verbal, and not assume they understand our feelings. It is very normal for siblings to find more comfort in sharing with friends, or other siblings, rather than parents. It is too much for them to take on their parent's grief, and it hurts too much to see parents cry. They have had both the terrible loss of a sibling and a stable parent (as they knew them), and they too, are fragile. The marriage is under tremendous strain. Both are so overwhelmed with grief, and don't have the strength to support the other. It is like leaning on a bent twig. If we harbor little grievances, all sorts of held in resentment may surface, exploding into serious problems. Often sexual relations habits will change, and frequently in opposite directions. This takes communicating with one another. A spouse can not fully understand or solve their mate's grief, but we must accept each other's style of grieving. The accusation of blaming a mate for the death is probably the most damaging of all. If this continues to smolder, it may be helpful to include a third party, such as a psychiatrist, pastor, or some form of grief counselor. No bereaved parent can handle being accused of their child's death. We must attempt a resolution, we can't afford to lose our marriage along with our child. Sometimes an experienced grief specialist can help clear our vision. It is very normal to blame someone for the death. But, most often in a family situation, the death could not have been prevented, or the party being accused was acting to the best of their ability. We must forgive, for they also loved the deceased, and are hurting badly

Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge, PA

"Commitment to life and living for yourself, spouse and family; and commitment to your child's memory are four choices you must make. Each one requires perseverance and patience. Failure to make these commitments will extend the tragedy by increasing the loss."

Nancy Hogan

YOUR SMILE

Though your smile is gone forever,
and your hand I cannot touch,
I still have many memories
of the one I loved so much.

Your memory is my keepsake,
with which I'll never part.
God has you in his keeping,
I have you in my heart.

Sadly missed, but never forgotten.
Author Unknown

In memory of my son, ♥**Scott**♥ **Harrison**
submitted by **Mary Lou Harrison**

No matter how long we are on this
earth, the more we have to realize
that life finds us living every day
with the unanswered. Faith helps
us to live with the unresolved. Trust
helps us to accept...and go on with
the work of living. **Mark Connolly**

MY LUCK ANGEL SON, ANDREW MICHAEL MADDEN

You are with me often, my Luck Angel son.
I meet you in my dreams, so quickly you pass by
Sometimes like a camera moved, your image blurs
But I know it is you.
Are we playing hide and seek?
When I awake, my Luck Angel son, my eyes are misty.
We must be on vacation, a summer at the shore.
Have you been near the sea?
Did the spray from a wave touch us?
And then I realize it is a tear, because the dream is fading.
There are still days, my Luck Angel son
When I pull the walls of our home around me.
Curling up as in a memory quilt.
As if waiting for you to come, to smile and say,
I'm sorry, Mom, that I've been gone so long.
But most days, you give me strength, my Luck Angel son.
Making me grateful over these years,
for what I have and those I love.
And for the hope that we will meet again
In love's eternity, my Luck Angel son.
Elaine Madden, Miami Valley Ohio Chapter TCF

SPRING

Yellow-green willow branches
Stretch and breach the cerulean blue of sky.
Brilliant colors break the earth
And blow in the newfound warmth of spring.
And I sit with sweated shoulders
And drink in the day.
I need its reminders of the cycles of life.
Birth, then death, then life again.

This is my hope for you,
My precious,
And for me.
My heart was as cold and bitter
As winter
When they broke the earth for you.
I died that day a little, too.

And each awakening spring
I hope
That I live again—
That I can hold
Your place in my heart
And still reach out life,
Embrace it
Without being able to embrace you.

Each spring my faith is renewed,
My faith in resurrection's spring.

Karen Nelson
TCF — Mantua, UT

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.

The Compassionate Friends Credo



*A bereavement organization
For parents, siblings and families
We offer friendship, love and understanding
We talk, we listen, we share, we care.*

Valley Forge Chapter
of the Compassionate Friends
Rhonda Gomez
Chapter Leader
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore PA 19343



**The
Compassionate
Friends Inc.**

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