



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## AUGUST 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. For information please call Rhonda at 484-919-0820.

#### Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of interest

- Aug 3 General Sharing
- Sept 7 General Sharing
- Sept 16 Butterfly Release (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 (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**

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[compassionatefriends.org](http://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 PEOPLE**

**Fietta Sherlock** son, *Jeremy* (31)

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**

**Herman & Lily Eason** in memory of our son, *Peter Muntijo* on his anniversary 7/27.  
**Rhonda & Frank Gomez** in memory of their son, *Frankie* on his anniversary 7/17

**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**

**Marie & Ken Hofmockel** in loving memory of our son, *Douglas*, on his birthday 8/27  
**Vern & Joyce Kaiser** in memory of our son, *Michael Kaiser*, on his birthday 8/4.  
**Gwen Kearns** in memory of my son, *Dennis J. Kearns, Jr.*, on his anniversary 9/28.  
**Bonnie Rosen** in memory of my son, *Troy Rosen*, on his birthday 8/30.  
**Roxborough/Manayunk Lioness Club** in memory of *Dennis J. Kearns, Jr.* on his birthday 9/18.  
**Lynn Winton & Tim Tumminello** in memory of Lynn's daughter, *Natalie Winton*, (24), and the butterfly release.

This publication of the **TCF Valley Forge Chapter Newsletter** is funded by the **Steven Schneibolk Memorial Fund**.

**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**



**BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND PROGRAM  
Saturday, September 16, 2017 at 3PM**

**Upper Merion Township Park (back of Police Station)  
175 West Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406**

Diagonally across from our monthly meeting place at Good Shepherd Church.  
This event will be held in back of the township building, at the Gazebo rain or shine.

**Cost \$5.00 per butterfly - registration now being accepted.  
August 15th last day to place order.  
There is no admission or parking fee.**

**Water will be provided by the chapter. Please bring folding chairs or a blanket to sit on.**

A family may order one butterfly to share, or order one butterfly for each family member. You may order as many butterflies as you wish. All butterflies must be preordered. If you are unable to attend on this date, we can release the butterfly that you have purchased in your loved one's name. The names of all loved ones will be read during the program. **Everyone welcome, (even if you do not order a butterfly) bring a friend.**

**For questions, please call TCF Valley Forge 484-919-0820  
Any further details will be posted at the VF website. [www.tcfvalleyforge.org](http://www.tcfvalleyforge.org)**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

**Total number of butterflies ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ \$5.00 each**

**Total money (no credit cards) enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please forward registration and check to: Rhonda Gomez,  
12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore, PA 19343**

**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:

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

**Marilynn Anton, cousin/godmother *Douglas Hofmockel* 8/27**

**Denis Nicholson Asselin & Judy, son *Nathaniel* 8/21**

**Rob and Janet Beiswenger, son *Jared* 8/17**

**Dorothy & Jack Bert, son *Matthias* 8/16**

**Jovanna & Joseph Bevilacqua, son *Donato "Danny" Bevilacqua* 8/20**

**Richard & Jo Bewley, son *Kevin Bewley* 8/24**

**Thomas & Janet Cleary, son *Ryan* 8/21**

**Joane Cooper, son *Ben* 8/2, and daughter *Katy* 8/2**

**Evelyn M. Corrado, son *John A. Corrado* 8/5**

**Allison Crowder, daughter *Amber* 8/8**

**Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr., son *David* 8/26**

**Lisa & David Dibello, son *Joey* 8/14**

**Jim and Patty Duffy, son *Michael Duffy* 8/8**

**Nancy & David Dykty, brother *Jim Sutton* 8/7**

**Tom & Irene Edmunds, son *Kyle Derek Edmunds* 8/1**

**Ron & Sue Gamza, daughter & grandson *Rachel & Troy* 8/22**

**Rita Gibbons, son *Paul Gibbons* 8/13**

**Mary Lou Harrison, son *Lance ♥Scott♥ Harrison* 8/4**

**Beatrice K Hildebrandt, son *John R. Hildebrandt* 8/26**

**Marie & Ken Hofmockel, son *Douglas Hofmockel* 8/27**

**Jan & Dan Jackson, son *John Jackson* 8/18**

**Michael & Betsy Jarrett, son *Michael Jarrett* 8/13**

**Vern & Joyce Kaiser, son *Michael* 8/4**

**Joan Kingslake, daughter *Ann Kingslake Woods* 8/3**

**Sue Lawlor, son *Jim* 8/24**

**Sherri Leco, daughter *Sommer Leigh Leco* 8/4**

**Kathleen & John Leeper, son *Shaun Michael Leeper* 8/17**

**Janet Leflar, son *Scott* 8/11**

**John & Nancy Logue, daughter *Heather Logue* 8/16**

**Timothy & Maxine Lurowist, daughter *Kristine* 8/24**

**Mary Mac Farland, son *Marc* 8/4**

**Bonnie MacDonald, son *R. Scott Geddes* 8/30**

**Anna E Marchese, son *Matthew Paul Marchese* 8/28**

**Diane Mazzagatti, son *John Pirocchi, Jr.* 8/3**

**Sue McMaster, cousin *Patty* 8/30**

**Joan Michini, son *Alfred J. Michini, II* 8/2**

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS continued**

**Alexandra Milas**, daughter *Nicole Penelope Wiseley* 8/23  
**BonAndrew Miller**, daughter *Perri* 8/21  
**Kathleen Mitchel**, daughter *Danielle* 8/21  
**John B. & Lillian Neff**, son *Patrick Neff* 8/30  
**Sharon Ott**, daughter *Amber* 8/12  
**Joan Palumbo**, son *Michael* 8/4  
**Marie Poulsen**, grandson *Jerry August Warfel* 8/12  
**Chris Poulsen**, nephew *Jerry* 8/12  
**Sharyn & Joe Pozzuolo**, son *Joey Brad Pozzuolo* 8/26  
**Joe & Marti Purifico**, son *Jeffrey* 8/3  
**Elise Rice**, son *Raymond Anthony Rice* 8/29  
**Christine Rizol**, son *Tyler* 8/24  
**Bonnie Rosen**, son *Troy* 8/30  
**Becky Rotkowski**, brother *Brian* 8/17  
**Beverly & Joe Rush**, daughter *Kelsey* 8/27  
**Marie Schmeltzer**, son *Sam "Sonny" Schmeltzer* 8/22  
**Pamela Schneibolk**, brother *Douglas Hofmockel* 8/27  
**Harry & Carol Schultz**, son *Brian Andrew Schultz* 8/23  
**Susan Snyder**, son *Brian* 8/24  
**Lorraine Spear**, daughter *Kimberly Jean Spear* 8/15  
**Susan & Ron Spencer**, son *Rob* 8/21  
**Elaine & Joe Stillwell**, daughter *Margaret Mary O'Connor* 8/23  
**Karen & Alan Stoner**, daughter *Holly Patricia Stoner* 8/11  
**Fred & Irene Sutton**, son *Jim Sutton* 8/7  
**Tracey Sutton-Vitabile**, brother *Jim Sutton* 8/7  
**Pety Suy & Matthew Kuchler**, son *Ethan* 8/22  
**Hellmut Theil**, son *Hellmut Theil, Jr.* 8/2  
**Thomas & Sara Thiermann**, daughter *Heather Bruce Thiermann* 8/26  
**Akhil & Judy Tripathi**, son *Sunil* 8/29  
**Tina Ulshafer**, son *Jimmy* 8/22  
**Pat Villante**, daughter *Patty* 8/30  
**Andy & Peg Yanoviak**, daughter *Elizabeth "Betsy" Hershman* 8/6

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

**Emily L. Alm**, son *Bryan W. Alm* - 8/23  
**Laura Amen**, son *R.J. Amen* - 8/21  
**Chip Arena**, son *Nick* - 8/1  
**Lisa Bellopede**, son *Johnny* - 8/12  
**Dorothy & Jack Bert**, son *Matthias* - 8/29  
**Tom & Kathy Biggar**, granddaughter *Ava Nobles* - 8/28  
**Adam Blasucci**, brother *Danny* - 8/1  
**Joe & Maryann Bucci**, son *Dante* - 8/13





**SHARED THOUGHTS ON SETTING YOUR OWN PACE FOR GRIEVING**

When we are in our early stages of grief, it can be a relief to see the summer's flurry of activities end. Picnics, family vacations, gatherings with happy children that once were such special times, can bring additional agony after the loss of a child or sibling. Watching other families, who have not lost one of its members, can cause us to fantasize, what could have been for us.

When we feel so all encompassed with grief, it is hard to imagine that we can one day enjoy life again. Our life seems so irrevocably changed. When we first begin our journey of grief, and pain permeates every part of our being, the road appears so dark and endless. We so desperately need someone to appreciate what we are experiencing and to understand we have been immobilized by our loss. It is normal for those around us, who have not experienced such a loss to want us to "snap back" to our old self. What they cannot appreciate is that all of our reactions are normal. Our fast paced society does not allow us proper time for grieving. It is healthy to cry, and talk about the deceased. It isn't time alone that heals; it is primarily the grief work. And we can only have a healthy healing grief process when we move at our own pace. Some need to spend more time than others on particular aspects of grief. The age of the deceased, the relationship you had with them, the cause of death and a long list of circumstances can create varying intensity of pain in different areas of grief. Each person in grief has to make their own path. We all hurt to the depth of our capacity, but each path to recovery is unique. It is very helpful to have someone who is non-judgmental with whom we can express our concerns. Putting our thoughts into words can bring healing.

It takes all the strength we can muster up to get our lives back together again. In our early stages of grief we cannot fathom ever leading a full life, laughing, being productive, or being a functional human being again. It is normal to feel our life is over. As we progress in our grief, and much healing has taken place, it is also normal for the intensity of our emotions to lessen, even though our grief may be a lifelong process. We learn to live without our loved one being physically among us. That does not mean our loved one is not with us in our memory. The memories will always be a part of our being. We will always be the same to each other. Our love does not diminish as our grieving progresses, we remember the good times and put away the thoughts of "I wish I had", or "I should have". The pain softens and our memories are our most prized possession.

It takes a lot of mountain climbing to reach the valley in grief. It cannot be rushed; no one can do it for us.

I hope all the brilliant colors of fall can form a rainbow for you, and give you hope.

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

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**MAY I GRIEVE?**

In the daytime, I walk and work, and all;  
But at home, in the evening, I stumble and fall.  
The office says, "Function, smile and get control."  
But at home I can grieve to cleanse my soul.  
Must I be two people for the rest of my life?  
If I could be just one person for more than one day,  
My freedom to grieve would help light the way.

But society tells me not to be sad,  
They say, "She's at peace now  
and you should be glad."  
When grieving the loss of a child is perceived,  
How much easier it is for we the bereaved.

*Susanne Demars*  
TCF, Hingham, MA



**QUESTIONS/ANSWERS FROM  
BEREAVED SIBLINGS**

**All of a sudden I burst into tears and cannot control crying.**

You have the freedom to cry when you need to. Crying is a normal reaction. You may feel embarrassed, but most people will react with sympathy and wish for themselves that they could cry freely. Crying is a natural outlet to grieving.

**Why am I so mad at my sister for dying? She left me alone. I know it wasn't her fault, but I feel so guilty for being angry.**

At some time everyone is angry at the person who died. Anger does not mean you loved them less; it means the loss is so great that you want the terrible pain to end.

**I can't concentrate. I can't think and I can't remember anything. I think I am losing my mind.**

You are not losing your mind, although it may feel that way. Your mind is probably overloaded. Not only do you have to go through your daily routine, but your mind is flooded with thoughts and feelings for your brother or sister. This is temporary; your memory and concentration will return over time.

**I have terrible nightmares. Sometimes I dream I am dying. I can't tell anyone because they will think I am crazy. Am I?**

Some grieving people experience intense dreams. Dreams serve as a healthy outlet for the intense feelings you have during the day. As time goes on and you deal with your feelings, your dreams will become less frightening.

**I feel so guilty for the way I yelled at my brother. We would fight about the silliest things. I'll never be able to tell him how sorry I am.**

Brothers and sisters in every family quarrel and don't apologize after every argument. Even though you fought, you still loved your brother and he loved you.

**Suddenly my parents expect me to parent them. I just can't handle it.**

This truly one of the most unfair positions your grief puts you in. Try to share these feelings with your parents. Hopefully you will be better able to understand one another.

*Author Unknown*

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**I'M MISSING YOU**

I'm missing you -  
All day, ever day.  
On a bright summer morning, or  
When the moon is full.  
In the golden days of fall,  
As the storm clouds build and it's snowing  
When the willows begin to turn green -  
You are always with me,  
In my mind and in my heart.  
My brother, My Good Friend.  
I'm missing you.

*Kris Cunningham, TCF Moro, IL*

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A lot of time!  
A little space,  
A kind of quiet  
Resting place,  
Are what I need  
At times like these,  
A special spot  
Where I can grieve.

*Beth Pinion TCF - Andalusia, AL*

WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS

● Get up 15 minutes early ● Prepare for the morning the night before ● Avoid tight-fitting clothes ● Avoid relying on chemical aids ● Set appointments ahead ● Don't rely on memory...write it down ● Practice preventative maintenance ● Make duplicate keys ● Say "no" more often ● Set priorities in your life ● Avoid negative people ● Use time wisely ● Simplify mealtimes ● Copy important papers ● Anticipate your needs  
 Repair anything that doesn't work ● Ask for help with the jobs you dislike ● Break large tasks into bite-size portions ● Look at challenges differently ● Unclutter your life ● Smile ● Prepare for rain ● Tickle a baby ● Pet a friendly dog or cat ● Don't know all the answers ● Look for a silver lining ● Say something nice to someone ● Teach a kid to fly a kite ● Walk in the rain ● Schedule playtime every day ● Take a bubble bath ● Be aware of decisions you make ● Believe in you ● Stop saying negative things to yourself ● Visualize yourself winning ● Develop a sense of humor ● Stop thinking tomorrow will be a better day  
 ● Set goals for yourself ● Dance a jig ● Say hello to a stranger ● Ask a friend for a hug ● Look at the stars ● Practice breathing slowly ● Learn to whistle a tune ● Read a poem ● Listen to a symphony ● Watch a ballet ● Read a story in bed ● Do a brand new thing ● Stop a bad habit ● Buy yourself a flower ● Take stock of your achievements ● Find support from others ● Ask someone to be your "vent partner" ● Do it today ● Work at being cheerful and optimistic ● Put safety first ● Do everything in moderation ● Pay attention to your appearance ● Strive for excellence, not perfection ● Stretch your limits a little each day ● Look at a work of art ● Hum a jingle ● Maintain your weight ● Plant a tree ● Feed the birds ● Practice grace under pressure  
 ● Stand and stretch ● Always have a plan "B" ● Learn a new doodle ● Learn to meet your own needs ● Become a better listener ● Know your limitations and let others know them too ● Tell someone to have a good day in pig Latin ● Throw a paper airplane ● Exercise every day ● Learn the words to a new song ● Get to work early ● Clean out a closet ● Play patty cake with a toddler ● Take a different route to work ● Leave work early (with permission) ● Put air freshener in your car ● Watch a movie, eat popcorn ● Write a note to a far-away friend ● Go to a ballgame and scream ● Cook a meal and eat it by candlelight ● Recognize the importance of unconditional love ● Remember you always have options ● Have a support network of people, places and things ● Quit trying to "fix" other people ● Get enough sleep ● Talk less and listen more ● Freely praise other people ● P.S. Relax, take each day at a time .. you have the rest of your life to live.

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### COMFORT FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

So many people imagine that death cruelly separates us from our loved ones. Even pious people are led to believe this great and sad mistake. When our loved ones die, they do not leave us. They remain. They do not go to some dark and distant place. They simply begin their eternity. We do not see them because we are still in the darkness of the world. But their spiritual eyes, filled with the light of heaven are always watching us as they wait for the day, when we shall share their perfect joy. We are born for heaven and one by one we end this life of tears to begin our life in endless happiness.

I have often reflected upon this beautiful truth and found it the greatest and surest comfort in time of mourning. A firm faith in the real and continual presence of our loved ones has brought the conviction and consolation that death has not destroyed them, nor carried them away. Rather it

has given them life! A life with power to know fully and to love perfectly. With this new life and new power our loved ones are always present to us, knowing and loving us more than ever before. The tears that dampen our eyes in times of mourning are tears of homesickness, tears of longing for our loved ones. But it is we who are away from home, not they. Death has been for them a doorway to an eternal home. And only because this heavenly home is invisible to our worldly eyes, we cannot see them so near us. Yet, they are with us, lovingly and tenderly waiting for the day when we, too, will enter the doorway of our eternal home. No, death is not a separation. It is a preparation for eternal union with those we love, in the peace and joy of heaven.

In loving memory of our son,  
*Robert L. Groff, III* 6/1/69 - 1/7/92

*Bob & Sally Groff*

**QUIET TIME**

An important way to push stress out of your life is to take advantage of quiet time. Choose a time when you can be alone with your thoughts and feelings. Sound scary? Read on...

There is a tendency to run from the pain of grief – to keep so busy and push yourself so hard that all you can do is fall in bed at night and go right to sleep. You may keep from feeling the pain, but it will catch up with you in some form in the future. It may be in the form of a disabling disease, frequent colds, a sudden heart attack or grief in years to come.

Stop and...open up the picture album and remember times past.

Take a walk where there were special memories. Sit down during the day and reflect.

At the beginning of these quiet times you may have a rush of feelings. Feel them. You won't break, and nobody has ever cried forever. Once you have gone into them, you will eventually begin to quiet down. At this time you could play some quiet music or put on a tape with some relaxing sounds, such as ocean waves or gentle rainfall.

Rest when you can. During this time your body is trying very hard to heal your emotional wounds and you may tire easily. Take a nap in the middle of the day. Yes, even at your place of work if possible. When I returned to work the week after my son's death, I found a couch in one of the women's rest rooms. I would curl up under a velveteen blanket for about 20 minutes after lunch. That helped me get through the rest of the day. Plus, it was the only place I could have a good, private cry in that kind of environment.

It's very common to have sleeping difficulties. Grievors frequently have trouble getting to sleep or wake during the night and are unable to go back to sleep. You have a lot on your mind, and it's hard to turn it off.

If you're having trouble sleeping at night, try the following tips before resorting to sleeping pills. Some medicines ward off your feelings so that when you stop taking them, it's as if your grief just begun.

- get out of bed if you wake up and can't go back to sleep within 10 minutes. Stop fighting wakefulness and do something else for a while.
  - don't make yourself sleep in a bed which has memories if it's too difficult, or put a pillow where the empty spot is. George Burns found comfort sleeping in his wife's bed after she died. A widow found comfort in wearing her husband's pajama top and laying on his side of the bed.
  - have a good book or magazine handy to read.
  - keep your journal next to your bed and write out your thoughts and feelings.
  - watch TV or read.
  - drink warm milk. It has a chemical which helps bring on sleep.
  - listen to relaxation cassette tapes, such as ocean waves or whale sounds. If you have never tried them you'll be surprised at how soothing they are.
  - play an affirmation tape.
- Or, if you're a snuggler, just rest in bed, not "trying" to go to sleep. Enjoy the soft feel of your pillow, the cuddliness of your mattress and covers.

Give yourself the gift of time out, awake or sleeping.

*Kelly Osmont, TCF S. Chester Co., PA*

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**COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR AND PAIN,  
BUT THE AFFIRMATION OF LIFE DESPITE FEAR AND PAIN.**

*Rabbi Earl Grollman*



**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