



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## AUGUST 2018

### 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 2 General Sharing
- Sept 6 General Sharing
- Sept 15 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**

#### Chapter Leaders

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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.

**INSIDE VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER**

**NEW PEOPLE**

**Craig Horwitz**, daughter *Kimberly* (21)  
**Sharmell & Chris McMurray**, son *Ryan* (26)  
**Sandy Salveter**, son Greg (30)

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**

**Sharmell & Chris McMurray**, in memory of our son, *Ryan* (26)  
**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 loving memory of our son, *Michael Kaiser*, on his 42nd birthday.  
Always in our prayers, forever in our hearts. Miss you, love you always, Mom & Dad.  
**Sandy Salveter** in loving memory of my son, *Greg* (30)

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 15, 2018 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  
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  
Karen Donaldson, daughter *Willow Ann* 8/5  
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  
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  
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, youngest 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  
Alfred J. & Joan Michini, son *Alfred J. Michini, II* 8/2  
Alexandra Milas, daughter *Nicole Penelope Wiseley* 8/23  
Andrew Miller, daughter *Perri* 8/21  
Kathleen Mitchel, daughter *Danielle* 8/21

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS continued**

**John B. & Lillian Neff, son *Patrick Neff* 8/30**  
**Sharon Ott, daughter *Amber* 8/12**  
**Joan Palumbo, son *Michael* 8/4**  
**Chris Poulsen, nephew *Jerry* 8/12**  
**Marie Poulsen, grandson *Jerry August Warfel* 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**  
**Carol & Ira Caplan, son *Julian* - 8/6**

## AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED

- Joann & Gary Chavez, son *Christopher Dale Chavez* - 8/4  
 Mary & John Chelius, son *John J. Chelius, Jr.* - 8/24  
 Wendy Coleman, daughter *Gabrielle* - 8/18  
 Liz & Scott Conaghan, brother *Jan* - 8/27  
 Joane Cooper, son *Ben* - 8/2  
 Jean & Bill Cotter, son *Patrick Cotter* - 8/11  
 Carol Curtiss, grandson *Kurt* - 8/20  
 Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr., son *G. Robert Daily, Jr.* - 8/10  
 Carol Dawidziuk, son *Michel* - 8/21  
 Kimberly De Simone, daughter *Lacey* - 8/13  
 Antoinette & John DiDonato, son *John Jr.* - 8/17  
 Scott & Charlene Fazekas, son *Eric Scott Fazekas* - 8/13  
 Richard & Martha Fenoglio, daughter *Judith Fenoglio Daw* - 8/6  
 Mary Field, daughter *Lindsay Field* - 8/19  
     daughter *Karolin Field* - 8/13  
 Lisa Foos, son *Curtis* - 8/12  
 Denise & Edward Frazier, son *Akhir* - 8/25  
 Molly Gehring, son *Daniel* - 8/26  
 Angela Giannantonio, son *Anthony* - 8/2  
 Stephanie Grier, son *John "J.D." Grier* - 8/17  
 Tim & Rosemarie Griffiths, son *Timothy Griffiths* - 8/17  
 Tom & Judy Hahn, daughter *Erica Hilley* - 8/23  
 Janet Higgins, son *Nicholas* - 8/1  
 Joan Jagers, son *John Costello* - 8/18  
 Lori Joseph, son *Andy* 10/6/1993 - 8/29  
 Janet & Dave Keller, son *Joseph E. Keller* - 8/21  
     brother *Thomas A. Keller* - 8/10  
 Greg & Anita Lewicki, son *Eric Stephen Lewicki* - 8/20  
 Frank & Laura Lincicome, son *Daniel* - 8/29  
 John & Nancy Logue, daughter *Heather Logue* - 8/23  
 Kathleen & Hugh Martin, Jr., son *Colin John "C.J." Martin* - 8/16  
 Jeff & Kathy McCarron, daughter *Sarah* - 8/14  
 Robert & Marjorie Meckley, son *Douglas Meckley* - 8/16  
 Kathleen Mitchel, daughter *Danielle* - 8/21  
 Joanne Morasco, son *Robert* - 8/6  
 Jenn Nobles, daughter *Ava Ruth Marie* - 8/28  
 Carol & Dennis O'Connor, son *Michael O'Connor* - 8/23  
 Patricia Peraino, brother *Anthony* - 8/2  
 Susan Pollock, son *Brendan Rosko* - 8/17  
 Marge Randolph, husband *Bob Fixter* - 8/18  
 Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert, mother (Bubbles) *Theresa Volpe* - 8/23  
 Tracey Robinson, son *Connor* - 8/29



**SHARED THOUGHTS ON GROWING THROUGH SHARING**

As I observe the intensity of Parental Grief in the newly bereaved, I see my past self with all the vivid memories of fresh pain. Hopefully, you can see healing and hope as you look at us, the more seasoned bereaved. Much of our healing comes from the caring and understanding of other Compassionate Friends, who helped to restore meaning to our lives again.

There will always be some clouds, even though the storm of grief is over. But, that gut-wrenching pain that used to come without warning or mercy has left, and the residue is tolerable. There is life after grief. You can restore love, hope, find a purpose for living, and a measure of peace. Unfortunately, these things lie on the other side of grief. We must first walk in the valley to find them, but we don't have to walk alone.

Sharing can lessen our loneliness, and help remove the feeling of isolation during our grief. A hug, a touch, or a knowing look can give reassurance that we are normal, in our very abnormal situation. Just speaking our loved ones names and sharing memories gives us a measure of healing. Life can be more bearable if we feel their nearness. One of our concerns is the world may forget our child or sibling. Fresh grief tends to remember the death, but as we heal we concentrate more on the life of our loved ones. The intense pain is caused by the great love we have for them, and the love they had for us. At some point, we have to be thankful for the time we had, even though we all agree it was not long enough.

We can find creative ways to memorialize and have our child or sibling live through us. They can not physically be a part of our life, but they can make us even more of who and what we are in this world. Their memories can give us courage and hope to lead a productive life again. It can even cause us to reach out to others in pain and offer comforting words by saying "I know".

The school season can bring a flood of tears as we watch children going to and from school. It reiterates that our children will not enter the next year of development. We hope you will come to meetings to share with us, it is the one place we can feel comfortable and a sense of normality. Regardless of what you are feeling, you can be certain someone else in the room has dealt with the same problem. We welcome discussion on both negative and positive subjects. Many times we have to deal with the negative side of grief before it can become positive. Come share with us. We care.

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

**LIFE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT**

Life is what we make it, I said with the confidence of youth.  
My own well ordered life would be the shining proof.  
That ills that befall others, would never come to me.  
But, then from nowhere came a blow that made me with pain.  
The illusion of control was gone never to come again.  
Life isn't what we make it, I railed against this bitter fate.  
But only how we take it, and this I refuse to take.  
But gradually acceptance came and with it some release.  
Of the vice like grip upon my heart of rage & anguished grief.  
Life is what we make it, I slowly came to know.  
If only in the way we take its unexpected blows.

**Roberta Robertson**

**I FEEL THE JOY**

Never let there be a time when  
I cannot feel the pain,  
When hurt and sadness  
are blocked out,  
And only numbness reigns.  
At least with pain I am alive,  
But numbness will destroy,  
For if I cannot feel the pain,  
Then I cannot feel the joy.

**Joanetta Hendel**  
TCF, Indianapolis, IN



**TO MY BIG BROTHER**

You were the best big brother.  
You were such a true true friend.  
You were someone to whom I could always  
talk and always could depend.

Its hard to believe that you are not here.  
Smiling, laughing ... Oh, I feel a tear.

I think back on many times gone by  
and I just keep asking myself, why?  
But, it makes me smile and it makes me laugh.  
To think back on sweet memories of the past.

Moving up from Osborne Street  
and joining a new school.  
Greg and Grant were always there  
even when we joined the pool.

Then we went off to Ocean City  
to spend our summers at the shore.  
The sand would drift the ocean roll  
and the gulls would often soar.

I watched you go through LaSalle,  
and then off to Penn State too.  
I was your little sister  
who was so very proud of you.

I think of you quite often.  
For your thoughts I'd give a penny.  
Did you know I had a son last year.  
I know he'd love his uncle Denny.

You'll be with me forever.  
And although we are apart.  
You live forever in my memories  
and always in my heart.

*Kimberly Kearns Minetola*, Phila., PA  
for her brother, **Dennis Kearns, Jr.**

9/18/57 - 9/28/93

**EACH LIFE AFFECTS ANOTHER'S**

We may not always realize that everything we do  
Affects not only our lives but touches others, too.  
A single happy smile can always brighten up the  
day for anyone who happens by.  
And a little bit of thoughtfulness that shows  
someone you care,  
Creates a ray of sunshine for both of you to share.

Yes, every time you offer someone a helping hand,  
Every time you show a friend you care and  
understand.  
Every time you have a kind and gentle word to  
give,  
You help someone find beauty in this precious  
life we live,  
For happiness brings happiness,  
and loving ways bring love,  
And giving is the treasure  
that contentment is made of.

*Author Unknown*

**I'M TIRED OF BEING STRONG**

“Forgive me Lord, but I’m tired of being some of  
the things I’ve tried so hard to be ... I’m tired of  
being so capable, so efficient. I’m tired of the  
compliment, ‘You are such a strong person, I  
admire your strength’. I’m tired of being  
considered so patient and understanding that  
people dump their troubles on me. I’m tired of  
being so cheerful. I want to be free to be cross and  
complain and not get a ‘buck up, old chap’ routine.  
I’m tired of being considered so independent, so  
strong. Sometimes, at least sometimes, Lord, I  
want to be weak and helpless, able to lean on  
somebody, able to cry and be comforted. Lord, I  
guess there are just times when I want to be a child  
again, running to climb on my mother’s lap.”

*Marjorie Holmes* “Hold Me Up a Little”

## THE GRIEF OF MENTAL ILLNESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Carol Katz*

**Some Common Thoughts Following the Death of Your Child**

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

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



**THE  
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