



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

DECEMBER 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

- Dec 7 General Sharing
- Jan 4 General Sharing
- Dec 10 World Wide Candle Lighting
(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

Rhonda & Frank Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore, PA 19343
(484) 919-0820 Chapter cell phone
email: sugar@tcfvalleyforge.org

Database Record Keeper

Frank Gomez

Webmaster

Frank Gomez
Email: frank@tcfvalleyforge.org

Newsletter Editors

Marie & Ken Hofmockel
340 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406
(610)337-1907
email: kendall.hofmockel@gmail.com

Love Gift Acknowledgements

Connie Nolan

Treasurer

Emil Nunez

Librarian

Carole Bailey

Chapter Advisors

Marie & Ken Hofmockel

Regional Coordinators

Ann Walsh 717-515-3000
Bobbi Milne 215-801-2840

National Headquarters

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll Free: (877)969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org
email: national_office@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.

NEW PEOPLE

Marlene & Jerry Lener, her son, *Daniel* (28)

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.

REFRESHMENTS

From the VF Chapter in honor of all the children.

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.

LOVE GIFTS

Freda & Jack Gross in loving memory of our daughter, *Linda Joy Gross* on her birthday 12/28.

Cathy & Carl Helwig in loving memory of our son, *Michael Helwig*.

Susan & Rick Hulseberg in loving memory of their daughter, *Amy Hulseberg Clark* (37).

Priscilla Enochs Thoroughgood in loving memory of my daughter, *Kendra Enochs* on her 49th birthday.

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

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

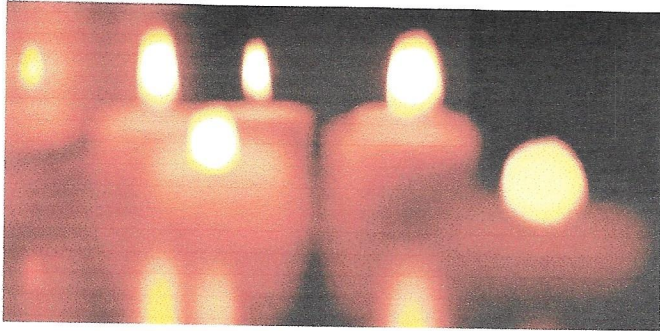
We are asking if possible , would you please receive your newsletter by email.

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**

Compassionate Friends 21st World Wide Candle Lighting.



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon. Now believed to be the largest mass candle

lighting on the globe, the 21st annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold a candle lighting remembrance service on December 10th at 2 PM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Founders Hall. (same place as our monthly sharing secessions are held). We chose 2 PM for our local service, so that it would be available to everyone, including those who do not drive at night. We also urge you to light a candle in your home at 7PM. We hope you will take this opportunity to join us in remembering our children & siblings who have died, but will never be forgotten. Let us ensure that their light may always shine.

Guest Speaker - Fred Mountjoy

Fred and his wife, Marilyn, lost twin daughters, Marian and Barlyn, shortly after their birth in 1961, a third daughter, Marian, died in 1996 at the age of 33. There was no TCF in 1961. Fred and Marilyn attended local TCF meetings shortly after Marian's death. They were co-facilitators in their group.

Fred was employed in public education at the high school level for 37 years. During that time he taught US history and psychology, was a high school guidance counselor, and an administrator. Fred was also employed as an addiction counselor at a local medical center for 25 years. He also holds certification in individual, family, and grief counseling.

Fred is well known to many Compassionate Friends, who attend TCF Conferences. He served as a Speaker and Workshop Presenter at the Eastern PA Regional Conference in 2005.

GIFTS FOR UNDER PRIVILEGED CHILDREN

FIRST STEP is a program of Chester County for under privileged/handicapped children. For many years our Chapter has collected gifts for them. We will do so again this year, at our December 7th meeting & December 10th World Wide Candle Lighting Service Program. The children are between the ages of 2 and 6. Both clothing and toys are welcome gifts. It is very rewarding to remember your child, by showing love to these children. Please add a tag that states suggested age and sex. You may sign it, "from your friend", or your child or sibling's name. This may be the only gift the child will receive. We appreciate your participation in this worthy cause.

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:

DECENBER BIRTHDAYS

- Lori Bartholomew, brother *Matthew* 12/17
Tom & Kathy Biggar, granddaughter *Ava Nobles* 12/13
Eleanor Brennan, grandson *Jonathan Masiak* 12/20
Ben & Cathy Breskman, son *Brian* 12/11
Libby Cavallaro, sister *Theresa* 12/29
Becky & Frank Clark, son *Pat* 12/16
Anita Conway, son *Daniel* 12/9
Jean & Bill Cotter, son *Patrick Cotter* 12/20
Bobbie Coyle, son *Whitney Coyle* 12/23
Janet Cozzone, daughter *Jesika* 12/5
Adriene & Peter De Moerloose, daughter *Olivia* 12/30
Tom & Marge Del Rosario, son *Dominic* 12/14
Antoinette & John DiDonato, son *Kenneth (Kenny)* 12/15
Joseph & Patsy Dooley, son *Peter J. Dooley* 12/22
Ed & Sue Duffy, son *Peter* 12/12
Justine Ellinger, daughter *Keira Ellinger* 12/11
Bob & Dena Filipone, daughter *Denise* 12/13
Bonnie Gardner, daughter *Michelle* 12/16
Suze Goldberg, uncle *Neal* 12/14
Jack & Freda Gross, daughter *Linda Joy Gross* 12/28
Ginger Jarrett, daughter *Adrienne* 12/5
Judy Kahl, son *Mark* 12/11
Joan Kellett, son *Daniel Thomas Kellett* 12/7
Wendy Kuhn, brother *David* 12/19
Teresa & Bill Lattanze, daughter *Jodi Noell Lattanze* 12/19
Frank & Laura Lincicome, son *Daniel* 12/22
Sue, Dave, Dan, and Lauren McCarthy, son and brother *Brian McCarthy* 12/25
Kevin & Nancy McKelvey, son *Michael* 12/4
Pat Miller, son *Nathan* 12/2
Fran & Kathy Moran, daughter *Denise Nicole Moran* 12/31
Ann Murray, son *Brian Rapoport* 12/2
Bonnie Nimerfroh, son *David* 12/19
Jenn Nobles, daughter *Ava Ruth Marie* 12/13
Maurice & Ruth Onraet, son *Thomas* 12/19
Betty Jane Peters - Neilson, son *Martin A Peters* 12/8
Maureen & David Rich, daughter *Mallory Kirby Rich* 12/4
Thelma Rosen, brother *David Beeler* 12/24

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS continued

Patti & Glen Smith, son *Chris* 12/30
 E. Pearl & Ernest Smith, son *Tony* 12/23
 Eileen Smith, son *Craig* 12/17
 John & Rose Stanley, daughter *Susan Stanley* 12/4
 Ronda Stansbery, daughter *Susan Anne Stansbery Stamman* 12/22
 Luanne Stefler, grandson *Jordyn* 12/25
 Edward & Mary Stimson, son *Keith Stimson* 12/29
 Priscilla Thoroughgood, daughter *Kendra Enochs* 12/5
 Judy Tomarelli, son *Daniel Robert Tomarelli* 12/19
 Jackie Ward, grandson *Anthony* 12/1
 Laura & Leo Weishew, brother *Steven McGowan* 12/28

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Nina Ansel, daughter *Jenny* - 12/21
 Carole Bailey, son *Matthew J. Bailey* - 12/21
 Richard & Jo Bewley, son *Kevin Bewley* - 12/29
 Lisa Bledy, sister *Danielle Bledy* - 12/4
 David Bonga, daughter *Amanda* - 12/31
 Catherine Chan, son *Chanlan Lee* - 12/19
 Becky & Frank Clark, son *Pat* - 12/4
 Tracy & Mike Collins, daughter *Krystal Chuck* - 12/5
 Carole and Kevin Creighton, son *Ryan Kent Creighton* - 12/6
 Reno & Bonnie Crescimone, son *Jonathan* - 12/21
 Bill & Donna Deasey, daughter *Michelle Deasey* - 12/19
 Helen Deery, son *Ronald J. Deery, Jr.* - 12/20
 Susan Dehlinger, daughter *Amy M. Dehlinger* - 12/7
 Antoinette & John DiDonato, son *Kenneth (Kenny)* - 12/5
 Karen Donaldson, daughter *Willow Ann* - 12/28
 Maureen & Jim Fleagle, son *Brian* - 12/11
 Lee & Patricia Grossman, daughter *Rachel Leah* - 12/5
 Giuliana Hilend, son *Patrick Andrew Hilend* - 12/10
 Michelle Hillstrom, daughter *Jen* - 12/20
 Anthony & Carol Iacobucci, son *Anthony Iacobucci* - 12/13
 Enid M. Irizarry, daughter *Lisette M. Molina* - 12/25
 Carl and Dorothy Johnson-Speight, daughter *Carlana Speight* - 12/13
 son *Khaaliq Jabbar Johnson* - 12/6
 Millie Jones, grandson *Shawn Dian* - 12/23
 Joan Kingslake, daughter *Ann Kingslake Woods* - 12/31
 Al & Sue Koenig, daughter *Emily Grace Koenig* - 12/11
 Howard & Stacy Koller, daughter *Kaitlin* - 12/18

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED

Teresa & Bill Lattanze, son *William Noel Lattanze* - 12/25
Barb & Larry Lauchle, son *Gray* - 12/18
Timothy & Maxine Lurowist, daughter *Kristine* - 12/24
Norine & William McDevitt, Jr., son *Sean Francis McDevitt* - 12/6
Alfred J. & Joan Michini, son *Alfred J. Michini, II* - 12/14
Alexandra Milas, brother *Nicholas Stathes* - 12/19
Gerald & Margaret Milice, son *Gerald Milice* - 12/11
Greg and Mary Miller, son *David* - 12/3
Audrey Morasco, son *Christopher Morasco* - 12/27
Emil Nunez, son *Oliver Nunez* - 12/24
Carol & Dennis O'Connor, brother *Jack Coladonato* - 12/3
Roy Redman, daughter *Linda Inez Redman* - 12/16
Tony & Toni Riccardi, son *David Riccardi* - 12/1
Elise Rice, son *Raymond Anthony Rice* - 12/9
Daune Ring, daughter *Chloe* - 12/29
Margaret & Robert Rooney, daughter *Sharon Rooney* 12/8
Beth Schad, son *Gage* - 12/27
Abigail Schwartz, mother *Barbra* - 12/26
Art & Carol Silverman, daughter *Cheryl Beth Silverman* - 12/16
Mike & Beverly Smith, son *Ryan* - 12/11
Karl Snepp, wife *Sue Snepp* - 12/2
Lisa M Spinks, brother *Robert* - 12/9
Catherine & Gerry St. John, son *Gerry* - 12/23/14
Ronda Stansbery, daughter *Susan Anne Stansbery Stamman* - 12/22
Fred & Irene Sutton, mother(Fred) *Pearl Collins* - 12/19
Frank Yanni, wife *Delores* - 12/9

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 GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

As we approach the holidays it is normal for our fears to become magnified. The holidays put an extra burden on us physically, financially, and emotionally, this can be an overwhelming time. Sometimes friends and family forget the stress and depression we are coping with.

It is unfair to expect the non-bereaved to understand what we are experiencing, and to know the length of time it takes to work through our grief. Before our loss we could not fathom the depth of despair it takes to get through our anguish. This may be a good time to be honest, and tell family and friends, "we are both physically, and emotionally drained, we plan to participate in the holidays as much as we are capable. But, that we do need understanding and to be excused from painful gatherings, so we can grieve, remember our child or sibling and heal through doing these things." When responding to invitations, it is helpful to be very open (but kind), and ask them to not pressure us to do more than we are capable.

Part of our celebration is to reminisce the beautiful time our family was all-intact and enjoying just being together. Now we face these same holidays knowing the circle will never again be complete, the intensity of it all makes us afraid. We are aware of the shattered dreams and how our future will always remain somewhat fragmented. It is very difficult for newly bereaved to accept that it will get any better. But, those of us who have more time in our bereavement know the pain will soften, but special occasions will always tug at our emotional stability. We have also learned that those occasional tears are OK, and now that we are much stronger we can tolerate the down times, for we have much more resilience.

Frequently, we try to take on more than we can handle. It is important to not over burden ourselves for that increases our fatigue, and lowers our self-esteem when we can't fulfill our commitment. You may want to re-evaluate your traditions, and decide which ones are really important to you, and are they worth keeping.

For those of us who have been able to maintain our relationship with our Supreme Being find it helpful to concentrate on our spirituality, rather than the commercialism of the holidays. It often helps to do something to commemorate our children or sibling - a remembrance service, light a candle, buy an ornament, write notes to our loved one, visit the grave, only you and your immediate family can decide what will get you through the holidays. It often helps to set aside some special time for our grief, to deal with our feelings, and express our love for our child or sibling in private.

Remember, getting through the holidays will help us take one more step in our healing process. It is unfortunate that we have to experience this pain to grow, and regain control of our life. Each of these hurdles helps to strengthen us, to get us through today, and into tomorrow, where we may find hope and peace.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel*, TCF Valley Forge

**We wish all of you a very meaningful Holiday,
May love be what you remember the most.**



OUR LOGO: ITS MYSTERY AND ITS HISTORY

Are the hands reaching out or letting go? Are they the hands of one person or two? These are questions often heard from new members,...so we asked the people who know.

Much of the beauty of our logo lies in the fact that there are no definitive answers to its symbolism. At first glance its meaning seems obvious; yet as you look more closely, these questions may arise.

The hands represent different things to us at different periods in our grief journeys. To the newly bereaved, the hands reach out toward him or her, offering comfort and support. Later in our grief journeys, they may symbolize the process of letting go, of coming to terms with the child's death, or acknowledgment that the child is no longer a part of our earthly existence.

Still later in our grief journeys, we begin to reinvest in life and reach out toward others. Then, *our* hands become the hands which are extended to the newly bereaved. ***The circle is complete:*** a circle of love and understanding, with the child at the center.

Joe Lawley, Founder-Chairman of the Society of the Compassionate Friends (Coventry, England, 1969) supplied the details on how the logo came about. Help came from John Fisher Design, Marketing, LTD, Maggie and John Fisher (Coventry) – whose 8 ½ year-old daughter, Clare, was killed on November 17, 1974 –wrote: "We are mobile, immediately available, and ready, both physically and spiritually, to begin work for the Friends. Please use us".

The logo first appeared on the June 1975 newsletter. Originally, the logo was a bright emerald green; subsequently, in 1977, the general universal color of royal blue with white was used and continues to this day.

Joyce Andrews
From "Friends Caring & Sharing"

MY SWING

Out in the backyard
Was the most wonderful thing,
From a huge maple tree
There hung my swing.

When I had a problem
A bad day at school,
Straight to my swing
That's what I'd do!

I'd swing away worries
Swing high in the air,
When I was there swinging
I hadn't a care.

Now I am much older
The pains run so deep,
I have much depression
And I cannot sleep.

Now I am childless
I don't have my boy,
My reason for living
The source of my joy.

My life is so different
Not a minute goes by,
When I can become tearful
I just start to cry.

My husband's so patient
With me all these years,
He never stops trying
To stop all my tears.

He gave me a gift
Only a true friend can bring,
He gave me back comfort
He gave me my swing!

Diane Hornis
Alive Alone Newsletter, Feb. 1999

SHARED THOUGHTS ON SIBLING GRIEF

We often call bereaved siblings the forgotten mourners. Frequently friends and family treat them as secondary grievers, and the approach is "How are your parents doing?", therefore, giving siblings the impression their grief is not as significant as parental grief. Often we hear the ridiculous suggestion that siblings should be strong, and take care of their parents. When siblings cannot reduce the parental grief they feel they have failed, which adds to their low self-esteem.

Our longest lifetime relationship is usually with our siblings. We count on them to always be there for us. We share with them our innermost secrets, as both children and adults. We even expect them to be there for our unborn children, as well as support when our parents are aged. They are our confidant, our best friend, our idol, our advisor, and sometimes they are younger, and we are the same things to them.

When our sibling dies we no longer feel so invincible, we worry who will be next, and quickly learn how final death is. Our family is disrupted, our sibling position changes, we may now be the oldest, the youngest, or the only child. We cannot avoid the pain of grief, our parents are different now, they are so consumed with their own grief, that they cannot be the parent that we want them to be for us, this lessens our security. Everyone's personality has changed. We not only have to adjust to the new person we have become, but also to the difference that the whole family has undergone. Sometimes it is very difficult to be in the home, when it is so filled with pain, and so much of the laughter has turned to tears. Frequently friends are easier to talk to, than our family. The fear of losing another family member makes the parents so over protective, that they take away the carefree feeling of life, which adds to the stress of sibling grief.

When our loss is at an early age, it is not uncommon to later grieve as an adult for that person. I was 12 years old, when I lost my first sibling. My brother was 30. I later went through an entirely different grief cycle as an adult. At the age of 12, I felt my brother was much older. As I got nearer and surpassed the age of 30, I then realized how young he was. This stirred up new emotions.

The hurting and healing causes us to redefine our priorities in life. Grief frequently causes us to have more compassion for hurting people. We learn to appreciate people more than things, and frequently a life long commitment is made to make the world a better place. It is our choice to decide what we will do with the experience we have so painfully endured.

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

Once I saw a grown man cry.
"Now there goes a man with feeling," said I.
He was strong, able, quite well built,
With muscles, gray hair and charm to the hilt.

I moved toward him slowly and said,
"What's wrong?"
The look he gave me was tear-filled and long.
"I cry for a child. My grandchild has died."
So I sat beside him and two grown men cried.

Author Unknown

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Holidays are often difficult for anyone who has experienced the death of someone loved. Rather than times of family togetherness, sharing and thanksgiving, holidays can bring feelings of sadness, loss and emptiness.

LOVE DOES NOT END WITH DEATH

Since love does not end with death, holidays may result in a renewed sense of personal grief – a feeling of loss unlike that experienced in the routine of daily living. Society encourages you to join in the holiday spirit, but all around you the sounds, sights and smells trigger memories of the one you love who has died.

No simple guidelines exist that will take away the hurt you are feeling. We hope, however, the following suggestions will help you better cope with your grief during this joyful, yet painful, time of the year. As you read through this, remember that by being tolerant and compassionate with yourself, you will continue to heal in your personal grief experience.

TALK ABOUT YOUR GRIEF

During the holiday season, don't be afraid to express your feelings of grief. Ignoring your grief won't make the pain go away and talking about it openly often makes you feel better. Find caring friends and relatives who will listen – without judging you. They will help make you feel understood.

ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY STRESS

You may already feel stressed so don't over-extend yourself. Avoid isolating yourself, but be sure to recognize the need to have special time for yourself. Realize also that merely "keeping busy" won't distract you from your grief. Experience suggests that it only increases stress and postpones the need to talk out thoughts and feelings related to your grief.

BE WITH SUPPORTIVE, COMFORTING PEOPLE

Identify those friends and relatives who understand that the holiday season can increase your sense of loss and who will allow you to talk openly about your feelings. Find those persons who encourage you to be yourself and accept your feelings both happy and sad.

MENTION THE NAME OF THE PERSON WHO HAD DIED

Include the person's name in your holiday conversation. If you are able to talk candidly, other people are more likely to recognize your need to remember that special person who was an important part of your life.

DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Well-meaning friends and family often try to prescribe what is good for you during the holidays. Instead of going along with their plans, focus on what you personally want to do. Discuss your wishes with a caring, trusted friend. Talking about these wishes will help you to clarify what it is you want to do during the holidays. As you become aware of your needs, share them with your friends and family.

(continued on page 11)

BE TOLERANT OF YOUR PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITS

Feelings of loss will probably leave you fatigued. Your low energy level may naturally slow you down. Respect what your body and mind are telling you and lower your own expectations about being at your peak during the holiday season.

EXPRESS YOUR FAITH

During the holidays, you may find a renewed sense of faith or discover a new set of beliefs. Associate with people who understand and respect your need to talk about these beliefs. If your faith is important, you may want to attend a holiday service or special religious ceremony.

EMBRACE YOUR TREASURE OF MEMORIES

Memories are one of the legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. And holidays always make you think about times past. Instead of ignoring these memories, share them with your family and friends. Keep in mind that memories are tinged with both happiness and sadness. If your memories bring laughter, smile. If your memories bring sadness, then it's all right to cry. Memories that were made in love – no one can ever take them away from you.

RENEW YOUR RESOURCES FOR LIVING

Spend time thinking about the meaning and purpose of your life. The death of one loved creates opportunities for taking inventory of your life – past, present and future. The combination of a holiday and a loss naturally results in looking inward and assessing your individual situation. Make the best use of this time to define the positive things in life that surround you.

PLAN AHEAD FOR FAMILY GATHERINGS

Decide the family traditions you want to continue and the new ones you would like to begin following the death of someone loved. Structure your holiday time. This will help you anticipate activities, rather than just reacting to whatever happens. Getting caught off guard can create feelings of panic, fear and anxiety during a time of the year when your feelings of grief are already heightened. As you make your plans, however, leave room to change them if you feel it is appropriate.

AS YOU APPROACH THE HOLIDAYS, REMEMBER: GRIEF IS BOTH A NECESSITY AND A PRIVILEGE

It comes as a result of giving and receiving love. Don't let anyone take your grief away. Love yourself. Be patient with yourself. And allow yourself to be surrounded by loving and caring people

Dr. Alan Wolfelt



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