

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

Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of Interest.

Meeting - 12/7/2023

Next meeting - 1/4/2024

December 10, 2023 — Keep in mind, this our World Candlelighting Ceremony at 2 pm.



December 2023

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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.

No new friends

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.

The Chapter

LOVE GIFTS

Ed and Sue Duffy — in Memory of Pete's 47th Birthday

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 the Fellowship 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.

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

Philip W. Willams

Times when just one person is missing-
the whole world seems so empty.

Author Unknown

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

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

Nina Ansel - Jenny - daughter - 12/21
 Eric Archibald - Naroly - daughter - 12/6
 Carole Bailey - Matthew J. Bailey - son - 12/21
 Richard & Jo Bewley - Kevin Bewley - son - 12/29
 Bob & Marge Blasucci - Adam - son - 12/26
 Lisa Bledy - Danielle Bledy - sister - 12/4
 Marbeth Blocklinger - Parker - grandson - 12/13, Bryam Jr - grandson - 12/13
 Christine Chamberlain - Lily - daughter - 12/16
 Becky & Frank Clark - Pat - son - 12/4
 Tracy & Mike Collins - Krystal Chuck - daughter - 12/5
 Carole and Kevin Creighton - Ryan Kent Creighton - son - 12/6
 Reno & Bonnie Crescimone - Jonathan - son - 12/21
 Bill & Donna Deasey - Michelle Deasey - daughter - 12/19
 Helen Deery - Ronald J. Deery, Jr. - son - 12/20
 Susan Dehlinger - Amy M Dehlinger - daughter - 12/7
 Antoinette & John DiDonato - Kenneth (Kenny) - son - 12/5
 Karen Donaldson - Willow Ann - daughter - 12/28
 Maureen & Jim Fleagle - Brian - son - 12/11
 Lee & Patricia Grossman - Rachel Leah - daughter - 12/5
 Giuliana Hilend - Patrick Andrew Hilend - son - 12/10
 Michelle Hillstrom - Jen - daughter - 12/20
 Enid M. Irizarry - Lisette M. Molina - daughter - 12/25
 Carl and Dorothy Johnson-Speight -
 Carlena Speight - daughter - 12/13, Khaaliq Jabbar Johnson - son - 12/6
 Joan Kingslake - Ann Kingslake Woods - daughter - 12/31
 Howard & Stacy Koller - Kaitlin - daughter - 12/18
 Teresa & Bill Lattanze - William Noel Lattanze - son - 12/25
 Tracy Lukens - Parker - son - 12/13, Bryan Jr - son - 12/13
 Timothy & Maxine Lurowist - Kristine - daughter - 12/24
 Alfred J. & Joan Michini - Alfred J. Michini, II * - son - 12/14
 Alexandra Milas - Nicholas Stathes - mom's brother - 12/19
 Gerald & Margaret Milice - Gerald Milice - son - 12/11
 Greg and Mary Miller - David - son - 12/3
 Carol & Dennis O'Connor - Jack Coladonato - brother - 12/3
 Roy Redman - Linda Inez Redman - daughter - 12/16
 Jill & Richard Reich - Patrick - son - 12/28
 Tony & Toni Riccardi - David Riccardi - son - 12/1
 Marcella Rice - Raymond Anthony Rice - brother - 12/9
 Daune Ring - Chloe - daughter - 12/29

Anniversaries - Cont'd

Margaret & Robert Rooney - Sharon Rooney - daughter - 12/8
 Beth Schad - Gage - son - 12/27
 Art & Carol Silverman - Cheryl Beth Silverman - daughter - 12/16
 Mike & Beverly Smith - Ryan - son - 12/11
 Lisa M Spinks - Robert - brother - 12/9
 Ronda Stansbery - Susan Anne Stansbery Stamman - daughter - 12/22
 Fred & Irene Sutton - Pearl Collins - mother (Fred) - 12/19
 Frank Yanni - Delores - wife - 12/9

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.

Marie Hofmockel , TCF Valley Forge

BIRTHDAYS

Eric Archibald - Naroly - daughter - 12/21
 Lori Bartholomew - Matthew - brother - 12/17
 Tom & Kathy Biggar - Ava Nobles - granddaughter - 12/13
 Eleanor Brennan - Jonathan Masiak - grandson - 12/20
 Ben & Cathy Breskman - Brian - son - 12/11
 Libby Cavallaro - Theresa - sister - 12/29
 Christine Chamberlain - Lily - daughter - 12/16
 Becky & Frank Clark - Pat - son - 12/16
 Jean & Bill Cotter - Patrick Cotter - son - 12/20
 Bobbie Coyle - Whitney Coyle - son - 12/23
 Peter De Moerloose - Olivia - daughter - 12/30
 Tom & Marge Del Rosario - Dominic - son - 12/14
 Antoinette & John DiDonato - Kenneth (Kenny) - son - 12/15
 Joseph & Patsy Dooley - Peter J. Dooley - son - 12/22
 Ed & Sue Duffy - Peter - son - 12/12
 Justine Ellinger - Keira Ellinger - daughter - 12/11
 Bob & Dena Filipone - Denise - daughter - 12/13
 Mary Ann Flocco - Barbara - sister - 12/22
 John Gailey - Alex - son - 12/30
 Bonnie Gardner - Michelle - daughter - 12/16
 Suze Goldberg - Neal - Uncle - 12/14
 Mary Green - Paul Green - , 12/2
 Jack & Freda Gross - Linda Joy Gross - daughter - 12/28
 Ginger Jarrett - Adrienne - daughter - 12/5
 Joan Kellett - Daniel Thomas Kellett - son - 12/7
 Wendy Kuhn - David - brother - 12/19
 Teresa & Bill Lattanze - Jodi Noell Lattanze - daughter - 12/19
 Frank & Laura Lincicome - Daniel - son - 12/22
 Sue, Dave, Dan, and Lauren McCarthy - Brian McCarthy - son and brother - 12/25
 Kevin & Nancy McKelvey - Michael - son - 12/4
 Fran & Kathy Moran - Denise Nicole Moran - daughter - 12/31
 Ann Murray - Brian Rapoport - son - 12/2
 Bonnie Nimerfroh - David - son - 12/19
 Jenn Nobles - Ava Ruth Marie - daughter - 12/13
 Maurice & Ruth Onraet - Thomas - son - 12/19
 Betty Jane Peters - Neilson - Martin A Peters - son - 12/8
 Maureen & David Rich - Mallory Kirby Rich - daughter - 12/4
 E. Pearl & Ernest Smith - Tony - son - 12/23
 Eileen Smith - Craig - son - 12/17
 John & Rose Stanley - Susan Stanley - daughter - 12/4
 Ronda Stansbery - Susan Anne Stansbery Stamman - daughter - 12/22
 Luanne Stetler - Jordyn - grandson - 12/25
 Edward & Mary Stimson - Keith Stimson - son - 12/29
 Morgan E Taylor - Devan - sister - 12/25
 Brooke Test - Devan - sister - 12/25



BIRTHDAYS (continued)

Judy Tomarelli - Daniel Robert Tomarelli - son - 12/19
 Tim and Mary Tuinstra - Sophia Tuinstra - granddaughter - 12/1
 Laura & Leo Weishew - Steven McGowan - brother - 12/28
 John & Cecila Zisk - Jacob - son - 12/13

BEATITUDES FOR THOSE WHO COMFORT

Blessed are those who do not use tears to measure the true feelings of the bereaved.

Blessed are those who do not always have a quick “comforting” answer.

Blessed are those who do not make judgments on the bereaved’s closeness to God by their reaction to the loss of their loved one.

Blessed are those who hear with their hearts and not with their minds.

Blessed are those who allow the bereaved enough time to heal.

Blessed are those who admit their uncomfortableness and put it aside to help the bereaved.

Blessed are those who do not give unwanted advice.

Blessed are those who continue to call, visit, and reach out when the crowd has dwindled and the wounded are left standing alone.

Blessed are those who know the worth of each person as a unique individual and do not pretend that they can be replaced or forgotten.

Blessed are those who realize the fragility of bereavement and handle it with an understanding shoulder and a loving heart.

Jacki Deems

I WILL NOT FORGET YOU

I will not forget you,
 Boy with hazel eyes.
 I will see you shining
 In every new sunrise.

I will not forget you,
 Sweet memories make me glad.
 I will not forget you
 Not all the love we had.

I will not forget you,
 Child with golden hair.
 I will feel your presence
 You are every where.

I will not forget you,
Your laughter or your smile.
 You'll be right beside me
 And walk my every mile.

I will not forget you,
 Your grin with dimples deep.
 I'll hold you in my dreams
 While in my deepest sleep..

No, I will not forget you,
 Your spirit fills my soul.
 I will not forget my son
 Your memory keeps me whole.

Jacecqeline Brown

Peace Valley TCF

New Britain, PA

Santa Lost a Child

Santa lost a child.
You can see it in his eyes.
There's a spot of deep dark wisdom there.
Behind the krinkling brightly twinkling
ides the tender sadness of a long lost love.

Santa lost his only child.
You can see it in his hands.
They are soft and sure when he holds a
young first born.
They are folded firmly with respect when he
counsels an only
on what the future may bring.

Santa lost a daughter.
You can see it in how he is with girls.
He beams bright with glee as he beholds the
princess in each,
the pretty one who will live long ... and
healthy ... and happily ever after.
May theirs be the dreams that come true.

It was well before the days of yore
when Santa was just a mortal man,
when his soulmate Jess could bear but a
single child,
when that child blossomed into a practically
perfect little girl,
when that cherished little girl had just turned nine.
That's when the illness took its wretched hold
and reduced her to a wisp.
And, on a cold gray day, she blew away in the wind.

Santa lost a child, his only child,
his darling daughter, the love of his life.
Now you know why Santa and his wife
forsook the mortal world.
And now you know why Santa loves every child
as if each were his very own.

R. M. Mebane

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
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**The
Compassionate
Friends Inc.**

November 2023

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