



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## FEBRUARY 2016

### 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. Phone on **meeting evenings only** is 610-265-0733. All other times please call Rhonda at 484-919-0820.

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

**Feb 4, 2016 General Sharing**

**Mar 3, 2016 General Sharing**

**July 8 - 10, 2016 39th TCF National Conference  
"Hope Rises on the Wings of Love"  
Scottsdale, Arizona (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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#### 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**

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.

**Pete Mihalek son, *Andy* (23)**

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**REFRESHMENTS**

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

**The Valley Forge Chapter**, for all the children & siblings of the Chapter.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Thomas & Anne Glenn** in loving memory of our daughter, ***Lauren Glenn*** (4) and ***Michael Cutone*** (31).

**Gerry & Nancy Hall** in loving memory of our son, ***Douglas Byron Hall*** (27).

**Enid Irizarry** in loving memory of my daughter, ***Lisette M. Molina*** (19).

**James & Maryellen Madden** in loving memory of our daughter, ***Anne Marie Madden*** (15).

**Robert Mc Cullough** in loving memory of my daughter, ***Caroline*** (2).

**Tony & Toni Riccardi** in loving memory of our son, ***David*** on his birthday 2/17.

**Robert & Margaret Rooney** in loving memory of our daughter, ***Sharon Rooney*** (16)

**Jo Anne Sands** in loving memory of my son, ***Tyler*** (22).

**Carol Sannella** in loving memory of my son, ***David*** (19), and my husband, ***Bob***.

**Fred & Irene Sutton** in loving memory of our son, ***Jim Sutton*** (21).

**JANUARY NEWSLETTER ADDITION**

Page 6. under January Anniversaries should have also read:

**Dorothy and G. Robert Daily, Sr. , son *David G Daily 1/11***

**NEW CHAPTER** has been chartered

#2473 TCF of Erie, PA

3411 Saltsman Road

Erie, PA 16510-3256

Meetings: second Tuesdays of each month 6:00 - 8:00PM

Wheezy's Kove

4887 Buffalo Road, Erie PA 16510-2301

Meeting information

Chapter Leaders: Laura Maas / Darlene Moore

email: [compassionatefriendseriecounty@gmail.com](mailto:compassionatefriendseriecounty@gmail.com)

Phone contact: (814) - 504-1559

**DOLORES YANNI**

Our January issue of the Valley Forge Chapter newsletter noted the passing of Dolores on Dec. 9, 2016. Dolores and her husband Frank joined the Valley Forge Chapter, shortly after the death of their son David, who died February 10, 1987.

The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends has been designated as her memorial fund. The January newsletter listed eight families who had given love gifts in memory of Dolores, and in honor of her son David.

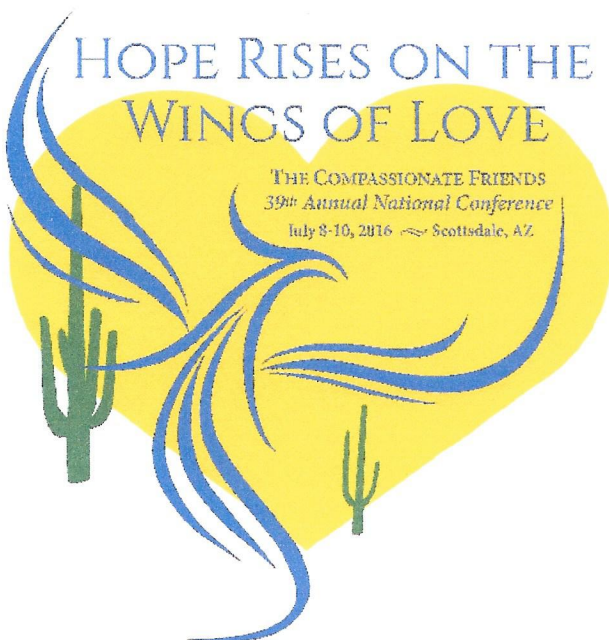
Additional families who have given to her memorial fund since the publication of the January newsletter are listed below.

**LOVE GIFTS IN MEMORY OF DOLORES YANNI, AND IN HONOR OF HER SON DAVID**

**Arthur Sullivan & Judith Anastasi  
 Peter & Stavroula Angelakos  
 Barbara & Craig Deslaurier  
 Jean Caputo  
 Gilbert & Diane DiSalle  
 Michael & Karen Everhart  
 Thomas & Margaret Friedman  
 Connie & Gene Gifford  
 Sheila Kanter  
 Barbara Leone  
 George & Joan Nebel**

**Joseph & Angelika Papke  
 James & Edith Pohlman  
 Bradley Rickenbach  
 Donna & Stephen Sullivan  
 Larry & Barbara Tuller  
 Sally & Pasquale Urbano  
 Rose Wescott  
 Lou & Jean Williams  
 Rose Yanni, in loving memory of my wonderful sister-in-law **Dolores**, and nephew **David**. They meant so much to me. I send my love and prayers to my brother **Frank**.**

**COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2016**



The Compassionate Friends National Conferences offer much healing to bereaved parents.

Many well known speakers will be addressing the opening and closing sessions., luncheons, banquets, and many workshops on different aspects of grief.

National Conferences offer a Hospitality Room, Reflection Room, Butterfly Boutique, Book Store, and Memory Boards to place a picture of your loved ones, and a candle lighting service.

There will be time for one-on-one sharing with our TCF families.

**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.

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

**Madeleine Adler, son *J. Peter Adler* 2/5**  
**Ann Bruner, sister *Katy Wade* 2/8**  
**William Bodulich, son *William W. Bodulich* 2/14**  
**Donna & Gregory Class, daughter *Megan Maria Class* 2/7**  
**Wendy Coleman, daughter *Gabrielle* 2/19**  
**Liz & Scott Conaghan, brother *Jan* 2/6**  
**Jane Cox, son *Bill* 2/21**  
**Bud Cunnane, son *Patrick* 2/14**  
***Jim & Ruth Fairley*, son *David Fairley* 2/5**  
**Rochena & Pat Fatale, son *Mark Longan* 2/21**  
**Charlie & Jill Fick, son *Michael Sternberg* 2/10**  
**Laura Giordano, son *Peter* 2/12**  
**Sandra Greenly, son *Michael Greenly* 2/18**  
**Tim & Rosemarie Griffiths, son *Timothy Griffiths* 2/18**  
**Cathy Grosshanten, son *Gary* 2/16**  
**Lee & Patricia Grossman, daughter *Rachel Leah* 2/2**  
**Jean & James Hayden, son *LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden* 2/17**  
**Othell & William Heaney, son *Kevin* 2/14**  
**Nora & Peter Heiss, daughter *Noreen Schmucker* 2/15**  
**Kimberlee Hills, brother *Chuck Hills* 2/10**  
**Charles Hills, son *Chuck Hills* 2/10**  
**Thomas & Virginia Hoesch, son *William E. "Buddy" Hoesch* 2/16**  
**Marlene Hoffman, son *Jesse Hoffman* 2/3**  
**Marlene Hoffman, brother *Barry Hoffman* 2/4**  
**Sally Ivory, son *Jimmy Ivory* 2/4**  
**Joan Jagers, son *John Costello* 2/17**  
**Deborah Keevill, son *Brandon* 2/23**  
**Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy, son *Philip V. Kennedy* 2/22**  
**Margaret & Edward Kiefski, Sr., son *Edward Kiefski, Jr.* 2/11**  
**Lynette Lampmann, son *Shawn* 2/10**  
**Carole LaSorsa, son *Stephen* 2/17**  
**Liz & Joe Loeper, son *Jamey* 2/27**  
**Julie & Richard May, son *William L. May* 2/25**  
**Jennifer McGowan Clark, brother *Joseph McGowan* 2/25**  
**Sue McMaster, cousin *Laura* 2/28**  
**Kathleen Mitchel, brother *Jeffrey Hathaway* 2/19**  
**Audrey Morasco, son *Christopher Morasco* 2/22**  
**Mary Mulholland, son *Joseph McGowan* 2/25**  
**John & Mary Ann Murphy, daughter *Maureen Murphy* 2/13**

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS CONTINUED**

**Dale & Helen Ninneman, son *Dale Ninneman II* 2/24**  
**Connie & Richard Nolan, son *Christopher Nolan* 2/9**  
**Emil Nunez, son *Oliver Nunez* 2/12**  
**Robert & Jean Phillips, son *Robert Phillips* 2/23**  
**Carol Phipps, daughter *Casey* 2/18**  
**Joan & Earl Reigel, daughter *Melissa Reigel* 2/19**  
**Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert, mother (*Bubbles*) *Theresa Volpe* - 2/27**  
**Tony & Toni Riccardi, son *David Riccardi* 2/17**  
**Barbara Rossman, daughter *Kickole Lyn* 2/13**  
**Linda Sandlin, brother *LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden* 2/17**  
**Bernice Scheinfield, son *Richard Scheinfield* 2/18**  
**Rosemarie Scott-Griffiths, stepson *Timothy F. Griffiths* 2/18**  
**Frank and Kay Shinnars, son *Erik Shinnars* 2/22**  
**Felicia Skalecki, son *Zuko Iroh McNulty* 2/4**  
**Janemarie Smith, daughter *Beth Jovanovic* 2/6**  
**Gary Snyder, daughter *Alyse* 2/16/**  
**Margaret & Wade Stallard, son *Wade Hampton Stallard, III* 2/21**  
**Elaine & Joe Stillwell, son *Denis E. O'Connor, III* 2/4**  
**Robert & Nancy Thompson, friend *J. Peter Adler* 2/5**  
**Esperanza & Libardo Toro, daughter *Maria Eugenia Toro* 2/9**  
**Barbara Torrens, brother *Robert Birmele* 2/18**  
**Steven Tucker, son *Steven II* 2/27**  
**Mek Wagner, daughter *Paige* 2/1**  
**Henry & Elizabeth Weaver, grandson *Donald Smith, Jr.* 2/24**  
**John & Linda Wilson, son *Sean* 2/18**  
**Gisela Witte, son *Bruce G Edlund* 2/24**

**FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

**Gary & Phyllis Adler, son *Matthew* - 2/18**  
**Mark Adler, brother *Matthew* - 2/18**  
**Marilynn Anton, cousin/godmother *Douglas Hofmockel* - 2/7**  
**Nina Bernstein, son *Andrew Voluck* - 2/9**  
**Donna & Gregory Class, daughter *Megan Maria Class* - 2/9**  
**Lisa Connolly, daughter *Elyce Pindjak* - 2/10**  
**Janet Cozzone, daughter *Jesika* - 2/19**  
**Allison Crowder, daughter *Amber* - 2/21**  
**Linda Cymbala, son *Nicholas Cymbala* - 2/5**  
**Emilie Degville, daughter *Madeline* - 2/8**  
**Harold & Marcia Epstein, grandson *Andrew Voluck* - 2/9**  
**Danielle Evelyn, son *Samir* - 2/12**  
**Rita Gibbons, daughter *Patricia Gibbons* - 2/1**  
**Jack & Freda Gross, daughter *Linda Joy Gross* - 2/25**  
**Frank Harms, son *Tyler* - 2/16**

## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED

Kimberlee Hills, brother *Chuck Hills* - 2/24  
Charles Hills, son *Chuck Hills* - 2/24  
Marlene Hoffman, brother *Barry Hoffman* - 2/12  
Marie & Ken Hofmockel, son *Douglas Hofmockel* - 2/7  
Robert Huss, son *Daniel* - 2/27  
Ginger Jarrett, daughter *Adrienne* - 2/4  
Judy Kahl, son *Mark* - 2/16  
Vern & Joyce Kaiser, son *Michael* - 2/2  
Barbara & Michael Kaner, son *Max Steven Kaner* - 2/7  
Sandi Kensicki, sister *Rose* - 2/5  
Tobie Kessler, daughter *Beth Kessler Waasdorp* - 2/9  
Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner, daughter *Anna Kreiner* - 2/10  
Lynette Lampmann, son *Shawn* - 2/13  
Sue Lawlor, son *Jim* - 2/17  
Janet Leflar, son *Scott* - 2/22  
Mary Mac Farland, son *Marc* - 2/12  
Carl & Josie Malitsky, daughter *Cynthia Malitsky* - 2/8  
James & Mary Beth Mattiford, son *Scott Mattiford* - 2/2  
Debra McKinley - Hastings, brother *Ken* - 2/17  
William & Carol Meehan, son *Patrick W. Meehan* - 2/11  
Alexandra Milas, mom's sister *Demitra Vallianos* - 2/17  
Jeffrey & Christine Miller, daughter *Teresa Leanne Miller* - 2/20  
Andrew Miller, daughter *Perri* - 2/5  
Leonard & Thelma Miller, son *Lowell Bruce Miller* - 2/23  
Kathleen Mitchel, brother *Jeffrey Hathaway* - 2/27  
Fran & Kathy Moran, daughter *Denise Nicole Moran* - 2/3  
Anthony & Mary Morrell, son *Andrew Michael Morrell* - 2/2  
Aminah Na'im, son *Dawann* - 2/14  
Kathy Nicholson, son *Frank* - 2/3  
Dale & Helen Ninneman, son *Dale Ninneman II* - 2/29  
Carol Phipps, daughter *Casey* - 2/16  
Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert, son *Thomas Reinert, Jr.* - 2/19  
Susan Reynolds, son *Craig Anderson* - 2/3  
Jacqueline Rider, son *Matthew Rider* 2/14  
Lois Robinson, son *Randy* - 2/1  
Felicia Skalecki, son *Zuko Iroh McNulty* - 2/4  
Melissa Smith, daughter *Ava* - 2/5  
Penny & Steve Stanaitis, daughter *Mikayla Faith* - 2/20  
Ellen & Frank Svitek, daughter *Kate Elizabeth Svitek* - 2/9  
Mary Ellen Swider, daughter *Kelly Swider* - 2/8  
Elaine & Tim Thomas, son *Seth Peterson* - 2/9

**FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED**

**Marilyn Toole, son *Ted Toole* - 2/6**

**Laura & Leo Weishew, brother *Steven McGowan* - 2/2**

**Terry & Bob Wolfe, son and stepson *Steven Moyer* - 2/15**

**Rose Yanni, nephew *David Yanni* - 2/10**

**Frank Yanni, son *David Yanni* - 2/10**

**Anthony & Cindy Zalesky, grandson *Max Zalesky* - 2/12**

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**Abraham Lincoln**, "With the fearful strain that is on me night and day, if I did not laugh,  
I should die."

Following are his **Words of Encouragement:**

"In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all ...

It comes with bitterest agony ...

Perfect relief is not possible, except with time.

You cannot realize that you will ever feel better ...

And yet this is a mistake.

You are sure to be happy again.

To know this, which is certainly true,

Will make you some less miserable now.

I have experienced enough to know what I say."

***Abraham Lincoln*** (lost three sons, Edward age 4, William age 11,  
and Thomas age 18)

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**SET-BACKS**

Set-backs and detours in healing are caused by internal as well as external events.

Anniversaries, things people say, a touch of the flu, bad luck in traffic, a child at Halloween, his favorite food at the supermarket; a friend moving to another city – the list goes on.

As life goes on in its ordinary fashion, it cannot fail but to present us with reminders of our own loss and tragedy. Relatively minor things, such as changes, thoughtlessness or neglect can overwhelm us too completely for too long.

When the first onslaught of pain begins to fade, we should try to accept the fact that healing from grief rarely happens in a quick and unbroken line of progress. Grievers and their friends do well to remember that grief will take us all on a journey of set-backs and detours. Healing work requires patience.

And when grief threatens the fiber of our life, we need to remind ourselves over and over again that patience IS the exercise of hope.

*Sascha Wagner*

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON LOVE**

Our dictionary says **love is a fond, deep, tender feeling**. Love is the one thing we have in abundance for our child or sibling. It often sustains us through our most difficult days. But until we can learn what to do with all the love we have stored for our loved ones, it can make us feel frustrated and to the point of explosion.

When our child or sibling dies, sometimes our first reaction is that all communication to that person has to stop. We buried the child or sibling, but the **love is still with us**, it did not go away. Love is our feelings and emotions for the person, **and can still flow between us**. Love is certainly stronger than separation. It hurts because we can not feel, touch, and hug that person that was so much a part of our lives. Perhaps the reason we hug at Compassionate friends, is we now appreciate the wonderful sense of touch, and we want to release our emotions to another who is in similar pain.

We could all write a book on the price we have paid for love, but I have never met a bereaved person who would say they regretted having loved. **Our reactions** to this terrible thing that has happened to us **plays a big role in getting us to the other side**. Sometimes we have to work very hard to concentrate on the good memories.

If we can keep our **love, memories, family, and friends**, we have salvaged **the ingredients to make life worthwhile again**. But we need time to grieve and go through the pain, tears, and the feeling we are losing it totally, before our grief will soften to the point we can tolerate life once again. It is necessary to **acknowledge our grief, to confront it helps to resolve it**. Healing does not mean forgetting. Life can be meaningful again, but it will be different, and a residue of grief will always be with us. But compared to the early stages we can be thankful, for this improvement is much beyond most of our earlier expectations.

We have learned the real meaning of love and compassion, and hopefully we will use that to help others through their loss.

God Bless,  
*Marie Hofmockel* , TCF Valley Forge

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Shadows often lengthen --  
and sometimes sadness --  
comes stealing up from  
the place of remembering.

For sadness is but a shadow.  
A shadow that is fashioned  
from love's bright sunlight  
shining upon a treasured memory.

*Winston O. Abbott - from his book, Come Walk Among The Stars*



**PLEASE DON'T OVERLOOK ME!**

I know my size is smaller  
my hands are littler  
my legs are shorter,  
but my **HEART**  
can hurt just like yours.

I'm a **CHILD**  
You're an adult...  
Please don't overlook me!

I know my vocabulary isn't the greatest  
my attention span lacks longevity  
my logic sometimes seems irrational,  
But my **MIND**  
can question death just like yours can.

I'm a **TEENAGER**  
You're an adult...  
Please don't overlook me!

I know my needs seem less important  
my feelings seem less controlled  
my actions are hard to understand,  
But my **BODY**  
needs a hug just like yours does.

I'm **YOUNGER**  
You're older,  
Please don't overlook me!

I know tears are hard to show  
fears are difficult to face,  
death means not coming back,  
But my **SOUL**  
searches for reassurance just like yours does.

I'm **HURTING**  
And you're hurting too...  
Please don't overlook me!

*TCF, Sibling Page, Carson City, Nevada*

**A PART OF ME**

You were not just my brother,  
but you were my friend as well.  
You were supposed to be here always  
Or til the world came to an end.  
I know that we argued and  
Seemed to disagree,  
But I could always count on you  
To be there for me.  
You may be gone from this world I see,  
But you will always be a part of me.

**Donna Montville, TCF, Gardner, Maryland**  
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**AN EMPTY CHAIR**

The first wedding was two years after Alan, my twin-brother, passed away. My second oldest brother was getting married. I was waiting for the question, "When was I going to get married?" I was never asked so I couldn't use my prepared response, "When Alan could be my best man."  
I thought if I did get married I would have an empty chair next to me. If Alan couldn't be my best man, I didn't want anyone. My brother's name would appear in the program (that he would have designed) as honorary best man. This year I turned thirty-six, it was my sixth birthday without Alan. At the restaurant we had made a mistake, the reservation had been made for one too many. I had ended up sitting next to an empty chair.  
Although I thought, I was doing better, no longer crying at family events. I now realize that I will not have an empty chair at my wedding, if I can ever bring myself to get married without Alan being there. The loss I feel will always be there but it's much worse seeing an empty chair.

*Daniel P. Yoffee - TCF, Rockland, NY*

## DEALING WITH YOUR GRIEF

For those of us who are newly bereaved, discussion of this topic may give some guidance and encouragement, as we discover that there is something we can do to help alleviate the devastating pain of the loss of our child. For those of us who have already been down that path and continue to do our "grief work", our discussion may provide new avenues of self help. By our sharing, we reach others who will recognize our expressed experiences as their own, and come to know that we understand as perhaps few others can, that we have survived and that they can survive and go on with their lives, not in the same way, but in a measure of peace and serenity.

We have suffered a shock and pain unknown to others and unthinkable to us before the loss of our child. Both our physical and mental beings have been severely affected. There is no abracadabra that will remove the pain and confusion, but the effects can be lessened and softened by some steps which give us something to do about something which nothing can be done.

### Physical Needs and How to Meet Them --

1. Eat right. Try to include fresh vegetables, fruit and nourishing food. Some find it helps to eat small meals.
2. Get sufficient sleep and rest - this varies with the individual. For now, you may need to avoid responsibilities and activities that you took care of for others without a second thought. Let someone else do it this year and let them know that you may be able to assume this responsibility again later.
3. Exercise regularly. Some of us walk at the University Mall and at the County High track. Spa workouts are helpful.
4. Find a doctor who recognizes the special problems of grief. This may be difficult as we understand that grief is not emphasized greatly in training of doctors.
5. DECREASE alcohol and medication consumption.

### Mental Needs of Bereaved Parents - What You Can Do

1. Be nice to yourself. Learn what your capabilities are at this time and don't expect too much of yourself too soon. You be the judge of what to do. Don't let others impose their "shoulds", "ought to" and "guilts" on you.
2. Include some time with others as you can. try not to seclude yourself. Try to make the effort to keep in touch with people who make you feel better, not worse.
3. Seek professional help if necessary, but be sure to check out the credentials of the counselor, especially regarding training in the area of grief.
4. If married, don't expect too much of your spouse. He or she may not be able to give at this time - you are in the same river of grief, but are in two different canoes. Make allowances of each other - don't be judgmental.
5. Learn to express your anger in constructive ways, such as - writing it down, talking it over with a close friend or a Compassionate Friend, be physically active, attend as many meetings of The Compassionate Friends as you can. **Please remember, you may experience emotional hangover after a meeting and know that this, too, is a part of our healing and grief work and another step on our road to recovery.**

*Jackie Thomson / Tuscaloosa TCF*

TOGETHER WE'LL WALK THE STEPPING STONES

Come, take my hand, the road is long.  
We must travel by stepping stones.  
No, you're not alone, I'll go with you.  
I know the road well, I've been there.  
Don't fear the darkness, I'll be with you.  
We must take one step at a time.  
But remember, we may have to stop awhile.  
It is a long way to the other side,  
And there are many obstacles.

We have many stones to cross, some are bigger than others,  
Shock, denial and anger to start.  
Then comes guilt, despair and loneliness.  
It's a hard road to travel, but it must be done.  
It's the only way, to reach the other side.

Come, slip your hand in mine.  
What? Oh yes, it's strong, I've held many hands like yours.  
Yes, mine was one time small and weak like yours.  
Once, you see I had to take someone's hand in order to take the first step.  
Oops! You've stumbled, go ahead and cry.  
Don't be ashamed, I understand.  
Let's wait here awhile and get your breath.  
When you're stronger we'll go on, one step at a time.  
There's no need to hurry.

Say, it's nice to hear you laugh. Yes, I agree.  
The memories you shared are good.  
Look, we're half way there now, I can see the other side.  
It looks so warm and sunny.  
Oh, have you noticed, we're nearing the last stone and you're standing alone.  
And look, your hand, you've let go of mine,  
We've reached the other side.

But wait, look back, someone is standing there.  
They are alone and want to cross the stepping stones.  
I'd better go, they need my help.  
What? Are you sure?  
Why yes, go ahead I'll wait, you know the way, you've been there.  
Yes, I agree, it's your turn my friend ---  
To help someone else cross the stepping stones.  
May God be with you, *Barb Williams* - Ft. Wayne, IN

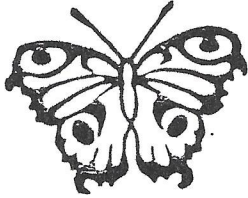


**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS, INC.**

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.

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