

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Inside Valley Forge

Meetings are on the **First Saturday** of every month, at 1:45 PM (ending at 3:30 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 Meetings -

February— No meeting

March — 3/2/2024 @ 1:45

April— 4/4/2024 @ 1:45

May— 5/4/2024 @ 1:45

June— 6/01/2024 @ 1:45

July— 7/06/2024 @ 1:45

August— 8/3/2024 @ 1:45

September— No Meeting

October - 10/5/2024 @ 1:45

November — 11/2/2024 @ 1:45

December— 12/8/2024

Remembrance service, 2 pm

The reason there is no meeting, the church has time reserved for other activities.



February 2024

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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.

Please make all checks Payable to:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
Send to Rhonda Gomez

Changes in this newsletter

The changes you see on the front page are due to the fact that we all are getting older and prefer not to drive at night. We consulted with the church staff to find out how we could come up with a day and time that is convenient for most of you. We will not be able to notify members about meeting cancellations due to bad weather if we not have their email addresses.

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.

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

John and Eileen Kostic — In memory of our son, John on his birthday.

Marcia G. Epstein - In memory of my grandson, Andrew Voluck on his birthday.

The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold its first meeting on the Saturday, March 2 at 1:45 PM. We go until 3:30 PM. Our first meeting will be March 2, 24 at 1:45 PM. We cannot meet for our meeting February 2024, September 2024, or December 2024 because the church scheduled something else those days.

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that come along." The danger lies in refusing to face the fear, in not daring to come to grips with it. If you fail anywhere along the line it will take away your confidence. You must make yourself succeed every time. You must try to do the thing you think you cannot do.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Those we love don't go away,
they walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
still loved, still missed, and very dear.

Author Unknown

Submitted by Rusty Puglisi

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

Gary & Phyllis Adler - Matthew - son - 2/18
 Marilyn Anton - Douglas Hofmockel - cousin/godmother - 2/7
 Nina Bernstein - Andrew Voluck - son - 2/9
 Donna & Gregory Class - Megan Maria Class - daughter - 2/9
 Allison Crowder - Amber - daughter - 2/21
 Frank & Linda Cymbala - Nicholas Cymbala - son - 2/5
 Carol Dawidziuk - Rachel - daughter - 2/27
 Emilie Degville - Madeline - daughter - 2/8
 Jennifer Dixon - Graham - son - 2/14
 Harold & Marcia Epstein - Andrew Voluck - grandson - 2/9
 Danielle Evelyn - Samir - son - 2/12
 Jack & Freda Gross - Linda Joy Gross - daughter - 2/25
 Frank Harms - Tyler - son - 2/16
 Kimberlee Hills - Chuck Hills - brother - 2/24
 Margaret Huss - Daniel - son - 2/27
 Tash Jackson - Peter Simmons Jr - brother - 2/14
 Ginger Jarrett - Adrienne - daughter - 2/4
 Jack & Stacy Kabic - Brithy - daughter - 2/3
 Vern & Joyce Kaiser - Michael - son - 2/2
 Barbara & Michael Kaner - Max Steven Kaner - son - 2/7
 Sandi Kensicki - Rose - sister - 2/5
 Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner - Anna Kreiner - daughter - 2/10
 Sara & Carl Kresge - Grant Kenneth Puskas - great grandson - 2/20
 Lynette Lampmann - Shawn - son - 2/13
 Sue Lawlor - Jim Sinha - son - 2/17
 Janet Leflar - Scott - son - 2/22
 Mary Mac Farland - Marc - son - 2/12
 Carl & Josie Malitsky - Cynthia Malitsky - daughter - 2/8
 James & Mary Beth Mattiford - Scott Mattiford - son - 2/26
 Pat & Harry McCullough - Brian - son - 2/10
 Debra McKinley Hastings - Ken - brother - 2/17
 Carol Meehan - Patrick W. Meehan - son - 2/11
 Alexandra Milas - Demitra Vallianos - mom's sister - 2/17
 Andrew Miller - Perri - daughter - 2/5
 Jeffrey & Christine Miller - Teresa Leanne Miller - daughter - 2/20
 Betty (Elizabeth) Miller - Dick Miller - husband - 2/8

Anniversaries - Cont'd

Kathleen Mitchel - Jeffrey Hathaway - brother - 2/27
 Fran & Kathy Moran - Denise Nicole Moran - daughter - 2/3
 Aminah Na'im - Dawann - son - 2/14
 Dale & Helen Ninneman - Dale Ninneman II - son - 2/29
 Carol Phipps - Casey - daughter - 2/16
 Matthew and Erica Puskas - Grant Kenneth - son - 2/20
 Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert - Thomas Reinert, Jr. - son - 2/19
 Susan Reynolds - Craig Anderson - son - 2/3
 Pamela Schneibolk - Douglas Hofmockel - brother - 2/7
 Felicia Skalecki - Zuko Iroh McNulty - ,2/4
 Penny & Steve Stanaitis - Mikayla Faith - daughter - 2/20
 Luanne Stetler - Jordyn - grandson - 2/25
 Ellen & Frank Svitek - Kate Elizabeth Svitek - daughter - 2/9
 Mary Ellen Swider - Kelly Swider - daughter - 2/8
 Marilyn Toole - Ted Toole - son - 2/26
 Laura & Leo Weishew - Steven McGowan - brother - 2/2
 Kathryn & Pat White - Steven White - son - 2/9
 Terry & Bob Wolfe - Steven Moyer - son and stepson - 2/15
 Frank Yanni - David Yanni - son - 2/10
 Anthony & Cindy Zalesky - Max Zalesky - grandson - 2/12

THE PATHWAY OF TEARS ... TO THE HAPPINESS OF MY MEMORIES

I walk in turmoil, I walk in peace.
 I walk in loneliness, I walk with love.
 I walk in sadness, I walk in happiness.
 I dwell in the depths of despair, yet soar to the ecstasy of beyond.
 I dwell in the shadows of darkness, yet strive for the light afar.
 I feel the emptiness, the pain, the grief, the heavy grief
 Yet search for the splendor of butterflies and the glory of rainbows.
 I feel trampled and wasted and without cause.
 I feel nothing.
 I feel the love of memories overflowing within me.
 I feel the warmth of his smile, his touch, his kiss, his arms around me, his innocence.
 I remember the hurt, the misunderstanding, the alienation, the darkness, the
 bleakness, the hopelessness, the devastation.
 I remember his love, his caring, the scent of his hair, the touch of his hand, the little
 boy playing in the sun.
 And I remember the family I found who understood when no other wanted to understand.
 I remember the guilt, the tears, the anger and hostility, the inability to carry on, to forgive,
 to laugh again.
 And I remember the family of Compassionate Friends who allowed that multitude of
 feelings to flow, to surface and to happen, thus finally allowing me to forgive, to live again,
 to smile again, to let happiness override unhappiness. **(continued on page 6)**

BIRTHDAYS

Madeleine Adler - J. Peter Adler - son - 2/5
 Donna & Gregory Class - Megan Maria Class - daughter - 2/7
 Wendy Coleman - Gabrielle - daughter - 2/19
 Liz & Scott Conaghan - Jan — brother — 2/6
 Jane Cox - Bill - son - 2/21
 Bud Cunnane - Patrick - son - 2/14
 Jim & Ruth Fairley - David Fairley - son - 2/5
 Rochena & Pat Fatale - Mark Longan - son - 2/21
 Charlie & Jill Fick - Michael Sternberg - son - 2/10
 Frank & Rhonda Gomez - Paul - brother - 2/7
 Sandra Greenly - Michael Greenly - son - 2/18
 Tim & Rosemarie Griffiths - Timothy Griffiths - son - 2/18
 Lee & Patricia Grossman - Rachel Leah - daughter - 2/2
 Jean & James Hayden - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - son - 2/1
 Othell & William Heaney - Kevin - son - 2/14
 Kimberlee Hills - Chuck Hills - brother - 2/10
 Sigrid Hirschhorn - Samantha - daughter - 2/20
 Thomas & Virginia Hoesch - William E. Buddy Hoesch - son - 2/16
 Margaret Innes - Frank - brother - 2/14
 Joan Jagers - John Costello - son - 2/17
 Julie, Kiley, Katie Keenan - Jordan - Daughter/sister - 2/17
 Deborah Keevill - Brandon - son - 2/23
 Shirley Kennedy - Philip V. Kennedy - son - 2/22
 Margaret & Edward Kiefski, Sr. - Edward Kiefski, Jr. - son - 2/11
 Lynette Lampmann - Shawn - son - 2/10
 Marlene & Jerry Lener - Daniel - son - 2/11
 Liz & Joe Loeper - Jamey - son - 2/27
 Andie Lunkenheimer - Brennan - brother - 2/26
 Julie & Richard May - William L. May - son - 2/25
 Eileen - McCormick - Lauren - daughter - 2/3
 Jennifer McGowan Clark - Joseph McGowan - brother - 2/25
 Sue McMaster - Laura - cousin - 2/28
 Sharmell & Chris McMurray - Ryan - son - 2/17
 Kathleen Mitchel - Jeffrey Hathaway - brother - 2/19
 Mary Mulholland - Joseph McGowan - son - 2/25
 Marian Mullahy - Matt - brother - 2/28
 John & Mary Ann Murphy - Maureen Murphy - daughter - 2/13
 Dale & Helen Ninneman - Dale Ninneman II - son - 2/24
 Connie Nolan - Christopher Nolan - son - 2/9
 Robert & Jean Phillips - Robert Phillips - son - 2/23
 Carol Phipps - Casey - daughter - 2/18
 Diane Reger - Jeff Morris - son - 2/19
 Joan & Earl Reigel - Melissa Reigel - daughter - 2/19
 Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert - Theresa Volpe - mother (Bubbles) - 2/27
 Tony & Toni Riccardi - David Riccardi - son - 2/17
 Barbara Rossman - Kickole Lyn - daughter - 2/13
 Linda Sandlin - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - brother - 2/17
 Rosemarie Scott-Griffiths - Timothy F. Griffiths - stepson - 2/18



BIRTHDAYS (continued)

Frank and Kay Shinnors - Erik Shinnors - son - 2/22
 Felicia Skalecki - Zuko Iroh McNulty - son - 2/4
 Janemarie Smith - Beth Jovanovic - daughter - 2/6
 Margaret & Wade Stallard - Wade Hampton Stallard, III - son - 2/21
 Elaine & Joe Stillwell - Denis E. O'Connor, III - son - 2/4
 Nancy Thompson - J. Peter Adler - friend - 2/5
 Esperanza & Libardo Toro - Maria Eugenia Toro - daughter - 2/9
 Barbara Torrens - Robert Birmele - brother - 2/18
 Steven Tucker - Steven II - son - 2/27
 Mek Wagner - Paige - daughter - 2/1
 Elizabeth & Henry Weaver - Donald Smith, Jr. - grandson - 2/24
 Gisela Witte - Bruce G. Edlund - son - 2/24

THE PATHWAY OF TEARS ... TO THE HAPPINESS OF MY MEMORIES

Cont'ed from page 4

I thank my Nathan for his lessons of love, for his ability to see the beauty and life, in all creatures, great and small.

I thank that little boy for his warmth, his sunshine, his gentleness, his wisdom, his innocence.

And I thank The Compassionate Friends for their patience, their understanding, and love, their acceptance.

I know that as long as I live I will remember, sometimes I will hurt, I will ache and I will weep in remembering.

Do we ever really let go? I doubt that it is possible to ever let go of that precious part of ourselves that has ceased to be. That is how it is - in spite of ourselves, and despite anyone else's beliefs.

Remember, remember the happiness of memories.

Remember the sadness, the tears of memories.

Remember always our children of the past; they dwell in the present of our hearts forever.

AND TRUE LOVE NEVER REALLY ENDS...

Karen Hoyland TCF, Newcastle

Grief's Garden

Tears of sorrow have no pardon. They water the memories of my hearts garden. Blossoms with seeds of sadness and joy. Seasons long, seasons brief, Sixteen years in my garden of grief. A path that is watered by tears, That time does not pardon, after all the years.

Rose Cote

SHARED THOUGHTS ON ANGER

Anger is probably one of the worst stages of grief. It is a raw emotion, we do not choose to be angry. It won't go away by denying it. It can be very mild or a rage that will almost destroy us. Our anger intensifies when we feel something or someone should have prevented the death, or done more for our loved one. We almost feel it is our duty to lash out at what, or who, let us down. Many times our anger isn't about how they died, it's just the fact they died.

Because the situation we are in seems so senseless and we feel so helpless, we search for a reason for our tragedy. We want to understand why it happened, but seldom are there answers.

We often feel anger when those around us won't allow us to be human, expect us to bottle up our feelings, and pretend they don't exist so they don't have to deal with our pain. They justify being angry at a broken appliance or disabled car, but can't allow us to be angry when such a large part of our future has been taken from our lives. We can't verbally express it because it is not socially acceptable, and it sometimes results in an explosion toward those around us. This causes anger to be misdirected and it becomes very destructive. It is most important to seek the right place and people to vent our feelings. We need to seek someone who is concerned, sympathetic, and will not pass judgment, but will gently make suggestions, and direct our anger into a positive direction. (this sounds as though we need a Compassionate Friend).

It is very healthy to be angry if we express it, and don't get stuck there. Many question their supreme being and the role they played. I feel this is a form of communicating, which can be necessary for some to obtain peace. We all take different roads to reach healing. We have to face the pain in all areas of grief that we deal with. I needed to spend time with me. After much healing I asked myself what new traits or knowledge have I acquired that could possibly help me, and make a better world for other bereaved parents. The one thing that I needed most was to stay around to say, "Grieve in your own way, because how you grieve is probably best for you". The pain did soften, and eventually I was glad there was a tomorrow. I did not believe this was possible in my early stages of grief, you probably won't believe it either, but I have to tell you anyway.

Marie Hofmocker , TCF Valley Forge

REMINDER

Did you wake up in the morning
with tears in your heart?
And did you say to yourself
"I should not feel like crying
not like this, every morning."

But you do know the truth, don't you?
When life deals us such a tragic blow,
such enormous damage,
We need many mornings to recover
We need more than a few moments to heal.

Take for yourself the grace
of one quiet healing-step at a time.
Trying to rush the work of grief,
will slow down your renewal.

You only need to remember
that you will recover some day.
You only need to remember
that we all have our own pace,
and we all move in our own measure.
Healing takes time.

Sasha Wagner

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
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**The
Compassionate
Friends Inc.**

February 2024

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