



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## January 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. 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

Jan 4 General Sharing

Feb 1 General Sharing

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**

**Peggy Furey, son *Kevin* (30)**

**Carol & Ira Caplan, son *Julian* (22)**

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**

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.

**Carol & Henry Bailey** in memory of our son, ***Matthew***, on his anniversary 12/21.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Lee, Patricia, & Adam Grossman**, son/sister ***Rachel Leah Grossman*** in blessed memory, on Rachel's Zahrzeit on 12/5.

**Joan Kellett**, in loving memory of my son, ***Danny*** on his birthday 12/7.

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

**Vern & Joyce Kaiser**, in loving memory of our sons, ***Brian*** (30) & ***Michael*** (38).

A happy heart, a contented home,  
loved ones near, hope for all...

may these be yours. ***Joyce & Vern***

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**



**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.**

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

**Gail Alyanakian, brother *Glenn Alyanakian* 1/27**  
**George & Anne Beerley, daughter *Jennifer Beerley* 1/21**  
**John Bilinski, daughter *Alayna* 1/22**  
**Joyce Caperilla, daughter *Jennifer* 1/14**  
**Linda Cymbala, son *Nicholas Cymbala* 1/2**  
**Carol Dawidziuk, son *Michel* 1/8**  
**Kimberly De Simone, daughter *Lacey* 1/18**  
**Bill & Donna Deasey, daughter *Michelle Deasey* 1/21**  
**Emilie Degville, daughter *Madeline* 1/20**  
**Abigail Figueroa, son *Jose C. Figueroa* 1/2**  
**Sharon Hirst, son *Tom* 1/19**  
**Joan Hornsby, daughter *Jackie* 1/30**  
**Karlin Hughes, son *Keegan Hughes* 1/17**  
**Priscilla & Urs Joho, daughter *Ursula* 1/21**  
**Barbara & Michael Kaner, son *Max Steven Kaner* 1/18**  
**Pat Kuchler, son *Michael* 1/23**  
**Ed & Linda Lincul, son *Matthew* 1/29**  
**John & Nancy Logue, daughter *Kaitlyn Logue* 1/19**  
**Sharon Mallozzi, son *Anthony* 1/28**  
**Kathleen & Hugh Martin, Jr., son *Colin John "C.J." Martin* 1/12**  
**Linda Massey, son *Gene* 1/19**  
**Debra McKinley - Hastings, brother *Ken* 1/23**  
**Marian Melchiorre, grandson *John Anthony Peticca, Jr.* 1/6**  
**Gerald & Margaret Milice, son *Gerald Milice* 1/28**  
**Rose & Mike Orlando, son *Michael* 1/27**  
**Barbara Pearl, son *Jason Seth Pearl* 1/14**  
**Teresa & Ron Perkins, daughter *Allison* 1/3**  
**Sheldon & Joan Plam, son *Michael Tobiah Plam* 1/27**  
**Ruth Pluck, niece *Jackie* 1/30**  
**Mary Jane Pollart, son *Mark Andrew Steffler* 1/30**  
**Christine and Richard Purkiss, son *Adam Clark* 1/15**  
**Steve & Joann Reynolds, son *Chris* 1/10**  
**Elise Rice, husband *James W. Rice, Sr.* 1/27**

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS continued**

Margaret & Robert Rooney, daughter *Sharon Rooney* 1/30  
Mildred Sayles, son *Fredrick Chavis* 1/31  
Lynn & Stephen Scartozzi, daughter *Christine Marie Scartozzi* 1/6  
Anthony & Marsha Schrader, daughter *Krista* 1/23  
Linda Sciarra, son *John Anthony Peticca Jr.* 1/6  
Barbara Smisko, daughter *Linda* 1/19  
Harry & Merrily Spiess, grandson *Charles Smith* 1/27  
Penny & Steve Stanaitis, daughter *Mikayla Faith* 1/24  
Juan & Casey Terrero, son *Jalen* 1/29  
Ruth Thomas, son *David George Thomas* 1/21  
Weldon & Marie Tyson, daughter *Lisa M. Tyson* 1/22  
Nancy Willis, son *Alex* 1/3  
Anthony & Cindy Zalesky, grandson *Max Zalesky* 1/13

**JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

Gail Alyanakian, brother *Glenn Alyanakian* - 1/25  
John Bilinski, daughter *Alayna* - 1/22  
Liliana Couchara, friend *Christian* - 1/2  
Bobbie Coyle, son *Whitney Coyle* - 1/4  
Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr., son *David* - 1/11  
Adriene & Peter De Moerloose, daughter *Olivia* - 1/26  
Janie & Joseph Dougherty, son *Brendan K. Dougherty* - 1/20  
Robert & Lee Duffield, son *Michael Robin* - 1/16  
Jo Ann Gatlin, daughter *Lisa Diane Gatlin* - 1/31  
Rita Gibbons, husband *Thomas* - 1/3  
Robert & Kathleen Grossi, son *James Michael Grossi* - 1/28  
Nancy & Gerald Hall, son *Douglas Byron Hall* - 1/25  
Jeanne R. Helmers, sister *Mary Ann Helmers Kemme* - 1/9  
Sharon Hirst, son *Tom* - 4/16  
Tammy & Allen Howard, daughter *Brianna Nicole Howard* - 1/19  
Karlin Hughes, son *Keegan Hughes* - 1/19  
Tracey-Anne Langley, sister *Nataly* - 1/23  
Carole LaSorsa, son *Stephen* - 1/1  
Kathleen & John Leeper, son *Shaun Michael Leeper* - 1/15  
Joan Lippre, son *John* - 1/26  
Liz & Joe Loeper, son *Jamey* - 1/6  
Vivian & Kenneth Maahs, daughter *Kirsten* - 1/18  
Anna E Marchese, son *Matthew Paul Marchese* - 1/29  
Mary & Bob Matcovich, son *Christian* - 1/2  
Julie & Richard May, son *William L. May* - 1/4  
Diane Mazzagatti, son *John Pirocchi, Jr.* - 1/30



**JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED**

**Michael & Maria McFadden, daughter *Rachel McFadden* - 1/14**  
**Linda & Jim McGrath, son *Paul Drew McGrath* - 1/22**  
**Sue McMaster, cousin *Laura* - 1/31**  
**Mark & Kathryn McNally, daughter *Beth Ann McNally* - 1/11**  
**John & Mary Ann Murphy, son *Thomas Patrick Murphy* - 1/11**  
**Ashlie Nawrocki, sister *Chereen* - 1/9**  
**Connie & Richard Nolan, son *Christopher Nolan* - 1/3**  
**Jim & Bobbi O'Brien, daughter *Beth Hubbard* - 1/26**  
**Peggy O'Brien, son *Rick O'Brien* - 1/9**  
**Elizabeth Orbann, daughter *Linda Elizabeth Johnson* - 1/1**  
**Thomas & Demetra Patukas, son *George Thomas Patukas* - 1/4**  
**Betty Jane Peters - Neilson, son *Russell F. Peters, Jr.* - 1/21**  
**Rosemary Peterson, son *Donald R. Peterson* - 1/25**  
**Robert & Jean Phillips, son *Robert Phillips* - 1/3**  
**Joe & Marti Purifico, son *Jeffrey* - 1/18**  
**Vernice Quattlebaum, daughter *Gwendolyn Y. Ashe* - 1/12**  
**Andrew Randolph, brother *James* - 1/14**  
**Roy Redman, daughter *Carol* - 1/9**  
**Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert, father (Bubbles) *Albert Volpe* - 1/18**  
**Carol Robinson, son *Jim Kearney* - 1/17**  
**Andrea Rohloff, son *Jim* - 1/23**  
**Sheila & Jim Smith, son *Seth Richter* - 1/13**  
**Patti & Glen Smith, son *Chris* - 1/25**  
**Patricia & Bertram Snead, son *James Christopher Snead* - 1/6**  
**Gary Snyder, daughter *Alyse* - 1/3**  
**Lorraine Spear, daughter *Kimberly Jean Spear* - 1/30**  
**Susan & Ron Spencer, son *Rob* - 1/18**  
**Thomas & Sara Thiermann, daughter *Heather Bruce Thiermann* - 1/23**  
**Allan Thomas, son *Vernon Odins* - 1/1**  
**Joy Tower, son *Ken* - 1/17**  
**Janice Vanderslice, son *Gregory Vanderslice* - 1/14**  
**Pat Villante, daughter *Patty* - 1/30**  
**Alice Weaver, daughter *Kristen* - 1/6**  
**Mimi & Tom Weber, son *Michael* - 1/17**  
**Dave White, son *Randy* - 1/28**  
**Susan Yarnall, son *Jesse* - 1/22**  
**Judi Zollers, son *Sam* - 1/20**

**QUIET TIME**

An important way to push stress out of your life is to take advantage of quiet time. Choose a time when you can be alone with your thoughts and feelings. Sound scary? Read on...

There is a tendency to run from the pain of grief – to keep so busy and push yourself so hard that all you can do is fall in bed at night and go right to sleep. You may keep from feeling the pain, but it will catch up with you in some form in the future. It may be in the form of a disabling disease, frequent colds, a sudden heart attack or grief in years to come.

Stop and...open up the picture album and remember times past.

Take a walk where there were special memories.

Sit down during the day and reflect.

At the beginning of these quiet times you may have a rush of feelings. Feel them. You won't break, and nobody has ever cried forever. Once you have gone into them, you will eventually begin to quiet down. At this time you could play some quiet music or put on a tape with some relaxing sounds, such as ocean waves or gentle rainfall.

Rest when you can. During this time your body is trying very hard to heal your emotional wounds and you may tire easily. Take a nap in the middle of the day. Yes, even at your place of work if possible. When I returned to work the week after my son's death, I found a couch in one of the women's rest rooms. I would curl up under a velveteen blanket for about 20 minutes after lunch. That helped me get through the rest of the day. Plus, it was the only place I could have a good, private cry in that kind of environment.

It's very common to have sleeping difficulties. Grievors frequently have trouble getting to sleep or wake during the night and are unable to go back to sleep. You have a lot on your mind, and it's hard to turn it off.

If you're having trouble sleeping at night, try the following tips before resorting to sleeping pills. Some medicines ward off your feelings so that when you stop taking them, it's as if your grief just begun.

- get out of bed if you wake up and can't go back to sleep within 10 minutes. Stop fighting wakefulness and do something else for a while.
  - don't make yourself sleep in a bed which has memories if it's too difficult, or put a pillow where the empty spot is. George Burns found comfort sleeping in his wife's bed after she died. A widow found comfort in wearing her husband's pajama top and laying on his side of the bed.
  - have a good book or magazine handy to read.
  - keep your journal next to your bed and write out your thoughts and feelings.
  - watch TV or read.
  - drink warm milk. It has a chemical which helps bring on sleep.
  - listen to relaxation cassette tapes, such as ocean waves or whale sounds. If you have never tried them you'll be surprised at how soothing they are.
  - play an affirmation tape.
- Or, if you're a snuggler, just rest in bed, not "trying" to go to sleep. Enjoy the soft feel of your pillow, the cuddliness of your mattress and covers.

Give yourself the gift of time out, awake or sleeping.

*Kelly Osmont, TCF S. Chester Co., PA*

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**COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR AND PAIN,  
BUT THE AFFIRMATION OF LIFE DESPITE FEAR AND PAIN.**

*Rabbi Earl Grollman*



**SHARED THOUGHTS ON GRIEF AND THE NEW YEAR**

Most of us have a new perspective about the New Year since our children or siblings have died. For some it is a relief to close the door on the year of our tragedy, and try to perceive the new year with small rays of hope. But, for others it was the last year we shared our life with our loved one, and can't bear to see that segment of our life close. Each of us view new seasons differently, for most of us it is a difficult time.

First of all we must allow ourselves to grieve, both privately and with other family members. We can't expect other family members to grieve exactly as we do. Each needs space to salve their own needs, which may be different than ours. We find it helps to set time aside for our grief. Perhaps, that is why going to Compassionate Friends meetings is so healing for many, where we devote the evening to dealing with our feelings, and hoping for suggestions from others who have "made it through".

It is important to take care of ourselves physically, for bad health can alter our mood, and how we respond to the daily happenings in our life. We need to be considerate of other family members, for they are also struggling to get their lives back together. Both kindness and antagonism will snowball, and return back to us. It helps to put all we possibly can into being kind and considerate to those around us. This does not mean taking abuse, or ignoring our own needs.

If a good hour, or day, comes our way, relish it, we deserve it. Sometimes this causes some guilt on our part. We must remember, the last thing our child or sibling would want, is for us to feel guilt for a moment of peace. The love we have for our children, is usually matched in return with love for us. So, I'm sure they are glad when we can have relief from the terrible torment we are going through.

We **must** try to see some good in the new year, and a reason to go on. When newly bereaved, it is difficult to even want to look for good things. Everything looks so trivial compared to our loss, for we are so depressed, and hurting so bad. For those of us who are further along in our grief well remember how difficult it is to believe anything about "getting better". We now know it does get tolerable, and you too, will make it through. You will not always be so miserable, it takes a lot of work to get there. Healing comes through sharing, crying, feeling guilty and angry, or any aspect of grief it takes for us to move forward.

We do grow through our grief, by becoming more loving, understanding, and compassionate to those around us. Most of us have refined our priorities, and have no time for trivial complaints of others, for we now know there are greater things in life to be concerned with. We have learned the true meaning of desperation, and know it comes from broken people, not broken appliances.

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

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**I cannot see your face, but my heart holds the sound of your voice  
And the soft brightness which is your soul. *Amy Lowell* "The Touch of You"**

**HELPING OTHERS HELP YOU - 10 RULES FOR SELF HEALING**

1. Tell friends to call you often. Explain that after the first couple of months you'll need their calls.
2. Tell your friends to make a specific date with you; none of this "we must get together for lunch". Remind them that you're bound to have "down" times and their patience would be appreciated.
3. Tell them to please feel free to talk about the person that has died -- and don't avoid that person's name.
4. It's important for friends to understand that you may appear to be "doing so well" but on the inside you still hurt. Grief is painful, it's tricky and it's exhausting.
5. Ask your friends to care but not to pity you.
6. Make plain that friends and relatives can still treat you as a person who is still in command and can think for yourself.
7. Tell your friends that it's all right to express their caring. It's OK for them to cry; crying together is better than avoiding the pain.
8. Let your friends know too, that it's all right to say nothing. A squeeze or a hug are often more important than words.
9. Let people know that they can invite you to socialize, but that you might decline.
10. Ask your friends to go for walks with you. You and your friends can "walk off" feelings. Walks promote conversation and help fight depression.

*Ruth Jean Loewinsohn*

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**IF I SHOULD TELL YOU**

If I should tell you  
That it will get better  
In time (just when I don't know)  
Will you look at me  
With lifeless, leaden eyes, with sagging shoulders,  
And turn away in forlorn disbelief?

If I should tell you  
That this damnation will fade  
Slowly, slowly, ever so slowly,  
As you battle the pain, such riveting pain,  
That enervates and drains your very being,  
will you believe me?

If I should tell you  
That that Gordian knot  
So relentlessly snarled  
Will gradually fray and unravel  
And you will start to rise up again.

If I should tell you  
I, too, like you have been there,  
Have struggled, rebounded, and  
fought my way back.  
The nights will become softer,  
The days less relentless.

If I should tell you  
You will live again, you will live again.  
And somehow, somewhere,  
You will love again, you will love again.  
And embrace, and caress, and encompass  
The memory of that beautiful child of yours.  
**YOU WILL.**

Will you believe me? Please do.

*Dave Ziv - Bucksmont Chapter*



**EVERYTHING IS A FIRST**

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me -- NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere -- love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say -- nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer; "I am mad, Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong"

*Lisa Ann Jones, Avoca, PA*

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

*Phillip W. Williams*

**A LETTER TO MY BROTHER**

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer.

How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you, I think of you everyday and feel you in my heart always.

Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness.

I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

*Robin Holeman Tuscaloosa, AL TCF*

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 comes 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*

AN ANGEL'S KISS

I believe I felt an angel gently kiss my cheek today  
 While lost in daydreams once again I saw us both at play.

Breathe as warm as a summer breeze, moist as morning dew  
 Was it just a wishful thought, or a gift from God and you?

Was that hushed sound falling leaves or a thousand other things  
 Perhaps it was just the sweet sound of fluttering Angel's wings.

I felt a fire rekindle, deep within my heart  
 A feeling I had not known since we've been apart.

I felt my pain and sorrow begin to ease away  
 As a little sun light broke through the sky of gray.

I may always wonder, but I am always grateful too  
 Because these are the things that help to get us through.

I may never know what happened, or just what words to say  
 Except that in my heart, I believe, my angel, I felt your kiss today.

Ed Young - Delaware county, TCF

PLEASE ASK

Someone asked me about you today,  
 It's been so long since anyone has done that.  
 It felt so good to talk about you  
 ...to share my memories of you  
 ...to simply say your name out loud.  
 She asked me if I minded talking about what happened  
 to you or would it be too painful to speak of it.  
 I told her I think of it everyday and speaking about it  
 helps me to release the tormented thoughts whirling  
 around in my head.  
 She said she never realized the pain would last this long.  
 She apologized for not asking sooner.  
 I told her, "Thanks for asking."  
 I don't know if it was curiosity or concern that made her  
 ask, but I told her,  
 Please do it again sometime soon."

*Barbara Taylor Hudson* POMC, Cincinnati, OH

SILENT GRIEF

Grief is sometimes silent – like snowflakes  
 falling on a dark winter's night – but never  
 peaceful or serene or pretty like the pure white  
 snow. When grief is silent, the tears seem to  
 turn to ice, like the snowflakes, before they  
 reach our eyes.

Grief is sometimes raging – like a monstrous  
 thunderstorm – with all its fury and bolts of  
 lightning striking our hearts at every angle.  
 When grief is raging, the tears come in  
 torrents, like the rain, and flood our soul.

Grief, whether it be silent or raging - hurts.

*Verna Smith* TCF, Ft. Worth, TX



## *Our Wishes For You*

*To those of you whose pain is fresh and raw, and still have courage to come and share with us, and give us healing through your pain, we send you love and compassion.*

*To those of you whose pain of grief, anger, and frustration has begun to soften, we wish you hope and healing.*

*To those of you who have found life can be good again, and can tenderly remember your child tinged with much less sorrow, and not be overwhelmed, we wish you fond memories, and a meaningful holiday.*

*To those of you who are struggling in your marriage or relationship, we wish you patience and understanding to accept one another for what you can give.*

*To those of you who are struggling with your spirituality, we wish you peace.*

*To those of you who give words of comfort and hope to another in the depth of despair, we say "Thank You".*

*To those of you who so willingly lend a hand in doing all the chores, And those who give financial support that holds the Valley Forge Chapter together, so we can provide a safe haven for all the bereaved to come and support one another, we say "Thank You"*

*We send you love, hope, compassion, a hug, and wish you peace.*

*Marie and Ken Hofmockel*



**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