

# 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 -

January— 1/6/2024 @ 1:45

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.



## January 2024

### Chapter Leader:

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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.

## 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

### THERE ARE NO LOVE GIFTS THIS MONTH

The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold its first meeting on the First Saturday of the every month at 1:45 PM. We go until 3:30 PM. Our first meeting will be January 6, 2024 at 1:45 PM. We cannot meet for our meeting February 2024, September 2024, or December 2024. Our September will be butterfly release in the park at 3 PM Stayed tuned.

## WHEN

When we finally realize that you are always going to be smiling and dancing in our hearts, then, our pain shall turn to joy.

Bob Walters

Those we hold dear never truly Leave us. They live on in the kindness they showed, and the love they brought into our lives.

Isabel Norton, Central Iowa Newsletter

## 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

Gail Alyanakian - Glenn Alyanakian - brother - 1/25  
 John Bilinski - Alayna - daughter - 1/22  
 Walt and Geogianna Bolger - Paul Vangrossi - son - 1/4  
 Liliana Couchara - Christian - friend - 1/2  
 Bobbie Coyle - Whitney Coyle - son - 1/4  
 Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr. - David - son - 1/11  
 Peter De Moerloose - Olivia - daughter - 1/26  
 Janie & Joseph Dougherty - Brendan K. Dougherty - son - 1/20  
 Robert & Lee Duffield - Michael Robin - son - 1/16  
 Lauren Feldman - Oliver - son - 1/17  
 Jo Ann Gatlin - Lisa Diane Gatlin - daughter - 1/31  
 Jackie Givnish - Megan - aunt - 1/25  
 Robert & Kathleen Grossi - James Michael Gross - son - 1/28  
 Nancy & Gerald Hall - Douglas Byron Hall - son - 1/25  
 Jeanne R Helmers - Mary Ann Helmers Kemme - sister - 1/9  
 Tammy & Allen Howard - Brianna Nicole Howard - daughter - 1/19  
 Karlin Hughes - Keegan Hughes - son - 1/19  
 Nancy Jones - Jeff - grandson - 1/20  
 Julie, Kiley, Katie Keenan - Jordan - Daughter/sister - 1/13  
 Tracey-Anne Langley - Nataly - Sister - 1/23  
 Kathleen & John Leeper - Shaun Michael Leeper - son - 1/15  
 Liz & Joe Loeper - Jamey - son - 1/6  
 Vivian & Kenneth Maahs - Kirsten - daughter - 1/18  
 Anna E Marchese - Matthew Paul Marchese - son - 1/29  
 Mary & Bob Matcovich - Christian - son - 1/2  
 Julie & Richard May - William L. May - son - 1/4  
 Diane Mazzagatti - John Pirocchi, Jr. - son - 1/30  
 Michael & Maria McFadden - Rachel McFadden - daughter - 1/14  
 Karen Pilcicki - Jeffson - 1/12  
 Joe & Marti Purifico - Jeffrey - son - 1/18  
 Vernice Quattlebaum - Gwendolyn Y. Ashe - daughter - 1/12  
 Roy Redman - Carol - daughter - 1/9  
 Thomas & Jeri ""Bubbles"" Reinert - Albert Volpe - father (Bubbles) - 1/18  
 Rocco & Fran Rinaldi - Stephen - son - 1/30  
 Carol Robinson - Jim Kearney - son - 1/17  
 Sandy Salveter - Greg - son - 1/28  
 Paul Shoenberger - Paul John - son - 1/1

# Anniversaries - Cont'd

Sheila & Jim Smith - Seth Richter - son - 1/13  
 Patricia & Bertram Snead - James Christopher Snead - son - 1/6  
 Lorraine Spear - Kimberly Jean Spear - daughter - 1/30  
 Susan & Ron Spencer - Rob - son - 1/18  
 Allan Thomas Vernon Odins - son - 1/1  
 Joy Tower - Ken - son - 1/17  
 Pat Villante - Patty - daughter - 1/30  
 Alice Weaver - Kristen - daughter - 1/6  
 Mimi & Tom Weber - Michael, 1/17  
 Susan Yarnall - Jesse - son - 1/22

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## A CURE FOR SORROW

There is an old Chinese tale about the woman whose only son died. In her grief, she went to the holy man and said, "What prayers, what magical incantations do you have to bring my son back to life?" Instead of sending her away or reasoning with her, he said to her, "Fetch me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow. We will use it to drive the sorrow out of your life.

The woman set off at once in search of that magical mustard seed. She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked at the door, and said, "I am looking for a home that has never known sorrow. Is this such a place", and they began to describe all the tragic things that had recently befallen them.

The woman said to herself, "Who is better able to help these poor unfortunate people than I, who have had a misfortune of my own". She stayed to comfort them then went on in her search for a home that had never known sorrow. But, wherever she turned, in hovels and in palaces, she found one tale after another of sadness and misfortune. Ultimately, she became so involved in ministering to other people's grief that she forgot about her quest for the magical mustard seed, never realizing that it had in fact driven the sorrow out of her life.

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

# BIRTHDAYS

Gail Alyanakian - Glenn Alyanakian - brother - 1/27  
 George & Anne Beerley - Jennifer Beerley - daughter - 1/21  
 John Bilinski - Alayna - daughter - 1/22  
 Joyce Caperilla - Jennifer - daughter - 1/14  
 Frank & Linda Cymbala - Nicholas cymbala - son - 1/2  
 Carol Dawidziuk - Michel - son - 1/8  
 Kimberly De Simone - Lacey - daughter - 1/18  
 Bill & Donna Deasey - Michelle Deasey - daughter - 1/2  
 Emilie Degville - Madeline - daughter - 1/20  
 Abigail Figueroa - Jose C Figueroa - son - 1/2  
 Jackie Givnish - Megan - aunt - 1/11  
 Linda Haines - Zackary Monroe McCarthy - son - 1/5  
 Sharon Hirst - Tom - son - 1/19  
 Jim & Betty Hogan - daughter,,daughter - 1/20  
 Joan Hornsby - Jackie - daughter - 1/30  
 Craig Horwitz - Kimberly - daughter - 1/3  
 Karlin Hughes - Keegan Hughes - son - 1/17  
 Barbara & Michael Kaner - Max Steven Kaner - son - 1/18  
 Pat Kuchler - Michael - son - 1/23,Ethan,,,,  
 Ed & Linda Lincul - Matthew - son - 1/29  
 John & Nancy Logue - Kaitlyn Logue - daughter - 1/19  
 Sharon Mallozzi - Anthony - son - 1/28  
 Kathleen & Hugh Martin, Jr. - Colin John ""C.J."" Martin - son - 1/12  
 Linda Massey - Geneson - 1/19  
 Pat & Harry McCullough - Brian - son - 1/14  
 Debra McKinley Hastings - Ken - brother - 1/23  
 Nancy Mclaughlin - Megan - daughter - 1/11  
 Marian Melchiorre - John Anthony Peticca, Jr - grandson - 1/6  
 Gerald & Margaret Milice - Gerald Milice - son - 1/28  
 Teresa and Ron Perkins - Allison - daughter - 1/3  
 John Peticca - John Anthony Peticca, Jr - son - 1/6  
 Sheldon & Joan Plam - Michael Tobiah Plam - son - 1/27  
 Ruth Pluck - Jackie - niece - 1/30  
 Mary Jane Pollart - Mark Andrew Steffler - son - 1/30  
 Christine and Richard Purkiss - Adam Clarkson - 1/15  
 Steve & Joann Reynolds - Chris - son - 1/10  
 Marcella Rice - James W. Rice, Sr. - father - 1/27  
 Margaret & Robert Rooney - Sharon Rooney - daughter - 1/30  
 Mildred Sayles - Fredrick Chavis - son - 1/31  
 Anthony & Marsha Schrader - Krista - daughter - 1/23  
 Linda Sciarra - John Anthony Peticca, Jr - son - 1/6  
 Barbara - Smisko - Linda - daughter - 1/19  
 Harry & Merrily Spiess - Charles Smith - grandson - 1/27  
 Penny & Steve Stanaitis - Mikayla Faith - daughter - 1/24  
 Ruth Thomas - David George Thomas - son - 1/21  
 SherronTrio - Tom - son - 1/5  
 Weldon & Marie Tyson - Lisa M. Tyson - daughter - 1/22



# BIRTHDAYS (continued)

Nancy Willis - Alex - son - 1/3

Anthony & Cindy Zalesky— Max Zalesky— grandson— 1/13

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## SHARED THOUGHTS ON FACING THE NEW YEAR

One of the dictionary's definitions for Holiday is "A day of enjoyment". Form any newly bereaved, that word has taken on a new meaning of "tough times". It seems this season does not allow enough time to heal, before the next holiday is upon us. The new year stirs up all kinds of emotions. It sometimes reminds us that the year our child or sibling died is gone, and we have put more space between us and our loved one's death.

We are new persons now, we need to take time to know ourselves, our capabilities, and priorities. Many of us will be facing our "first". We know there will be some bad moments. It is important that we don't take on the whole New Year. A day, an hour, or a moment is what most grieving people have learned to try and cope with.

Putting unreal expectations and demands on ourselves can remove any sense of progress, and increase the sense of failure. The only New Year's resolution we need make is, "I will do the best I can, and at the pace I can". We can expect that some days will take all we can muster to just get through it. That in itself is a big accomplishment, recognize it as such. When we have survived yesterday and today, our coping skills have improved and will give us strength to take on tomorrow. Remember, recovery is a very slow process, we want relief before it is possible. We must take our time and talk with the right people. It is important to seek those who have experienced this depth of pain. These people will gently encourage and support us. It is vital to know others who have survived the loss of a child or sibling.

There will be ups and downs. We can be thankful for those up days, and know the down days are normal, but they won't last forever. We can, and will be better. I wish you could be where I am in my grief, without going through where I have been. Unfortunately, we have to go through it ourselves, but not alone. There is help through The Compassionate Friends, we are here to share the pain, as well as the hope. The whole concept of TCF is to lean on one another. Utilizing the help that others offer to us can help us survive, and give a sense of growth and healing to the one reaching out to us. We know the depth of your despair. We have been there, and together we can make it.

My New Year's wish for you is well said by Ruth Eiseman (TCF Louisville, KY):

Where there is pain, let there be softening.

here there is bitterness, let there be acceptance.

Where there is silence, let there be communication.

Where there is despair, let there be hope.

**Marie Hofmockel** , TCF Valley Forge

## Sharing A Private Grief

The other day someone said to me, "My grief is too private to share." I think we all feel that way some-time. We are saying two things when we say that. First, "You couldn't possibly know how I feel." And second, we are saying, "I hurt so much, I'm not about to tell of my anguish and leave myself open to your judgment of my feelings." We have to protect ourselves, but, in protecting our privacy are we forgetting anything? Is it possible that our friends also grieve; that they, too, miss our child and hurt for us in ways we don't let them express? Is it possible that our friends are not judging us and that in not giving voice to our sorrow we are closing the door to the healing love that may be in store for us? It is probable that our friends don't know what to say to us. People have no trouble wishing us "happy birthday", "get well soon" or "have a good day", and mean it. But, it is hard for people to express their sorrow, often because they are afraid of hurting us. That they don't express their grief isolates us. Sometimes we have to encourage others to address the issues closest to our hearts - for our own protection.

Pat Ryan TCF, Silverdale, WA

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## THE PATH

My world lay shattered around me. Gone were the flowers and the sun. The path ahead looked dark and threatening. I heard a voice saying, "You have to travel this path alone."

"I don't want to go down that path. I can't." I protested. "I liked the old path."

"The choice is yours," said the voice, "but you may never go back to the old path. You may stay here at the crossroads where anger and pain will keep you company and wither your spirit. Or, you may runoff into the surrounding woods and pretend you are going somewhere, but you will become disoriented and lost. The only peace is to be found at the end of the path ahead."

"If you have the courage to set forth upon the new path and keep struggling through the storms, you will discover depths in yourself that you never knew existed. If you reach out you will find those who have already traveled this difficult way and are there to support and guide you. Though it seems impossible now, your path will become beautiful again, as will your spirit. You will emerge from the desolation a stronger, wiser, and more compassionate person. Then you too can turn and extend your hand to those who are still on the way."

I made a choice. I picked up the remains of my life -- my aching heart and wounded spirit, my broken dreams and disbelief — and wrapped them carefully in my blanket of grief. Holding them closely to me, I walked steadfastly ahead into the storm with faith in to promise of peace on the other side.

Sharron Cordaro, Riverside, CA

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A boy was flying his kite. He kept adding more spools of string to make it go higher. A woman walked by and said, "you have that kite flying high." And the boy agreed. The woman left and went about her business. On her way back, she looked up toward the kite and said, "I do not see your kite." The boy agreed. She asked, "Then why don't you let go of it?" The boy answered, "I can't. I can still feel it tugging." **This is the plight of bereaved parents..**

TCF of Tilton, GA

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.**

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