

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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

July 2009

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 Fellowship Hall at Valley Forge and Henderson RDs, King of Prussia, PA. Phone on meeting evenings only is 610-265-0733. All other times please call Ann or Rhonda at 484-919-0820.

Meeting Schedule

Please Mark Your Calendar

July 2 General Sharing & Loss by Suicide

July 25 Butterfly Release (see page 3)

Aug 6 General Sharing

Aug 7-9 National Conference , Portland OR

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 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.**

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
SEND TO: RECORD KEEPER, FRANK GOMEZ
PLEASE SEND ALL OTHER CHAPTER MAIL
TO CHAPTER CO-LEADERS
ANN MURRAY or RHONDA GOMEZ**



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Diana Clark, grandson *Alexander* (7)
Sheila & Mike Mullin, son *Matthew* (26)

We welcome our newly bereaved friends. We are sorry for the cause that brings you. We offer confidentiality, unconditional love, compassion and understanding to all of you.

JUNE REFRESHMENTS

John & Lisa Russo in honor of our son *Casey* on his Anniversary
Mary Lou Harrison in honor of my son *Scott* on his Anniversary
Ann Murray in honor of my son *Jonathan* on his Anniversary

LOVE GIFTS

Joyce Caperilla, in loving memory of my daughter, *Jennifer*
Benjamin Cohen, in loving memory of my daughter *Donna Lynne*
Judy & William Cosgrove, in loving memory of our son *Michael*
Mary Lou Harrison, in loving memory of my son *Lance "Scott" Harrison*
Sally Ivory, in loving memory of my son *Jimmy Ivory*
Roxborough Manayunk Lions, in memory of all children who have died and helping parents to cope with grief in losing a child.
Betty Jane Peters-Neilson, in loving memory of my 4 sons, *Walter, Russell Jr., Martin & Glenn*. I love you and miss you so much. My heart is broken, Love, Mommy
Sam & Palma Panichello, in loving memory of our beloved son, *Joseph* with love always and forever with us in our hearts. Dad, Mom & sister Judy
Janice Vanderslice, in loving memory of my son *Gregory Vanderslice*

We apologize for the May newsletter oversight of the following contributions:

Margaret & Matthew Strickler, in memory of our son, *Tim Strickler* on his 35th birthday in May. We love and miss you so much. Mom, Dad, Dave, Andrew and Ted.
Barbara Purtell-Frank in honor of my son, *Michael Purtell* on his birthday on May 28th. Until we are together again my precious son, you are always in my thoughts, forever in my heart. Love Ah-Ma

CHANGE OF ABINGTON TCF CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Janis & Larry Murphy have accepted the leadership of the Abington Chapter. We hope you find this position very rewarding as you extend the gift of compassion to members bearing the load of grief.

Art & Carol Silverman have resigned after many years of leadership of the Abington Chapter. Their daughter, Cheryl Beth died in 1987. They have spent much of their lives since the loss of their daughter, promoting & supporting The Compassionate Friends. Their dedication has reached beyond their chapter. They have served on the committees of many regional & national conferences. Art served 6 years on the National Board of Directors. We thank them for their devotion to our great organization of The Compassionate Friends.

BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND PROGRAM

Sponsored by the Valley Forge Chapter
of the Compassionate Friends

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND

BUTTERFLIES MUST BE ORDERED BY JUNE 18TH

Tyler Arboretum
515 Painter Road
Media, PA 19063

Phone: 610-566-9134 Email: info@tylerarboretum.org

Saturday, July 25, 2009 at 2:00 PM
(This event will be held rain or shine)

Cost \$9.00 per butterfly

A family can order one butterfly to share, or order one butterfly for each family member. You may order as many butterflies as you wish. If you are unable to come on this date, we can release the butterfly that you have purchased in your loved one's name. The names of all loved ones will be read during the program.

The Arboretum admission fee must be paid upon arrival in order to attend this event:

Adult \$7; Senior \$6; children, ages 3-15, are \$4; and children under 3 are free.

(The Entertainment Book - Philadelphia West has a coupon with one complimentary admission to Tyler when a second admission of equal or greater value is purchased)

Tyler Arboretum is a 650 acre sanctuary of natural beauty. It has horticultural collections, hiking trails, historic buildings, butterfly house with native butterflies in all stages of their life cycle, children's maze, picnic tables, and is open 9 AM until 7PM.

For questions, please call TCF Valley Forge 484-919-0820

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to them

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to them

Please make checks payable to "TCF Valley Forge Chapter" and mail to:
Rhonda Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore, PA 19343

For directions view www.tcfvalleyforge.org

Having been to the National Conference last year in Nashville, we can attest to the significance of the large display of loved ones pictures. We hope you will join in the following project to honor your loved ones. We thank Frank for his generosity to undertake this sizeable task.

Marie & Ken Hofmockel

Dear Friends,

Last year we attended The Compassionate Friends conference held in Nashville, TN. There were many decorated boards (4 x 8 ft.) displayed in the hall ways, which were used as Memorial Boards for people attending the conference to display photos of loved ones. It was very impressive. I called TCF National Office to ask about bringing photos of our chapter members loved ones, who would not be attending the conference. I received a positive response.

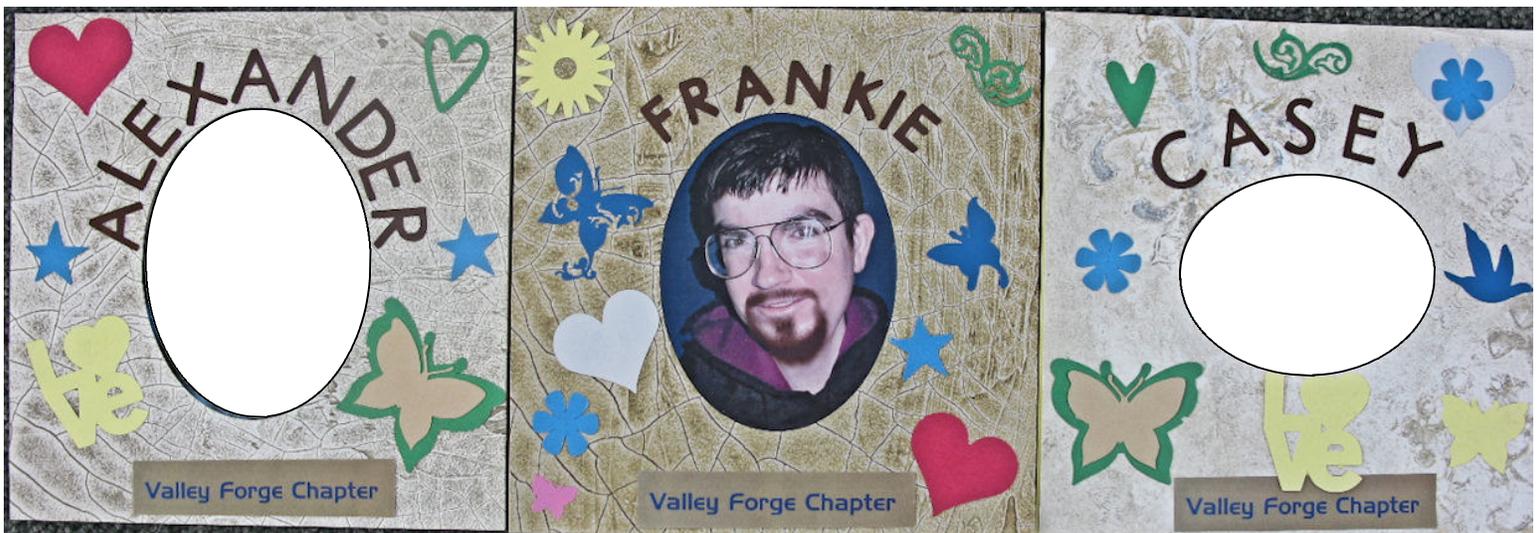
I have designed sample mats as shown below. The mats are 8" x 8", are in color and each background is a different pattern. Sorry, I had to blank out 2 of the photos. I do not have permission to send them. My goal is to take as many mats with your loved ones photos as possible with me to the Portland, OR TCF Conference in August. This will be my contribution to TCF this year.

If you wish to participate in this project, allowing me to make a mat with your loved ones photo, please send the photo. Be sure the photo fits in a regular business size envelope and the name of the loved one(s) is written on the back. If you place a light weight card board in the envelope it will help to keep the photo from being damaged. Sorry, I cannot accept photos as email attachments. My printer's colors are not accurate.

Send to: Frank Gomez
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore, PA 19343

All mats will be displayed at the National Conference, will eventually be laminated (can't do it yet, as any photos of them would reflect the flash), and we will bring them to the September meeting so you can pick them up.

Frank



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: **Additions or corrections to this list should be given to the editors, Marie & Ken Hofmockel.**

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.

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

Sylvia Abramson, granddaughter *Avery Silverman* - 7/14
Mary Auger, son *Eric R. Ehmman* - 7/5
Lucille Bagwell, son *Lew* - 7/22
Charlene & Earle Bare, son *Abe Bare* - 7/27
Lori Bartholomew, brother *Matthew* - 7/14
Eleanor Brennan, grandson *Jonathan Masiak* - 7/9
Jackie & Steve Brown, son *Doug Brown* - 7/23
Joanne & Tom Christman, son *Kyle R. O'Neill* - 7/20
Catherine Dardozzi, grandson *Evan Schmidt* - 7/15
Louis Dardozzi, grandson *Evan* - 7/15
Judith M. Deutsch, son *Anthony Deutsch* - 7/21
Vanessa Diaz, friends child *Samir* - 7/12
Kenneth Frantz, son *Kenneth Frantz, Jr.* - 7/14
Sharon & Francis Gailey, daughter *Danielle Marie Gailey* - 7/14
Susan Gamble, son *Bobby Gamble* - 7/21
Gwen & Walt Gearhart, grandson *Jamie Rogers* - 7/12
Richard Geddis, daughter *Mindi Geddis* - 7/25
Carolyn & Allen Gephart, son *Joseph Malec* - 7/14
Rhonda and Frank Gomez, son *Frank Jr.* - 7/17
Jean & James Hayden, son *LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden* - 7/26
Beatrice K Hildebrandt, son *John R. Hildebrandt* - 7/12
Mark & Vicki Hoffman, son *Eric Daniel Hoffman* - 7/21
Dennis & Lois Ianovale, son *Dennis* - 7/6
Sally Ivory, son *Jimmy Ivory* - 7/16
Terry Konieczka, niece *Diane White* - 7/4
Arlene and Bob Krauss, son *Fred* - 7/23
Donna Leathers, son *Brandon M* - 7/4
Maryann Lockyer, son *Keith* - 7/15
Fred & Kay Lokoff, daughter *Terry Lokoff* - 7/27
Maryellen & James Madden, daughter *Anne Marie Madden* - 7/28
Lynne & John Malloy, son *David Gross* - 7/1
Linda Massey, son *Gene* - 7/16
Frank & Bernadette McAllister, son *Christopher J. McAllister* - 7/11
Megan McKeough, brother *John McKeough* - 7/18
Felix & Shirley McShane, son *Brian* - 7/30
Cheryl Mezzaroba, son *Lon Mezzaroba* - 7/24

JULY ANNIVERSARIES continued

Betty & Dick Miller, son *Raymond* - 7/26
Danielle Murtha, brother *Jake* - 7/29
Scott & Alison Myer, son *Brett Myer* - 7/17
Eugene & Lynn Myers, son *Scott Myers* - 7/8
Betty Jane Peters- Neilson, son *Walter C. Peters* - 7/21
Donna Rogers, son *Jamie Rogers* - 7/12
Donna Rogers, husband *Jonathan Rogers* - 7/13
Thelma Rosen, nephew *Charles Carswell* - 7/10
 neice, *Mary McMasters Neal* - 7/10
Francine Safir, brother *Howard (Howie) Richard Safir* - 7/29
Linda Sandlin, brother *LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden* - 7/26
Mildred Sayles, son *Fredrick Chavis* - 7/6
Donna & Eric Schaertl, son *Jared M. Schaertl* - 7/13
Michelle & Bill Schmidt, son *Evan Peter Schmidt* - 7/15
Suzanne Schoenhut, son *Joe* - 7/5
Anna Schwarz, son *Jerrold Schwarz* - 7/11
Ann Sherwood, son *David Foster Sherwood* - 7/28
Matthew Silverman, sister *Avery Silverman* - 7/14
Howard & Margorie Silverman, daughter *Avery Silverman* - 7/14
Steven & Bernice Sitkoff, daughter *Gwyn Allison Sitkoff* - 7/18
Eileen Smith, son *Craig* - 7/31
Carole Solomon, niece *Avery Silverman* - 7/14
Philip & Ilene Spector, niece *Avery Silverman* - 7/14
Patsy Ann Spitz, son *Paul David Spitz* - 7/3
Margaret & Wade Stallard, son *Wade Hampton Stallard, III* - 7/27
Margaret & Matthew Strickler, son *Timothy Strickler* - 7/23
Hellmut Theil, son *Hellmut Theil, Jr.* - 7/14
Gerard & Jane Thimm, son *Gary Thimm* - 7/12
Robert & Nancy Thompson, son *Andrew Thompson* - 7/28
Brenda Timbers, daughter *Niya Raquel Timbers* - 7/2
Rick Troja, son *Mark Troja* - 7/5
Sue Troja, son *Mark Troja* - 7/5
Shelly Wagner, son *Andrew Wagner* - 7/26
Ellen & Dale Weaver, son *Jeffrey M. Weaver* - 7/29
Peggy West, daughter *Kelly Ann West* - 7/28
Patricia White, daughter *Diane Patricia White* - 7/4
Donna White, sister *Diane White* - 7/4
Tammy Wood & Jerry McKenna, son *Richie Wood* - 7/6
Andy & Peg Yanoviak, daughter *Elizabeth "Betsy" Hershman* - 7/5
Herb Zucker, daughter *Eileen Zucker Horn* - 7/4

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Nina Ansel, daughter *Jenny* 7/27
Mary Auger, son *Eric R. Ehmann* 7/13
Charlene & Earle Bare, son *Abe Bare* 7/1
Regina Buckingham, son *Brian J. Buckingham* 7/14
Anita Burns, daughter *Suzanne Burns* 7/21
Joann & Gary Chavez, son *Christopher Dale Chavez* 7/19
Carol Funaro, sister *Bernadette Funaro* 7/23
Tom & Judy Hahn, daughter *Erica Hilley* 7/2
Russell L. Kinder, daughter *Susanna B. Kinder* 7/22
Al & Sue Koenig, daughter *Emily Grace Koenig* 7/8
Tania Kriebel, sister *Barbara Szymanski* 7/3
Eleanor Lee, son *Tom* 7/16
Joan Lippre, son *John* 7/16
Donald Maurer, son *Keith Maurer* 7/18
Robert McCullough, daughter *Caroline Patricia McCullough* 7/19
Megan McKeough, brother *John McKeough* 7/11
Felix & Shirley McShane, son *Brian* 7/30
Cameron and Sandra Meikle, daughter *Laura* 7/4
Alexandra Milas, mom's brother *Nicholas Stathes* 7/1
Denver & Rosa Miller, son *Michael T. Miller* 7/14
John & Mary Ann Murphy, son *Brian Michael Murphy* 7/20
Betty Jane Peters- Neilson, son *Walter C. Peters* 7/4
son *Russell F. Peters, Jr.* 7/25
Carol & Dennis O'Connor, brother *Jack Coladonato* 7/14
Thomas Ottey, daughter *Jennifer Ottey* 7/2
Gary & Patricia Otto, son *Benjamin Otto* 7/26
Marlene Patrone, son *Alfred M. Patrone, Jr.* 7/11
Vernice Quattlebaum, daughter *Gwendolyn Y. Ashe* 7/11
Maria and Nathan Reyes, son *Michael Anthony* 7/10
Donald & Freda Rhinier, son *Glenn D. Rhinier* 7/18
William Russell, son *Andrew Russell* 7/12
Ruth Schmitt, son *Robert Schmitt, Jr.* 7/16
Abigail Schwartz, mother *Barbra* 7/15
Holly Silverthorne, son *Spencer Silverthorne* 7/27
Mike & Beverly Smith, son *Ryan* 7/18
Helen Smith, son *Bob Smith* 7/2
Patricia & Bertram Snead, son *James Christopher Snead* 7/15
Judy & Jim Snyder, son *David Snyder* 7/18
Jen & Alex Soutos, daughter *Alexi* 7/27
Harry & Merrily Spiess, son *F. Ryan Spiess* 7/16
Linda Spinks, son *Robert* 7/9
Lisa M Spinks, brother *Robert* 7/9

JULY BIRTHDAYS continued

Patsy Ann Spitz, son *Paul David Spitz* 7/6
Linda Sposato, daughter *Bernadette Funaro* 7/23
Karen & John Sprouse, son *John James* 7/30
Nancy Sullivan, daughter *Kathleen Sullivan-Purcell* 7/23
Ellen & Frank Svitek, daughter *Kate Elizabeth Svitek* 7/1
Anne & Charles Swann, daughter *Katherine Anne Swann* 7/12
Jean Sykora, son *Mark* 7/14
Chris & Larry Teal, son *Wade Teal* 7/30
Renee Teufel, son *Gregory* 7/28
Robert & Nancy Thompson, son *Andrew Thompson* 7/21
Doris Tierney, son *Tom Tierney* 7/14
Brenda Timbers, daughter *Niya Raquel Timbers* 7/3
Barbara Tuller, son *Charles* 7/3
Pat Villante, daughter *Laura* 7/28
Bill & Patti Whitehead, daughter *Maria* 7/4

NOT GUILT, REGRET

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn't we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us.

Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn't feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt - we feel regret.

Kitty Sanders, Nashville, TN
Survivors of Suicide Group

SIBLING CORNER

One road in, one road out
 An antique fountain greets familiar faces
 Life still flows from its brass veins
 At the end of the town is the final resting place
 White washed walls and black iron gates
 The cold gates are never locked
 Where my ancestors and brother lie
 In our family mausoleum
 Fresh flowers, candles warm the damp home
 Where I will someday rest with my brother
 Danny

Fabio Bevilacqua , TCF Valley Forge
 in memory of my brother,
Donato Bevilacqua (13)
 who was laid to rest in 2002,
 in the family mausoleum,
 in our father’s home town in Italy.

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

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS FROM BEREAVED SIBLINGS

All of a sudden I burst into tears and cannot control crying.

You have the freedom to cry when you need to. Crying is a normal reaction. You may feel embarrassed, but most people will react with sympathy and wish for themselves that they could cry freely. Crying is a natural outlet to grieving.

Why am I so mad at my sister for dying? She left me alone. I know it wasn’t her fault, but I feel so guilty for being angry.

At some time everyone is angry at the person who died. Anger does not mean you loved them less; it means the loss is so great that you want the terrible pain to end.

I can’t concentrate. I can’t think and I can’t remember anything. I think I am losing my mind.

You are not losing your mind, although it may feel that way. Your mind is probably overloaded. Not only do you have to go through your daily routine, but your mind is flooded with thoughts and feelings for your brother or sister. This is temporary; your memory and concentration will return over time.

I have terrible nightmares. Sometimes I dream I am dying. I can’t tell anyone because they will think I am crazy. Am I?

Some grieving people experience intense dreams. Dreams serve as a healthy outlet for the intense feelings you have during the day. As time goes on and you deal with your feelings, your dreams will become less frightening.

I feel so guilty for the way I yelled at my brother. We would fight about the silliest things. I’ll never be able to tell him how sorry I am.

Brothers and sisters in every family quarrel and don’t apologize after every argument. Even though you fought, you still loved your brother and he loved you.

Suddenly my parents expect me to parent them. I just can’t handle it.

This is truly one of the most unfair positions your grief puts you in. Try to share these feelings with your parents. Hopefully you will be better able to understand one another.

This Healing Journey
an Anthology for Bereaved Siblings

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, and 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 sociably acceptable, and it sometimes results in an explosion toward those around us. This causes anger to be misdirected. This is when 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.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel* , 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. *Sascha Wagner*

GREG, "I LOVE YOU AND MISS YOU."

As I sit here all alone today,
 I can't believe its been 11 years since you've gone away.
 I really do miss you since we've been apart,
 But you're always with me, deep down in my heart.
 I'll never forget you; how could that be,
 You're in my thoughts and soul, and I carry you around with me.
 I cherish our love, and all that we shared,
 But it breaks my heart that your life was so shortly spared.
 A Mother's love never goes away;
 It just grows stronger day by day.

Dedicated to my son:
Greg Vanderslice deceased 1998 at age 40
 Love Forever & Always, "Mom"
Janice Vanderslice



AS TIME PASSES

As time passes
 And others forget
 Day by day
 I enter my lonely
 Room of memories
 And broken dreams
 And I cry.

And each day
 As I push forward
 I move a step ahead
 And then back
 But still gaining
 If even but a little.

Mary Rapke
 TCF, Grand Junction, CO

CHAPTER GLEANINGS

WHERE ELSE – can you come into a group of complete strangers and talk about the death of your child...

WHERE ELSE – can you know that you are not alone in your bereavement...

WHERE ELSE – can others sincerely say to you, "I know how you feel..."

WHERE ELSE – will you **not** hear, "It's time you were over it and started getting on with your life," and other unwelcome advice...

WHERE ELSE – can you cry without feeling shamed or laugh without feeling guilty...

WHERE ELSE – can you just listen and not talk if you do not wish to...

WHERE ELSE – can you reach out to newly bereaved parents who are experiencing the grief and pain you have felt...

WHERE ELSE – can you share the love and memories of your child(ren) with others...

WHERE ELSE – NO WERE BUT AT THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

Dave Ziv,
 TCF Buck Mont Chapter, Warrington, PA