

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

Inside Valley Forge

Meetings are on the first Thursday of every month, at 7:45 PM (ending at 9:30 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 TCF Events of Interest.

Meeting - 7/6/2023

Next Meeting - 8/3/2023

The 46th Annual Conference will be July 7- 9 2023 at Denver, Colorado.



July 2023

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compassionatefriends.org

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 editor.

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 the 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 Rhonda Gomez

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.

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.

No new people

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

Ms. Palma Panichello — her annual donation
Mr. and Mrs. John Heil — for their daughter's birthday and anniversary

BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND PROGRAM
Saturday, September 23, 2023 at 3 PM
Upper Merion Township Park
175 West Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406
the cost of each butterfly is \$6.50
Everyone Welcome - Bring a Friend

Please see the July Newsletter for registration form!!

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

The greatest gift
we can give to those
who have left us
Is to live fully in their place.

Author unknown

It is what it is...
But it will become
What you make of it.

Author unknown

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

Lori Bartholomew - Matthew - brother - 7/14
 Eleanor Brennan - Jonathan Masiak - grandson - 7/9
 Jackie & Steve Brown - Doug Brown - son - 7/23
 Ellen & James Burbano - Eric - son - 7/14
 Joanne & Tom Christman - Kyle R. O'Neill - son - 7/20
 Catherine Dardozzi - Evan Schmidt - grandson - 7/15
 Vanessa Diaz - Samir - friends child - 7/12
 Laurie Downing - Trevor - son - 7/24
 Lily Eason & Peter Montijo - son/stepson - 7/27
 Bob & Connie Ercole - David - son - 7/2
 Sharon & Francis Gailey - Danielle Marie Gailey - daughter - 7/14
 Ron & Sue Gamza - Rachel & Troy - daughter & Grandson - 7/24
 Gwen & Walt Gearhart - Jamie Rogers - grandson - 7/12
 Carolyn & Allen Gephart - Joseph Malec - son - 7/14
 Victoria Gerber - Brea - daughter - 7/11
 Craig & Kathleen Gerland - Alexis - daughter - 7/18
 Frank & Rhonda Gomez - Frank Jr. - son - 7/17
 Danielle & Joshua Graham - Jake - brother - 7/29
 Sharon Harvey - Christopher William - son - 7/21
 Tracey Hawley - Sean - son - 7/20
 Jean & James Hayden - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - son - 7/26
 Mark & Vicki Hoffman - Eric Daniel Hoffman - son - 7/21
 Dennis & Lois Ianovalle - Dennis - son - 7/6
 Mary Pat King - Griffin Scott Gearhart - son - 7/25
 Barbara Kirk - Eric - son - 7/2
 Bob & Laura Latshaw - Scott - son - 7/12
 Maryann Lockyer - Keith - son - 7/15
 Maryellen & James Madden - Anne Marie Madden - daughter - 7/28
 Linda Massey - Gene - son - 7/16
 Lee & Laurie Maxwell - Dan - son - 7/21
 Sue, Dave, Dan, and Lauren McCarthy - Brian McCarthy - son and brother - 7/7
 Cheryl Mezzaroba - Lon Mezzaroba - son - 7/24
 Betty (Elizabeth) Miller - Raymond "Jim" - son - 7/26
 Christy O'Brian - Evie - daughter - 7/19
 Janet Patrizio - Stephen - son - 7/5
 Betty Jane Peters Neilson - Walter C. Peters - son - 7/21
 Marie Poulsen - Jerry August Warfel - grandson - 7/3
 Chris Poulsen - Jerry - nephew - 7/3
 Debbie Repas - Stacy Lynn - daughter - 7/18
 Christine Rizol - Tyler - son - 7/10
 Donna Rogers - Jamie Rogers - son - 7/12 - Jonathan Rogers - husband - 7/13
 Linda Sandlin - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - brother - 7/26
 Jackie Savage - Gwen - Granddaughter - 7/25

Anniversaries - Cont'd

Linda Sandlin - LCDR. Timothy M. Hayden - brother - 7/26
 Jackie Savage - Gwen - Granddaughter - 7/25
 Mildred Sayles - Fredrick Chavis - son - 7/6
 Donna & Eric Schaertl - Jared M. Schaertl - son - 7/13
 Suzanne Schoenhut - Joe - son - 7/5
 Matthew Silverman - Avery Silverman - sister - 7/14
 Howard & Margorie Silverman - Avery Silverman - daughter - 7/14
 Janis Siravo - Christian - son - 7/22
 Eileen Smith - Craig - son - 7/31
 Philip & Ilene Spector - Avery Silverman - neice - 7/14
 Margaret & Wade Stallard - Wade Hampton Stallard, III - son - 7/27
 Margaret & Matthew Strickler - Timothy Strickler - son - 7/23
 Suzanne Teleha - Peter Teleha - son - 7/29
 Hellmut Theil - Hellmut Theil, Jr. - son - 7/14
 Gerard & Jane Thimm - Gary Thimm - son - 7/12
 Nancy Thompson - Andrew Thompson - son - 7/28
 Brenda Timbers - Niya Raquel Timbers - daughter - 7/28
 Betsy Townsend - Wendy Townsend Besche - daughter - 7/29
 Roseanne Vigliotti - Adriana - granddaughter - 7/4
 Shelly Wagner - Andrew Wagner - son - 7/26
 Ellen & Dale Weaver - Jeffrey M. Weaver - son - 7/29
 Irene & Bob Weaver - Monica - daughter - 7/17
 Peggy West - Kelly Ann West - daughter - 7/28
 Donna White - Diane White - sister - 7/4
 Nancy Willis - Alex - son - 7/9

THE EMPTINESS

The emptiness is what fills up inside of you when you give up hope.
 The emptiness means different things to different people.
 It is understood inside that person and that person only.
 It is the cold sadness lurking inside.
 Always there but seems to hide.
 Covered up by happiness, but surely finds its way back inside.
 The emptiness is not evil, it is only sadness.
 The emptiness is the feeling you get when you have lost someone close to you.
 The emptiness is when your heart aches.
 The emptiness is when you feel you can't face another day.
 The feeling you get when you are all alone.
 When no one understands.
 When your fate is in your hands.
 You take a deep breath and face another day.
 For that is what everyone expects.
 That is the emptiness.

Christine Santoleri, Valley Forge, PA
 for her sister, Katie Santoleri 6/5/81 - 8/14/92

BIRTHDAYS

Eileen & Tom Algeo - Megan - daughter - 7/17
 Nina Ansel - Jenny - daughter - 7/27
 Loretta Bovell - JoAnna - daughter - 7/12
 Carol & Ira Caplan - Julian - don - 7/7
 Gary Chavez - Christopher Dale Chavez - son - 7/19
 Tracy & Mike Collins - Krystal Chuck - daughter - 7/19
 Hazel Corbin - Dayle C Rutledge - daughter - 7/7
 Jennifer Dixon - Graham - son - 7/22
 Heather Gabell - Marin Gabell - son - 7/23
 Nancy Hartzell - Adam - son - 7/29
 Sharon Harvey - Christopher William - son - 7/28
 Giuliana Hilend - Patrick Andrew Hilend - son - 7/9
 Nancy Jones - Jeff - grandson - 7/2
 Janet & Dave Keller - Thomas A. Keller - brother - 7/3
 Stacy Ludy - Alyssa Kenny - daughter - 7/27
 Maureen and Pat McCormick - John McCormick - son - 7/20
 Cameron and Sandra Meikle - Laura - daughter - 7/4
 Pete Mihalek - Andy - son - 7/15
 Alexandra Milas - Nicholas Stathes - mom's brother - 7/1
 John & Mary Ann Murphy - Brian Michael Murphy - son - 7/20
 Carol & Dennis O'Connor - Jack Coladonato - brother - 7/14
 Gary & Patricia Otto - Benjamin Otto - son - 7/26
 Betty Jane Peters - Neilson - Walter C. Peters - son - 7/4, Russell F. Peters, Jr. - son - 7/25
 Karen Pilcicki - Jeff - son - 7/2
 Vernice Quattlebaum - Gwendolyn Y. Ashe - daughter - 7/11
 Jill & Richard Reich - Patrick - son - 7/20
 Donald & Freda Rhinier - Glenn D. Rhinier - son - 7/18
 Rocco & Fran Rinaldi - Stephen - son - 7/30
 Tracey Robinson - Connor - son - 7/6
 Kelly Rossi - Kevin - brother - 7/24
 Mike & Beverly Smith - Ryan - son - 7/18
 Helen (Barb, daughter) Smith - Bob Smith - son - 7/2
 Patricia & Bertram Snead - James Christopher Snead - son - 7/15
 Jen & Alex Soutos - Alexi - daughter - 7/27
 Harry & Merrily Spiess - F. Ryan Spiess - son - 7/16
 Lisa M Spinks - Robert - brother - 7/9
 Linda Sposato - Bernadette Funaro - daughter - 7/23
 Ellen & Frank Svitek - Kate Elizabeth Svitek - daughter - 7/1
 Jean Sykora - Mark - son - 7/14
 Chris & Larry Teal - Wade Teal - son - 7/30
 Renee Teufel - Gregory - son - 7/28
 Nancy Thompson - Andrew Thompson - son - 7/21
 Brenda Timbers - Niya Raquel Timbers - daughter - 7/3
 Melissa Toland - Connor Shepherd - son - 7/10
 Steven Tucker - Patrick Ryan - son - 7/12
 Barbara Tuller - Charles - son - 7/3
 Pat Villante - Laura - daughter - 7/28
 Bill & Patti Whitehead - Maria - daughter - 7/4



SHARED THOUGHTS ON MEN ALSO NEED SUPPORT

Men tend to be less verbal about their agony of losing a child or sibling, which results in the misunderstanding that they feel less pain. The Valley Forge Chapter is very fortunate to have men who attend meeting and speak of their loss. It helps to erase the myth that men are emotionally stronger, which has put unrealistic expectations on them, and prevented their reaching out for support. The depth of grief is not proportionate to a gender. It is unfair to assume a father's parental attachment is less than a mother's. When society expects more of men than they are capable, it lowers their self-esteem, and can make them feel they are not meeting their obligation. No one should ever feel obligated to be a pillar of strength for another family member. Each has the ultimate load they can bear. It helps to share our grief, when we can do so without putting expectations on another.

Father's Day is a tough day for our men. They need the same love and compassion, we mothers do on Mother's Day. We tend to measure our parental worth on these special days. We often come up short, for we bereaved parents tend to lay every possible guilt our imagination can conjure up on ourselves. If we can not find a realistic failure, we can always feel guilty for breathing while our child is dead. I consider a big turning point in my grief when I could say "I did the best I could do, and that is good enough". If our children were as great as we say they were (and we know they were), I'll bet some of those traits were nurtured by the parents. We need to take some credit for the good things in their life. We wish all our father's the best day you can possibly have this Father's Day, and hope you feel pride in being a father to your child.

June can also be a tough month at graduation time. Any school related event stirs up emotions for most of us. For many years, I found June to be the toughest month of all. Our son Doug was a sophomore in high school when he died, each year I relived the "he would have been". For some it is elementary or high school, others it is college, regardless of the stage of life our child or sibling was in when they left us, our grief seems to intensify at the next anticipated hurdle they would have achieved. We mourn the loss of our future dreams, as well as the physical loss of our child or sibling.

Our grief will take more time and energy than those around us could ever imagine. The lack of understanding our grief, can cause us to feel detached from family and friends. It is vital to our well being to find someone to share our grief with. Other bereaved parents and siblings have many of the same grief symptoms, know the depth of despair, and our need for help. More seasoned bereaved families can help us get through our bad days by showing us there is light at the end of the tunnel, and how we can become stronger than we ever expected to be.

Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge

Missing Graduate

Parents happy faces all around me,
With a glow from within,
Pomp and Circumstance is playing,
Now the program will begin.
The graduates are lined up,
They are coming down the aisle,
Some have serious faces, yet
Some have a little smile.
I look down the aisle,
Hoping for your face to come into sight,
This is your class,
It was to be your graduation night .
All the graduates pass by,
But none of them are you.

A tug of my heart tells me,
You are not here, your death is true.
God called you home...
I wanted you here in such a bad way.
Looking into your classmates' faces
Do they recall you, missing this day?
Memories, sweet memories,
Now fill my mind and heart.
There will be no golden tassel
This day for my Sweetheart.
The Class is oh! so happy,
This isn't the time to be blue.
Now I must go shake a hand
And get a hug or two.

Emma Valenteen
TCF Phoenixville, PA

BUTTERFLY RELEASE PROGRAM
Saturday, September 23, 2023 at 3PM

Upper Merion Township Park (back of Police Station)
175 West Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406

Diagonally across from our monthly meeting place at Good Shepherd Church.
This event will be held in back of the township building, left of the gazebo.

Cost \$6.50 per butterfly - August 19th last day to place order.
There is no admission or parking fee.

Water will be provided by the chapter. Please bring folding chairs or a
blanket to sit on.

A family may order one butterfly to share, or order one butterfly for each family
member. You may order as many butterflies as you wish. All butterflies must be
preordered. If you are unable to attend 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.

For questions, please call TCF Valley Forge 484-919-0820
Any further details will be posted at the VF website. www.tcfvalleyforge.org

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to them

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to them

Name of loved one

Your Relationship to them

Total number of butterflies ordered: _____ \$6.50 each

Total money (no credit cards) enclosed: _____

Please forward registration and check to: Rhonda Gomez, 12 Brook Circle,
Glenmoore, PA 19343

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
Chapter Leader
12 Brook Circle
Glenmoore PA 19343



**The
Compassionate
Friends Inc.**

June 2023

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