



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## MARCH 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

Mar 1 General Sharing

April 5 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**

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.

**Barbara Blake, son *Chad* (37)**

**Nancy Jones, grandson *Jeff* (32)**

**Karen Pilcicki, son *Jeff* (32)**

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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.

**Luanne Stetler, grandson *Jordyn* on his anniversary 2/28.**

**Nina Bernstein, son *Andrew Voluck* on his anniversary 2/9.**

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Marco & Patricia Giubilato** in loving memory of our daughter, **Robin Giubilato Zarelli** on her birthday 3/18.

**Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy** in loving memory of our son, ***Philip V. Kennedy*** on his birthday 2/22.

**Marilyn & Fred Mountjoy**, in loving memory of our daughters, ***Barilyn, Maralin & Marian.***

**Sigrid & Robert Snow**, in loving memory of our sons, ***Barry & Kevin.***

**Esperanza & Libardo Toro** in loving memory of our daughter, ***Maria*** on her birthday 2/22.

**Linda & John Wilson** in loving memory of our son, ***Sean Elliott Wilson*** on his birthday 2/18.

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.**

**MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

Catherine Dardozzi, son *James Dardozzi* 3/7  
Joanne Devito, grandson *Domenico* 3/7  
Janie & Joseph Dougherty, son *Brendan K. Dougherty* 3/29  
Robert & Lee Duffield, son *Michael Robin* 3/31  
Richard & Martha Fenoglio, daughter *Judith Fenoglio Daw* 3/30  
Sarah Fishel, daughter *Allyson* 3/26  
Bill & Karen Flavin, son *Chad Flavin* 3/7  
Lisa Foos, son *Curtis* 3/14  
Kate Gara, godchild *Colin* 3/27  
Jo Ann Gatlin, daughter *Lisa Diane Gatlin* 3/20  
Marco & Patricia Giubilato, daughter *Robin Giubilato Zarelli* 3/18  
Danielle & Joshua Graham, brother *Jake* 3/27  
Elizabeth Haney, son *Christian* 3/6  
Jack & Stacy Kabic, daughter *Brithy* 3/29  
Joan Kellett, grandson *Keith Mastronardo* 3/23  
Gloria and Jerry Koval, son *Steven* 3/11  
Terry Kozlewski, son *Frankie* 3/12  
Tracey-Anne Langley, sister *Nataly* 3/25  
Julie Lauderback, son *Donovan Lauderback* 3/5  
Vivian & Kenneth Maahs, daughter *Kirsten* 3/22  
Lorelei Malandra, brother *Jeff Singer* 3/9  
Tom & Charmaine Malik, son *Danny Malik* 3/3  
Shannon Mastronardo, son *Keith* 3/23  
Lee & Laurie Maxwell, son *Dan* 3/14  
Jeff and Kathy McCarron, daughter *Sarah* 3/30  
William & Carol Meehan, son *Patrick W. Meehan* 3/11  
Greg and Mary Miller, son *David* 3/26  
Beth Mohr, brother *Matthew Bock* 3/18  
John Mscisz, grandson *Liam John Williamson* 3/8  
Aminah Na'im, son *Dawann* 3/3  
Kimberly Newman, mother *Margaret Haffey* 3/3  
Marie O'Connon, son *Curran J.* 3/27  
Janet Patrizio, son *Stephen* 3/12



**MARCH BIRTHDAYS continued**

Steve Patrizio, son *Stephen* 3/12  
Terri Pfeiffer, son *Matthew* 3/6  
Rusty Puglisi, son *Michael Puglisi* 3/5  
Susan Reynolds, son *Craig Anderson* 3/24  
Thelma Rosen, nephew *Charles Carswell* 3/26  
Lisa & John Russo, son *Casey* 3/17  
Susan & John Rutland, son *Justin Rutland* 3/28  
Carol Sannella, son *David Sannella* 3/18  
Abigail Schwartz, brother *Jake* 3/27  
Arthur & Nancy Singer, son *Jeffrey Vincent Singer* 3/9  
Jeffrey Smith, son *Jacob Smith* 3/2  
Mary Ellen Swider, daughter *Kelly Swider* 3/25  
Allen Thomas, son *Vernon Odins* 3/5  
Peggy Tweed, son *Matthew Bock* 3/18  
Peggy West, daughter *Kelly Ann West* 3/8  
Mary Willinger, sister *Annette* 3/6  
Carolyn & Tom Yuhas, son *Eric Whitelock* 3/4  
Judi Zollers, son *Sam* 3/6

**MARCH ANNIVERSARIES**

Loretta Bovell, daughter *JoAnna* - 3/7  
Gary Chavez, wife *JoAnn* - 3/31/09  
Rose Marie Cote, son *Mark J. Cote* - 3/26  
Barbara Cotteta, granddaughter *Denise* - 3/28  
Joanne Devito, grandson *Domenico* - 3/21  
Linda DiPasquale, son *Thomas* - 3/24  
Ginny Ebert, son *Jason* - 3/25  
Tom & Irene Edmunds, son *Kyle Derek Edmunds* - 3/17  
Bob & Dena Filipone, daughter *Denise* - 3/8  
Kate Gara, godchild *Colin* - 3/13  
Rita Gibbons, son *Paul Gibbons* - 3/20  
Herb & Karen Grant, son *Ryan* - 3/8  
Ronald J. & Margaret Halas, daughter *Desiree A. Halas* - 3/11  
Othell & William Heaney, son *Kevin* - 3/10  
Brad Ingerman, son *Justin* - 3/18  
Michael & Betsy Jarrett, son *Michael Jarrett* - 3/10  
Joan Kellett, grandson *Keith Mastronardo* - 3/19  
Jacquie Kilroy, son *Shilen Kenneth* - 3/21  
Suellen & Stephen King, daughter *Danelle Rossi* - 3/12  
Susan Lipson, nephew *Justin Ingerman* - 3/18  
Stacy Ludy, daughter *Alyssa Kenny* - 3/10  
granddaughter *Anastasia* - 3/10

**MARCH ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED**

- Lorelei Malandra, brother *Jeff Singer* - 3/9**
- Dan Markle, brother *Matt Markle* - 3/3**
- Shannon Mastronardo, son *Keith* - 3/19**
- Anne McClenachan, brother *Andy McClenachan* - 3/30**
- Kevin & Nancy McKelvey, son *Michael* - 3/30**
- Barbara Meisenhelder, daughter *Renee Meisenhelder* - 3/2**
- Bob & Janet Milnazik, daughter *Kim* - 3/3**
- Beth Mohr, brother *Matthew Bock* - 3/16**
- Ann Murray, son *Brian Rapoport* - 3/9**
- George & Estelle Null, daughter *Kathleen "Kathy" Null* - 3/7**
- Betty & Richard Owens, Sr., son *Richard H. Owens, Jr.* - 3/26**
- Thomas & Mary Jane Poore, son *Bradley Poore* - 3/19**
- Kelly Rossi, brother *Kevin* - 3/8**
- Becky Rotkowski, brother *Brian* - 3/14**
- Beverly & Joe Rush, daughter *Kelsey* - 3/29**
- Arthur & Nancy Singer, son *Jeffrey Vincent Singer* - 3/9**
- Akhil & Judy Tripathi, son *Sunil* - 3/17**
- Peggy Tweed, son *Matthew Bock* - 3/16**
- Hans & Margaret van Naerssen, son *Eric* - 3/25**
- Jamie (Germaine) Cote Weaver, brother *Mark Cote* - 3/26**
- Linda Weaver, son *Damon Weaver* - 3/18**
- Laurie Wyche, son *Jameson Wyche* - 3/1**

**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.

**River of Tears**

River of Tears  
Crest to Flood.  
My River of Tears,  
sixteen long years.

Over Rapids and Falls  
Sad with Grief.  
Tears for times of disbelief.

Times never again to be,  
leaving only past memory.

Gone from this earth  
to peace and rest,  
In heaven to be  
eternally blessed.

**A Mother's Broken Heart**

Time gone,  
sixteen years,  
measured in  
the River of Tears.

Loosing a child breaks  
a mother's heart.  
Leaving forever  
a missing part.

Acceptance ??  
Does it ever come?  
Does sixteen years  
add up that sum?

Until then,  
memories will stay.  
She will embrace you  
in heaven some day.

***Rose Marie Cote*, TCF Valley Forge, PA**

In loving memory of my son, ***Mark*** on his anniversary 3/26



**THE BEREAVED MARRIAGE**

Before the death of a child, in an intact marriage both contribute to a mutually satisfying relationship. The following are areas of sharing before the death and where lack of sharing occurs afterwards.

Before, in family activities, couples shared what happened during the day, etc. After the death, they may have an initial sharing regarding the funeral and everything relating to the child, but not to them as a couple. Emotional support was a balancing act before the death. Often there is no emotional support afterwards, because each is so wrapped up in individual grief. People in grief become introspective - a typical thought is how am I going to go on? Before the death there was mutual concern for each other's well-being; afterwards the concern is turned inward. While before the death there was interest in each other's work, hobbies, and activities, afterwards nothing has meaning.

Males deal with grief differently from females because they are expected to be strong emotionally, to not show emotion, to not cry after the funeral. Society does not allow males to show anger over the death. As providers, men go back to work soon after and are away from where the memories are. They do not have as much time to think about what happened. As protectors, they may be feeling guilt. "Have I failed to protect my child in some way?" Also, there may be a feeling of wanting to protect the spouse by not being too emotional, by being "strong."

Men are more self-sufficient, especially in the emotional area. Men are not likely to share very well; this hurts their ability to grieve. Men hurt as much as women do, but usually do not show it until something triggers it. A man may talk about many things like sports and politics, but rarely is there someone with whom he can share his feelings. Men escape to the job, to outside activities. It is hard to find someone with whom to share feelings. Men do not usually recognize that it is all right to feel depressed.

Society says it is all right for a woman to cry and to talk about the loss. Women usually have a network with other women, although some of those making up the network may drop the woman because of not being able to face what has happened. Women set the tone for the family. When in grief, her responses set the tone for the family atmosphere and can be devastating. Because women are the primary child-caring persons, the mother may be the one feeling guilty because she had responsibility for the child's everyday care. Women are given more prescriptions for tranquilizers than men because of doctors' attitudes.

How do couples reconcile these variables? What can they do to lessen the impact? Men should take it easy regarding outside activities. Emphasis should be placed on getting into the business of grieving, even isolating oneself at times to be able to grieve. Men should find someone with whom to talk, preferably another bereaved father. Don't choose a woman because a man is too vulnerable emotionally and an unhealthy situation could develop. Men are "shaky" on accepting a group experience. If anger is what a man feels, he should express it by channeling it into something physical - be angry at something, not at a person. Daily exercise that is appropriate for the individual is another way of channeling aggression. Men should make a concerted effort to learn how to cry. Crying is a natural response; tear ducts have a natural purpose. Find a catalyst - a photo of your child, an article of clothing - anything that will make you cry. No one else need know about the crying if you go into another room. Some men find it takes much time before they feel free to cry, but once they do, it is then easier to continue to cry in private.

The woman in the bereaved couple should remember that she needs friends, especially other bereaved mothers. She should schedule time away from her job if she is a working mother, if nothing more than a flexible coffee break schedule. Non-working mothers should use a baby sitter and plan time away from the usual environment. It is vital to nurture yourself. Physical exercise helps overcome depression and anger. Ask for help if you need it. If someone says, "What can I do?" give them something to do - shop, baby sit, clean house, write notes, something that will help you; it will also be good for the volunteer.

Until a death occurs, husband and wife behavior patterns within a family are predictable; afterwards, they are different. In the new husband-wife relationships don't try too much too fast. Drop expectations; be patient with each other. Respect how the other grieves and his timetable for doing it; no two people grieve exactly the same way or at the same pace.

If one spouse does not show grief, it does not mean memories are forgotten. Spend time together even if you have to schedule it. Each spouse is a reminder of the loss; for this reason they may even avoid each other. There may be feelings of guilt for allowing yourself to feel good when your child is dead. Therefore, resume slowly and with patience. It is important to be able to say, "I am angry about what happened to our child, but it does not mean I love you any less."

*Adapted from an article by  
Bill and Barbara Schatz - TCF, Bothell, WA*



## SHARED THOUGHTS ON CARING FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Frequently, the change of seasons adds to our depression. In the spring, we look forward to the new plant life popping up all around us, bearing the fact its dormant life was only temporary. Often, when the evidence of spring does not lift our spirits as it has in the past, it iterates to the low level our depression has descended. We begin to question why our beloved children and siblings can not return to us. It can even make us feel we are less important than the nature we view.

When we are in the pit of depression, we can not see beyond our loss. It is important to have someone who will not immediately encourage us to see a doctor to prescribe anti-depressant drugs, so they can shift the responsibility of helping us to someone else. We need someone who is willing to listen to our rambling and repetitive talking about our loss, and will not pass judgment, even though they do not understand us. But hopefully, they will gently encourage positive thinking. We need to be accepted for what little we can give in return. When we lean on those who help us, it is essential to let them know we are doing the best we can in our very abnormal situation, and appreciate their allowing us to talk about that which is very healing in our grief.

Relationships with our family members, are also important. Our remaining children need to know they are as equally important, and loved as much as our deceased. By putting our deceased child on a high pedestal, the remaining siblings can feel they are not as precious to us. It is best to be verbal, and not assume they understand our feelings. It is very normal for siblings to find more comfort in sharing with friends, or other siblings, rather than parents. It is too much for them to take on their parent's grief, and it hurts too much to see parents cry. They have had both the terrible loss of a sibling and a stable parent (as they knew them), and they too, are fragile.

The marriage is under tremendous strain. Both are so overwhelmed with grief, and don't have the strength to support the other. It is like leaning on a bent twig. If we harbor little grievances, all sorts of held in resentment may surface, exploding into serious problems. Most sexual relations habits will change, and frequently, in opposite directions. It is important to try and resolve continued absence of sexual relationships. This takes communicating with one another. A spouse can not fully understand or solve their mate's grief, but we must accept each other's style of grieving. The accusation of blaming a mate for the death is probably the most damaging of all. If this continues to smolder, it may be helpful to include a third party, such as a psychiatrist, pastor, or some form of grief counselor. No bereaved parent can handle being accused of their child's death. We must attempt a resolution, we can't afford to lose our marriage along with our child. Sometimes an experienced grief specialist can help clear our vision. It is very normal to blame someone for the death. But, most often in a family situation, the death could not have been prevented, or the party being accused was acting to the best of their ability. We must forgive, for they also loved the deceased, and are hurting badly.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel*, TCF Valley Forge

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"Commitment to life and living for yourself, spouse and family; and commitment to your child's memory are four choices you must make. Each one requires perserverance and patience. Failure to make these commitments will extend the tragedy by increasing the loss."

*Nancy Hogan*



## **GUIDELINES FOR GRIEVING COUPLES**

Realize the death of your child will hurt more than you imagined. It will rearrange your life and world view. Your relationship with your partner will be stretched. There are some things you can do to reduce strain on your relationship.

You and your partner will grieve differently. Let go of the assumption that you "ought" to do it alike. Respectfully make room for each other's style.

Increase the amount of time you spend in each other's company. Listen to each other as much as you can. Do special little things for each other.

Realize you cannot meet all your partner's needs. You have limits. You are both overextended. Do seek appropriate outside support when you need it.

Focus on what you need. Let go of trying to get your partner to do something different about his or her own grief.

Grief takes its time and is not very predictable. Let go of trying to conform to anybody else's idea of how you ought to be doing.

Women, if you don't see "Dad" grieving in ways you recognize, stay clear of the trap of deciding this means he doesn't care about the baby (or you) very much. Ask him what he does with his sadness and sense of helplessness. Remember you both hurt. You will both feel it and show it in different ways.

Men, if your partner needs to talk about the baby and her grief more than you can absorb, encourage her to find additional places to talk. Show her you care in other ways. Keep clear of the trap of thinking you aren't doing it "right". Let go of trying to get her "through it" easier or faster.

Remember other parents have survived this much pain. Life will be meaningful again.

Keep remembering life will become meaningful again.

From "Coping with infant or Fetal Loss:  
The Couple's Healing Process" By *Gilbert and Smart*

## **GRIEVING IN PAIRS**

How many times have people said, "Well, thank God you have each other!" How many times have you felt each other to be entirely inadequate at meeting your needs.

Alarming statistics are available telling us of the rocky road parents encounter in their marriage after the death of a child. We sometimes see in ourselves a touchiness or quickness to become irritated that wasn't there before, it always seems that my "bad" day is my wife's "good" day, or the day she wakes up crying is the day I am planning to play tennis.

Or sometimes, even more difficult, we both have a bad day and find no help from the other in pulling things back together. How can one person hold up another when he is, himself, face down in the mud?

Every person grieves differently. This is a rule that even applies within a family. And the needs of every individual are different. While you may need to talk and talk, and talk, your spouse may need some time alone to reflect inwardly.

You have both been through the worst experience of you life. And while at times you can face recovery as a team, sometime you must develop the patience to be able to wait out certain needs alone or with someone else . Realize that no matter how it is shown, your partner hurts, too.

*Gerry Hunt*

Like a bird singing in the rain - Let grateful memories survive in time of sorrow.

Robert Lewis Stevenson



**BEATITUDES FOR THOSE WHO COMFORT**

- Blessed are those who do not use tears to measure the true feelings of the bereaved.
- Blessed are those who do not always have a quick “comforting” answer.
- Blessed are those who do not make judgments on the bereaved’s closeness to God by their reaction to the loss of their loved one.
- Blessed are those who hear with their hearts and not with their minds.
- Blessed are those who allow the bereaved enough time to heal.
- Blessed are those who admit their uncomfortableness and put it aside to help the bereaved.
- Blessed are those who do not give unwanted advice.
- Blessed are those who continue to call, visit, and reach out when the crowd has dwindled and the wounded are left standing alone.
- Blessed are those who know the worth of each person as a unique individual and do not pretend that they can be replaced or forgotten.
- Blessed are those who realize the fragility of bereavement and handle it with an understanding shoulder and a loving heart.

*Jacki Deems*

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**SEARCHING**

<p>Once again, my list has vanished; it was here, but now it's missing. Keys and glasses disappearing, books and letters overdue.</p>	<p>I'm forever searching, searching, they must be here, and I need them! Could it be that what is missing, what I want this very minute</p>	<p>could it be that what I'm really searching for, my child, is you?</p>
		<p><i>Joyce Andrews</i> TCF, Sugar Land, TX</p>

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**HUGGING: PERFECT CURE FOR WHATEVER AILS YOU**

<p>No movable parts No batteries to wear out No periodic checkups Low energy consumption High energy yield Inflation proof No monthly requirements Theft proof Non-taxable Non-polluting And, of course, fully returnable</p>	<p>Hugging is healthy. It relieves tension, Combats depression, Reduces stress, Improves blood circulation. It's invigorating. It's rejuvenating. It elevates self-esteem. It generates good will. It has no unpleasant side effects. It is nothing less than a miracle drug!</p>
	<p><i>Author Unknown</i></p>



## THOUGHTS FROM A PARENT WHO LOST AN OLDER CHILD

Perhaps, I had my child longer than you had yours, but thirty-eight years does not seem long. Perhaps, there are more memories to hold in my heart, but I know yours are just as dear to you as mine are to me even if your memories are memories of only one or two days.

Your dreams for your child are gone. So are mine. Never did I imagine that I would have to deal with my child's death instead of him having to deal with mine.

In thirty-eight years there was time to give me a legacy of three grandchildren. This is a very special blessing and one that I do not take for granted.

My child died from a terminal illness that is not one of the 'acceptable' diseases. My child died of alcohol and drug addiction. The tools for remission of this disease are place in the hands of the person who has the disease. Even with help of four treatment centers the recovery was not to be.

One day at a time my recovery is taking place. The pain, after two and one half years has gone to a place where it can be tolerated. My mission is to sustain the relationship with my three granddaughters who now live three thousand miles away from me.

My story and my age may be different from yours, but the bottom line is the same! My child has gone to a place where I cannot go and I miss him so much. The pain of grief is still there, but I am living life one day at a time enriched because my son came through my body into my life.

*Helen Godwin, TCF – Orange Park – Jacksonville Chapter*

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### RISKS

To laugh...is to risk appearing the fool  
 To weep...is to risk appearing sentimental  
 To reach out for another...is to risk involvement  
 To expose feelings...is to risk exposing your true self  
 To place ideas, your dreams before a crowd...is to risk their loss  
 To love...is to risk not being loved in return  
 To live...is to risk despair  
 To try...is to risk failure.

But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing  
 The person, who risks nothing, does nothing...has nothing...and is nothing.  
 They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they cannot learn...feel...change...grow...love...live  
 Chained by their certitude's, they are a slave, they have forfeited their freedoms  
 Only a person who risks is free. *Author Unknown*

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**“Who can so softly bind up the wound of another,  
 as he who has felt the same wound himself.”**

*Thomas Jefferson*



## “O Death ... where is thy sting?”

Is it here? Yet? Has it come finally?  
Pricking and prodding me,  
Even puncturing my skin  
Stabbing the surface

To get through to pain  
To reach that part of the Heart  
Which feels True pain.

Everything still seems so  
“On the surface”, Sympathy cards, notes ... and flowers  
Words of condolence, well-meant  
Come pouring forth  
Flooding in, well appreciated  
But ... somehow Meaningless, just ... Words.  
Sympathy, Sorrow, Peace ... Prayers.

It is too Deep, the hurt that's hiding  
Still inside, Hard to share  
To speak about, aloud  
Only in whispers  
Too many phone calls, mouthing sounds  
In my ear, surface words superficial    Suspended, in midair  
Meaning ... nothing.

What are we waiting for? Wherein lies the full meaning?  
The real understanding of what has happened.  
What brings the final “ending”? The Closure, they talk about  
The ability to share the Sadness  
With others ... with friends and family  
Who seek solace and need help, just as we do.

This shadow is still here, hovering over us, and ... yet  
Where is the “sting”?  
The pang of Sorrow  
Perhaps it is still here with us now, and maybe always will be.  
Maybe no more than a dull ache, ... waiting to be confronted  
Like a distant wave, seen afar off, comes rolling in, curling towards us  
Mounting higher and higher until it is on top of us, ... and then breaks  
As we are drawn under, and momentarily submerged,  
Gasping for air, engulfed, and gulping  
Until just as suddenly, the wave disperses and spreads, harmlessly all around us  
Dissolving in meaningless watery nothingness, once again and ...again

But when death comes suddenly - taking us by surprise - hitting us with momentum,  
Drowning us for an instant, in too big a wave  
Too much to undertake, to tolerate, to understand ... leaving us breathless  
We finally feel the sting, we know the pang, we seek the final outcome.  
We swallow the oncoming waves of death.

Showing us when calamity hits hard ... violently  
We must learn to meet it head on  
Learning to dive right into the oncoming Wave  
To swim through it, coming up on the other side  
Or - ride the Wave, rolling with it all the way to shore  
Feeling every pain  
But reaching safety, at last, on sandy beaches.  
And perhaps finally finding the peace we're looking for.





# 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