

# 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 - 5/4/2023

Next Meeting - 6/1/2023

The 46th Annual Conference will be July 7-9 2023 at Denver, Colorado. You can register as soon possible on the website, at The Compassionate Friends.



## May 2023

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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.

## 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.

## LOVE GIFTS

Irene Sutton — In memory Jim Sutton, son, 4/16

### MOTHER & DAUGHTER

It's a special bond that spans the years,  
Through laughter, worry, smiles & tears.  
A sense of trust that can't be broken,  
A depth of love sometimes unspoken.  
A lifelong friendship of sharing,  
Hugs, kisses, warmth & caring.  
Mother & Daughter their hearts as one,  
A link that can never be undone.

**Author unknown**  
**submitted by Lucia Watters**  
**for daughter Luanne Zambino**

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**

They are everywhere, people who are hurting so deeply...so desperately...so broken in spirit and soul that they feel almost certain they will never smile again. Hearts so tender and crushed, that pain is all consuming and it strips them of all hope that there could ever be a day they wouldn't hurt. If only they could see a day when their agony would end. But what can I do? All I can do is love them - so desperately that their pain is no longer theirs alone, but mine as well, and I bearing the same pain makes it more endurable. To this end I seek, and to this goal I commit my life. I can do something - I can love.

**Debby Grogan**  
TCF - Atlanta, GA  
Debby is a nurse. . . .

## 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

Madeleine Adler - J. Peter Adler - son - 5/30  
 Don & Monica Barber - Steven W. Barber - son - 5/30  
 Gloria Bello - Joseph - son - 5/21  
 Ben & Cathy Breskman - Brian - son - 5/26  
 Krisha Byrd - William - son - 5/29  
 Andrea Caesar - Daniel Mark Caesar - son - 5/13  
 Joane Cooper - Katy - daughter - 5/21  
 Rose Marie Cote - Paul Cote - husband - 5/27  
 Jane Cox - Bill - son - 5/24  
 Franklin & Patricia Cox - Christen Fox - daughter - 5/26  
 Bud Cunnane - Patrick - son - 5/2  
 Dawn Dellabarba - Brett - son - 5/5  
 Janie Ebersole - Ashley Sankus - daughter - 5/16  
 Renee & Walter Eells - Patrick - son - 5/31  
 Justine Ellinger - Keira Ellinger - daughter - 5/7  
 Bridget & David Ellison - Caroline - daughter - 5/7  
 Charlie & Jill Fick - Michael Sternberg - son - 5/14  
 Colleen and Dan Fledderman - Amy - daughter - 5/25  
 Mary Ann Flocco - Barbara - sister - 5/17  
 John Gailey - Alex - son - 5/18  
 Daniel Gentry - Emily - daughter - 5/4  
 William & Marilyn Hudson - Robert Hudson - son - 5/11  
 Joan Kelly - William - son - 5/2  
 Joan Kingslake - Guy Thornton Woods - son-in-law - 5/6  
 Pat Kuchler - Michael - son - 5/3  
 Dan Logan - Joanie - daughter - 5/28  
 John & Nancy Logue - Kaitlyn Logue - daughter - 5/3  
 Tom & Charmaine Malik - Danny Malik - son - 5/12  
 Andrew Mautz - Jaxon - Son - 5/6  
 Michelle Mazzio - Brendan Mazzio - son - 5/20  
 Marian Melchiorre - John Anthony Peticca, Jr - grandson - 5/11  
 Mike & Jen Meluskey - Carolyn Meluskey - daughter - 5/22  
 Mary O'Halloran - Thomas M. O'Halloran - brother - 5/28  
 Winnie & James O'Halloran - Thomas M. O'Halloran - son - 5/28  
 Anna Packer - Anna M Packer - daughter - 5/2  
 Holly Kuiatkouski and Paul Falkestein - Anna - daughter - 5/26  
 John Peticca - John Anthony Peticca Jr - son - 5/11  
 Sharyn & Joe Pozzuolo - Joey Brad Pozzuolo - son - 5/19  
 Joe & Kim Pratt - Paul - son - 5/16

# Anniversaries - Cont'd

Christine and Richard Purkiss - Adam Clark - son - 5/7  
 Joanne Quirion - Marissa - daughter - 5/21  
 Joan & Earl Reigel - Melissa Reigel - daughter - 5/4  
 Kathleen Schmitt - Ken Schmitt - son - 5/21  
 Anthony & Marsha Schrader - Krista - daughter - 5/11  
 Linda Sciarra - John Anthony Peticca Jr - son - 5/11  
 Cathy Seehuetter - Nina Seehuetter - daughter - 5/11  
 Helen (Barb, daughter) Smith - Bob Smith - son - 5/15  
 E. Pearl & Ernest Smith - Tony - son - 5/5  
 Harry & Merrily Spiess - Charles Smith - grandson - 5/29  
 John & Rose Stanley - Susan Stanley - daughter - 5/29  
 Pety Suy and Matthew Kuchler - Ethan - son - 5/3  
 Anna Maria Tamaro-Bintliff - John - son - 5/3  
 Morgan E Taylor - Devan - sister - 5/30  
 Brooke Test - Devan - sister - 5/30  
 Nancy Thompson - J. Peter Adler - friend - 5/30  
 Sherron Trio - Tom - son - 5/21  
 Marissa Wadsworth - TJ Wadsworth - son - 5/28  
 Mek Wagner - Paige - daughter - 5/13  
 Deb Walter - Evan - son - 5/10  
 Jamie (Germaine) Cote Weaver - Paul - father - 5/27  
 Terry & Susan Weikel - Jennifer - daughter - 5/11  
 John & Cecila Zisk - Jacob - son - 5/20

## Valley of the Butterflies

There is a green, sun-drenched valley -  
 Light with the scent of clover & lilacs -  
 Where the butterflies dance.  
 Leaping and swooping, they reflect colors  
 Of every hue and dimension.  
 There are monarchs and skippers  
 Swallow tails and delicate spring azures.  
 Each dances its unique pattern  
 Of flits, circles and dives.  
 Stretching its fragile wings toward the clouds  
 Or brushing its feet on the succulent grass

**Marcia F. Alig - Highstown, NJ, TCF**

# BIRTHDAYS

Courtney Aaron - Justin - brother - 5/18  
 Dianne Algeo - Skylar - Granddaughter - 5/4  
 Marilyn Anton - Steven Schneibolk - nephew - 5/7  
 Don & Monica Barber - Steven W. Barber - son - 5/19  
 Stephen & Barbara Billings - Laura Elizabeth Billings - daughter - 5/22  
 Bob & Marge Blasucci - Adam - son - 5/31  
 Shirley & Lex Bono - Greg - son - 5/19  
 Krisha Byrd - William - son - 5/29  
 Loretta & Ken Cericola - Anthony Cericola - son - 5/3  
 Mary Chelius - John J. Chelius, Jr. - son - 5/2  
 Joanne & Tom Christman - Kyle R. O'Neill - son - 5/23  
 Kathy Concannon - Tracey - daughter - 5/31  
 Joanne De Felice - Joseph - son - 5/27  
 Vanessa Diaz - Samir - friends child - 5/16  
 Michelle Dozier - Eric McCoy - son - 5/24  
 Danielle Evelyn - Samir - son - 5/16  
 Carol Graber - Bobby - son - 5/17  
 Frank Harms - Tyler - son - 5/20  
 Tracey Hawley - Christopher - son - 5/7  
 Robin Hayman - Bradley Hayman - son - 5/11  
 Debbie Helman - Adam - son - 5/7  
 William & Marilyn Hudson - Robert Hudson - son - 5/11  
 Hazel Hurley - Michael - son - 5/3  
 Jean Jones - Bobby - grandson - 5/7  
 Joan Kelly - Joan Barbara - daughter - 5/6, William - son - 5/2  
 Donna Kendall - Jennifer - daughter - 5/7  
 Mary Leshem - Michael - son - 5/18  
 Susan Lipson - Justin Ingerman - nephew - 5/18  
 Ella Mack - Elizabeth - sister - 5/31  
 Maryellen & James Madden - Anne Marie Madden - daughter - 5/18  
 Anne McClenachan - Andy McClenachan - brother - 5/30  
 Michael & Maria McFadden - Rachel McFadden - daughter - 5/14  
 Susan McKelvey - John - son - 5/20  
 Mike & Jen Meluskey - Carolyn Meluskey - daughter - 5/13  
 Cheryl Mezzaroba - Lon Mezzaroba - son - 5/18  
 Ann Murray - Jonathan Rapoport - son - 5/17  
 Christy O'brian - Evie - daughter - 5/2  
 Elsie Oreski - Gregory T. Oreski - son - 5/22  
 Betty & Richard Owens, Sr. - Richard H. Owens, Jr. - son - 5/12  
 Palma Panichello - Joseph Panichello - son - 5/21  
 Holly Kuiatkouski and Paul Falkestein - Anna - daughter - 5/21  
 Barbara Purtell-Frank - Michael John Keller Purtell - son - 5/28  
 Thomas & Jeri Bubbles Reinert - Albert Volpe - father (Bubbles) - 5/4  
 Carl Rudegear - Adam - son - 5/7  
 Lynn Saxon - Michael - son - 5/30  
 Sheila Scanlon - Andrew McGuire - grandson - 5/12  
 Kathleen Schmitt - Ken Schmitt - son - 5/31



## BIRTHDAYS (con'd)

Pamela Schneibolk - Steven - son - 5/7  
 Enjoli Segneri - Shane - boyfriend - 5/16  
 Margaret & Matthew Strickler - Timothy Strickler - son - 5/4  
 Suzanne Teleha - Peter Teleha - son - 5/20  
 Nancy Venafrá - Justin Aaron - son - 5/18  
 Roseanne Vigliotti - Adriana - granddaughter - 5/9  
 Donna White - Diane White - sister - 5/1  
 Joan & Ed Young - Jed Young - son - 5/18

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### A RETARDED CHILD

Having a retarded child has its rewards as well as its heartaches. I wish I could put my feelings into words, so the whole world would know what a joy Brian was to us. He was a very handsome boy with blonde hair and large blue eyes and a very deep dimple, and his smile was like a ray of sunshine. He was very special to us (my husband, myself and our other son and daughter who just idolized him). He could not express verbally his feelings for us, but the way he grabbed and embraced us with such sincere affection for every little thing we did for him (no matter how small) was worth a thousand words. He taught us the true meaning of the word love. We visit his grave quite often, and no matter what kind of a day it is, it seems as though the sun peeks through for just a minute, a reflection of Brian's smile to let us know how grateful he is that we are there.

Since it was God's will for me to have a retarded child, the greatest thing I can say about it is that, I thank God he chose me to be Brian's mother. I feel almost as privileged as Mary must have felt to be chosen as the mother of God. In our minds and hearts, Brian will never die.

**Anita O'Connell** - TCF, Delmar/Albany, NY

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### HOW TO HELP ME GRIEVE

**Be there for me:**

I feel alone, in pain.  
 I need a friend.

**Share my sorrow:**

Speak from your heart.  
 I have to talk about my feelings.

**Let me grieve:**

Listen to me, I need to cry.  
 We all grieve in our own way  
 and in a different time frame.

**Keep the memory alive:**

It is always on my mind.  
 I have so many memories.

**I need your help:**

Help me, call me, pray for me.  
 Do whatever you can.

**Don't desert me:**

Don't desert me after the 1st or 2nd week.  
 I need you especially on holidays.

**Take care of yourself:**

I need to depend on you.

**Help me to heal:**

Involve me, listen to me months later.  
 I need your interest and invitations.

**Be my friend:**

Don't be afraid of me or my grief.  
 It's okay to cry.  
 Lastly, please don't criticize until you've walked my  
 Shoes.

**Instead: Pray for me.**

**Vivian Sagert**  
 TCF, Minitonas, Manitoba, Canada

## SHARED THOUGHTS ON "MOTHER'S GUILT"

The month of May has always been an ego booster for most of us mothers, as we receive cards of praise and flattery from our children. But now that our child has died, and we are walking around with a hole in our soul, those same greeting cards can cause us guilt by not feeling worthy of the words.

We most always refine our priorities, and make new standards for ourselves after the death of our children. One of those priorities is don't put off spending time together or expressing our love. With our hindsight of knowing the child's life was cut short, we critique our motherhood as though we could have been super-human. We measure our mothering performance as though we could have given 100% of our time to our precious child. We punish ourselves with guilt, by remembering specifics of harsh words or deeds. Most often these are very normal human things most parents do and say. We know we cannot change, or take back, any infliction we place upon our child.

When we were entrusted with the gift of our children, we were not given hindsight, or the ability to be perfect. We were expected to handle all the other responsibilities placed upon us by other family members, and many mothers dealt with jobs to provide financial support for the family. This means there was not time, nor energy, to be the perfect parent. We were even expected to make mistakes, but now guilt holds us responsible for all our parental shortcomings. I have learned if we did what we thought was right at the time, or the best we could, that was all we could do. It is unfair to measure our performance as a parent with hindsight or super-human powers that we did not possess.

I'm sure our children did not judge us nearly so harshly as we judge ourselves. You may find it very helpful to tell your deceased child how you feel, what you wish you could have done, and how much you love them. I, personally, feel they are in an all-knowing state, and can better understand our expression of love. I'm sure a lot of our guilt would subside, if our children could express their image of us as parents.

Love is the greatest gift we have ever given or received. Just the fact we hurt so badly, and our pain is so intense, tells us we had great love for our children.

The pain of losing our children can never stop totally, but we can help to ease it to the point we can live with it. We would be very angry if someone would judge us as unfairly as we judge ourselves. We must first learn to love ourselves again, so we can love others. We love our children, even with their flaws. We must respect our children enough to know they love us, even when we are not the perfect parent. Don't minimize their love by thinking they were not capable of forgiving, or understanding that we did our best, and that was good enough.

**Marie Hofmockel** , TCF Valley Forge

Scott was good to me. He was the best brother anyone could have. Here are some of memories of him: We would always wrestled. When I was 6, I went to an Orioles game with him. I used to help with his homework. He was a caring person. He taught me all I know. He died of pypertrophic cardiomyopathy when he was 11, and I was 6.

I miss him so much. It's been years now since he died and I never forgot him.

Oh, I really miss you Scottie.

**Greg Rosemthal**, age 10  
Valley Forge, PA

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  
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**The  
Compassionate  
Friends Inc.**

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