



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## NOVEMBER 2016

### 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

- Nov 3 General Sharing
- Dec 1 General Sharing
- Dec 11 World Wide Candle Lighting  
(see page 2)  
Collection of gifts for First Step (under privileged children.) (see page 2)

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**

#### Chapter Leaders

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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**

**Hermon & Lily Eason** her son & his stepson, *Peter* (28).

**Enjoli Segneri** boyfriend, *Shane* (34).

**Lynn Winton & Tim Tumminello** daughter, *Natalie* (24).

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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.

**Nina Bernstein** in memory of my son, *Andrew* on his birthday 10/12.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Marcia & Harold Epstein** in loving memory of our grandson, *Andrew Voluck* on his birthday 10/12

**Shirly & Philip Kennedy** in loving memory of our son, Philip V. on his 29th anniversary.

**Joyce & Vern Kaiser** in loving memory of our son, *Brian* on his birthday 11/9.

**Joanne & Thomas Lennen** in loving memory of our son, *Scott Lennen* on his 53rd birthday.

Always in our hearts, forever in our thoughts. Miss and love you always.  
Mom and Dad.

**Frank Yanni** in loving memory of my son, *David* on his birthday 10/26 and my wife

**NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL**

**We are asking if possible , would you please receive your newsletter by email.**

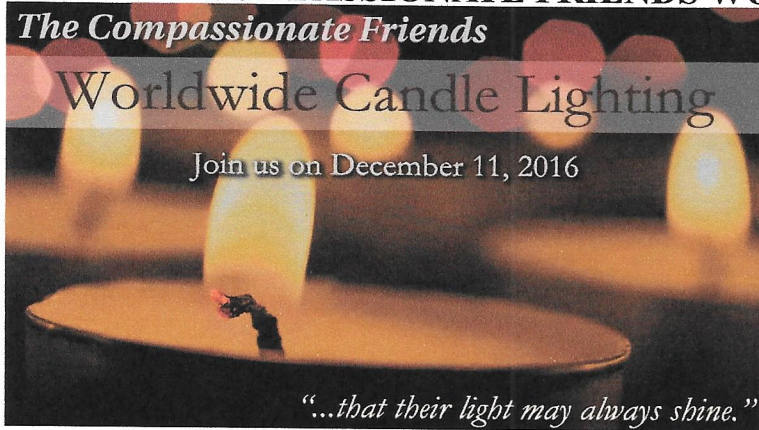
We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefiting from receiving it. We hope it is a help to you while going through your grief, giving you better understanding of your feelings, and letting you know **"We need not walk alone"**.

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**

**COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING**



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 18th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold a candle lighting remembrance service on December 11th at 2 PM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in the Founders Hall. (same place as our monthly sharing secessions are held). We chose 2 PM for our local service so that it would be available to everyone, including those who do not drive at night. We also urge you to light a candle in your home at 7PM. We hope you will take this opportunity to join us in remembering our children & siblings who have died, but will never be forgotten. Let us ensure that their light may always shine.

**Guest speaker will be Dr. Yvonne Kaye**, who is an international speaker with a wide range of subjects, including post traumatic stress disorder and bereavement, specializing in the death of children. She is a certified Thanatologist, veteran radio talk show host, author, and Interfaith Minister, believing in the power of the human spirit. She is a strong advocate of humor and spirituality, a Spiritual Coach and her philosophy is "Laughter is the miracle healer". Dr. Kaye received the prestigious Matty Muir Award 2005 for work with victims of crime. She has given much support for many years to TCF. Dr. Kaye has often been a Keynote speaker at Regional, National and International TCF Conferences. She has been a long time friend of the Valley Forge Chapter.

**GIFTS FOR UNDER PRIVILEGED CHILDREN**

**FIRST STEP** is a program of Chester County for under privileged/handicapped children. For many years our Chapter has collected gifts for them. We will do so again this year, at our December 1st meeting & December 11th World Wide Candle Lighting Service Program. The children are between the ages of 2 and 6. Both clothing and toys are welcome gifts. It is very rewarding to remember your child, by showing love to these children. Please add a tag that states suggested age and sex. You may sign it, "from your friend", or your child or sibling's name. This may be the only gift the child will receive. We appreciate your participation in this worthy cause.

**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.**

**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

**Gloria Bello, son *Joseph* 11/24**  
**Jackie & Steve Brown, son *Doug Brown* 11/28**  
**Catherine Chan, son *Chanlan Lee* 11/27**  
**Lisa Connolly, daughter *Elyce Pindjak* 11/14**  
**Tom & Irene Cornely, daughter *Colleen* 11/1**  
**Franklin & Patricia Cox, daughter *Christen Fox*, 11/2**  
**Antoinette & John DiDonato, son *John Jr.* 11/24**  
**JoAnne Forman, son *H. Scott Hartman, Jr.* 11/21**  
**Sharon & Francis Gailey, daughter *Danielle Marie Gailey* 11/7**  
**Angela Giannantonio, son *Anthony* 11/11**  
**Enid M. Irizarry, daughter *Lisette M. Molina* 11/16**  
**Vern & Joyce Kaiser, son *Brian* 11/9**  
**Luann Kalamon, son *Adam Michael* 11/12**  
**Sandi Kensicki, sister *Rose* 11/7**  
**John & Eileen Kostic, son *John E.* 11/29**  
**Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner, daughter *Anna Kreiner* 11/19**  
**Joanne & Thomas Lennen, son *Scott C. Lennen* 11/14**  
**Dan Logan, daughter *Joanie* 11/15**  
**Leonard & Thelma Miller, sister *Geraldine Weiner* 11/04**  
**Joanne Morasco, son *Robert* 11/4**  
**Joan Morefield, son *Robert* 11/25**  
**Anthony & Mary Morrell, son *Andrew Michael Morrell* 11/28**  
**David & Donna Morrell, son *Matthew Morrell* 11/9**  
**Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy, daughter *Marian Mountjoy* 11/11**  
**Betsy Oakes, son *Bruce Schaeffer* 11/19**  
**Carol & Dennis O'Connor, son *Michael O'Connor* 11/21**  
**Patricia Peraino, brother *Anthony* 11/11**  
**Susan Pollock, son *Brendan Rosko* 11/14**  
**Robert & Barbara Pontician, son *Rob Pontician* 11/28**

**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS continued**

Roy Redman, daughter *Carol* 11/20  
Daune Ring, daughter *Chloe* 11/14  
Lois Robinson, son *Randy* 11/5  
Ilene & Sy Rockower, daughter *Amy Rockower* 11/22  
Andrea Rohloff, son *Jim* 11/14  
Priscilla Shober, son *Gregory Shober* 11/7  
Edie Smith, son *John Seddon "Sed" Wilson* 11/15  
Marilyn Toole, son *Ted Toole* 11/3  
Elaine & Tim Thomas, son *Seth Peterson* 11/21  
Judy Tomarelli, husband *Bert* 11/2  
Jack, Bobbie and Ross Trotter, daughter/sister *Megan* 11/25  
Weldon & Marie Tyson, son *Ronald C. Stewart* 11/12  
Harry & Lynne Urian, son *Mike* 11/14  
Linda Weaver, son *Damon Weaver* 11/21  
Paul & Marcia Woodruff, son *Danny Woodruff* 11/23

**NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

Nancy Althouse, daughter *Donna Lee Althouse* - 11/4  
Victoria Bayle, husband *Robert D Bayle II* - 11/9  
Julie Beasley, son *Aaron* - 11/5  
Stephen & Barbara Billings, daughter *Laura Elizabeth Billings* - 11/26  
Scott & Gail Campbell, daughter *Chelsea* - 11/4  
Joyce Caperilla, daughter *Jennifer* - 11/22  
Libby Cavallaro, sister *Theresa* - 11/19  
Loreta & Ken Cericola, son *Anthony Cericola* - 11/10  
Becky & Frank Clark, daughter *Lisa* - 11/25  
Thomas & Janet Cleary, son *Ryan* - 11/14  
Benjamin E. Cohen, daughter *Donna Lynne Cohen* - 11/22  
Kathy Concannon, daughter *Tracey* - 11/9  
Anita Conway, son *Daniel* - 11/29  
Lisa & David Dibello, son *Joey* - 11/13  
Julie & Joe Fabrizio, brother *John Russel Bryant* - 11/9  
Rochena & Pat Fatale, son *Mark Longan* - 11/15  
Abigail Figueroa, son *Jose C Figueroa* - 11/11  
JoAnne Forman, son *H. Scott Hartman, Jr.* - 11/12  
Sharon & Francis Gailey, son *Francis E. Gailey*, - 11/24  
Linda & Steven Gilbert, daughter *Pamela Gilbert* - 11/6  
Laura Giordano, son *Peter* - 11/7

**NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED**

Elizabeth Haney, son *Christian* - 11/28  
Othell & William Heaney, son *Roger Heaney* - 11/22  
Nora & Peter Heiss, daughter *Kathleen Heiss McCaughan* - 11/23  
daughter *Noreen Schmucker* - 11/27  
Carl & Catherine Helwig, son *Michael Helwig* - 11/24  
Danielle Hemmench Ricci, boyfriend *Ryan* - 11/14  
Jacob & Rachel Himmelstein, son *Benjamin Himmelstein* - 11/19  
Cynthia Hornyak, daughter *Meredith* - 11/27  
Vern & Joyce Kaiser, son *Brian* - 11/2  
John & Eileen Kostic, son *John E.* - 11/18  
Karen Lopera, son *Michael* - 11/26  
Julie Lauderback, son *Donovan Lauderback* - 11/20  
Ed & Linda Lincul, son *Matthew* - 11/27  
Bonnie MacDonald, son *R. Scott Geddes* - 11/28  
Jennifer & Michael Magee, sister *Jacqueline Ann Rogers* - 11/7  
Alexandra Milas, daughter *Nicole Penelope Wiseley* - 11/5  
Pat Miller, son *Nathan* - 11/8  
Leonard & Thelma Miller, sister *Geraldine Weiner* 11/04  
Audrey Morasco, husband *John J. Morasco* - 11/19  
Rose & Mike Orlando, son *Michael* - 11/21  
Sheldon & Joan Plam, son *Michael Tobiah Plam* - 11/7  
Tony & Laurene Quercetti, daughter *Christine L. Quercetti* - 11/7  
Roy Redman, daughter *Linda Inez Redman* 10/22  
Ruth Richardson, grandson *Nicholas Richardson* - 11/14  
Gina & Brian Richardson, son *Nicholas Richardson* - 11/14  
Skipp & Kathy Robinson, daughter *Carrie Robinson* - 11/16  
Mike & Diane Rogers, daughter *Jacqueline Ann Rogers* - 11/7  
Donald & Mary Rose, daughter *Marjorie Rose-Cotteta* - 11/24  
Priscilla Shober, son *Gregory Shober* - 11/3  
Cathy Siciliano, son *Anthony* - 11/24  
Barry & Sigrid Snow, son *Kevin Snow* - 11/26  
Jen & Alex Soutos, daughter *Alexi* - 11/22  
Harry & Merrily Spiess, son *F. Ryan Spiess* - 11/29  
Judy Tomarelli, husband *Bert* - 11/18  
Esperanza & Libardo Toro, daughter *Maria Eugenia Toro* - 11/3  
Steven Tucker, son *Steven II* - 11/1  
Mary Walker, daughter *Susan* - 11/19  
Linda Weaver, daughter *Krista "Binky" Weaver* - 11/4  
Bill & Patti Whitehead, daughter *Maria* - 11/1  
John & Linda Wilson, son *Sean* - 11/3  
Pat Zimmerman, son *Bernard Zimmerman* - 11/13

## SHARED THOUGHTS ON THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is the beginning of our holiday season. This once joyous time can become a horrendous anticipation for us. This is the season we like **all** our children and siblings gathered around us. We enjoy the togetherness, for it is a time to be thankful for each of our family members. We find it difficult for such a large piece to be missing from our family circle.

We suggest you try to discuss your plans with your immediate family, your spouse and children. It not only makes them feel part of the family, but it also removes the tremendous burden of making all the decisions from your shoulders. This also sends the message you know they are hurting, by acknowledging their pain you open up the door of communication.

You have to decide what is best for your family. You may choose to keep it traditional or make changes. These changes can be temporary or permanent. It may help to talk about what you are doing just for the sake of tradition. If they aren't meaningful and are painful, you may choose to drop them.

Some find it helpful to go away, others want to be home. Some have found it very peaceful to devote time to helping others. There are many organizations that need help to serve a meal to others who have no one to spend the holiday with. It is a way of bringing the love for your child or sibling to life. For some it is impossible to give thanks when your grief is very fresh, this is normal for many. Allow yourself to cry and grieve, if that is all you are capable of this year. In time you will be able to think beyond your pain, don't feel guilty for something you cannot do. Remember it helps others to feel good when they can do small physical chores for us, if you are in need of their help, ask for it.

We can't avoid Thanksgiving and often we even feel some guilt for not being thankful for what we have left. Our overwhelming grief crowds out our appreciation of what we have. We are human, and it is normal to lament our loss. Perhaps this is the season to enumerate and be thankful for friends and family who have helped us through these devastating times. We all wanted more time, but we must remember our pain is so very great because we were given someone very special to share a segment of our life with. For this we are thankful. We also are very thankful for all the friends and support we have in The Compassionate Friends. Your sharing with us has gotten us through many holidays, gave us strength and healing from having passed through another painful event. Each passing event tells us we can survive, and doing our grief work softens our pain. We wish you peace of mind and love as you remember your child or sibling this Thanksgiving.

God Bless, *Marie Hofmockel*, TCF Valley Forge, PA

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Hold on to what is good even if it is a handful of earth.

Hold on to what you believe even if it is a tree, which stands by itself.

Hold on to what you must do even if it is a long way from here.

Hold on to life even when it is easier letting go.

Hold on to my hand even when I have gone away from you.

*Nancy Wood*, "Many Winters"

**EVERYTHING IS A FIRST**

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me -- NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere -- love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say -- nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer; "I am mad , Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong"

*Lisa Ann Jones,  
Avoca, PA*

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*Tears don't erase all the hurt,  
Tears don't bring the dead to life,  
But tears do help to ease the pain.*

*Phillip W. Williams*

**WHERE DOES THE SISTER COME IN?**

My brother was killed.  
He was murdered for no reason at all.  
My pain is so sharp, so close.  
But THEY think I shouldn't  
be suffering as much...  
As much as his wife,  
who grieves for her love and her future.  
As much as his son,  
who will never know his daddy.  
As much as his parents,  
who have lost their only son,  
their first born, their child.  
I have lost -- my closest friend; the man I  
admired most in my world; the person I  
spent most of my free time with -- only for  
the company; the person I played Yahtzee  
with until 2:00 a.m., knowing I'd beat him  
soon; the boy I grew up with and followed  
around constantly; the love that only a  
brother and sister can know; the respect he  
had for me; the talks and the personal  
jokes.  
I have lost my brother.  
I hurts just as much.

*Bridgette Huard*

-----  
**TO MY BROTHER**

Wherever we look,  
You are there.  
You are the light  
On the water.  
You are the blossom  
On the tree.  
You are a thought,  
And you are a feeling.  
Wherever we are,  
You are.

*Martha Dubinsky,  
Chappaqua, NY*



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But tears do help to ease the pain.*

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My brother was killed.  
He was murdered for no reason at all.  
My pain is so sharp, so close.  
But THEY think I shouldn't  
be suffering as much...  
As much as his wife,  
who grieves for her love and her future.  
As much as his son,  
who will never know his daddy.  
As much as his parents,  
who have lost their only son,  
their first born, their child.  
I have lost -- my closest friend; the man I  
admired most in my world; the person I  
spent most of my free time with -- only for  
the company; the person I played Yahtzee  
with until 2:00 a.m., knowing I'd beat him  
soon; the boy I grew up with and followed  
around constantly; the love that only a  
brother and sister can know; the respect he  
had for me; the talks and the personal  
jokes.  
I have lost my brother.  
It hurts just as much.

*Bridgette Huard*

-----  
**TO MY BROTHER**

Wherever we look,  
You are there.  
You are the light  
On the water.  
You are the blossom  
On the tree.  
You are a thought,  
And you are a feeling.  
Wherever we are,  
You are.

*Martha Dubinsky,  
Chappaqua, NY*

**I give thanks, Lord, for  
Time --**

The time I had with Tim, time to grow and learn even when I'm no longer young, and time which will one day reunite me with my child.

**Friends --**

Those that I've known that time had taken from me, those I cherish now, and those I've yet to meet.

**Answered Prayers --**

I asked for comfort and strength to face what I must face and you answered me -- maybe not the way I wanted, but you always answered me.

**For Family --**

And I find my family expanding with each day. I find relatives need not always be family and family need not always be relatives. Love makes families -- not bloodlines.

**For the Children --**

Those remaining -- mine and everyone else's. And for the ones that remain only in memory.

**For Love --**

Love that's been given me so freely from hearts that were broken like mine but still could offer me strength and hope.

**For all of you,  
I thank God.**

*Judy Dickey*  
TCF, Greenwood, IN

**SOMEDAY**

To say I understand you,  
To even say I know  
Of the many aches you carry  
And all the tears that flow.

Is to say I, too, have spent awhile  
In the land that's known as grief,  
And I can still remember  
Suffering beyond belief.

It was a strange and foreign place,  
That desperate land of pain,  
Where no man-made compass  
Could lead me out again.

I seemed to ever roam around  
Those valleys all alone,  
My days became all midnight's  
Where the sunshine never shone.

All joy ran together  
And hid in some dark hole,  
My life's landscape was barren,  
Empty, dead and cold.

My future? It was somber.  
My past? A dismal shroud.  
My present? Sorrow's cottage,  
No happiness allowed.

That ever frightening wasteland  
Destroyed hope within.  
I lost the will to live  
Or even to begin.

And then a voice I barely knew  
Said, "Child, come take my hand.  
Stay close and I will guide you  
Thru this quagmire hellish land."

"To a land that sings of color,  
More than midnight blue and black,  
To a people who need help  
In walking the long way back

"Because your heart's been broken,  
Compassion floods within,  
So you can be my agent  
To balm and love and mend."

So to say I understand,  
Have even felt and touched such pain,  
Doesn't lessen heartache  
Or make it right again.

But someday, and I'll bet my life,  
You'll see that girl or boy  
In wholeness and completion,  
God's promised gift of joy.

*Carolyn Huffman*

**TAKE THE TIME . . . TO HURT, TO CRY . . .**

Wordless and worldless -- Endless and forever, grief goes on --  
It takes the best -- And leaves the rest an empty shell -- Life is Hell.

David was dead four months when I wrote that in my journal. Time is my enemy. As I envisioned the future of my life, I saw only a vast expanse of desert - dry, parched, and empty.

It is now a year and a half since David's death, and I recognize that time has become my friend. Now, when I look to the future, I see hills and valleys - struggles, to be sure, but, also, moments spent at the summit. What has happened? Time is healing.

**Take the time . . .**

**To hurt . . .** The pain is great and the temptation to run away is great. But, there is no avoiding, no escaping the hard feelings. If you cover them over, they only re-surface later in a potentially more destructive way.

**To cry . . .** It may feel like once started, you can never stop. But you have every reason to cry, and when you have cried enough, you will stop.

**To "fall apart." . . .** If you have a broken leg, you would not expect yourself to function at full capacity right away. Your wound is much greater - you have a broken heart. Confusion, inability to concentrate, lethargy, imagined glimpses of your dead child are a normal part of the grieving process and do not mean that you are going crazy.

**To be "selfish." . . .** Mourning is an egocentric time, a time for turning inward and introspection.

**To "identify" . . .** and seek out resources in your environment that can help: friends, clergy, Compassionate Friends, a counselor. Talk to them. Having done all that - having lingered in the valley of the shadow - it is time to begin the climb out.

**Take the time . . .**

**To engage again** in activities that were once pleasurable. They may hold no joy the first few times; someday they will and that will be all right.

**To laugh without guilt.** Savor the good moments in the day, brief though they may be. Through your child, you can re-discover the beauty of a sunset.

**To care for your health.** Grieving is a physio-, as well, as psycho-logical stress. Your body needs protection.

**To be patient.** Wanting to live again and learning to live again takes time. The path out of the other side of the valley is steep, and we all often stumble. But with time - time spent doing the work of grief - you can find the path to a world made richer by your love.

*Bronna Romaoff, PHD - Albany, NY, TCF*



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS, INC.**

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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.

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