

# 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 - 11/2/2023

Next meeting - 12/7/2023

December 10, 2023 — Keep in mind, this our World Candlelighting Ceremony at 2 pm.



## November 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.

No new friends

## 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

Thomas and Joanne Lennen - Happy Birthday to Scott Lennen,  
Always in thoughts - forever in our hearts. We Love You!  
Mom and Dad

Janie and Joseph Dougherty — In Memory of Brendan K. Dougherty

The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold a candle lighting remembrance service on December 10th at 2 PM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in the Fellowship 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.

Times when just one person is missing-

The whole world seems so empty.

**author unknown**

**We wish you a very meaningful Thanksgiving. May you remember the love you received from your child or sibling.**

## 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

Victoria Bayle - Robert D Bayle II - husband - 11/9  
 Julie Beasley - Aaron - son - 11/5  
 Stephen & Barbara Billings - Laura Elizabeth - daughter - 11/26  
 Barbie Blake - Chad Blake - son - 11/19  
 Jacqueline Bonney - Genevieve - daughter - 11/5  
 Scott & Gail Campbell - Chelsea - daughter - 11/4  
 Joyce Caperilla - Jennifer - daughter - 11/22  
 Libby Cavallaro - Theresa - sister - 11/19  
 Loreta & Ken Cericola - Anthony Cericola - son - 11/10  
 Becky & Frank Clark - Lisa - daughter - 11/25  
 Kathy Concannon - Tracey - daughter - 11/9  
 Joe & Germaine DePiano - Luke - son - 11/10  
 Lisa & David Dibello - Joey - son - 11/13  
 Rochena & Pat Fatale - Mark Longan - son - 11/15  
 Abigail Figueroa - Jose C Figueroa - son - 11/11  
 JoAnne Forman - H. Scott Hartman, Jr. - son - 11/12  
 Sharon & Francis Gailey - Francis E. Gailey, III - son - 11/24  
 Linda & Steven Gilbert - Pamela Gilbert - daughter - 11/6  
 Paul Hagerty III - Paul - son - 11/11  
 Elizabeth Haney - Christian - son - 11/28  
 Othell & William Heaney - Roger Heaney - son - 11/22  
 Carl & Catherine Helwig - Michael Helwig - son - 11/24  
 Jacob & Rachel Himmelstein - Benjamin Himmelstein - son - 11/19  
 Cynthia Hornyak - Meredith - daughter - 11/27  
 Hazel Hurley - Michael - son - 11/10  
 Vern & Joyce Kaiser - Brian - son - 11/2  
 Elida Kauffman - Daniel - son - 11/26  
 Joan Kelly - Bruce T. - grandson - 11/28  
 John & Eileen Kostic - John E - son - 11/18  
 Karen Lopera - Michael - son - 11/26  
 Julie Lauderback - Donovan Lauderback - son - 11/20  
 Marlene & Jerry Lener - Daniel - ,11/16  
 Susan & Richard Leoni/Cutler - Kevin - son - 11/6  
 Ed & Linda Lincul - Matthew - son - 11/27  
 Bonnie MacDonald - R, Scott Geddes - son - 11/28  
 Jennifer & Michael Magee - Jacqueline Ann Rogers - sister - 11/7  
 Pete Mihalek - Andy - son - 11/21  
 Alexandra Milas - Nicole Penelope Wiseley - daughter - 11/5  
 Kelly & Hank Murray - John Murray - son - 11/22

# Anniversaries - Cont'd

Sheldon & Joan Plam - Michael Tobiah Plam - son - 11/7  
 Robert Pontician - Barbara - wife - 11/28  
 Tony & Laurene Quercetti - Christine L. Quercetti - daughter - 11/7  
 Marcella Rice - Eloise - sister - 11/28  
 Ruth Richardson - Nicholas Richardson - grandson - 11/14  
 Gina & Brian Richardson - Nicholas Richardson - son - 11/14  
 Mike & Diane Rogers - Jacqueline Ann Rogers - daughter - 11/7  
 Mary Rose - Marjorie Rose-Cotteta - daughter - 11/24  
 Cathy Siciliano - Anthony - son - 11/24  
 Robert & Sigrid Snow - Kevin Snow - son - 11/26  
 Jen & Alex Soutos - Alexi - daughter - 11/22  
 Harry & Merrily Spiess - F. Ryan Spiess - son - 11/29  
 Judy Tomarelli - Bert - Husband - 11/18  
 Esperanza & Libardo Toro - Maria Eugenia Toro - daughter - 11/3  
 Steven Tucker - Steven II - son - 11/1  
 Lynn & Tim Tumminello - Natalie - daughter - 11/12  
 Mary Walker - Susan - daughter - 11/19  
 Bill & Patti Whitehead - Maria - daughter - 11/1

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## IT'S NOT FAIR

It's not fair that my only sibling, my older brother, my best friend died.  
 But I have to survive this.

It's not fair that I won't have nieces or nephews, nor will my future children have  
 Michael as the wonderful uncle that he would have been.  
 But I have to survive this.

It's not fair that he wasn't here to give me a hard time about turning 30.  
 But I have to survive this.

It's not fair to have to deal with such a heart wrenching blow.  
 But I have to survive this.

As all of us know at TCF, life sometimes isn't fair. We all have to survive the pain of  
 losing a sibling or a child. It is not fair that we have to, but we do. It has been one  
 year and three months since my brother died, and I have to survive this. But you  
 know what, every day that passes and every morning that I wake up, I realize that I  
 AM surviving this!  
 So will you!

**Renee Highsmith** — TCF Valley Forge Chapter  
 In memory of my brother, Michael Highsmith

# BIRTHDAYS

Gloria Bello - Joseph - son - 11/24  
 Marbeth Blocklinger - Bryam Jr - grandson - 11/4  
 Cindy Brickley - Timothy - son - 11/14  
 Jackie & Steve Brown - Doug Brown - son - 11/28  
 Sally Cahill - Tim - grandson - 11/14  
 Terry & Sam Capizzi - Sammy - son - 11/21  
 Liliana Couchara - Christian - friend - 11/22  
 Franklin & Patricia Cox - Christen Fox, - daughter - 11/2  
 Dawn Dellabarba - Brett - son - 11/9  
 Antoinette & John DiDonato - John Jr - son - 11/24  
 Renee & Walter Eells - Patrick - son - 11/22  
 JoAnne Forman - H. Scott Hartman, Jr. - son - 11/21  
 Sharon & Francis Gailey - Danielle Marie Gailey - daughter - 11/7  
 Angela Giannantonio - Anthony - son - 11/11  
 Diane Goldberg - Sammy - nephew - 11/21  
 Charlotte and Michael Gormish - Douglas Moyer - brother - 11/9  
 Tracey Hawley - Sean - 11/2  
 Enid M. Irizarry - Lisette M. Molina - daughter - 11/16  
 Tash Jackson - Peter Simmons Jr - brother - 11/20  
 Vern & Joyce Kaiser - Brian - son - 11/9  
 Joan Kelly - Bruce T. - grandson - 11/14  
 Sandi Kensicki - Rose - sister - 11/7  
 Barbara Kirk - Eric - son - 11/29  
 John & Eileen Kostic - John E - son - 11/29  
 Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner - Anna Kreiner - daughter - 11/19  
 Joanne & Thomas Lennen - Scott C. Lennen - son - 11/14  
 Dan Logan - Joanie - daughter - 11/15  
 Tracy Lukens - Bryan Jr - son - 11/4  
 Mary & Bob Matcovich - Christian - son - 11/22  
 Eileen & Chris McKeown - Eric - son - 11/16  
 Joanne Morasco - Robert - son - 11/4  
 David & Donna Morrell - Matthew Morrell - son - 11/9  
 Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy - Marian Mountjoy - daughter - 11/11  
 Carol & Dennis O'Connor - Michael O'Connor - son - 11/21  
 Chet, Hema and Nita Patel - Neil - son - 11/12  
 Patricia Peraino - Anthony - brother - 11/11  
 Robert Pontician - Rob Pontician - son - 11/28  
 Roy Redman - Carol - daughter - 11/20  
 Debbie Repas - Stacy Lynn - daughter - 11/26  
 Daune Ring - Chloe - daughter - 11/14  
 Ilene & Sy Rockower - Amy Rockower - daughter - 11/22  
 Edie Smith - John Seddon Sed Wilson - son - 11/15  
 Judy Tomarelli - Bert - Husband - 11/2  
 Marilyn Toole - Ted Toole - son - 11/3  
 Jack, Bobbie and Ross Trotter - Megan - daughter/sister - 11/25  
 Weldon & Marie Tyson - Ronald C. Stewart - son - 11/12  
 Harry & Lynne Urian - Mike - son - 11/14  
 Paul & Marcia Woodruff - Danny - son - 11/23



## 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.

**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"

For those of you who are newly bereaved, it is difficult to be thankful. But for us who are further removed from the poignant early stages of grief, and have found the pain has softened, may find Darcie's thoughts very helpful.

### FOR THAT, I AM THANKFUL

It doesn't seem to get any better ...  
but it doesn't get any worse either.  
For that, I am thankful.

There are no more pictures to be taken ...  
but there are memories to be  
cherished.  
For that, I am thankful.

There is a missing chair at the table ...  
But the circle of family gathers close.  
For that, I am thankful.

The turkey is smaller ...  
but there is still stuffing.  
For that, I am thankful.

The days are shorter ...  
but the nights are softer.  
For that, I am thankful.

The pain is still there ...  
but it last only moments.  
For that, I am thankful.

The calendar still turns,  
The holidays still appear  
And they still cost too much ...  
but I am still here.  
For that, I am thankful.

The room is still empty,  
The soul still aches ...  
but the heart remembers.  
For that, I am thankful.

The guests still come,  
The dishes pile up ...  
but the dishwasher works.  
For that, I am thankful.

The name is still missing,  
The words still unspoken ...  
But the silence is shared.  
For that, I am thankful.

The snow still falls,  
The sled still waits,  
and the spirit still wants to ...  
For that, I am thankful.

The stillness remains ...  
but the sadness is smaller.  
For that, I am thankful.

The moment is gone ...  
but the love is forever.  
For that, I am blessed,  
For that, I am grateful ...

Love was once (and still is)  
A part of my being ...  
For that, I am living.

I am LIVING ...  
and for that, I am thankful.

May your holidays be filled  
with reasons to be thankful.  
Having loved and having been loved  
is perhaps the most wondrous reason  
of all.

**Darcie D. Sims**

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  
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**The  
Compassionate  
Friends Inc.**

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