

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

October 3 General Sharing

November 7 General Sharing

CORRECTION

December 8 Lighting Service



October 2019

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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.

If you donate to the 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.

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.

Please make all checks Payable to:

TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER

Send to Rhonda Gomez

NEW MEMBERS

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.

Hazel Hurley—Son Michael (62)

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

Nina Bernstein In loving memory of **Andrew's Birthday**

LIGHTING SERVICE

Will be held on December 8, Sunday at 2pm at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,
Founders Hall

Service lasts about an hour, everyone is invited. Refreshments at the end.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

We are asking, would you please receive your newsletter by email. We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefitting 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"**.

We consider this an important function of our program. 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 wish to receive your newsletter by email please send Frank Gomez (frank@tcfvalleyforge.org) your full name.

"We were promised sufferings. They were part of the program. We were even told, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' and I accept it. I've got nothing that I hadn't bargained for. Of course it is different when the thing happens to oneself, not to others, and in reality, not imagination."

C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*

The difference between what you expected grief to feel like and the reality of it may be significant. You think that you can handle it in one way, when that may not be working for you at all. You never actually know how the grief and subsequent healing processes will make you feel until you experience them. Do not worry if things are not playing out the way you thought they should. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

- **Grossman, Patricia**

"We are imperfect mortal beings, aware of that mortality even as we push it away, failed by our very complication, so wired that when we mourn our losses we also mourn, for better or for worse, ourselves. as we were. as we are no longer, as we will one day not be at all."

Joan Didion,

- ***The Year of Magical Thinking***

It is hard to look at people who have not grieved without feeling some envy. It is comparative bliss to not be in mourning; whatever daily troubles you have do not compare to the irrevocable pain of losing someone you love.

Be aware of that feeling, but don't let it cloud your thoughts. You will not always feel so raw, and while you cannot take back the changes to your spirit that grief makes, you will develop an acceptance of death and loss as a result of this experience.

Grossman, Patricia

"The mystery of death, the riddle of how you could speak to someone and see them every day and then never again, was so impossible to fathom that of course we kept trying to figure it out, even when we were unconscious."

- **Francine Prose, *Goldengrove***

Have you picked up the phone to call your loved one before you remembered that you can't? Have you started to say something and then stopped yourself before the words came out? The adjustment is hard. The phone or the computer or the empty chair may be a constant reminder of that hollow place in your heart. It might help to write down the words to

describe how you're feeling on a piece of paper. Then, rip it up and dispose of it. It is all part of the slow healing process.

Grossman, Patricia

"I know now that we never get over great losses; we absorb them, and they carve us into different, often kinder, creatures. ...We tell the story to get them back, to capture the traces of foot falls through the snow."

- **Gail Caldwell, *Let's Take the Long Way Home: A Memoir of Friendship***

Tell a story about your loved one today to someone who hasn't heard it. To see a new reaction to something so precious makes your loved one a part of your life now. It is so precious to feel connected again, even if it is just for a

"Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am in a thousand winds that blow,
I am the softly falling snow.
I am the gentle showers of rain,
I am the fields of ripening grain.
I am in the morning hush,
I am in the graceful rush
Of beautiful birds in circling flight,
I am the starshine of the night.
I am in the flowers that bloom,
I am in a quiet room.
I am in the birds that sing,
I am in each lovely thing.
Do not stand at my grave bereft
I am not there. I have not left."

- **Mary Elizabeth Frye**

couple of moments.

Grossman, Patricia

"All things of grace and beauty such that one holds them to one's heart have a common provenance in pain. Their birth in grief and ashes."

- **Cormac McCarthy, *The Road***

Seek out something beautiful today. Go to a greenhouse or

a flower shop. The beauty of nature helps you to feel hope again... a hope that the world can deliver happiness as well as sorrow.

"No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear."

- *C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed*

You may be asking yourself how you can possibly move on with your life. Your world has changed, and this new reality is unbearable. Try to recognize that a big part of how you are feeling is fear. You may be afraid that you will never experience joy again, that you will never want to participate in activities that used to bring you pleasure, or that you will never connect to others as you once did. Be patient with yourself. The early days can feel unbearable...with each one as overwhelming as the one before. The process of grief takes time, perhaps longer than you might expect.

You do not need to feel afraid, because you are not alone. Others feel as you do. You may want to reach out to a support group in your area to talk with people who are also experiencing loss. You do not need to be frightened, because there are many people who feel as you do right now.

Grossman, Patricia

Some people say they can feel their loved one's spirit around them. Depending on your religious beliefs, you may have a strong opinion on whether this is possible or not. There may be items in your home or neighborhood that trigger the feeling that your loved one is by your side. Rather than worrying about whether or not this is true, focus on the hopeful comfort this passing feeling provides.

Grossman Patricia

I wish I could tell everyone who has lost a loved one how important it is to let themselves, and their family, remember. Forget, if you can, the sickness or tragedy that took them, but give them a place in your life. My family speaks very naturally of their father and their sister. We remember the fun, the love, and the closeness...

We have memories to cherish, and we shouldn't cheat ourselves by not doing that. I don't mean that we should constantly talk about them, but when something we're doing reminds us of something good that happened when we were still a whole family, we don't hesitate to say so.

Lettie Petrie

From Frank Gomez, Co-leader

Where is my newsletter? Many of you asked that question for the last 8 months. Many of you should have known that the Hofmockel's would stop publishing the newsletter by the end of 2018. A volunteer search produced no helpers, I don't even know why I started publishing it again in September 2019. I am only trying to fill in while a proper volunteer can take over. **No more walking alone if I can help it.** Now it is your turn. Yes, I need articles, poems and anything else you think of that belongs in this newsletter. The best way to send them, is an attachments to an email. It is time we unite again, time you start coming to the meetings every month even if you

are a "veteran" and don't need to be helped. Think that there are other members who need your help because their loss is much fresher than yours and their emotions require that they meet other parents who have lost children. They have problems just coming through the door and your presence alone will calm them seeing that they are not the only ones with that heavy load on their hearts.

On other matters, I would feel sending the newsletter via Email is the best way, and the easier way for me, so if you can, please send me your email address and I will switch you right away.

frank@tcfvalleyforge.org

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.

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

- Victoria Bayle**, son, **Bobby D Bayle III**, 10/2
- Cindy Brickley**, son, **Timothy**, 10/20
- Sally Cahill**, grandson, **Tim**, 10/20
- Gina Cappelli**, son, **Dan Foley**, 10/9
- Barbara Cohen**, son, **Mark Y**, 10/26
- Tina & Mike Cusamano**, daughter, **Amanda Angelucci**, 10/1
- Tom & Marge Del Rosario**, son, **Dominic**, 10/17
- Virginia Di Fronzo**, daughter, **Sis**, 10/4
- Joseph & Patsy Dooley**, son, **Peter J. Dooley**, 10/1
- Shirley & Herb Druker**, daughter, **Heidi**, 10/25
- Jim and Patty Duffy**, son, **Michael Duffy**, 10/28
- Peggy Furey**, son, **Kevin Furey**, 10/8
- Bonnie Gardner**, daughter, **Michelle**, 10/19
- Thomas & Anne Glenn**, daughter, **Lauren Glenn**, 10/15
- Charlotte and Michael Gormish**, brother, **Douglas Moyer**, 10/19
- Carol Graber**, son, **Bobby**, 10/28
- Herb & Karen Grant**, son, **Shaun**, 10/21
- Cathy Grosshanten**, son, **Gary**, 10/18
- Thomas & Virginia Hoesch**, son, **William E. "Buddy" Hoesch**, 10/7
- Marie & Ken Hofmockel**, grandson, **Steven Schneibolk**, 10/2
- Joan Hornsby**, daughter, **Jackie**, 10/5
- Jean Jones**, grandson, **Bobby**, 10/28
- Margaret & Edward Kiefski, Sr.**, son, **Edward Kiefski, Jr.**, 10/25
- Maureen and Pat McCormick**, son, **John McCormick**, 10/4
- Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy**, daughter, **Barilyn Mountjoy**, 10/3
- John B. & Lillian Neff**, son, **Patrick Neff**, 10/17
- Gary & Patricia Otto**, son, **Benjamin Otto**, 10/17
- Joan Palumbo**, son, **Michael**, 10/13
- Barbara Pearl**, son, **Jason Seth Pearl**, 10/16

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- Bill Padove & Jen Scaless** - son - **Zachary** - 10/22
Maryellen & Dick Abell - son - **Brian Abell** - 10/14
Chip Arena - son - **Nick** - 10/10
Carole Bailey - son - **Matthew J. Bailey** - 10/6
Victoria Bayle - son - **Bobby D Bayle III** - 10/5
Nina Bernstein - son - **Andrew Voluck** - 10/12
Marbeth Blocklinger - grandson - **Parker** - 10/14
Jacqueline Bonney - daughter - **Genevieve** - 10/28
Joe & Maryann Bucci - son - **Dante** - 10/7
Martha & Albert Caesar - son - **Daniel Mark Caesar** - 10/18
Diana Clark - grandson - **Alexander** - 10/16
Lauren Cole - brother - **Chris** - 10/10
Theresa L Cole - son - **Christopher Michel** - 10/10
Carole and Kevin Creighton - son - **Ryan Kent Creighton** - 10/7
Virginia Di Fronzo - daughter - **Sis** - 10/7
Harold & Marcia Epstein - grandson - **Andrew Voluck** - 10/12
Peggy Furey - son - **Kevin Furey** - 10/9
Gwen & Walt Gearhart - grandson - **Jamie Rogers** - 10/29
Daniel Gentry - daughter - **Emily** - 10/9
Rita Gibbons - daughter - **Patricial Gibbons** - 10/26
Virginia Hagen - son - **Matthew D. Hagen** - 10/20
Joanne Haley - son - **Douglas Haley** - 10/4
Carl & Catherine Helwig - son - **Michael Helwig** - 10/9
Janet Higgins - Son - **Nicholas** - 10/10
Lori Joseph - son - **Andy** - 10/6
Lynn Kivlen - son - **Brien Kivlen** - 10/12
Barb & Larry Lauchle - son - **Gray** - 10/23
Maryann Lockyer - son - **Keith** - 10/23
Maureen Lok - daughter - **Jessica** - 10/24
Tracy Lukens - Son - **Parker** - 10/14
Jennifer & Michael Magee - sister - **Jacqueline Ann Rogers** - 10/3
Dan Markle - brother - **Matt Markle** - 10/30
James & Mary Beth Mattiford - son - **Scott Mattiford** - 10/15
Mark & Kathryn McNally - daughter - **Beth Ann McNally** - 10/1
Alexandra Milas - daughter - **Nicole Penelope Wiseley** - 8/23
Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy - daughter - **Barilyn Mountjoy** - 10/3
Kelly & Hank Murray - son - **john murray** - 10/30
Kathy Nicholson - son - **Frank** - 10/26
Peggy O'Brien - son - **Rick O'Brien** - 10/4
Deborah Osting - son - **Christopher Daniel Osting** - 10/24

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS (CONTD)

Dale Pearlstein - son - **Jeffrey** - 10/18
Roy Redman - daughter - **Linda Inez Redman** - 10/22
Thomas & Jeri "Bubbles" Reinert - son - **Thomas Reinert, Jr.** - 10/21
Ginger & Merle Renner - daughter - **Deanna Dawn Renner** - 10/11
Skipp & Kathy Robinson - daughter - **Carrie Robinson** - 10/28
Carol Robinson - son - **Jim Kearney** - 10/4
Mike & Diane Rogers - daughter - **Jacqueline Ann Rogers** - 10/3
Donna Rogers - son - **Jamie Rogers** - 10/29
JoAnne Sands - son - **Tyler** - 10/16
Monique Sarkessian - son - **Cole Sarkessian** - 10/18
Joy Conard Settles - son - **R. Gary Korn** - 10/5
Robert & Nell Shoemaker - daughter - **Brynn Shoemaker** - 10/5
Janis Siravo - son - **Christian** - 10/7
BETSY TOWNSEND - daughter - **WENDY TOWNSEND BESCHE** - 10/25
Janice Vanderslice - son - **Gregory Vanderslice** - 10/4
Lucia Watters - daughter - **Luanne Zambino** - 10/14
Mimi & Tom Weber - son - **Michael** - 10/8
Beth Williams - son - **Joey Burke** - 10/28
Sandra & Harry Wolfheimer - daughter - **Ann Marie Wolfheimer** - 10/10
Rose Yanni - nephew - **David Yanni** - 10/26
Frank Yanni - son - **David Yanni** - 10/26

REFLECTIONS

With the death of my sister come some painful realizations; that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness. Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time – time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger

**COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR AND PAIN,
 BUT THE AFFIRMATION OF LIFE DESPITE FEAR AND PAIN**

Rabbi earl Grolmman

QUIET TIME

An important way to push stress out of your life is to take advantage of quiet time. Choose a time when you can be alone with your thoughts and feelings. Sound scary? Read on...

There is a tendency to run from the pain of grief to keep so busy and push yourself so hard that all you can do is fall in bed at night and go right to sleep. You may keep from feeling the pain, but it will catch up with you in some form in the future. It may be in the form of a disabling disease, frequent colds, a sudden heart attack or grief in years to come.

Stop and...open up the picture album and remember times past.

Take a walk where there were special memories.

Sit down during the day and reflect.

At the beginning of these quiet times you may have a rush of feelings. Feel them. You won't break, and nobody has ever cried forever. Once you have gone into them, you will eventually begin to quiet down. At this time you could play some quiet music or put on a tape with some relaxing sounds, such as ocean waves or gentle rainfall.

Rest when you can. During this time your body is trying very hard to heal your emotional wounds and you may tire easily. Take a nap in the middle of the day. Yes, even at your place of work if possible. When I returned to work the week after my son's death, I found a couch in one of the women's rest rooms. I would curl up under a velveteen blanket for about 20 minutes after lunch. That helped me get through the rest of the day. Plus, it was the only place I could have a good, private crying that kind of environment.

It's very common to have sleeping difficulties. Grievers frequently have trouble getting to sleep or wake during the night and are unable to go back to sleep. You have a lot on your mind, and it's hard to turn it off.

If you're having trouble sleeping at night, try the following tips before resorting to sleeping pills. Some medicines ward off your feelings so that when you stop taking them, it's as if your grief just begun.

- get out of bed if you wake up and can't go back to sleep within 10 minutes. Stop fighting wakefulness and do something else for a while.-
- don't make yourself sleep in a bed which has memories if it's too difficult, or put a pillow where the empty spot is. George Burns found comfort sleeping in his wife's bed after she died. A widow found comfort in wearing her husband's pajama top and laying on his side of the bed.
- have a good book or magazine handy to read.- keep your journal next to your bed and write out your thoughts and feelings.
- watch TV or read.
- drink warm milk. It has a chemical which helps bring on sleep.
- listen to relaxation cassette tapes, such as ocean waves or whale sounds. If you have never tried them you'll be surprised at how soothing they are.
- play an affirmation tape.Or, if you're a snuggler, just rest in bed, not "trying" to go to sleep. Enjoy the soft feel of your pillow, the cuddliness of your mattress and covers.
- Give yourself the gift of time out, awake or sleeping.

Kelly Osmont,

FAMILY TIES

Every time a new person is added to the family by birth, marriage, adoption, etc., everyone begins to readjust and reorganize to new roles they must assume. Husband and wife work out the give and take necessary to establish a family system. Mothers and fathers find new roles when children enter the picture, and adjust their sleeping, eating, loving, working and being. Brothers and sisters truly learn what sharing and change are all about when a new member is added.

Everyone, in fact, becomes a changed individual in this new system. New patterns of trusting and communicating are established. Like the mobile we hang above the crib, the family works toward establishing stability; each part balances the whole.

The family mobile is susceptible to many forces of change; winds from outside and within. But blown and disturbed, each piece moves and sways until eventually the mobile becomes stabilized once again.

When one of the parts is suddenly removed, as in the death of a child, the very core is threatened. Cut off one of the parts of the mobile and it becomes frenzied, looking for stability and lost balance. It sways to and fro, bobbing and weaving, tilting up and down.

When our child dies, we are inevitably faced with this chaos in the system. How can we seek to balance our ship of life when we, as a part of that system, feel pain, confusion and imbalance? If we were the anchor before, we find ourselves adrift, unable to hold in the current. If we were the steering wheel, we begin to spin uncontrollably. The propeller shaft is bent; the spare oar is missing; there aren't enough life preservers to go around. How do you save the ship - the mobile - the family?

Recognize the part you as an individual play in the family and work at resolving your own losses. Encourage the expressing of feelings in yourself and others. Know that each person grieves in his own way and at his own pace, and give them permission to do so. Understand that sometimes a system cannot rebalance without professional help, and seek this help if needed.

Watch for obsessive behavior in your family, i.e. overprotectiveness, overeating, under-eating, alcohol and/or drug abuse, rage and violence, etc., and offer support, sharing and help for the pain - not the behaviors.

How tragic it is when the ultimate loss, the death of a child, leads to an even greater loss; the breakdown of the family, the marriage, the individual. You, as part of the family, can work to make sure this doesn't happen.

Neenan, WI TCF

LOVE LIVES ON

Those we love
 Are never really lost to us
 We feel them
 In so many special ways
 Through friends
 They always cared about
 And dreams they left behind,

In beauty that they added to our days ...
 in words of wisdom
 We still carry with us
 And memories that never will be gone...
 Those we love
 Are never really lost to us
 For everywhere their special love lives on.

By *Amanda Bradley*

STARTING OVER AGAIN

As parents, how many times have we told our children to try, try again? "You can do it, just start over," we'd say, be it a coloring book not kept within the lines, learning to tie shoes, school assignments, or later the other difficulties that life brings.

Little did we think that this well meaning advice we gave out of love and concern for our children's well being would be the words that we now must follow. Hang on. Don't give up. Try again and start over. All this now applies to us. Had the situation been reversed we could not have wanted our children to live out the rest of their lives in pain and unable to go on. We would have wanted them to continue on, not in constant sorrow, but with hope for renewal and better days ahead. As we have said to them, they would be throwing right back to us, it is a very hard road that you must travel, but you can do it. What you wanted for me, I want for you. Do what you have to, to find your way out of the dark tunnel and when you fall, pick yourself up and start over again. You can do it. What we wanted for our children is not less than they would want for us. If we could hear them right now, they would be saying "LIVE, for life is but a moment", "LOVE, for that is what really matters", and go on for we shall be together again some day.

Mary Ann Lambden, TCF Gloucester County, NJ -

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Today Is Your Birthday

In Heaven Above

My blessings I send

On The Wings Of This Dove

Not Just For Today

But Every Day Hereof

I Think Of You Always

With All Of My Love

ALWAYS LOVED, FOREVER

MISSED

Toni Cane

Luanne Zambino

Happy 50th Heavenly Birthday to
 my special Angel

I love you & Miss you very much I will
 keep you tucked away in my heart
 always & forever. Mommy

NEWSLETTER FORMAT CHANGING

Next month the newsletter will have a new look. Instead of starting with 3 sheets 11"x17" printed on both sides and folded twice for a total of 12 pages, we will have 6 sheets of 8.5x11 paper also printed both sides, stapled and folded. That is translated to the same amount of paper, twice as many pages (24 pages), but half the size.

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***A bereavement organization
 For parents, siblings and 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.