



The Compassionate Friends

Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

April, 2003

This is a very difficult time in the life of our country for all of us who have suffered the loss of our child or sibling. The prospect of war loomed large over my head - I didn't want to know when it started. Now that it has, I grieve each time I hear of another soldier who has been killed in battle.

Whether you are for or against the decision to go to war, there is something offensive about the intentionality of taking lives. Those of us who have lost the people we love to accidents, illness, or suicide know the helplessness involved, so the thought of purposefully taking a life is unfathomable. Some of our members have experienced this type of intentional loss firsthand through homicide. I just pray that the war will be over quickly.

You may find that the war has an effect on your grieving. Hearing about it may slow your progress or even make you feel like you are "getting worse". Here are some suggestions for handling your grief amidst the horror

stories from the Middle East:

Realize that the media will show every detail that they can and they will do so repeatedly. Try to avoid getting stuck to the television. Tune in for the headlines and then turn away from commentary about the war.

Find time to get outside and see the beauty around you. Even if you can only nudge yourself to your own backyard, you're sure to see buds on the trees, daffodils coming up, or hear the birds singing. Breathe in the newness of Spring - it has healing powers.

Talk to a friend about how you are feeling. This is good advice always, but especially if something outside of your world (like the war) is causing you to get stuck. Many people also find prayer to be a good outlet for their concerns.

Come to a meeting of the Compassionate Friends - we find strength in each other. I hope that we will soon be celebrating together the end of this unsettling period in our history. Let there be peace on earth!

Lisa Beall

GOALS OF BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

- to educate families about the grief process and all its complexities as it applies to the death of a child at any age and from any cause.
- to aid and support those who are suffering such a loss, regardless of race, creed or financial situation.
- to provide a library at each meeting place where members may borrow books with up-to-date information about the grief process.
- to supply the telephone numbers of other bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who are able to offer support to other more newly bereaved families.
- to inform and educate members of the helping professions who interact with bereaved parents as to the nature and duration of parent/sibling/grandparent bereavement.
- to provide monthly meetings with sharing groups and occasional informative programs.

*The printing of this newsletter has been donated through United Charities contributions
by JeanMarie O'Sullivan,
in memory of the life of
Cortney Belt*



The Compassionate Friends
Bereaved Parents of the USA
Anne Arundel County Chapter
P.O. Box 6280
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It is our sincere hope that you will find comfort somewhere in this newsletter. It is our intention to offer you hope in knowing that you are not alone. We encourage you to write about your feelings and to share your feelings with others who understand...your compassionate friends.

Material to be printed "in memory of" must be sent to the editors 6-8 weeks in advance of the newsletter in which you wish the item to be printed. **June submissions are due by April 20th).**



Our **lending library** is available to help you understand and deal with your grief. Most of our materials have been donated in memory of a child. When you have finished with them, please return them at our monthly meeting or mail them to the post office box listed above.

Thank you.

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit self-help organization. We operate on donations from the community we support and concerned professionals in order to produce our newsletter, Service of Remembrance, library, and other needed services. Donations are tax deductible.

Refreshments at our monthly meetings: A sign-up sheet is on the refreshment table at the meeting or you may call Rebecca Fitzmorris to sign up. Drinks, ice, and paper products are provided by the chapter.



Inclement weather on a meeting night - meeting canceled if Phase 1 of the Snow Emergency Plan is in effect at 5:00 p.m.

MEETING INFORMATION

April 3, 2003; Doors open at 7:15 p.m.
Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM: HELPING OUR SURVIVING CHILDREN

Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis
Park in the back of the church

NEXT MONTH:

May 1, 2003

PROGRAM: HOW DIFFERENT ARE WE?

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Sometimes we feel the need to talk to someone who understands the pain we feel and will listen to us. When you have questions to ask, a need to talk, or have a difficult day, these people welcome your call.

Marie Dyke, daughter, 17, only child, car accident, single parent

410-969-7597 Janet Tyler, daughter, 5 and brother, 33, car accident

410-360-1341 Tia Stinnett, miscarriages and infant death

410-721-6457 Sandy Platts, infant death

OTHER RESOURCES:

* **Baltimore-metro area of The Compassionate Friends** of Maryland and Bereaved Parents of the USA, (410-321-7053).

* Stephanie Roper Committee, **for victims of violent crime**, Anne Arundel County chapter representative is James Donnelly (410-544-1473).

* The Compassionate Friends, **Reston Satellite Group (support group for parents who are now childless)**, second Saturday of the month, 1:00 p.m. at North County Government Center, Reston District Police Station, 12000 Bowman Town Drive, Reston, VA. For info., contact Linda Nielsen (703-435-0608, InLvMemory@aol.com); Harriet Evenson (703-525-9311); Sharon Skarzynski in MD (410-757-5049).

* **Seasons, a suicide support group**, 3rd Tuesday, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lutherville (Dorothy Schanberger, 410-803-2098).

CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

Upcoming Meeting Topics

April 3: “Helping Our Surviving Children”

The surviving children in our families have issues of their own. These issues can be vastly different depending on the age of the surviving child, his/her location in the order of the family, etc. Dr. Peter Wilcox will describe his experience in dealing with the issues faced by the siblings of deceased children, and offer ideas on how we might help them.

May 1: “How Different Are We?”

Men and women often grieve differently. These differences can introduce new stresses into a couple's relationships. As we anticipate Mother's Day and Father's Day in the coming months, understanding these differences (and the similarities) can be helpful. There will be separate sharing groups for men and women.

SIBLING PEN PAL PROGRAM: Especially for the brothers and sisters of children who have died, this pen pal club will provide bereaved siblings someone to talk with and write to. Currently the club has pen pals from 25 different states. 14% are between the ages of 5-9, 71% between the ages of 10-30, and 15% in the over 30 age group.

If you are interested in the program, please call or write for the forms: Carol Paulson, 18170 Hopewell Road, Mount Vernon, OH 43050; phone (614)397-0423.

Sponsoring a monthly newsletter in your child's name can be arranged through Lisa Beall (bealls@erols.com). Newsletter printing costs \$150 and mailing is \$40 each month.

WEB ADDRESSES

Bereaved Parents USA home page	www.after-death.com
www.bereavedparentsusa.org	TCF Sibling Internet Chat - Thursday nights at 9:00 EST: (email tcf siblingrep@aol.com for the password)
Bereavement Magazine-	For bereaved parents
www.bereavementmag.com	www.moms-dads.com/index2.html
On Suicides -	CLIMB
www.pbs.org/weblab/living	newsletter@climb-support.org
Paul Alexander -	
www.griefsong.com	
Judy Guggenheim's Home page -	

Many of you who receive our **newsletter** were referred by a friend, physician, or clergy. You may have never attended a meeting. In this case, it is likely that your child's name does not appear in our **monthly list of “Children Remembered”**. This is because we require your permission to do so. If you would like your child's name added, please send a note to our post office box. List your child's name, your name(s), and the dates of your child's birth and death. Please allow 6 weeks to be sure it arrives in time for the appropriate month.

WANTED:

Donations for the sales table for the May 17, 2003 Annual Hope and Healing Conference. If you have items you would like to donate, please call or email Rebecca Fitzmorris (410-987-9175), rafitzm@att.net (Proceeds benefit our chapter.)

MESSAGE ON BALLOON HITS TARGET

Each one of us has our own personal belief about Life. Mine is that I think everything in life is meant to be, and sharing my story might help prove that it's true.

Having belonged to the Compassionate Friends for 4 years, I took part in their annual balloon lift-off on July 12, 2001. Each of us wrote a personal message to our loved ones and attached it to the strings of our balloons. It was a beautiful night as we watched them sail on up to the heavens. I remember saying that they were heading toward Rhode Island and I had hoped that someone from R.I. would find mine.

I wrote a poem and this is what it said:

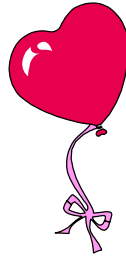
The annual balloon lift-off is here once again
For each and every Compassionate Friend

To Pete Salvatore

May the wind take this balloon
all the way to you in Heaven.
It's filled with so much love,
since April of '97.
If anyone finds this balloon,
won't you please write to me?
I know the love has been released,
to my son, with love from me.

On the back I typed: If you find this, please write to...and I put my name and address and also my email address.

On July 30th - 18 days later - I got an email from a lady in Warren, Rhode Island. Her message started out as: 'My son was bird watching yesterday when he spotted the pink ribbon in the wooded area. He brought it home to me because he knew it would mean a lot, simply because I, too, lost a son in 1983.' Then she went on to tell me that her son was 26 when he was killed on a motorcycle, but the ironic thing is that 'This son that was killed had a good friend whose last name is SALVATORE'. She went on about how there are many of us that grieve



and continue on as life does go on - very difficult, but it does go on. It was a very touching message. She was happy to correspond and wrote, 'I know that Pete did receive your compassionate message because it went straight from you to Heaven', and signed it - 'A friend who shared your sorrow, Sadie'.

While writing back to each other, we have found that we share a lot of things in common: we both had four children by our first marriage; both our deceased sons were our second born; both our sons were born in 1957; her son was born on 3/13 while my husband and my brother, Jim were born on 3/13. Her son that found my balloon? His name is Jim. When she asked how my son died, I told her that he was sick with a virus and the bacteria went thru his bloodstream, shutting down his organs. She wrote back and said: 'Strange that his virus went thru his bloodstream that way because my first husband got pneumonia and it too went thru his bloodstream and the doctors did not know how this happened back in 1963.'

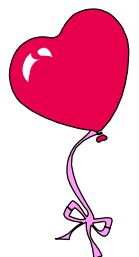
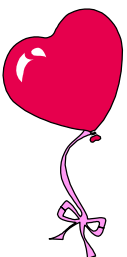
We have sent about 20 messages to each other and we have added each other's sons to our Prayer Lists and will continue to correspond. When I went to my August support group meeting, I shared my story with the group and they said they had goosebumps when they heard all the ironic things we have in common. Sadie wrote: 'It is so ironic that your message was found by my Jim - it almost seemed like a message to me from my Dave that he has another friend and wanted us to be friends.'

Sadie and I are going to meet each other after we both return from our vacations. Anyone could have found my balloon, but Sadie did. I think everything in life is meant to be and this just shows that it's true.

Barbara Morton
Douglas, MA

**5th Annual Hope and Healing Conference
and balloon lift-off
Saturday, May 17, 2003
at Calvary United Methodist Church
Annapolis**

Questions? Call or email Pat Schultz at 410-255-7760, jim.n.pat@juno.com



SIBLING PAGE

DENIAL

I live life in denial
It's the only way to go
If I had to live it honestly
My feelings I must show.

In denial you're away from home
On some secluded land
Vacationing along the beach
Enjoying sun and sand
You are out on an adventure
You are learning a career
And until you've learned your lessons
I continue to wait here

In denial you have taken work
And now live out of state
And though I'm desperate to see you
I can only sit and wait
You're preparing for your future
For your journey to begin
But without communication
I don't know where I fit in

In denial you are busy
There are many plans to make
You'll come on holidays
Or when you get a break
But the months just keep on passing
And the holidays come round
And although I do expect you
You are nowhere to be found

Anniversaries to deal with
The Beginning - when it ended
No cards can come your way
For I have nowhere to send them

There are times when I see your picture
And I forget that you are gone
I have to stop and make it real
You've been gone for so long
When reality comes crashing in
There's none of the above
Just me still here just waiting
Without you to share my love

My denial is not permanent
I've been there and I find
It's a useful place to visit
To protect my heart and mind

In memory of my brother, John F. Campbell on the 2nd anniversary of
his farewell. John, remember I am keeping my love for you
in a special place until we meet again.

Your loving sister,
Laura Williams
(1995)



FOR MY BABY BROTHER

You came and went without a word
But I'll miss your loving cry.
We barely got acquainted,
And then it was goodbye.

There was so much more
You should have done.
Your innocent eyes had barely opened
Your life had just begun.

You never saw a sunset,
Or a star in the night sky.
You never saw a sunrise,
Or a rainbow flying high.

You never drew a picture,
Or sang a nursery rhyme.
You never took those first few steps,
You should have had more time.

You never hit a baseball,
To score the winning run.

You never even had the chance
To miss the things you've never done

Although you left so many things
Undone, unseen, and unsaid.
Their numbers never shall come close
To the tears that I have shed.

You came and went without a word.

T.C.
TCF, Miami, FL



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Love shared can bring comfort to a broken heart.
Please remember the following families this month.





HEART IN HAND

The newly bereaved parents come to our meetings. Such sadness on their faces, and yet that twinkle of hope in their eyes. The hope that we have some answers. They come with heart in hand. Can you mend it? Can you make this hurt go away?

Three years ago I was one of those parents and yet after three years I still have no answers and no magical

words. Why do I still come? Because the people in this room all know the pain and grief of their child or children dying. I can talk about my child here and not get strange glances. I can cry and not be made to feel I'm crazy. The sharing and caring I receive from the people in this room has made my grief a little easier to deal with.

One day I woke up and found I didn't carry my heart in hand anymore. It's still battered and bruised, but ever so slowly the healing has begun.

Janet Bryant
South Central KY

Lend me your hope for awhile,
I seem to have mislaid mine.
Lost and hopeless feelings accompany me daily,
Pain and confusion are my companions.
I know not where to turn; looking ahead
To future times does not bring forth images
of renewed hope.
I see troubled times, pain-filled days, and
More tragedy.

Lend me your hope for awhile,
I seem to have mislaid mine.
Hold my hand and hug me;
Listen to all my ramblings, recovery seems
so far distant.
The road to healing seems like a long and
Lonely one.

Lend me your hope for awhile,
I seem to have mislaid mine.
Stand by me, offer me your presence, your
Heart, and your love.
Acknowledge my pain, it so real and
Ever present.
I am overwhelmed with sad and
Conflicting thoughts.

Lend me your hope for awhile;
A time will come when I will heal,
And I will share my renewal, hope and
Love with others.

Adapted from the poem "Lend Me Your Hope", author unknown.
From Victory Over the Darkness - Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ, by Neil T. Anderson

Donations may be made to offset the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, the memorial service, library books, and other literature. We gratefully acknowledge the following donations:

Contributions through United Way, Central Md.:

Deborah and Paul Michael, in memory of Paul Brian Michael

Peggy and Gordon Haines, in memory of Matthew Haines

Paul and Claudia Balasic, in memory of Bethany Balasic

Donna and Doug Rohrbaugh, in memory of James Ryan Rohrbaugh

JeanMarie O'Sullivan, in memory of Cortney Belt
James and Sheila Mohan, in memory of Scott Joseph Mohan

Sandra Shockey, in memory of Daniel R. Shockey

Contributions:

Jeff and Terri Saff, in memory of Philip Francisco Saff
Dorothy and Norm Heincelman, in memory of Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman

HAPPY PASSOVER

On the evening of Passover, Jews throughout the world celebrate the holiday. Passover has been called the favorite holiday because it operates on so many levels. It is a time of triumph, but it is also a time of tears...perhaps at no other time do we feel the absence of our loved one more so than at the time of Passover. As we gather around the Passover table, we cannot help but recall those who were dear to us in life and are with us here no more. We recall them in friendship and in love, for Passover is the time of family service. But even as we mourn their loss, we understand that the life of the dead is now placed in the memory of the living. Spring and Passover are a time of new hope and new life.

Rabbi Earl Grollman

Excerpted from "Passover-A Season of Triumph, But Tears"

SUNLIGHT/SUNSET

Oh, Lady in the Park, don't you remember?
I used to come here with three children
And we would push the swings with small talk.
You were fascinated by her and we laughed
Because the other two spun around her
Like revolving doors
And she was the sunlight in the park.

All winter I have waited for spring
To explain to you where the sun had gone.
But you didn't remember me.
Yesterday I came with two children
And we pushed the swings with small talk.
You weren't even aware
That the sunlight was gone.

Susan Borrowman
TCF, Kingston, ON

A YES FOR SPRING

Crocuses, robins, light breezes and warmth
Signal the coming of Spring.
Already my neighbor measures his lawn
With the spreader to encourage
Green grass and new life.
But not for me. No, not for me.

How dare that robin build
A nest in my apple tree!
Can't she see that here
Winter still shrouds the house -
That storms still howl within?

I do not yearn for Spring.
There is no new awakening
Or joy within my heart.
I cling to winter's dreary cold
For it echoes the cry of my soul.

And yet that bird builds.
Now comes her mate to add
A ribbon fallen from the Christmas rubble.
Together they stack and weave
Until a strong new nest appears.

Was last year's nest torn asunder
By winter's brutal wrath?
Were the nestlings caught
By neighbor's greedy cat?
Whatever - robin sits upon the new nest.

I watch the robins and long to stay in winter.
To postpone the pain of rebuilding.
But I cannot - I must not.
Spring is coming even here.
Crocuses grow in my yard, too.
And for me - especially for me.

Marcia F. Alig, TCF, Hightstown, NJ

COMPASSIONATE CHRIST

Lean on me, child, and cry.
 I know your heart is broken...
 I called your loved one home today,
 He is with me.
 Look at me, child and trust,
 I am acquainted with grief...
 I welcomed your precious one
 To a home far better than earth.
 Hold on to me, child.
 I know the searing of your soul,
 And will ease your pain.
 Cling to me, child,
 I know you love him
 But I loved him more...
 And died that he could be with me.
 Keep your eyes on me, child,
 I will not abandon you...
 No words can describe
 The peace I will give you.
 Be comforted, my child
 Your loved one is rejoicing in my presence,
 His entrance into heaven was accompanied
 With triumphant exultation!
 I want you to love me more,
 And to watch for my coming.
 For I am coming for you, my child,
 And you will be with me,
 And see your loved one again,
 Where you will know no tears,
 death or loneliness,
 I love you, dear child
 And know your hurt...
 So lean on me and cry.

Leonard

Donne



EASTER AND PASSOVER THE SEASON OF GRIEF

The seasons take on new meanings when a child dies. The snow of winter melts into the first breath of spring. How well I remember the first spring of my grief. I looked forward eagerly to its coming... surely when the long, dark days of winter are past... surely spring will be better!

How surprised I was at tears springing forth with the discovery of each new crocus and every bursting bud and spring flower. Yes, spring was beautiful, but oh, so sad, that first year without my son to share it with. For suddenly I realized that it was he who gave me my first bedding plants for Mother's Day each year.

And now the Lenten season unfolds once more, and I'm aware of other bereaved parents who will withdraw to the privacy of their personal and painful world of memories with this new season for them. Ash Wednesday...Easter...Passover...these are a totally new experience in the first years of grief. The liturgical words are a thousand years old, yet tears blur the painful newfound meaning.

Author unknown
 reprinted from the Delmarva Area Newsletter

APRIL DAYS

The days are getting longer, longer,
 and it is easier to work away.
 So many busy things to do — keep busy, busy.
 The more we do, the less we have to say.

The days are getting warmer, softer —
 and is it easier to work a lot?
 All right, forgive yourself for crying midnights;
 the heart remembers what your hands forgot.

Sascha Wagner
 TCF, Des Moines, IA

**Those who leave us in the springtime of their lives
 will greet us again someday in a land
 where springtime is eternal.**



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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. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children 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 and creeds. 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 we feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; 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 our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and 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.