



# The Compassionate Friends

## Bereaved Parents of the USA

### Anne Arundel County Chapter

**August, 2003**

[www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org](http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org)

Our lives are most comfortable when there is a balance. When we can give equal parts of ourselves to work and family, we have a sense that life is moving at the right pace. But when we are out of balance, we begin to feel that life is sweeping us along and we have no power to control its circumstances. That is when we experience the greatest stress in our lives.

So it is with the early stages of grief. Our life is so seriously out of balance, that we cannot give equal parts of ourselves to the needs of those around us and to the innermost needs of ourselves. One or the other is left out: parents often tell us that they had no energy for their surviving children in those early days and months. Others tell us that they couldn't eat or sleep and became physically ill or they needed constant medication just to get through the day. Some get so caught up in the grief of their family members

that they forget to give themselves the time and permission to grieve. This is when our compassionate friends can be of such help. As an outsider, we can often see where there is a problem with balance and can suggest ways to meet the needs of self or other.

Henri Nowwen (page 8) observes that grief does not diminish with time, but it certainly changes. I think he speaks of balance: the balance of knowing with certainty what a terrible loss has occurred and the depth of our unchanging love for this person. It is the process of having our eyes opened to the frailty and uncertainty of life but the absolute and eternal existence of love. We learn to balance heartache with wisdom, loss with insight, and grief with love - knowing that given the choice, we would endure their loss again just to feel their love again. When we understand this, we can regain a sense of balance in our lives.

#### **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 and mailing of this newsletter has been donated by  
Frances Palmer in memory of her son  
Scott Thomas Palmer*



The Compassionate Friends  
Bereaved Parents of the USA  
Anne Arundel County Chapter  
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401-0280

Newsletter is published monthly  
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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. **October submissions are due by August 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 (410-987-9175) 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

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

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

**PROGRAM: LOSS THROUGH ADDICTION**

#### NEXT MONTH:

September 4, 2003

**PROGRAM: HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS**

**CORE GROUP MEETING: AUG. 19TH**  
(ANYONE IS WELCOME)

#### 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, single parent, daughter, 17, only child, car accident**

**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).

\* **Survivors of Suicide Group (SOS)** meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., at Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park (410-987-2129).

## CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

### Upcoming Meeting Topics

#### **August 7: Loss Through Addiction**

Deborah Sheehy, a member of our chapter, will provide a mother's story of her family's struggle with addiction.

#### **September 4: Holidays and Special Days**

The holidays, particularly those in November and December, can be very difficult for bereaved parents. A panel of TCF members will discuss these issues and offer suggestions on preparing for and dealing with holidays and significant dates such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentines Day, the birthdate of the child, the deathdate of the child, the day the child would have first gone to school,

**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.**

### CHAPTER WEBSITE

If you would like your child's name to appear on our website, please either email Dave Alexander at [dralex@sdalex.com](mailto:dralex@sdalex.com) or send a note to him at PO box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401. In your email or note, include your name, your child's name as you would like it to appear, and your child's date of birth and date of death. If you send a note, include your email address in the note.

In addition to the children's names, we plan to have pictures of our children. If you would like to have a picture of your child on the website, please email a digital file with the picture. If you only have a printed picture, send that to Dave at the above address and we will arrange to have it scanned onto the site. We will return the photo to you when it has been scanned. Be sure you include clear identifying information so that we will be able to know where to return the photo.

If you have any questions about this project, give Dave a call at 410-544-3634.

### WEB ADDRESSES

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

### Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul


Grief Book Supports Mission of TCF

This book is now available in bookstores and a portion of the proceeds will go to TCF. Jack Canfield, co-creator of the series says, "TCF was the natural choice as the charity for [this book]. Its mission to aid those just beginning to grieve with the help and insights of veteran griever is in total alignment with what we also hope this book will accomplish.

This book may be purchased through Amazon.com (going through our chapter website to order it results in a 5% commission for our chapter - go to **[www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org](http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org)**; click on the butterflies on the welcome page to enter our site and then scroll down the first page to the bottom to the Amazon.com graphic. **Purchases made through Amazon without going through our website do not get credited.**

## HAPPY 24th, CORTNEY

It's hard to believe that this year marks the eighth time that we have had to look skyward instead of into your beautiful eyes as we wish you a Happy Birthday on August 26th. But, wish you a will, because we will that magical day of remarkable gift you to be. Your best friend



got married this summer. Can you believe that after 7 long years you were so much a part of that beautiful event? In fact, you were a special part of two weddings this summer! ("They are not gone who live in the hearts they left behind.")

One of your greatest legacies was how you taught so many the true meaning of friendship. We are trying to carry on and to live by the lessons your life and death have taught us, but still, on the occasion of your 24th birthday...

### I Can't Help Missing You So Much

(written by Gail Mutterperl; experienced by those who love you)

Missing you is something  
I feel every moment.  
It's like a little piece of sadness  
That I carry around with me.  
When I stop what I am doing  
To take a moment to think of you,  
There is an emptiness  
That fills me up inside.  
But along with the sadness  
There are wonderful memories.  
And when I think of all the  
Special times we had,  
I can't help but smile  
In spite of the sadness.  
It is then that I realize  
That I would rather  
Feel the pain of missing you  
Than lose a single memory  
Of you and me together.

Happy Birthday, sweetheart. We love you. Say hi to Traci and tell her we love and miss her deeply.

Terre Belt  
TCF, Anne Arundel Co., MD

## MEMORIES

You will not leave me alone -  
You refuse to be silent!  
You bump up against my memory  
Teasing  
Coaxing  
Cajoling me to take a chance, to remember  
To let the memory of you wash over me -  
Sometimes I am bathed in the warmth of you,  
Other times I shiver in the torrent of tears  
your memory brings.

Susan Howard  
(in loving memory of Nancy)  
TCF, San Diego, CA



## COPING WITH MEMORIES

Memories are a bridge between the past and present. In an abstract, though nonetheless real sense, you can reach your child, be with him or her, by crossing the bridge, remembering; but herein lies the pain — you have to go back to the past because he or she is not physically present.

The memories that you have of your child, whether of happy or unhappy times, or perhaps of how he or she looked, felt, sounded — all of these are precious, special and sometimes can be so painful that you want to block them to escape the anguish. This is normal, natural. And yet, the loss of your memories would leave a large gap. Perhaps the most difficult to deal with are the sudden, unexpected stabs that can occur anytime. When an association with your child comes out of the blue — perhaps a piece of music or a can of spaghetti in the supermarket — whatever it is that throws you, try to remember to breathe deeply and slowly, and it will help. Remembering is important because even when it is painful, healing is taking place.

Jenny Kander  
TCF, Johannesburg, S.A.

# SIBLING PAGE

## HOW TO HELP ME GRIEVE

**Be there for me:**

I feel alone, in pain.

I need a friend.

**Share my sorrow:**

Speak from your heart.

I have to talk about my feelings.

**Let me grieve:**

Listen to me, I need to cry.

We all grieve in our own way and in a different time frame.

**Keep the memory alive:**

It is always on my mind.

I have so many memories.

**I need your help:**

Help me, call me, pray for me.

Do whatever you can.

**Don't desert me:**

Don't desert me after the 1st or 2nd week.

I need you, especially on holidays.

**Take care of yourself:**

I need to depend on you.

**Help me heal:**

Involve me, listen to me months later.

I need your interest and invitations.

**Be my friend:**

Don't be afraid of me or my grief.

It's okay to cry.

Lastly, please don't criticize until you've walked in my shoes.

Instead: **Pray for me.**

Vivian Sagert  
TCF, Minitonas, Manitoba, Canada

## KNOW THY ENEMY...

Does this sound familiar?

"I never feel like doing anything" ... "Boy am I getting fat"... "Gosh Mom, I'm really not hungry"... "It's not my fault my grades are failing. It's that lousy instructor I have"... "Everything seems to be going wrong. Life is the pits!"...

And on and on and on...

But never is it that lousy "GRIEF" that is affecting me. It couldn't possibly be causing any of my problems or feelings. No, not me. I'm doing just fine. Losing my brother or sister wouldn't do this to me.

Well, guess what? You're wrong... "Know thy enemy" ...Educate yourself about your enemy - grief - and you will conquer. Go for the gusto, get out there and attack this monster in a positive manner before it leaves scars. You certainly read and discuss everything else you're interested in, or that is affecting your life: school, sports, sex, boys or girls, cars, etc... Who do you discuss all these subjects with? Why of course, any friend who is interested in the same subject. We learn from each other and we help each other when we share our ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Claire Tully  
TCF, New Orleans, LA

## CATCHING UP

When they told me, I understood.  
I knew you would never return.  
I never wondered where you went.  
I still remember.  
The trees swayed in the blowing breeze.  
It was chilly and gray, just what you'd picture for such a day.  
I gazed around the small gathering,  
at faces streaked with tears.  
I was silent as so many cries surrounded me.  
I felt empty.

It was as if I looked in from the outside,  
seeing the pain, hurt and suffering I was helpless to heal.  
I knew more than they thought.  
You weren't gone.  
You had only run ahead  
and are now waiting for us...  
to catch up.

Melissa Mae Friebe  
TCF, Minneapolis, MN



## OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

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



Cortney Belt  
daughter of Terre and John Belt  
August 26, 1979 - July 9, 1996

Paul J. Burash  
son of Sandra and Robert Burash  
January 18, 1972 - August 8, 1992

William F. Carter, Jr.  
son of Dorothy Carter  
brother of Lisa Beall and Janet Tyler  
April 24, 1959 - August 16, 1992

Alexandra Ann Denevan  
daughter of Gregory Denevan  
September 18, 1985 - August 21, 2002

Kathleen Yvette Denevan  
daughter of Gregory Denevan  
August 10, 1970 - May 13, 1971

R. Daniel Ferrer  
son of Anna Severn  
May 25, 1972 - August 29, 1986

Jeremy Scott Jones  
son of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Jones  
August 4, 1976 - August 21, 1986

Benjamin Mogil  
son of Kate and Allyn Mogil  
August 12, 2002 - August 12, 2002

Eric Eugene Maier  
son of Marlene and Gene Maier  
August 8, 1961 - July 5, 1984

Brian Richard Melcher  
son of Norma and Don Melcher  
brother of Cheryl Lewis  
August 30, 1960 - June 14, 2002

Scott Thomas Palmer  
son of Frances A. Palmer  
August 3, 1983 - September 1, 1996

Brittany Nicole Tyler  
daughter of Janet and Dan Tyler  
October 12, 1986 - August 23, 1992

Roy James Wyrick  
son of Patricia Wyrick  
August 8, 1962 - January 10, 2002





I am not an optimist, because I am not sure that everything ends well. Nor am I a pessimist, because I am not sure that everything ends badly.

I just carry hope in my heart. Hope is a feeling that life and work have a meaning. You either have it or you don't, regardless of the state of the world that surrounds you.



Life without hope is an empty, boring and useless life. I cannot imagine that I could strive for something if I did not carry hope in me.

I am thankful to God for this gift. It is as big a gift as life itself.

Vaclav Havel  
Playwright and Leader of Czechoslovakia  
newsletter of BP/USA, Spring 2003

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:**

Landon Butler, in memory of Scott Thomas Palmer Chesapeake Community Foundation

Kenneth A. Smith, memory of Tracy Fotino

Dorothy Heincelman, in memory of Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman

Ethel E. Cleary, in memory of our grandson, Scott Thomas Palmer

Real grief is not healed by time... If time does anything, it deepens our grief. The longer we live, the more fully we become aware of who she/he was for us, and the more intimately we experience what their love meant to us. Real, deep love is, as you know, very unobtrusive, seeming easy and obvious, and so present that we take it for granted. Therefore, it is often only in retrospect - or better in memory - that we fully realize its power and depth. Yes, indeed, love often makes itself visible in pain.



So I am glad not that my loved one has gone  
But that the earth she laughed and lived on  
was my earth, too.

That I had known and loved her,  
And that my love I'd shown  
Tears over her departure?  
Nay a smile

That I had walked with her a little while.

Barbara Bush, in memory of daughter Robin

Henri Nowwen

## ON A ROSEBUSH FULL OF BLOOMS

On a rosebush full of blooms, there is occasionally one rose more fragile than the rest. Nobody knows why. The rose receives the same amounts of rain and sun as its neighboring blooms; it receives the same amounts of water and food from the earth, of clipping and tending and gentle encouragement from the gardener. Its time on earth is neither more nor less significant than that of the other blooms alongside. Its stresses are neither greater or fewer. Its promises of development are just as rich. In other words, it has all the necessary components to become what it is intended to be: a beautiful flower, fully open, spreading its petals and fragrance and color for the world to see.



But for some inexplicable reason, once in awhile a single rose doesn't reach maturity. It's not the gardener's fault. It's not the fault of the rose. For some roses, even the touch of the gentle spring rains leaves bruises on the petals. The sun's rays - so soft and warm to some flowers - feel searing to others. Some roses thrive while fragile ones feel buffeted by inner and outer ghostwinds.

So it is that sometimes, despite the best growing conditions, the best efforts of the gardener, and the best possibilities and predictions for a glorious blooming season, a particularly fragile rose will share its glow for awhile, then fade and die. And the gardener and the rosebush

and the earth and all around grieve.

We are never ready for a loss, not for the loss of a promising rosebud, nor for the loss of a friend or relative whose life appears ready to unfold with brilliant color and fulfillment. In the midst of our grieving, we can remember and celebrate the glimpses of color and fragrance and growth that were shared. We can love the fragile rose and the fragile soul for the valiant battles won and the blooming that was done. And as our own petals unfold, we can remember the softness and beauty of those who touched us along the way.

Earnestine Clark  
TCF, Oklahoma City, OK

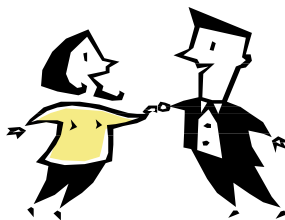


## HUMOR AND SURVIVAL

Recently, my daughter paid me one of the highest compliments a bereaved parent can hope to receive.

Having made a change in her primary care physician, her new doctor was taking her history and he reached the place where he inquired about her parents' health. He started with me, and my daughter just started laughing and said, "You're not going to believe her history." With that she ran off my litany of woe, both past and present. Her doctor asked if I had gone out looking for things to happen to me. She said she assured him that wasn't the case and she added, "In spite of all of it, she has never lost her sense of humor."

Now, I consider that a compliment because I'm sure there were times she couldn't have said that. I tell you this because, when one of our children dies, we seem to lose other things, as well. One of them seems to be our sense of humor. We are hard put to find things that tickle our funny bone. Life becomes tedious and surviving becomes a deadly serious business. After a few months, when something strikes you as humorous and you laugh, you'll find that the old devil guilt makes his presence known.



If this happened to just a few bereaved parents, you would probably think it was somehow warranted guilt but how do you account for it happening to practically every bereaved parent? Most of us were good parents who never intentionally did anything that warranted the feeling of guilt, except maybe loving our children too much.

Next time you're tempted to laugh, do ahead! Laugh long and hard. You'll feel better after you do, for, eventually, you come to realize that laughing does not mean you're "all over" your child's death. It just means you needed some relief from all that pain that comes with grieving. Those of us who allow humor to become a part of our lives again survive better. If someone nearby hears you laughing and attributes it to problems with your mental health, just tell them that that's mental health all right, but it's no problem!

Mary Cleckley  
BP/USA

Believe when you are most unhappy, that there is something  
for you to do in the world. So long as you can  
sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain.

Helen Keller

## WE'RE ALIKE, YOU AND I

We're alike, you and I.

We've never met. Our faces would be those of strangers if we met. We would barely perceive the other's presence if we passed on our walk through the mists. We're unknown to each other until the terrible words have been spoken: "MY CHILD DIED".

We're alike, you and I.

We measure time in seconds and eternities. We try to go forward to yesterday. Tomorrows are for whole people, and we are incomplete now.

The tears, after a time, turn inward to become invisible to all save you and me. Our souls are rumpled from wrestling with demons and doubts and unanswerable prayers: "GIVE ME BACK MY CHILD."

We're alike, you and I.

The tears that run down your face are my tears, and the wound in your soul is my pain, too. We need time, but time is our enemy, for it carries us farther and farther from our lost child. And we cry out: "HELP ME."

We're alike, you and I.

And we need each other. Don't turn away, but give me your hand, and for a time we can cease to be strangers and become what we truly are, a family closer than blood, united by a bond that was forced upon us - but a bond that can make us stronger, still wounded to be sure, but stronger for our sorrows are shared.

"We need not walk alone."

Judy Dickey  
TCF, Greenwood, IN

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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.**