



The Compassionate Friends

Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

May, 2003

As bereaved parents, we have all experienced shock, disbelief, depression, guilt, anger, loneliness, despair, sadness, helplessness, and at least a thousand other emotions. "This is grief". These feelings come back with a vengeance when we hear about our soldiers being killed on the battlefield and our hearts go out to the families of the fallen as they start their grieving process. Just today we saw the funeral procession of a young man from Pasadena who was the 125th American "casualty" of the war. Somewhere, there are 124 more families experiencing this most horrendous of life events. We hope to see the return of many of our soldiers in the very near future.

The fifth conference of Hope and Healing is being held at Calvary United Methodist Church on Saturday, May 17th. The purpose of the conference is to help us through the journey of grief. The committee has tried to select a variety of grief-related topics that will offer messages of hope and tools for coping. The presenters are bereaved

parents or professionals - in some instances, both. The topics this year include: Sudden death of a child; Where was God when I needed him?; Grief and marriage; Dealing with the suicide of a child; Early years of bereavement; I can handle this...but how? (this is a sibling discussion group which also might give some insight to parents on what their other children are going through); Infant loss; You can communicate with the world beyond; Now childless; Memorials and tributes; Story work/soul work: storytelling and the journey of grieving.

If at the end of the day you have found one thing that will bring you peace, comfort, and/or a tool for coping...we have been successful. We hope you will join us... "to share the pain as well as they 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 are The Compassionate Friends.

Pat Schultz

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
Ken Smith*

*"in memory of "my beautiful niece, Tracy Fotino.
Her mother and I miss her and Tracy is in my thoughts every day."*

The Compassionate Friends of Maryland, Inc.
 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. **July submissions are due by May 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

May 1, 2003; Doors open at 7:15 p.m.
 Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM: HOW DIFFERENT ARE WE?

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

NEXT MONTH:

June 5, 2003

PROGRAM: MEMORIALIZING OUR CHILDREN

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

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.

June 5: "Memorializing Our Children"

Many bereaved parents seek ways to memorialize their deceased children and to keep their memories fresh in the minds of family, friends, and the community. Paula Muehlhauser will introduce us to creating a **Chapter Quilt**. One of the sharing groups will work on starting the quilt. Background fabric will be supplied for everyone. You may want to bring a picture that can be transferred to the fabric for "your child's" square, or a special drawing or piece of artwork that they did. You don't need to have any sewing skills to be involved, just a loving desire to share your story.

WEB ADDRESSES

Bereaved Parents USA home page

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Bereavement Magazine-

www.bereavementmag.com

On Suicides -

www.pbs.org/weblab/living

Paul Alexander -

www.griefsong.com

Judy Guggenheim's

Home page -

www.after-death.com

TCF Sibling Internet Chat

- Thursday nights at 9:00 EST: (email tcfsiblingrep@aol.com for the password)

For bereaved parents

www.moms-dads.com/index2.html

CLIMB

newsletter@climb-support.org

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

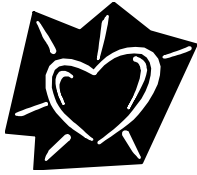
We are about to formally establish a website for the Anne Arundel County Chapter. One of the features of the website will be a page with the names of our children who have died. The listing will be similar to the listing that appears in the annual Memorial Service program in December.

If you would like your child's name to appear on this page of our website, please either email Dave Alexander at 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.

When we formally establish the website, we'll let you know the web address (the URL) you will use to access it.



“We are the rememberers,
the people left behind to keep the one who’s gone from us alive in heart and mind,
the people left to cherish and preserve a legacy...
yes we are the rememberers, and we will always be.”

Remembering Wendy Dawn Saunders
May 20, 1972 - May 14, 1998

Loving you forever,
Mom and Dad

WE SHALL MEET AGAIN

If I should leave this world
Without a warning,
And not even whisper a fond farewell,
Grieve not for one more message
From the lips that God has stilled.
But just remember me with love
And prayers for my soul’s journey
To that fair land beyond life’s tears.
For I have believed with all my heart
In its existence, and I know
That God is good, for He has come to me
Through the life of Him whose very
garment I have sought to touch.
It may be lonely, and I hope you miss me
Just a little, because I have loved so deeply
My own family and faithful friends.



Forgive me if I have ever hurt you
And remember me for what I
longed to be.
Have faith that I am nearer than
your dreams and fondest longings.
For the God of love shall keep all kindred spirits
Close together, though the misty vale between
This world and that to come
Keeps us from each other’s sight,
For a few precious moments.
Whisper softly that you love me
And it shall linger on within my soul
Until you come. Say not goodbye,
For on some bright tomorrow
We shall meet again!



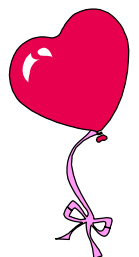
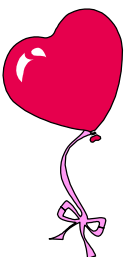
The Annual National Bereaved Parents of the USA Gathering will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, from June 26 - 29. The National Gathering is a time for parents, siblings and families to come together to remember our children, attend workshops and to assist each other in learning new ways to cope through this devastating nightmare. The over 100 workshops and sharing sessions will address all aspects of grief. The presenters will range from parents and professionals, to your favorite authors.

For information and registration forms, go to the conference website at http://www.bpustl.org/2003_national_gathering.htm

The Annual National Compassionate Friends Conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, from July 3 - 6. This conference is an annual opportunity for bereaved parents, siblings and other special people to gather with others from around the world who have similar circumstances for a weekend of help and healing. The Conference will offer over 90 workshops, addressing a wide variety of topics for the bereaved family. For information and registration forms, go to the conference website at <http://www.tcfatlanta.org/2003conference/>

**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

AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR SIBLINGS

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know, since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives. And the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember storeis of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could have imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief.

There is only the simple choice I made every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.



Melanie Lamoureux,
TCF/Marin County, Ca
on behalf of the sibling group

EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

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

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

Lisa Ann Jones
Avoca, PA



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

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





TO A FRIEND

I cannot take away the sadness,
Cannot ease your pain,
Although I wish that I could make
Your spirit whole again.

Only time and cleansing tears
Can mend a broken heart.
Bit by bit, their miracles
Let gentle healing start.

No words can counteract the anger,
The emptiness, the loss.

Nor can they justify the dreams

Now blown away like dust.

Only time and memories
(Their magic never ceases)
Can numb the pain-filled, lonely task
Of picking up the pieces.

We pick them up as best we can,
Most often one by one.
Life executes its cruelest blow
When death has claimed a son.

Peggy Kociscin
TCF, Albuquerque, NM

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:

Dorothy and Norm Heincelman, in memory of Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman

Ken and Debby Fiscus, in memory of Andrea Faith Fiscus

Ken Smith, in memory of Tracy Fotino

Ron and Aljuana Saunders, in memory of Wendy Dawn Saunders

RAISING THE CHILDREN WHO FOLLOW

I know about raising children who are born after the death of a child. As a mother, I lost two babies at birth and raised two children after them. As a psychotherapist, I have counseled a number of adults whose siblings had died before them. Some of these adults had not been told of the deaths, and, until we explored their family histories, were unaware of the effects that those deaths had had upon them. Dealing with "the children who follow" is five-fold:

FIRST IS THE ISSUE OF SELF-HELP.

Parents need to take care of themselves. This involves allowing their own personal grieving. I did not allow myself my grief until many years later. I am certain that this had an effect on my ability to be emotionally available to my children. Parents also need to attend to the needs of a spousal relationship, if there is one, by mending any strains put upon that marriage by grief.

SECOND IS THE AWARENESS THAT A SUBSEQUENT CHILD CANNOT BE A REPLACEMENT FOR A DEAD CHILD.

I learned from my adult clients who were "children who followed" that one of the ways they most suffered from the death of a prior sibling was a confusion of identity with that dead sibling, resulting in identity and self-acceptance struggles. A subsequent child needs to feel that he is not filling a gap or empty space in the family but has his own place and identity - and that identity is wonderful! He needs to be loved for himself

THIRD IS THE ABILITY TO KEEP GRIEF SEPARATE FROM THE BIRTH AND LIFE OF A SUBSEQUENT CHILD.

The conception, birth (or adoption) and raising of a subsequent child may present mixed feelings of joy and sadness, hope and increased anxiety. Parents must allow themselves to feel and express all of these emotions. At the same time, they must explain that the painful feelings are not the subsequent child's fault. If not, he may feel that he is responsible and, therefore, must comfort his parent (too much of a burden for a little one). It is equally important that the parents express their joy at his having been born and that he is a source of joy.

FOURTH, BECAUSE THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SPECIAL ANXIETIES ABOUT A SUBSEQUENT CHILD, A PARENTS MUST NOT ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BECOME SMOTHERING AND OVERPROTECTIVE.

They must allow this child to have his own normal problems and struggles.

FINALLY, AS THE CHILD WHO FOLLOWS GROWS UP, PARENTS MUST TALK TO HIM ABOUT THE BROTHER OR SISTER WHO DIED.

Secrets cause confusion, even shame, in many families, however well-intentioned. It is important for a subsequent child to know that his dead sibling is an important member of the family and its history-and that he is equally important. Both lives must be celebrated.



FOR COLIN

And it came to pass that all living things came together, One unto One, until they numbered a great host. And one of the wise, gazing over the multitudes said, "Which of you will give unto this child the strong heart he needs, but has not?" And Urrsus the Bear answered saying, "I am old, but my heart is strong. He may have my heart to beat for him in the place of the next life."

AND IT WAS SO DONE.

Another of the wise spoke out saying, "Which of you will give unto this small one the strong limbs which he needs, but has not?" And Windracer the Horse answered saying, "I am old, but my limbs are long and have great strength. He may have my limbs with which to run in the place of the next life."

AND IT WAS SO DONE..

Yet another of the wise called forth asking, "Which of you will give unto this boy, the strong lungs which he needs, but has not?" And Deepdive the Dolphin answered saying, "I am old, but my lungs are among the best. He may have my lungs with which to breathe in the place of the next life."

AND IT WAS SO DONE...

Once again one of the wise rose saying, "Which of you will give to this baby the strong nose he needs, but has not?"

And Lupus the Wolf answered saying, "I am old, but on even the calmest of days I can smell a Lilac from many leagues away. He can have my nose with which to smell the wonders of the place of next life."

AND IT WAS SO DONE...

And so It continued with a wise one asking, "Which of you will give your voice to this human child so that he might sing?" And Chee the Nightingale sang out saying, "I am old, but my voice is beautiful and clear. He may have my voice with which to sing in the place of the next life."

AND IT WAS SO DONE

Then another of the wise gently asked, "Which of you will give this needy child of your brain, which he needs, but is poor thereof?" Then answering himself he said, "I am

old, but my brain has the knowledge of many ages and is wise. He may have my brain to guide him in the place of the next life."

AND IT WAS SO DONE...

Now it was, that of the wise, all but two were standing, their questions having been answered. One of the two slowly rose asking, "Which of you will give this small one your eyes so that he might see, as he now cannot?" And Skrye the Eagle turned his haughty head saying, "I am old, but my eyes can see the first blush of pink on a cherry blossom from far above the earth. He may have my eyes with which to see in the place of next life."

AND IT WAS SO DONE...

And Lo! The last wise one arose. He peered deeply at each among the gathered host.

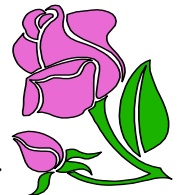
"But this poor babe was born, so briefly lived, and died without having eyes, so was unable to shed even a single tear. Which of you will cry and weep for this baby Colin, so that he need never cry in the place of the next life?" I answered saying, "I am old, but have many years left to me. I will weep for my grandchild through the rest of my days so that he may know only joy, and need never cry in the place of the next life. For him, I will cry."

AND IT WAS SO DONE...

Now that is how it came to pass that a tiny babe with no chance in this life, went into the place of the next life with the many good things given him by the host. He entered it with the strength, stamina, and wisdom of his benefactors, the song of a Nightingale on his lips, and never a tear from his beautiful eyes.

Written in loving remembrance of COLIN KEITH JONES
(Sept. 15, 1995-Sept. 16, 1995 by his grandfather, Tom Turley,
(with permission for publication in THIS newsletter ONLY)

Actor Glenn Ford tells this story: the Indian Statesman Nehru gave Ford a rose and said, "Keep this rose and look at it for a long time." When the two men met again a year later, Nehru asked whether Ford had kept the rose and looked at it. Glenn Ford said, yes he had. "And what did you think?" asked Nehru. The actor answered, "I kept seeing the rose. Even after it faded and lost its petals, I kept seeing the rose." Nehru nodded and said, "That is the secret of love. If you love something, you will see its beauty. Even if it fades and goes away, you will always see its beauty."



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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.