


The Compassionate Friends TCF of POTOMAC , MD

TCF meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM
Potomac Presbyterian Church
10301 River Road
Potomac, MD 20854
TCFPotomacMD.com

Summer 2010

Co-Leaders	Nancy Frank
	Mary Mandeville
Treasurer	George Beall
New Members	Barbara Beall
Remembrances	Mary Nader
Librarian	Lynn Lee
Outreach	Susan Johnson
Hospitality	JoAnn Gelman
Newsletter	Katherine Bloom
Google Group Manager	Barry Gordon
Member at Large	Rob Goor

The Compassionate Friends Mission

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national, self help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families, who have experienced the death of a child or sibling. TCF members provide information and support . Volunteers run the more than 600 local chapters in the U. S. and TCF has chapters in many other countries.

The Compassionate Friends:
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60255-3696
National Website:
WWW.Compassionatefriends.org



“Just living is not enough”, said the Butterfly, “ one must have sunshine,
freedom, and a little flower.
Hans Christian Anderson

Letter from the Editor

16 months. . . At first I said I had to go on for my son's sake, for Kira's son's sake, but then I realized I was doing it for myself. The process of going on was gradual, and much of the time I did not even know it was happening.

Grief is a journey, and the road is littered with the debris of sorrow, what ifs, and the lost possibilities. We pick our way gingerly through the pebbles, rocks and boulders, having to stop at every fork in the road. One path goes in circles, the other is a winding road and eventually brings you forward. If I've learned anything at TCF, it is this. . . Life is about perspective and balance. When, in the first few weeks and months of unrelenting grief, I thought it was all my future held. Over time, as new people joined the group, I realized I was a bit farther along than I had thought I ever could be. Now, I know my only two choices are to stay at the beginning, always looking backwards, or make some sort of peace with myself and my new reality, and go forward. Moving forward is healthy and normal, and by no means a betrayal of our love and loss. If we take the path that leads us backwards, the one that always end with the questions. . . "why did this happen to my child?" "why is life so unfair?", I think we do a disservice to our child's memory and to ourselves. The questions have no answer, and can only bring more sadness. If we take the path forward, we tend to focus more on our child's life than their death.

It is with this in mind I have started a new Column for the newsletter. It's call "Funny Moments". The reason for it is simple. Our stories, poems and comments are often sad and mournful, and these are appropriate for our group. However, we should never lose ourselves in only the sadness. Lately, when I find myself telling people about Kira, I seem to include some funny, silly, or totally wacky things that happened with her. Instead of tears, I start to smile, not just my mask smile, but an inside smile, one that does indeed end up on the outside. It's how I want people to remember her, or get to know her.

Barry was kind enough to get the ball rolling with a story about Jon, his and Barbara's son. I hope each one of you can send me a story about your child, one that will make everyone chuckle when they read it. Who, if not each of us, needs and deserves a good laugh right now?

FUNNY MOMENTS

Written by Barry Gordon about his son Jon at age 6

Funny how kids will use their age to promote or reject things. If I asked him to help me rake the leaves (I had some small rakes that he and Andrea could use), he would say. . ."I'm only 6 years old. But when he was trying to open the lid to a cottage cheese tub after I had removed the plastic seal around the edge, I told him to give it to me and I will open it. Instead, he replied. . ."I'm 6 now and I can do this myself". So there we were, at the breakfast table, Barb, Andrea and me with eggs and bacon in a dish that has compartments, waiting for Jon to open this tub. When he finally got the top off, in that same prying motion, he lost control of the tub which seemed to be suspended in air before it turned over and landed on top of everything that was on the table. What added to the hysteria is that as soon as Jon lost his grip on the tub and he realized what was going to happen, he darted away from the table and ran upstairs to his room. I actually believe he made it halfway up the steps before the cottage cheese hit the table and changed our meal from eggs, bacon and cottage cheese to cottage cheese sprinkled with eggs and bacon. He heard the three of us laughing and came back down the steps and peeked around the corner with eyes as wide open as dinner plates. Barbara, while still chuckling looked at him and said. . ."You better be going to your room. We'll talk after I clean up this mess. I don't think he heard anything after she said. . ."You better. . ." And he was gone.



TCF National Conferences



Well, the Conference has come and gone, and hopefully many of our Chapter were able to attend and feel they had a worthwhile time. There was a lot to learn, many wonderful people to meet and intense moments to share. It was my first, and I was able to attend several meaningful workshops and gain a better understanding of the grief journey, what I've already been through and what may lie ahead.

I'm sure I speak for all if us when I offer a special thanks to Nancy Frank, Mary Mandeville, Susan Johnson, Barbara and George Beall, and all those who volunteered their time and energy to make it a special time for us.

Susan invited a reporter from the Washington Post and he wrote an article about the conference. It was a long article, which included comments from some of our chapter members. I will copy it and bring to a chapter meeting.

Nancy Frank recruited a couple friends to help in the Butterfly Boutique, and one, Terry J. Enfield, has put a few together for us to read.

“As you walked into the Butterfly Boutique at the TCM Convention in Washington DC, you thought that Spring had just blossomed. There were butterflies and dragonflies in all sizes everywhere! The love and workmanship that was reflected in the crocheted butterflies and in the handmade pillows brought comfort to many. As did the Lenox China Angels, the beautifully crafted wind chimes, and the glass blown ornaments

And the customers --- patiently waiting in line, happy to be there, talking among themselves and to the workers, telling us their stories. The beauty of the merchandise was overwhelmed by the beauty of the people who visited the boutique. Thank you to everyone who came in to buy, to browse, or just to talk. You made volunteering a pleasure and a joy.”

From the Inside Looking Out A new perspective as a Volunteer vs. a Participant by Nancy Frank

For anyone who knows me well I could easily be labeled a “TCF Conference Groupie” if there is such a word. I attended my first conference in July 2007 in Oklahoma City exactly one year after the loss of my son Danny. I headed for the conference facing the “one year” feeling of despair, with the realization that I lived one full year without Danny, people were starting to expect the old Nancy by now and I knew that would never happen. Then I get to Oklahoma and people asked about Danny, wanted to learn about Danny, about me, and everyone had a story to share of the child that just warmed my heart. I made new friends from so many different cities and felt an unexplainable bond and feeling that I had a family that understood, that could provide comfort and love and most of all that like the new Nancy I had become. I knew I had found my place for a once a year weekend getaway/family reunion that I could look forward to and know in **the interim I had so many new friends to email or call. e on a pedestal, it was like being Queen for 3 days, hugs, loves, talk, sympathy and most of all loving friendships.** Well I was sold and attended the next 2 conferences in Nashville, TN, and Portland OR, never disappointed still with that feeling of being treated “normal” again because everyone else felt like I did and everyone was able to look you in the eye and share your pain that no one else could every understand. I felt these conferences were a gift to all of us and everything just worked out perfectly because we just deserved these three days out of the year.

Then came 2010, the conference is right here in my own backyard. Without a thought and knowing Kathy and Chuck Collins as friends for over 20 years I volunteered full speed ahead, took on co-committee chair of the Butterfly Boutique along with George and Barbara Beall and decided I am going to turn the tables and give back some comfort and make the conference special to others like they did for me. Well little did I know that being on the Committee did not mean just working on the butterfly boutique but it meant 24/7 involvement with the whole conference. This was a full one year project with meetings, telephone discussions, work of all kinds, reports, status, but most of all it was about being on the inside of the conference, being the one who works for a year to give back to others what so many had given me that

I just thought was a gift for us that just sort of fell together. Oh was I mistaken.

Being on the inside gave me so much insight into what the Committee is really doing behind the scenes. It is like becoming part of another family that has been there through the pain, been there to receive the comfort, and now is there to give back in anyway possible. Being on the committee was kind of like being the “wizard of oz”. No one really knows who you are or how much you do but you get the prize when you meet someone at the conference who behind their tears has a comforting feeling in their eyes or a look of belonging and feeling that they are part of a family.

I learned that every little detail of the conference requires work, sweat, and tears. So many things that are just taken for granted such as the centerpieces, the donations for the bags, the sponsorship, the programs, the set-up, the rooms, the signs, the auction items, the walk, and the list goes on and on. Just stuffing the bags took two full days with at least 15 people each time in a never ending assembly line, it was unbelievable. It did not matter though because I found out that everyone is there not only to help get it done but to help get it done in a manner to bring the most possible joy to others and to provide even a moment of comfort, whether from an item in the bag to a fountain in the reflection room, to a speaker. It was phenomenal. I also learned a most valuable lesson about others who have the gift of giving, they are not just giving time and effort and money, they gave love for each other, for all participants, and most of all for their children or their friend’s children. This was also not just about bereaved parents but friends of the bereaved parents came forward and gave up their Saturdays to stuff bags, their full week before the conference to set up the rooms, stuff bags, hang pictures, make shirts, move items, sell items. My own friends were unbelievable as there are no words to ever thank them but then I know they would not even want to be thanked as they were there for Danny and so many others like me, just to bring someone a smile or to give them a loving hug.

I also learned that volunteer’s just jump in, no one asks, “Can I help”, they just jump in and help. I was amazed at it all but my final thought was of the people that arrived early on Wednesday, a day early, not just to sight see, get in an extra day for the city but to go the volunteer desk and jump right in and spend their extra day or two helping out and as they find

every year, they are needed full time. I was talking to several of them and they simply said if they can help one Mom or Dad and provide a moment of comfort, it is worth it all. They do this every year at every conference. Wow, what a great tribute and most of all what a way to keep the love for the children alive for all of us.

Well, now I am resting up for Minnesota next year where I will no longer feel that the conference just happens for us but takes an army and takes love, care, compassion, and patience. I know I will know check in before I organize my own time to see if they need help and jump right in if they do. After all, I have learned that “my time” is now “our” time and I will get more out of the conference if I can be there to offer an extra smile or a hug of comfort.



*******SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS*******

The Google Group

As many of you know by now, Barry Gordon has started a Google email group. Many of us are already writing to one another and Barry invites everyone in our chapter to participate. Many of the emails recount very intimate feelings about our loved and lost children. The responding emails offer insight and comfort. The email address, in case some have not received it is: Compassionate-Friends-Potomac@googlegroups.com.

We all thank Barry for undertaking this challenge and encouraging us to share our thoughts during the days when the Group does not meet.

Sibling Support Group Update

The group is held at Hospice Caring, It is private and non profit. Hospice Caring trains and provides volunteers to help hospice patients and provides bereavement support groups.

Bereavement Care – Provides bereavement counseling, support groups and workshop for hospice families and members of the Montgomery County community.

This program offers help to young adults who have lost a sibling.

Linda Tebelman, LCSW

Director of Bereavement Care

Montgomery Hospice

1355 Piccard Drive, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20850

Phone: (301) 921 4400

Fax: (301) 921 4433

www.montgomeryhospice.org

Montgomery Hospice | Facebook: www.facebook.com/MontgomeryHospice

Our mission is to gentle the journey through serious illness and loss with skill and compassion.

From Kate & Craig Duncan

We set up an educational Foundation/Scholarship for Nick at East Tennessee State U. He had been accepted into the music education program there for this upcoming fall term, 2010.

The information on that is:

ETSU

Nicholas Tate Endowment

P.O. Box 70721

Johnson City, TN. 37614

(checks payable to: ETSU FNDN, Nicholas Tate fund)

Since we were unable to send Nick to ETSU, this foundation/scholarship in the Music Education program at East Tenn. State, will enable other students to receive financial help they might need in pursuing a career in music education as Nick had wanted so very much to do himself.

POETRY CORNER

Any Less a Man?

If I cry myself to sleep, missing the little things we'd share
If I refuse to open my eyes, not wanting to see what's not there
If I paste on a smiling face, to hide the pain I feel within
If I simply look up to the clouds, and feel it start all over again

If I only go on doing the menial tasks, the little things I can
If this is what my life has become, am I any less a man?

If I feel weak when I hear your name, even in a crowded room
If I am laughing on the outside, when inside I'm feeling gloom
If I beg my heart to simply stop, when it's my love that they all need
If I lay in bed in the middle of the day, am I expressing my inner greed

If I can't go on with my dreams of life, because of a flaw in the plan
If I can't decide on what I want to do, am I any less a man?

If seeing an infant in its mother's arms, reduces me to tears
If children playing in the park bring out my darkest fears
If looking into a crowd of friends, no faces do I see
If all this is my reality, what do they see of me?

If I'm not afraid to let them see, the pain since this all began
With the death of my child, my love and my life, am I any less a man?

Rick McCauley

The Outsiders

So how are you the question's asked
As if I had no sorrowful past
The careless question the doleful glance
They notice nothing
as if nothings askance

Too bad she's gone they seem to say
Did you see what's on sale today?
Oh, is that a tear I see
Your mask is slipping, fix it please
I don't want a reminder of your terrible loss
You should be more thoughtful at any cost

It's been a month, a year or ten
So what is your problem, it's been over since then
My kids are great, they all have jobs
and kids of their own,
and great big houses and a dog or a cat
What? You still haven't gotten over that?

Being your friend is so tiresome
You still seem think you have a child
Oh, is that a tear I see
Your mask is slipping, fix it please
I don't want a reminder of your terrible loss
You should be more thoughtful at any cost

Katherine Bloom

Kira

I heard your voice it seemed so near
I heard your voice soft and clear
I said I love you please come home
the voice was gone I was alone
I saw you walking on the rise
I saw you 'neath the pale blue skies
I ran to hold you
The sky turned black
I was alone
You won't be back

Katherine Bloom

The Weeping Tree

Stripping away of outer bark.. wood fresh, raw..exposed
in the elements.

Sap leaks, insects feast, pulp softens, naked in the rain..
it dries, disintegrates, is lost to the wind.

The rising bark, a scab over time, begins anew. Fresh
layers emerge, still vulnerable..year by year..cell by cell.

It heals..grows stronger..to again protect the raw weeping
pulp.

The new bark, the purpose served...underneath...where
no one sees, the wound..ever hidden.

Kate Duncan, 2009

*The only thing I could imagine submitting at this point
would be a general thank you to the group, for their
warm kindness and true compassion this past three
months that Craig and I have been members. I have
been so surprised, and grateful to have learned that
sharing this grief with others, has been a hopeful and
uplifting experience. From Kate Duncan*

Falling Apart

I seem to be falling apart
My attention span can be measured on seconds
I cry at the drop of a hat
I forget things constantly
The morning toast burns daily
I forget to sign the checks
Half of everything in the house is misplaced
Feelings of anxiety and restlessness are my constant
companions
Rainy days seem extra dreary
Sunny days seem an outrage
Other people's pain and frustration seem insignificant
Laughing, happy people seem out of place in my world
It has become routine to feel half crazy
I am told I am normal
I am a newly grieving person

Eloise Cole

Forever Changed

Can you see the change in me? It may not be so obvious
to you. I participate in family activities. I attend family
reunions. I help plan holiday meals. You tell me you're
glad to see that I don't cry anymore.

But I do cry. When everyone has gone...when it is
safe...the tears fall. I cry in private so my family won't
worry. I cry until I am exhausted and can finally sleep.

I'm active in my church. I sing the hymns. I listen to the
sermon. You tell me you admire my strength and my
positive attitude.

But I'm not strong. I feel that I have lost control, and I
panic when I think about tomorrow....next week....next
year.

I go about the routine of my job. I complete my assigned
tasks. I drink coffee and smile. You tell me you're glad to
see I'm "over" the death of my loved one.

But I'm not "over" it. If I get over it, I will be the same as
before my loved one died. I will never be the same. At
times I think I am beginning to heal, but the pain of
losing someone I loved so much has left a permanent
scar on my heart.

I visit my neighbors. You tell me you're glad to see I'm
holding up so well. But I'm not holding up well.
Sometimes I want to lock my door and hide from the
world.

I spend time with friends. I appear calm and collected. I
smile when appropriate. You tell me it's good to see me
back to my "old self".

But I will never be back to my "old self". Death and grief
have touched my life and I am forever changed.
At first I was preoccupied with 'how' my loved one died.
Then for a long time I focused on 'that' my loved one
died. Now I am remembering more vividly 'that my
loved one lived'.

Rhonda Wilson

LOVE GIFTS

Katherine & Larry Bloom for Kira Bloom

Linda Tebelman & Rob Goor for Andrew Goor

Barbara & Barry Gordon for Jonathan Blank

Debra & Daryl Thornton for Crystal Thornton

Rita & Richard Helgeson for Andrew Helgeson

Alison & Lauren Keller for Uncle Jonny



Love Gift Giving

The Compassionate Friends is a self supporting, non-profit organization solely dependent on LOVE GIFTS and other donations for operating expenses of all TCF chapters. If you would like to send a LOVE GIFT in memory of your child or any other loved one, or in honor of any occasion, it would be greatly appreciated. **Love Gifts are fully Tax Deductible.** There is a basket at monthly meetings with Love Gift envelopes or

You may mail Love Gifts to:

George Beall
798 Kimberly Court E
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Gifts received by the monthly meeting deadline will be acknowledged in the next newsletter.

Our Children Remembered



June 2010 Birthdays

Alexander, Bruce & Lisa Polak
Jeffrey & Lisa Banana
Lou & Sandi Dobies
JoAnn Gellman
Jim & Cindi Glass
Ainsley & Peggy Gordon
Fred & Lynn Lee
Dan & Janice Melnick
Dave Nelson
Fred & Edye Smith
Toni Stonestreet

Codi Nicole
Nikeem
Allan
Julia & William
Jeremy
Ainsley III
Nicole
Brian
Grant
Stephen
Tesslee

June Anniversaries

Susan Carter
Paula Davis
Lou & Sandi Dobies
Manny & Penny Flecker
Judith Freidenberg
Dan & Janice Melnick
Robert & Judy Pannier
Toni Stonestreet
Daryl & Debbie Thornton
Claire Wilk

Sarah
Justin
Allan
Norman
Sebastian Herbstein
Brian
Sarah Stratton
Tesslee
Crystal
James

July 2010 Birthdays

George & Barbara Beall	Barbara Beall
Louis & Sandra Dobies	Alan Goldberg
Joe & Ann Duffy	Caroline Duffy
Joseph & Louise Ellinger	Doug
Helen Hunter	Jenifer
Tim & Ginny O'Conner	Robert
Hope Phillips	Hilary Phillips
Romall Robinson	Orlando
Russell & Sarit Scott	Elie
Lorie Somers	David Goldstein
Ales & Marlem Stein	Claudia Stein
Stanley & Joan Weiss	Jonathan Weiss
Dan & Judy Williams	David Williams

July Anniversaries

Lance & Theresa Aug	Grant Aug
Jeffrey & Lisa Banana	Nikeem Banana
Sandra Coles Bell	Corrine Bell
Phyliss Belzer	Alan Belzer
David & Lisa Daniel	David Daniel
Teresa Donaldson	William Donaldson
Mike & Nancy Frank	Daniel Frank
JoAnn Gellman	William Gellman
Gerald & Lilyan Heupel	Robert Heupel
Ellen Lee	Stephen Lee
Vickie Bender & Kenneth Ramey	Kenneth Ramey Jr.
Romall Robinson	Orlando
Russell & Sarit Scott	Elie
Alison Snow	Nicolas Cowell
Stanley & Joan Weiss	Jonathan Weiss
Dan & Judy Williams	David Williams

August 2010 Birthdays

Donald & Betty Fick	Kenneth
Irvin & Micki Koniak	Lesley Garelick
Mary MacDonald	Keith Sovey
Mary Mandeville	Kenneth Mandeville
Sadi McGee	Thomas Mizerek
Carl & Doris Sensabaugh	Tammy Sensabaugh
Paul & Marian Smith	Christian Smith
Leslie Thomas	Scott

August Anniversaries

Alexander, Bruce & Lisa Polak	Codi Nicole
George & Barbara Beall	Barbara Beall
Matt & Stella Chubski	Darlene Richards
William & Jane Frank	Alexander Frank
Kelly Heller	Margaret Hernandez
Denise Hyman	Alex Hyman
Carl & Susan Johnson	Michael Johnson
Mary Mandeville	Kenneth Mandeville
Ray & Melody Manning	Bryce Manning
Kathryn Marra	Diana Marra
Patty McGinley	Jonathan McGinley
Linda Overstreet	Steven Flanary
Jack Purdam & Laurie Dove	Matthew Purdam
Jerry & Cecile Smith	Christian Smith

September 2010 Birthdays

Rebecca Domaruk	Paul Domaruk
Teresa Donaldson	William Donaldson
Robert Goor	Andrew Goor
Cindy Houde	Tyler Houde
Leroy & Joan Jerry	Leroy Jerry III
Charles & Linda Lubin	Todd Lubin
Robert & Judy Pannler	Sara Stratton
Lori Goldstein Somers	Paul Goldstein
Linda Vasquez	Sonya Vazquez
Marsha Weinberg	Matthew Weinberg

September Anniversaries

Joyce Bahrami	Radman Bahrami
John & Joan Bartell	Jenna Bartell
Lionel & Sandra Chaiken	Pamela Sue Chaiken
Jim & Cyndi Glass	Jeremy Glass
Cindy Houde	Tyler Houde
Ray & Maggie Jones	Ryan Jones
Maurice & Neyda Lewis	Maurice Lewis Jr
Donald & Margery Miller	Moore's Tige Miller
Walter & Rita Pancik	Bruce Leibowitz
John & Christine Rother	Nathaniel Rother
Kenneth Rowe	Nicole Rowe