

**Jo Ann Gellman & Susan L. Johnson – Co-Leaders**

**The Compassionate Friends Newsletter  
Potomac, Maryland Chapter**

Founded in 1999 by Sandra & Lionel Chaiken



The Potomac Chapter meets the first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m., at the Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac, Maryland, 20854, two blocks north of the intersection of River Road and Falls Road in Potomac. The chapter serves Montgomery County and beyond.

**Our Chapter Steering Committee**

Jo Ann Gellman, Co-Leader	(301) 774-9426
Susan L. Johnson, Co-Leader and Newsletter	(301) 949-2158
Barbara & George Beall, Librarians and Care Outreach	(301) 253-8740
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Linda Lubin, Event Planner	(301) 774-3397
Mary Mandeville, Welcome Committee	(301) 438-1911
Melody Manning, Treasurer	(301) 251-0419
Mary Nader, Remembrances and Hospitality	(301) 924-3618

**National Organization**

The Compassionate Friends  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
Toll Free: 1-877-969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**Local Assistance**

Website: TCFDCMETRO.COM → TCF Potomac, MD  
Metro Inquiry Line for Newly Bereaved (301) 776-8500

Regional Coordinator MD & DE  
Barbara Allen  
410-480-2334  
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THE ART OF GIVING

We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the heart:  
Love, kindness, joy, understanding, sympathy, tolerance, forgiveness.

We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the mind:  
Ideas, dreams, purposes, ideals, principles, plans, projects, poetry.

We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the spirit:  
Prayer, vision, beauty, aspiration, peace, faith.

We give of ourselves when we give the gift of words:  
Encouragement, inspiration, guidance.

Emerson said it well:  
"Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts.  
The only true gift is a portion of thyself."

*~From The Art of Living  
by Wilfred A. Peterson*



## **Chapter News**

The Steering Committee met on October 23<sup>rd</sup> in Rockville.

We are pleased to announce that Mary Mandeville and Nancy Frank have joined our Steering Committee, assuming the duties of Hospitality /Attendee Welcome Chair Person and Beverage Refreshment Chair Person, respectively. Welcome, Mary and Nancy, and thank you.

The new Potomac Chapter website is up and running! Please take a few minutes to visit the site at [www.tcfpotomacmd.com](http://www.tcfpotomacmd.com) It is our hope that this site will be a source of providing comforting and helpful information to all who find themselves walking the path of this grief journey.

Thank you to Ron Broderick for getting the site up and running quickly; well done, Ron!

### **Candle Lighting**

The Potomac Chapter's Annual Candle Lighting will take place on Tuesday, December 2, 2008, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at the Presbyterian Church on River Road, the same location our regular meetings are held.

The Candle Lighting Committee, Linda Lubin, Melody Manning and Jo Ann Goldberg, have been hard at work on all the details. Please be sure to register by **November 15<sup>th</sup>** and get your payment to Melody Manning. The charge this year is \$5.00 per person. Immediate family members and children age 10 and older are welcome to participate. Please contact Melody Manning at [melom42@comcast.net](mailto:melom42@comcast.net) for mailing and address information. **Registration and pre-payment is required.**

If you wish to have your child or children's photo displayed in memory, you must either e-mail a photo to Jo Ann Goldberg at [jagoldberg1@comcast.net](mailto:jagoldberg1@comcast.net), or bring an unframed 4x6 photo to the November 4<sup>th</sup>

meeting. Photos must be received by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

It is our hope that this will be an evening of remembrance that will linger through the coming holiday season and long afterwards.

### **Sibling Group**

Leslie Thomas works with our young adults. This group is for those 18 and over who have lost a brother or sister. Our goal is to provide the same care and support to our young adults that we, as parents, receive from Compassionate Friends. Parents, if you have a teenager or young adult who is grieving for their brother or sister, please encourage them to join us at our regular meetings. They will be with others who understand their emotions.

### **Call to Duty**

We still have one position that needs to be filled on our Steering Committee. If you are interested in assuming the duty of maintaining our library for our meetings, please contact either Susan Johnson or JoAnn Gellman.

### **TCF Potomac Shirts**

Many of you have already purchased your TCF Potomac Shirts. If someone you know has made a contribution to Compassionate Friends, or you would just like to remember a kindness, a gift of one of our shirts is a nice way to say "Thank You". Please see Melody Manning to place your order. This is a fund raiser for our chapter and to help us get the word out about The Compassionate Friends, who we are, and how we help bereaved parents. The shirts are royal blue with our logo embroidered in white. Please see Melody Manning, [melom42@comcast.net](mailto:melom42@comcast.net) for information and to place your order.



*The following article is by Darcie Sims and taken from the TCF Atlanta Newsletter. While somewhat lengthy, I enjoyed the humor and the message, and wanted to share it with all of you. --Jo Ann Goldberg*

## **Low Fat, Lite Holidays**

By Darcie D. Sims,  
Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS  
Puyallup, Washington

I'm tired of low fat; I'm tired of fat free. I'm tired of thinking rice cakes are good; they're not the same as Oreos! I'm tired of trying to be creative in my thinking, my eating, my living, and I'm tired of dreading the holiday season. In fact, I'm just plain tired!

The holidays will be here soon enough. I think they actually start right after the 4th of July because that's when the clothing ads feature sweaters and winter coats. WHO can think of wearing wool when it's 103! Am I crazy or is the rest of the world nuts?

I'm tired of dreading almost half of each year because some marketing expert thinks it would be "cute" to have Jingle Bells echoing through the frozen food section in the middle of August. If I have to start thinking holiday in July, and it takes more than a few weeks to "recover" from The Holiday Season after it's over, then I really am spending almost half of each year coping with the holiday blues. And I'm tired of that!

Most people think the holidays start sometime in November, but for me, they never really stop. I can get depressed any time of year and blame it on the holidays (except for the month of August). There are no holidays in that poor month, but just being August is reason enough to be depressed.

My reds and greens can turn to blue at any moment. It only takes a few notes of a song, a whiff of real food (low fat does not smell heavenly) or a trace of a memory to send me into the dumps. We can recycle

pain anytime, but somehow, once the displays are up in the stores and the weather turns cooler than before, the downhill slide towards The Holidays intensifies.

By Halloween, I'm bracing for those days and by Thanksgiving, the thought of being cheery is often simply too much to bear. Gifts? Right! What could I possibly find, wrap, give or get that would lighten this load? Icicles form around my heart and The Holidays are only colored with despair. I've forgotten where I stashed the gifts I did manage to buy during the sidewalk sales last summer, and that recipe for low-fat fruitcake was copied down and promptly misplaced (for which my family and friends should be eternally grateful!)

By November, I've run out of options, however, and no matter how creative I am, there is no denying the approach of those days when the rest of the world looks far happier than I have been or will ever be.

Even their voices are cheery as we slip past each other on the icy sidewalks! It grows dark at 4:30 in the afternoon, and there is little comfort in a carrot on a wintry day. I'm tired of low-fat substitutes for happiness. I'm tired of bracing for the memories that flood back to better times and for fearing the sights and sounds that only serve to remind me of what isn't anymore.

Can anyone stop the holidays please? Can anyone find a fat substitute that really tastes like mom's pumpkin pie? Can anyone figure out a cure for the pain of these memories? Probably not. So, as long as we are stuck with the approaching holidays and as long as we remain determined to be healthy and keep up the good low-fat fight, what can we do to turn this season of despair into a season of hope? Where are the beacons of light (recipes?) that make low fat anything acceptable?

Handling the holidays is not deciding how to eliminate the fat, the pain, the memories from our lives, but rather, learning how to live with the hurt instead of being consumed by it.

*BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF*

Know that hardly anyone is as happy as you think they might be. We all have our hurts to hide. We are always in a hurry. We want things to be better now. Do what you can this season and let it be enough.

*BE REALISTIC.*

It will hurt, especially if there is an empty chair at the table. Don't try to block bad moments. Be ready for them. Lay in a supply of tissues (a roll of toilet paper is more efficient). Anticipation is often far worse than reality. Let those hurting moments come, deal with them and let them go. Leave the word "ought" out of this holiday.

*PLAN AHEAD.*

Grieving people often experience a lack of concentration. Make lists. Prioritize everything. Decide what is really important. (Breathing and potty time rank right up there!)

*REDEFINE EXPECTATIONS.*

Be honest in what you expect to be able to do. We live in a world of oughts and shoulds and suffer from guilt because we cannot meet our own expectations. You can't buy away grief, although you might be tempted to try.

*BE KIND AND GENTLE TO SELF*

Figure out what you should do, balance it against what you are capable of doing and then compromise. Forgive yourself for living when your loved one died.

*LISTEN TO YOURSELF*

Find the quiet space within where all the answers live. As you become aware of your

needs, tell family members and friends. Keep some traditions; choose which ones. Don't toss out everything this year. You can always try changing a routine. Try whatever pops into your head. You can always scrap it if it doesn't work.

*TAKE CARE OF SELF PHYSICALLY*

Eat right (toss some chocolate chips into the oat bran; gift wrap some broccoli; ban low fat for one glorious meal!) Exercise (or at least watch someone else). Jog your memory!

*HOLD ON TO YOUR POCKET BOOK and CHARGE CARDS.*

*SCREEN ALL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES.*

- \_ Will it be the holidays without it?
- \_ Why do you do this activity? Tradition, habit, obligation?
- \_ Do you have to do this, or can others do it for you?
- \_ Do you like doing it?
- \_ How could this activity be done differently?

*GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF EMOTIONS.*

Put the motion back into the emotions. Toss a Nerf brick when you're angry, or pound a pillow. Go outside and yell while you shovel snow. Find a way to express the intensity of your feelings in a personally, nondestructive way.

*BUY A GIFT FOR YOUR LOVED ONE.*

Give it away to someone who would otherwise not have a gift. It is the giving, the exchanging of love that we miss the most. When you share love, it grows.

*HANG THE STOCKINGS; PLACE A WREATH ON THE GRAVE.*

Do whatever feels right for you and your family.

*SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS,*

Ride the ferry, visit a soup kitchen or nursing home, spend an evening at the

bus station. There are lots of lonely people who could use your love and caring.

*WORK AT LIFTING DEPRESSION.*

Take responsibility for self. We cannot wait for someone else to wrap up some joy and give it to us. We have to do that for ourselves. Think of things you enjoy and give yourself a treat. (One cookie will not cause mounds of fat to be deposited on your hips- a dozen, however, might!)

*UNDERSTAND THAT HEARTACHES WILL BE UNPACKED.*

As you sift through the decorations, appreciate the warm, loving memories of each piece. Don't deny yourself the gift of healing tears.

*ASK FOR HELP*

Make a help-on-a-stick sign and stand on the porch, waving it. Someone will notice (but may not stop). Just because you ask for help does not guarantee you will get some, but if you never ask, no one will ever know how much you might need a hug.

*LEARN TO LOOK FOR JOY IN THE MOMENT.*

Learn to celebrate what you do have instead of making mental lists of what you're missing. Change the way you look at things.

*LIGHT A SPECIAL CANDLE.*

Not in memory of a death, but in celebration of a life and a love shared! Never forget that once someone loved us and we loved back. No one can deny that gift exchange!

Can anyone stop the holidays please? Can anyone find a fat substitute that really tastes like mom's pumpkin pie? Can anyone figure out a cure for the pain of these memories?

Joy can return to warm your heart. I'm tired of low-fat life, and I'm tired of dreading the approaching holiday season. I can't live with my entire being focused on fat grams and painful memories. So, since I can't eliminate fat completely and if I get rid of the memories, I must also get rid of the remembered joy, I'll just have to do what I can and forgive the rest. The holidays are survivable just as fat is manageable. I'll have to run a few more miles and shed a few more tears, but I'm not going to let yesterday use up today, and if I do find something wonderful to eat or a terrific memory to cherish, I'll enjoy them all.

I will not allow fat or pain or fear or sadness to ruin the entire season. It may not be the same as before we became health-conscious or bereaved, but whatever it is can be something and that just may be the beacon of hope in this season of despair. Grab the fruitcake and the low-fat turkey and get moving to the rhythms of this holiday season-the season where love and memory lighten the heart and chase the gloom. Skip the fat, shed the tears, light the candle and find the light. Make this holiday season full of "lite" and "light" and love: the best seasoning of all!

BE REALISTIC; PLAN AHEAD; REDEFINE EXPECTATIONS; BE KIND AND GENTLE TO SELF; LISTEN TO YOURSELF; TAKE CARE OF SELF PHYSICALLY; HOLD ON TO YOUR POCKET BOOK AND CHARGE CARDS; SCREEN ALL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES; GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF EMOTIONS; BUY A GIFT FOR YOUR LOVED ONE; HANG THE STOCKINGS; PLACE A WREATH ON THE GRAVE; SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS; WORK AT LIFTING DEPRESSION; UNDERSTAND THAT HEARTACHES WILL BE UNPACKED; ASK FOR HELP; LEARN TO LOOK FOR JOY IN THE MOMENT; LIGHT A SPECIAL CANDLE; LIVE THROUGH THE HURT.

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[www.griefdigest.com](http://www.griefdigest.com)



## **Jakey's Second Anniversary**

It is just a few days from the second anniversary of my precious son's death; an anniversary that, for me, is almost as painful as the first. On October 8, 2008, Jacob (I called him Jakey) will be gone from this earth longer than he was alive. It doesn't seem possible that this is true. Jakey was only 23 months old when he was murdered by his biological father, but this October 8<sup>th</sup>, he will be dead for 24 months. As I write those words, I want to scream that it is NOT fair and that it's NOT true.....Jakey can still come back, can't he?

It is hard to admit that there are still times that I allow myself to believe, or at least try to believe, that Jakey is going to come home, that all the gut-wrenching events of the night that he was murdered were a bad dream that will eventually end. I think that for the past two years, this has been my heart and brain's way of coping with such a cruel, devastating and profound loss. I do not think that I have fully accepted, way down deep in my soul, that Jakey is dead and that all my yearning, longing and thinking about him will not bring him back. I think that this full acceptance is going to take more time and wrestling in my heart and mind.

But, I have taken some steps. Steps that I hope Jakey sees, smiles at and says, "Mommy go; mommy go," which are words that a 23-month-old would use to encourage me. It has been hard to take steps, to make changes. The steps I have and am taking can sometimes make me feel afraid that I am betraying my baby or somehow being disloyal. Some changes can make me feel that I am going to "loose" Jakey or that he will disappear little by little. I have struggled a lot more with some steps/changes than others. The step to go back to graduate school, finish my teaching degree that I started many years ago, and do something good in a world that has taken so much from me

has not been a difficult one. I try to look at the faces of children and see Jakey, to feel him hug me when I get hugs from children and to know how much I loved my son. I have made changes to my house. Putting in a new light fixture or repainting my bathroom has not been hard for me. But, removing Jakey's toy boxes from the living and family rooms took me quite a while and did not come without many tears. The toy boxes are now in Jacob's room, but I have not yet packed up the toys.

I have not been able to make changes to Jakey's room (except storing his toys in there). His dinosaur p.j.'s that were laid out on his changing table for him are still sitting there. His crib with the sheets that he last slept in is still up. His clothes are still in his drawers and closet. Two years ago, I had just purchased new fall clothes for Jakey - - they sit in his closet unworn with the tags on. I think Jakey's room is going to be the hardest for me. I keep telling myself that even if I pack away the things in his room, I will not "loose" Jakey; he will not disappear. But, the feelings are still so strong and I miss him so much that his room will have wait a little bit longer.

Last year, I wrote on the first anniversary of Jakey's death and I recognized that in order to live myself that I would have to let go of Jakey, let him be dead. I am still working on that and the steps I have taken, changes I have made are helping me to do that. But, I'm still scared and there are times and ways in which I hang on so tightly to him. But I did have a chance to imagine him not so long ago (while in an imagery workshop for my grief). I was thinking of myself as a little girl, not editing my thoughts, and Jacob suddenly came into them. He came walking up to me on the beach with his orange monkey shirt and Old Navy baseball hat. His beautiful blond curls were blowing in the breeze and he was smiling. In my thoughts, Jakey sat down with me on a swing and we felt so free

**REMINDER**

together, swinging in the late day sun. I started to cry and Jakey looked up at me brightly and said, "Mommy I okay, I okay."

When I am grappling with Jakey's death and trying to make sense out of something so senseless, I think of Jakey's words. When I miss Jakey so badly that I can't force myself out of bed, I think of Jakey's words. When I want to take steps or make changes, but I think I'll lose him, I think of Jakey's words. When nothing seems right in the world, I think of Jakey's words. And, when I want to hear his voice and need his encouragement to "let go," I think of Jakey's words. I love you, sweet Jakey. I miss you dearly. You will always, always be a part of Mommy.

-- By Halley Dunn



No farewell words were spoken, no time to say goodbye. You were gone before we knew it and only God knows why.

-- Anonymous

"A sorrow shared is a sorrow halved."

-- Anonymous

"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal. Love leaves a memory no one can steal."

-- Irish Proverb



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting®, held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 14, unites family and friends around the globe as they light candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memories of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift from TCF to the bereavement community, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

A Remembrance Book is available during the event at TCF's USA national website. In that short one day span, thousands of messages are received and posted each year from every U.S. state and Washington D.C., every territory, as well as dozens of other countries. Some are in foreign languages.



# Our Beloved Children Remembered



*Joshua David Allison*  
*Darcy Mistia Bernard*  
*Nicolas Christopher Colwell*  
*Jacob Matthew Dunn*  
*Steven Wayne Flanary*  
*Lesley Koniak Garelick*  
*Christopher Hensel*  
*Robert Jason Heupel*  
*Stephen Farrow Lee*  
*Timothy Thomas McGinley*  
*Carolyn C. Nader*  
*Alexander Narvaez*  
*Barnaby Thomas Pape*  
*Lisa Rae Schiffgens*  
*Kimberly Dawn Ubery*  
*Mary Wilmot*

*Virginia Graeme Baker*  
*Lisa Marie Champlin*  
*David Gordon Daniel*  
*Jodyann Faber*  
*Brian Christopher Friedman*  
*Julia Gellman*  
*Gerald Francis Heupel, III*  
*Kanishke Karunaratne*  
*Kristen Margaret Meske*  
*Michael McInaine*  
*Julie Katherine Nagel*  
*Daniel Otten*  
*Paul David Quattlebaum*  
*Jennifer Lynn Seidel*  
*David Wilmot*



# Love Gifts



Mary & German Nader in memory of ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Carolyn Nader  
Elise & Woody Ward & Family in memory of ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Bryce Keaton Manning  
Gloria Hensel in memory of ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Christopher O. Fink  
Vivian Kim in memory of ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Susie Kim  
Carol & Leon Hollins in memory of ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Dawn Leonette Hollins  
Barbara & George Beall in memory of ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Barbara Beall  
Linda & Charlie Lubin & Jennifer Lubin in memory of ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ Todd Lubin



## **Chapter Donations**

The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit organization and relies solely on donated funds. If you would care to make a “love gift” in memory of your child, please complete the form included in this newsletter and mail it to the address shown on the form or bring it with you to our chapter meeting.



## The Compassionate Friends, Potomac Chapter “Love Gift” Donation Slip

I understand that The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit organization, and as such relies solely on donated funds. I would like to make a contribution to help Compassionate Friends continue to reach out to families who have experienced the death of a child.

This contribution is made:

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)

On the occasion of: \_\_\_\_\_ (memorial, birthday, death date, other)

This contribution is made by:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to: The Compassionate Friends / Potomac Chapter  
14151 Saddle River Drive  
N. Potomac, MD 20878



"Remember, grief is not something that you get over, it is something that you walk through.  
My shoes are worn and my feet hurt from this walk"

– *Anonymous*

**“YOU NEED NOT WALK ALONE”**