


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 2012

Co-Leaders

**Nancy Frank
Mary Mandeville
George Beall
Barbara Beall
Mary Nader
Nancy Pinto
Susan Johnson
JoAnn Gelman
Katherine Bloom
Barry Gordon
Rob Goor
Lilyan Heupel**

Treasurer

New Members

Remembrances

Librarian

Outreach

Hospitality

Newsletter

Google Group Manager

Member s at Large

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



**In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer
Albert Camus**

Letter from the Editor

As the third Spring blooms without my daughter, Kira, I continue trying to balance the past with the present and future. I make no secret of the fact, that in the early months after Kira died, I did not think I had a future, nor did I want one. I came to understand this was not an unusual reaction to the loss of one's child. As reality sunk in, in the weeks and months afterwards, I somehow knew I had choices to make. While I don't think I was really conscious of doing so, I moved forward. As lonely as it was, I was not alone. I've come to believe in a life, though vastly different from what I had before, was possible, if not a necessity. Luckily, I have a surviving child. He was the reason to get out from under the covers each day. Once I had accomplished that feat, I found I gave myself other little reasons and goals for myself. I took almost a month of leave from my job, and painted furiously. Flowers were abundant at the time, so despite the gloom I felt, I ended up painting bright cheery panels of lilies, azaleas, daisies and orchids. I'm not sure from where in the depth of my heart it came, but I kept going.

Now, with some perspective of time, I know my feelings and thoughts were not unique to bereaved

parents. I didn't even know then, we had a "title" I've listened to the parents in our group talk of not wanting to lose the love of their children, not knowing how to keep their memories alive, and how to find the wherewithal to stay among the living themselves. Each of us has a reason and a need to find our own way.

With Spring, we see the trees coming back to full leaf, daffodils and tulips sprouting up in gardens and along the roadside. This time of yearly renewal can be a struggle for some of us. The days are longer, sweeter smelling, though like much in life, can be spoiled by the very nature of its time. Trees, grass and flowers are spewing pollen in the air, leaving us sniffing and teary eyed. What a perfect cover for what we do anyway! But don't give in too easily. I don't think Time Heals all Wounds, but time does soften the blow. Look around and see the beauty of the world, a color saturated sunset, or for the early risers, a sunrise. Plant or buy some flowers, take in the fragrance, absorb the colors. Remember some flowers last longer than others, and like our children, we can glory in the the height of their beauty, and weep as they wilt and wither away. Like many of you, I light candles in sad memory of my child, but I also have a bright bouquet near by. Can Summer be far behind?



Special Note: This is your Newsletter. Please send me poems, stories, memories of your children to share @ Katherinx@aol.com



Jeremy's Run

Memorial Day May 28, 2012 at 8 AM in Olney, MD

This event is a 10K Run, 5K Walk/Run and a 1 Mile Fun Run

the beneficiaries are the Kolmac Foundation, the Partnership at DrugFree.Org and the Family Support Center's school program "Dying to Get High"

The race is in loving memory of Jeremy Glass and the purpose of this event is to raise awareness to the dangers of substance abuse. The Website is <http://www.Jeremysrun.com>

2nd Annual Paul and Celine Silver Memorial 5K RACE

**Sunday, June 3, 9:30 AM (Packet pick-up and pre-race registration @8:45AM)
Tilden Woods Park Rec. Center**

Please join the family and friends of Nathalie and Karen Silver again this year as they run/walk to honor the memories and lives of Paul Silver (who among many other things, was our LCA president) and his daughter Celine Silver and continue to raise funds for the Paul and Celine Silver Scholarship Fund established in their memories.

The registration form is available on the Fund website at:
http://paulandcelinesilver.org/5k_registration_2012

Please fill out the form and send it with payment attached to the included address.

Registration/payment is due by May 27th!

All proceeds and donations benefit the Paul and Celine Silver Scholarship Fund, which supports awards and scholarships give to students at Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda, Maryland, as well as the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida.

You can **run, walk, volunteer**, or be a **sponsor!**

SSL Hours are approved for Middle and High School volunteer helpers with setup, cleanup, and preparations the week before the race!

email: silver.karen@gmail.com for more details

Race tee-shirts, bagels and water will be provided to registered runners/walkers during the race!

Plan to be there, to race or to cheer, as we remember our friends, Celine and Paul Silver, and enjoy a family and neighborhood celebration in their honor!

TCF Library Report

A Broken Heart Still Beats

Anne McCracken & Mary Semel

The two women who wrote this book are bereaved parents, but they did not just write a story about their own losses. They found many others who have experienced the loss of a child, a sibling, a parent, or a friend. They have compiled a collection of writings from as diverse a group of people as you could imagine. Some are famous writers, philosophers, actors, poets, politicians, a dancer, world famous record setters, a singer and the unknown. Since I often read on the Metro, there were times I had to close the book, as someone's writings brought me to tears. What I learned from the varied stories, is many of the feelings of loss are universal, and intensely personal for each one in grief at the same time.

I had not known Mark Twain, Robert Frost, J.M. Barrie, had lost a child or sibling. Victor Hugo, Shakespeare, Alfred Lord Tennyson were bereaved parents. Anne Morrow and Charles Lindbergh, John and Reba Walsh whose children were kidnapped and murdered. The families of those lost through the evil of terrorists, on the Pan Am flight over Lockerbie, Scotland, the bombing at the Murrah Center in Oklahoma City to the World Trade Center in New York City. Their eloquence shows that times do not change. Grief, whether experienced 600 hundred years ago, or 6 months ago, is the same. Victor Hugo, one of my favorite writers learned of the drowning death of his beloved daughter and her husband, by reading an article in the newspaper.

He writes:

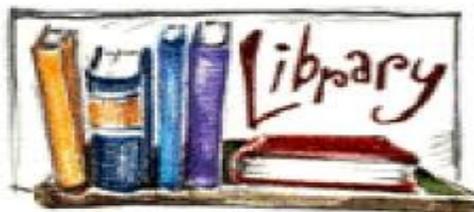
**“Oh, I was wild like a madman at first,
Three days I wept bitter tears and accurst;
Of those whom God of your hope hath bereft!
Fathers and Mothers like me lonely left!”**

Some families have suffered loss after loss, like the Kennedys. Rose Kennedy, who lost a daughter in a plane crash, a son in war, and two assassinated sons, writes: “How can one endure in the face of tragedy? People have asked me. And surely I have often had reason to ask myself. Joe (Sr.) was right in his words: “Carry on... take care of the living...there is a lot of work to be done.” and right in his instinctive and immediate recognition that in sorrow we must look outward rather than inward, and thus can come peace of mind and peace of spirit.”

Whether a child died in birth, infancy, young or as an adult, whether from illness, accident, war, drug or alcohol use, by their own hand or the hand of a murderer, loss and grief are the same.

This book contains a wealth of poems, essays, quotes from people of all walks of life, from both men and women, all ages, and from era to era. One can read it cover to cover or skip around from writer to writer. I think everyone could relate to the way others have expressed their losses, soul searching, anger, hopelessness and hope.

Read this book, and you will find comfort, shared experience and understand we are not alone.



Contributed by Mary Nader: While traveling last September with our daughter, Susan, we met Marsha & Innes Buchanan of South Africa. They are a warm and friendly couple. They founded the Johannesburg chapter of TCF.

“It was special meeting you and your family. I guess it's the feeling we really do understand each other's pain and hurt. For me, in all the years since Stuart died, I know there has always been a special bond with others who, too, have walked in the same tragic path. If course, now that we are both home half a world apart, I would love to have a coffee and long chat to find out more about you and your family, including your precious daughter who died. Finding the time to chat on such a hectic trip wasn't easy. I also know having a long chat is also tough, and can easily open up the flood gates, so I was aware of that, too. Of course, crying is the most normal and natural thing to do, but at certain times it can be difficult especially in a group of others who don't fully understand. So that is why most our chats were short and not particularly deep. That is why I would love to have that long chat.

Here is a little bit about the TCF history that I can recall. When Rev. Simon Stephens was in SA, he told us about the road accident that killed both his parents and his sister. At age 16, he alone survived the crash which wiped out his family. At the tender age of 23, while serving as the assistant to the chaplain at the Coventry & Warwickshire hospital, he met with two lots of parents whose sons had died three days apart.

It was at his suggestion they got together. There was an immediate bond as they discussed their beloved children. That was the start of TCF way back in 1969. In the 70's, Simon became a chaplain in the British Royal Navy, and while stopping over at various ports around the world, he met other bereaved parents and helped them set up chapters of TCF. I can't recall the year he visited us in SA, but it was a huge success. He is a very special person to get to know, and ever so humble, too. I have no idea of where he is or what he is doing these days, but it is clear since 1969 TCF has been growing and has spread all around the world offering love and support to parents, siblings and grandparents.

Our son, Stuart Munro Buchanan, was born on 29 September 1982. His birth was easy and my heart soared with the gift of a son to make our pigeon pair perfect. Lee-Anne was two when he was born. He was a delightful little boy and much loved by us and all our family. I have a letter I wrote to him (something I did for all the kids) telling him what a blessing he was to us as a family. He and Lee-Anne had a really close bond because at that stage we were far away from most of our extended family. So, for a lot of the time it was just the four of us. However, we made many trips back home so he could meet and get to know the rest of the family who were all at that stage living in Cape Town.

On 5 May 1985 he started with a high fever which was treated with antibiotics. When he didn't get better, the pediatrician sent him to the hospital to do a spinal tap, suspecting meningitis. So on 9th May he was admitted to the hospital where he stayed for the next two weeks getting worse each day. In spite of the huge “pool” of medical brains around (he was at a teaching hospital), they never came up with a diagnosis. He was hemorrhaging from all over, and at one stage they were weighing the blood lost from his mouth & ears and caught it in a diaper in order to replace it via the drip. One by one his organs went into failure. Four days before he died his heart stopped and they had to resuscitate him. From that time onwards he was in a coma til he finally passed away in my arms with multiple machines all plugged into his poor little body.

As you know, at that moment our lives were to change as we dealt with one of the worst tragedies a parent can suffer. At first, there was a sense of relief for him as he no longer had to struggle. He put up a brave fight right til the end. But soon the sense of relief was replaced by all the feelings of raw grief. How well you would know this feeling. So that is the story of our beloved Stuart who died at the very young age of two years and 8 months old of an unknown bleeding disorder.

I attended my first TCF meeting a few months later thinking I would go and hear some sage advice on how to deal with a distraught 4 year old who missed her brother desperately. I initially only went for Lee-Anne but stayed for me. I would never have survived and stayed sane were it not for TCF. What I got from those in the group is what makes TCF work. They just “got me” in all my hurt and despair. Innes was more private but saw how much it helped me, and always encouraged me to go although he did attend quite a few meetings. He then got involved on the financial side as the Treasurer. By then I had done some Life Line & TCF counseling courses and was working at the office one morning a week as a volunteer, as well doing counseling at our meetings. Later, as I took on more responsibility and put in more mornings, they paid me and a few others a stipend to make sure we stuck it out. We were the first “staff”. TCF in SA was founded in 1983 by Linda Abelheim in memory of her beloved son Joel David Abelheim. By the time I started attending in 1985 there was already a group of keen volunteers and they were producing a monthly newsletter, and, of course, the 1st parcels that always went out to newly bereaved families. Fund raising became a big thing, and we tried everything to keep the set up going. Somehow we managed.

Finally, one day, with Innes as Chairman (and standing surety), we took the plunge and bought a big, old house. At that stage, together with my friend Sylvia Shewitz, we were running TCF Joburg as joint Chapter leaders. Joburg was also the Mother Chapter for all the other smaller SA chapters. The house was a real dump. I recall Sylvia's face getting paler and paler as we walked around the mess. But with donations and lots of hard work, we renovated and decorated and created a superb sanctuary for our growing group. It was a tough time, but whatever I put into TCF I felt I was doing in memory of our beloved son, Stuart. My work was where I channeled my love for Stuart. It

helped me make sense of his short life. Helping others made a difference. I stayed there until 1997 when I resigned to work for Innes at home. My time at TCF for me was a way of showing how much we loved Stuart, and how much he was missed. TCF and my TCF friends were there for me through all my heartache and despair. Slowly and steadily, I coped better and grew stronger. The more I helped others the stronger I became. At first, my whole focus was on Stuart's death and the anguish of such a tragedy but gradually I started to focus on his life, what he meant to us and will always mean to us. That was when things started to get hopeful again. I was investing in life with Innes, Lee-Anne and baby Andrew without ever forgetting about our beloved Stuart, whom I still miss to this day. I just knew he would not want me to mourn for him in a downcast way forever, so I chose not to stay in that awful place of mourning longer than was necessary. I still love him and miss him even after 26 years but my life has been good and filled with fun and laughter as I have relished what my other two kids bring to my life. My lesson from all this has been we only get one day at a time and to make the most of that day for myself and my beloved family so that I can live without any regrets should something befall one of us.

So there you have our story. Of course, the above is really how I experienced and dealt with Stuart's death which was quite different to how Innes dealt with it. I just know if you stay with your TCF group you will walk this tragic path with the best and most understanding support you will ever be able to find. Grieving a precious child is a long and hard road to be on but there is a time when we somehow “accommodate” this awful tragedy in order to still live a full and fruitful life with those that have survived. Nonetheless, it is hard work and the work has to be done in order to reach that place. I pray that you are comforted by others and that you too will reach that place I talk of.”

Poetry Corner

In Memory of Tiffany Amber Collins May 19-- May 6

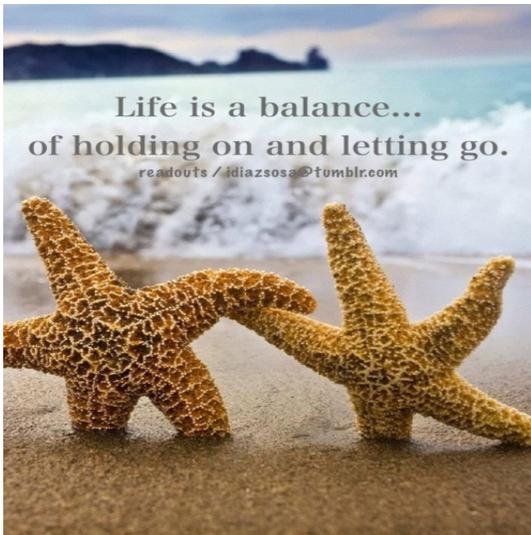
We've survived these last sixteen years,
Refusing ever to let you go,
Struggling through the pain and tears,
This process of healing is slow.

It helps us to openly talk about you,
With caring friends willing to play that part,
Sharing wonderful stories of how you grew,
Those memories still soothe our heart.

We remember you daily in so many ways,
Keeping your loving spirit alive,
It enables us to get through the days,
We'll always be a family of five.

We have finally learned to enjoy our lives,
And stopped torturing ourselves asking why,
Holding onto your love enabled us to survive,
When we realized love never dies.

We love you
Mom, Dad, David and Chris



Thanks for the Little While

Thank you for life
for its good times and bad.
Thank you for love,
even when I can't feel it.
Thank you for the love I used to share,
for the arms that held me tight.
Thank you for my family
in faraway places, in different times.
Thank you for the songs we sing,
for the dreams we saved,
for the smiles we shared.

Thank you for the strength
that eludes me just now.
Thank you for the weakness
that sends me to my knees.
Thank you for the bonds of memory
that hold me in place,
even when I don't believe in it anymore,
or...forget what it is all about.

Thank you most of all
for having been blessed
with the love I have known
even now when I fear I will forget it.
Thank you for the memory and
for filling it full measure for me.
It wasn't nearly long enough,
but it will have to do.
Thanks for the moments we danced.
Thanks for the little while...

Darcie D. Sims

LOVE GIFTS

Barbara and Barry Gordon for Jonathan

Rob Goor for Andrew

Betty Otten for Daniel

Doris Sensabaugh for Tammy

Mitzi Sereno for Andrea

Barbara Tatge for Alexander

Arlene Stein for Sonora

Katherine & Larry Bloom for Kira



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



March 2012

Colleen Boskin	Patrick (Elasik)
Gail & Mark Garfinkle	Harris
Karen & Fred Johnson	Katherine
Terry & Chris King	Terry
Dave Nelson	Claire
Lisa Rushton-Pereira & Charley Pereira	Savanna H
Doris & Carl Sensabaugh	Tammy
Marlem & Alex Stein	Claudia
Linda Vasquez	Sonia

April 2012

Carol Danforth	Carlos & Maria
Nancy & Fritz Schultz	Steven (McGrath)
Barbara & Ted Tate	James (TateIII)
Linda Vasquez	Kathleen

May 2012

Katherine & Larry Bloom	Kira
Nancy & Gregory Cox	Bradley
Rebecca Domaruk	Paul
Sandra Giger	Robert (Yin)
Robert Goor	Andrew
Barbara & Barry Gordon	Jonathan (Blank)
Rita & Richard Helgeson	Andrew
Sharon Kohout	Shayne Ann
Sandi McGee	Thomas (Mizerek)
Dave Nelson	Grant
Arlene Stein	Sonora Lyn

**This is the Hour of Lead --
Remembered, if outlived
As freezing persons recollect
the snow--
First chill, then stupor, then
The letting go.**

Emily Dickinson

