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# The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

## 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](http://TCFPotomacMD.com)

Winter 2014

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### 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 660 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](http://WWW.Compassionatefriends.org)

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Katherine Bloom</b>		
<b>Co-Leaders</b>	<b>Nancy Frank</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Susan Johnson</b>
	<b>Mary Mandeville</b>	<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>JoAnn Gelman</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>George Beall</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Katherine Bloom</b>
<b>New Members</b>	<b>Barbara Beall</b>	<b>Google Group Manager</b>	<b>Barry Gordon</b>
<b>Remembrances</b>	<b>Mary Nader</b>	<b>Members at Large</b>	<b>Rob Goor</b>
<b>Librarian</b>	<b>Lilyan Heupel</b>		<b>Mitzi Serano</b>
			<b>Barbara Gordon</b>

*Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.*

*Marcel Proust*

## Letter from the Editor

We made it! Another year and hopefully things to look forward to. We, as bereaved parents and siblings, are standing on a precipice of either looking back with sorrow and regrets or looking forward to renewed hope.

I learned something interesting in the past year, a concept which crystalized with the visit of my 90 year old Aunt. The concept is not brand new, but bears some new thought. It is the idea of "being in the moment". A little background here to show what I mean.

My uncle passed away 2 months after my daughter, Kira, died, in 2009. It was a rough time for both families. My aunt had never lived on her own. She lived at home as was the custom for unmarried women in the 50's, and finally, marrying in her mid 30s moved in with her new husband. Living in Queens, NY all her young life, she didn't even learn to drive. My aunt and uncle (who immigrated to the US from Switzerland) raised one child. They shared a good marriage, raised my lovely cousin, and travelled extensively over the years. When my uncle retired, they moved to Colorado, and my cousin also ended up there with her own family. My aunt relied on my uncle for everything, from being her constant companion, managing the finances, driving everywhere and travel arranger. His death, after a long, terrible struggle with cancer, left my aunt bereft. While outwardly a gregarious and social person, she says she is really always in doubt of herself and has low self esteem. She has been struggling alone the past 4 years, living in a large retirement community.

She stayed with me for eight days this past Thanksgiving holiday. We had many long and late night discussions, often on the topic of grief, our pasts and our futures. In her mind, she has no future other than a continual decline of her health (2 bouts of breast cancer in the past 10 years), despite the fact her daughter and her family live 15 minutes away and sees them frequently. So here is what I think is her essential problem. She is unable to "be in the moment". She has often

stated she can go to a gathering of family or friends, have a good time, yet spends most of the time thinking "soon I'll just go back to an empty apartment". I don't consider this a really healthy way to live. I've told her about our Chapter and how many of us are grieving over our lost children, siblings, and even a spouse. I told my aunt we are doing so with mixed results. Some of us are on the path of healing and renewal, while others are still in the deepest throes of grief. Time doesn't seem to help some of us, though it often softens the rough edges of our grief.

Over the past 4 ½ years since Kira died, and then my brother 2 years ago, I have strived to train myself to be in the moment. Any success I have achieved has only been with the help of my son, most dearest friends and TCF. I don't say this to boast, or to say anyone who cannot get to my stage is a failure, only to show it is *possible*. There is no time line to grief, and there are ups and downs along the way. It is a journey with no real destination, only what we have right now.

I can go to dinner with friends and enjoy the experience. Sure, I am going home alone to an empty apartment and there will be no messages from Kira or my brother, but that fact does not overshadow my time with the living people I have right now. Sure, I may cry when I'm alone, see a sad movie, or even when I watch a Hallmark commercial, but that's okay, too. I am learning to be more in the moment as time goes by. Yet, every conversation I have with my aunt starts off with her saying, "I just wish I were dead already". I get it, but then I have to remind her she still has family and friends who love her and want to keep her around a few more years. At 90, we cherish whatever time she has left and want her to focus more on now than what was.

So, in this new year of 2014, my question to all of you is this, do you want only to look back and grieve for what we have lost, or can we also make the effort to look forward with renewed hope. This can be the year we find some peace of mind, a balance between who is lost to us and who we still have, and at the end of each day think we made it...again!

## To Crystal

by Debbie Thornton

How many times a day do I think about you?  
Never counted but it is a lot - especially with  
the holidays, you're in my mind even more. You  
loved all the chaos of Christmas – the shopping,  
the wrapping the going way over your budget,  
etc.

You always love the excitement and the  
traditions of the season. I miss that – and you  
were my shopping buddy, my wrapping buddy,  
your Dad's Black Friday 5 AM shopping buddy.  
I miss you coming in “look Mom, we found this  
or that... or I had to substitute this for...” You  
loved decorating the tree and had all the kids  
right there helping. Thankful, never breaking  
any ornaments!

There is an empty spot in the middle of my heart  
where you had always filled with laughter,  
LOUDness, chaos, a temperament quick to light,  
to fight for what you thought was right ( and  
heaven help the person who got in your way!)

There were many ways we were alike, but oh so  
many different ways, too, often causing us to  
butt heads. It wasn't a perfect life, there were  
problems we had to deal with, but what I would  
give to have one more day to deal with the loud,  
boisterous Crystal!

Now, you live on in my heart, I see through your

beautiful daughter, remembering all the times  
this or that happened. You live through the times  
I say your name whether it slips out when I  
meant someone else, or the times it was  
intentional. I will talk about you and laugh or  
cry. Although not many may see the tears, they  
are there – sometimes dripping on the inside of  
my broken heart.

You left a legacy through all the lives you  
touched, all the kids you loved, and it grows  
through your daughter, Faith.

I love and miss you greatly,  
Love  
Mom

## Forever In Our Hearts

We thought of you today,  
but that is nothing new  
We thought of you yesterday,  
and days before that, too.  
Your memory is our keepsake  
with which we'll never part.  
God has you in his keeping;  
we have you in our heart.

Dexsa Co.  
Hudson, WI.

In Loving Memory of  
Robbie & Jerry Heupel III  
from Mommy & Daddy

# National Conference

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Chicago, Illinois, will be the site of the 37th TCF National Conference on July 11-13, 2014. "Miles of Compassion through The Winds of Hope" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national conference experience. The 2014 conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, just minutes from the airport. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Early registration for the conference will be \$90.00 for Adults, \$40.00 for Children (9-17), and \$40.00 for Full-Time College Students.

The Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 9300 Bryn Mawr Ave., Rosemont, IL 60018, is now accepting reservations for TCF's National Conference. To make your reservation, please access the following link, which will take you directly to TCF's reservation portal on the Hyatt's website. Conference attendees are receiving a discounted room rate. We anticipate a large attendance for the conference, so we encourage you to make your reservation as soon as it is convenient for you.

Reservations can also be made by calling the hotel directly at 888.421.1442 and please mention The Compassionate Friends when reserving your room. Please visit Rosemont's website, [www.rosemont.com](http://www.rosemont.com), for information on local area dining and activities.

## *Sponsorships*

A variety of sponsorships are available and can be found here, [37th National Conferences Sponsorships Reply Form](#). To confirm your sponsorship, please call Lisa Corrao at the National Office, fill out the form and e-mail it to [lisa@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:lisa@compassionatefriends.org), or fax it back to us at 630.990.0246.

Questions? Please contact us at 877.969.0010.

## The Sibling Group

Andrea Keller runs the Sibling Group and her contact information is as follows:

She has a Closed Facebook Page – MD/DC/VA Adult Loss Support Group

Facebook: Andrea Blank Keller

Email: [Andreakeller@Yahoo.com](mailto:Andreakeller@Yahoo.com)

Cell: 301-802-1855

## 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](mailto: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.

## Newsletter Contributions

**The Potomac Chapter wants to hear from each of you, to share your ideas and feelings. To hear about what works for you in handling your grief, and what doesn't. What helps you cope, and how you deal with new situations.**

**Please send articles, stories, poems, or quotes for the next newsletter to Katherine Bloom @ [Katherinx@aol.com](mailto:Katherinx@aol.com)**

Please forgive any misspelled names or typos

# LOVE GIFTS

Katherine Bloom	Kira
Millie Rumerman	Kira
Micki & Irv Koniak	Lesley Koniak Garelick
Rosemarie Mahmood	Amanda Elise
Mary & German Nader	Carolyn
Debra & Daryl Thornton	Crystal
Nancy Schultz	Steven McGrath
Lilyan & Gerald Heupel	Robbie & Jerry III
Rita & Walter Pancik	Bruce Jay Liebowitz
Susan & Carl Johnson	Mike
Mary Mandeille	Kenny
Nathalie Silver	Celine



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 another 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.

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



September 2013

Joan & John Bartell	Jenna
Sandra & Lionel Chaiken	Pamela Sue
Marianna & Craig Duncan	Nichlos (Tate)
Cyndie & James Glass	Jeremy
Rita & Walter Pancik	Bruce (Liebowitz)
Mrs. & Shih Cheng Pao	Kevin
Christine & John Rother	Nathaniel
Susan Smith	Samuel
Bryan Smith	Samuel

October 2013

Paul Ahearn	Beth (Ryan)
Carolyn & Gerard Carroll	Vincent
Halley & Pat Daley	Jacob (Dunn)
Patricia DeSimone	Michael (Melhane)
Jane & Ilya Furman	Caroline
Lilyan & Gerald Heupel	Gerald III
Mari Pierce	Danielle

November 2013

Staphetra Anyaibe	Naiyah
Cheryl & Bob Evans	John
JoAnn Gellman	Julia
Trish & Tony Glowacki	Charles
Peggy & Ainsley Gordon	Ainsley III
Beth Hilliard	Jeanette
Micki & Irvin Koniak	Lesley (Garellick)
Janet & Charles Pacholkin	Charles
Joan Uhlig	Jason
Joece & Matt Yuen	Michael

December 2013

Olivia Featherson	Troy
Adrienne & Gene Fisher	Ashley (Wade)
Rosemarie Mahmood	Amanda
Mary & German Nader	Carolyn
Ginny & Tim O'Conner	Robert
Catherine Papoi	Mackensie Ann
Joan Uhlig	Chris

January 2014

Anita & Gary Fields	Adam
Hope Phillips	Hilary
Wendy Reid	Hope (Roth)
Barbara Tatge	Alexander (Finamore)
Lise & John Valenta	Troy

February 2014

Terry Bendell	Teresa
Letha & Ty Healy	Kiran
Kathleen & John Kennedy	Molly
Marsha & Robert Weinberg	Matthew

Now Voyager, sail thou forth, to seek and find

Walt Whitman

