

## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families who have experienced the death of a child.

### BRANDYWINE HUNDRED CHAPTER

www.BrandywineTCF.org

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August 2011

# *From Memories to Baby Stepping*

By: Debbie Ferguson - Kimberly Bryant's Mom

April 2, 2001 was the day of my daughter Kimberly Bryant's death. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think of her. How many times in life do we find ourselves saying, "Why me?" I was the same way in the beginning, but now I say "If not me, then who?" Who would I wish this pain on? Who could I give this pain to? There is no one. It is a pain so intense that no one should ever have to bear it. I truly am thankful for my faith and Compassionate Friends. My faith is what helps me baby step my way through each day. Compassionate Friends lets me know that I am not alone in this journey.

I can barely remember how I got through the first year. I remember driving home from the Compassionate Friends meetings, my eyes filled with tears, and my insides hurting so intensely that I wished I could pull them out to stop the pain. When I got home, I would sit and think about what the other parents had shared and it made me feel better to know that I was not alone. It was good to see that others had survived. It was nice to have a safe place to share my thoughts and feelings. Most of all, it was good to know that I was not losing my mind, I was grieving.

With grief there is no right or wrong and no two people grieve the same. It is very personal. It is our thoughts and feelings. That is why no two people can grieve the same, because no two people have the same thoughts and feelings.

To me my daughter's death has been like a part of me has been amputated. Something has been cut or taken away. If part of my body was amputated, I would learn to live without it but I would always miss it and wish I could have it back. It is the same with Kimberly. I wish I could have her back. But I know I can't so I continue to baby step my way through each day.

I continue to go to Compassionate Friends not so much for me (all though I have my days) but to help others. If I can say just one thing that helps someone else, I know that Kimberly is smiling and has her thumb up saying "Way to go Mom. Please do not be sad because it is what it is and none of us can change it. I am in a good place and I am always watching over my family and friends."

August 15, 2011 will be Kimberly's 41<sup>st</sup> birthday. I am sure the angels will be celebrating with her, but here on earth her family and friends will be thinking of her. We will each celebrate in our own way. For me it will be thinking back on some of the special things, like the day she was born. The birthday party where all her friends would say "Lucky Duck" with each gift she opened. The day she said when she grew up she wanted to be the house-sister (like a house-wife) and take care of the house for us. The way she and her brother were so close, never fighting like most brothers and sisters. They always had each other's backs. Yes, I will spend my day with my memories. Memories are one of God's most precious gifts to us and I will hold and cherish every one of mine forever.

Compassionate Friends was here when I needed them most and I hope to always be here when they need me. Come to the meetings whenever you can, it is always good to share and help each other.

## Keep Baby Stepping



## LOVE GIFTS

This month we thank the following  
for their continued support of our local chapter

Alan Dolan

in memory of his nephew Kyle

Vincent & Maria Papa

in memory of their daughter Anna Gallagher

Gene & Nancy Taylor

in memory of her son Brian Martin

Jack & Patsy Simmermon

in memory of their son David

If you would like to send a donation please send it to:

TCF

PO Box 114

Rockland, DE 19732

make check payable to

The Compassionate Friends.

## United Way

Let Othell (656-9288) know  
if you have not gotten  
an acknowledgement from us  
for donations made to Code 9016.  
We may need to track them down.

## Pictures

I set them out. I put them away ...I get them out and start to go through them filled with wonder that the daughter pictured there is no longer going to call or walk in the door or send a card filled with love and humor. Cards that brightened my day, made me laugh and always prompted me to call her and give her a big hug when she walked in the door.

**P**ictures. I get them out. I run my hand over her face, lingering on her lips, remembering "kissy face mom." And suddenly, overcome with grief, I pull that picture to me and kiss her and tell her how much I love her and how very much I miss her ... and then I look again, and see her eyes-eyes that sparkled and twinkled with mischief though at times filled with deep reflection. She

This newsletter is sponsored by  
Karen & Tim Kelly  
in memory of  
Kyle T Kirk



9/22/86 - 8/11/2008

Not a day goes by that we  
do not forget your fun loving smile.

We miss you always.

Love Mom, Tim, Justin, Cory and Reagan



Patty Fallon, Central Oregon TCF

was a sensitive, intuitive young woman who possessed wisdom and insight much beyond her years. She "left us" when she was only 24.

**P**ictures. At times I hate them. They show me what I don't have. They bring back memories of a time when Jody was healthy and happy. A time when life with her was a joy. I am not yet to a place in my grief-healing where I can remember those times very well. I'm still filled with memories of her illness, pain, and death; and I'm still at the place that I want all of those horrible memories to be a bad dream - a dream that I will wake from, hearing Jody's voice calling me to come outside so that we can take some ... pictures.

# August Calendar

## August 9th

- 6:30 pm** Social Time with **Birthday Cake**  
To celebrate August birthdays
- 7 pm** Meeting - Share a memory of the walk.

## August 23rd

- 7 pm** **Topic > Denial**

## Thank You

To all who helped with  
Minneapolis Conference  
&  
Delaware Walk  
(more details in September)

## Birthday Cake

Donated by  
Othell

**We have a New  
Button Machine!  
Bring a picture  
and  
Have a button made**

### Newsletter Sponsorship Criteria:

We are now accepting 2 sponsors/month.  
\$100 Donation to BHCTCF Newsletter  
(this still only covers part of cost)  
Email a jpeg photo of your child  
or send a photo.  
Include a short note to go with the photo.  
Please submit by the 1st of the month  
preceding the newsletter (i.e. May 1st  
for the June Newsletter).  
Or earlier if you want a specific month.

E-mail: [othellTCF@verizon.net](mailto:othellTCF@verizon.net)  
Phone: 656-9288



Nancy Taylor  
(Suicide & Only Child)  
234-1654

Need someone to talk with?  
Having a bad day?  
Give us a call.  
We also suffered  
the loss of a child.  
So we know you are in pain.  
We care about you  
and want to help

Mary Mullin  
(Suicide)  
(610) 497-3447

Mary Welch  
(Long Term Illness)  
(302)475-7050

### SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

Meetings start at 7:00 p.m.  
on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month

### MEETING PLACE:

Brandywine Valley Baptist Church  
7 Mt. Lebanon Road

### DIRECTIONS:

From I 95 go north on US 202 (Concord Pike)  
Turn left onto Mt. Lebanon Rd.  
Church is on right side of road next to the YMCA.  
Parking lot and entrance in the back of the church.

### Where Do We Meet?

Brandywine Valley Baptist Church  
7 Mt. Lebanon Road

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## BIRTHS

AMBER ALLEN	August 30
MELISSA BARRY	August 17
EDWARD BERGERON	August 28
KEVIN BLACKMAN	August 22
TOMMY BOOTH, III	August 18
DOUG COHEN	August 23
JUSTINE CREED	August 18
JILL RUSSELL EDDY	August 03
KIM FERGUSON	August 15
JENNIFER FORESTER	August 08
ANNA GALLAGHER	August 15
EDDIE HOPKINS	August 15
ELIZABETH HURLOCK	August 14
LAURA KELLY	August 13
NICOLE ELIZABETH KERR	August 05
JOE KERSWILL	August 16
ZACHARY KRUGER	August 16
DANIEL LANGLEY	August 03
CAMERON LOGAN	August 24
MITCHELL McALLISTER	August 30
TIMOTHY McGOVERN	August 28
WENDY MILLER	August 31
CHRISTIAN MOLITOR	August 08
ALAN PEARSON	August 03
KATHLEEN PEPE	August 03
MARK REEDY	August 31
BRIDGETT RYKACZEWSKI	August 11
SHARON SCHMEHL	August 05
DAVID SIMMERMON	August 27
JIM SNAVELY	August 28
CHRIS WALLACE	August 14
ROB WELDON	August 05

# August Children Loved Missed Remembered

## DEATHS

JEREMY J. ACOSTA	August 03
EDWARD BERGERON	August 07
WALTER CHANNELL	August 06
GARY COVELLI	August 08
JUSTINE CREED	August 21
MARK GIORDANO	August 06
ROMA JADICK	August 20
LAURA KELLY	August 20
KYLE KIRK	August 11
ZACHARY KRUGER	August 16
CATHY LOWE	August 30
LISA NECASTRO	August 30
BILLY RATZ	August 02
BILLY THOMAS	August 29

Let me know if you find  
an error or omission.

Othell1@verizon.net



# Grief:

## Then . . . Now

Grief seemed too small and insignificant a word to describe what was happening inside of me. How could such a little word convey the massive pain that weighed me down and made each breath an effort. The pressure inside my chest that constricted my heart was real pain - not an emotion - but a physical agony that seemed almost to consume me. I could think of nothing else.

I used to look around me at people still living and breathing and smiling and I was amazed. Couldn't they see that life was over? How could they walk around oblivious to the pain that was eating me alive? They didn't see the endless darkness that stretched out ahead of me as far as I could see - the black emptiness that sapped my strength and was making me wonder why I should bother with the rest of my life.

I seemed to go on for a long time in that dark tunnel, sometimes fighting it, but more often letting myself be carried further and further down. Most of the time I just felt numb - I began to wonder if I were still alive.

One day, to my surprise, I realized I had smiled - at a flower or a bird or a child laughing. No, I thought, it can't be. How can I smile without my child? And my guilt would drive me back into that dark pit again.

Then one busy day at lunch I realized I hadn't thought about the emptiness all morning. That dull ache was not the first thought in my mind upon awakening. When I stopped to think about it, I realized there had been other days and times when I lived through a few hours without the pain.

Then one afternoon I actually laughed out loud at a funny story my neighbor told me. I was coming back to life. The pain went away more and more often and for longer periods of time. When the emp-

teness did return it was sharp, but not so intense as before - not so all-consuming. I continued to live and grow and love. My life came slowly back to me; my feelings and hopes and dreams came back. My laughter and enthusiasm returned. Slowly but surely I became a whole person again.

I have since had moments of great happiness that were not muted by my grief for Terry. And I've had sad and painful times that were not caused or intensified by Terry's death. In fact, perhaps they were made a little easier to bear because of those scars that left a roughened spot on my heart.

If I had a wish to give the world, it would be that no one would ever have to suffer that kind of loss. Of course, I can't give that gift. All I can offer is the sure and certain knowledge that the despair you feel now will be eased; the pain will become bearable; the emptiness will be filled and you will begin to live again if you take one hour and one day at a time - not trying to think too far ahead the minutes become bearable and then the hours and days too.

I'll never forget my son. I'll never forget how much I loved him and how much he meant to me. I'm not sorry he was born. I'm not sorry I had two wonderful years with him while he was growing and learning. I am sorry that my time with him was much too short, but I am thankful for the time we did have. I smile when I remember his face and the way he tilted his head and grinned at me.

He was my firstborn son and he'll always live in my heart. I keep the memory of him alive and safe inside me.

**The memory is mine forever  
the tears will pass.**

Kathe McDaniel  
TCF, Ambler, PA

# OH WELL ..

"I'm sorry to hear your child has died, "  
someone said to me one day,  
But when I said he was handicapped,  
she turned her eyes away  
And instead of words of sympathy, she said,  
"Oh well, it's for the best, and  
you know, it was a blessing, now  
I bet you could do with a rest."  
I stood there numb with horror  
at the words that I'd just heard,  
Surely she should have known better,  
her sorrow now seemed absurd.  
Inside I shook with anger -  
how dare she talk that way!  
All I could do was stare at her.  
these words I couldn't say ...  
"No, it wasn't a blessing and  
my burden hasn't gone  
My child was worth much more than that,  
now my burden has just begun.  
He was just like any other child,  
though you wouldn't have a clue,  
So don't stand there feeling sorry for me -  
it is I who feel sorry for you.  
I gave my life to him willingly  
and I was rewarded beyond belief"  
But because you haven't experienced that,  
you'll never understand my grief  
He filled every corner of my life.  
He gave everything worth giving.  
He taught me to love, he touched my soul;  
loving him made life worth living.  
There isn't a normal child in this world  
who could give the love he gave;  
His love was unconditional  
and I will take it to my grave.  
So you see it wasn't a blessing  
for my life with him was bliss;  
Now it's so hard to live without him  
and his love I will always miss."  
I wish I could have said all this  
to that person standing there,  
But it would have fallen on deaf ears  
for she didn't really care.  
But why on earth should I worry -  
she's the one who's missed out;  
Knowing and loving a handicapped child  
is what living is all about ....

Dany Sherlock

There's a hole in me. You see, a part of me is missing. I keep looking for my son, and all I find are bits and pieces of him - something he wrote, a picture he took, a book he read, a tape he made, something he drew but there is emptiness in me that these bits and pieces cannot fill, that nothing will ever fill. I wander around, and sometimes without realizing I am doing it, I shake my head in disbelief, thinking it can't be true. But I know it is. My son is gone and he is not coming back I will have to go to him and someday I will.



There's a hole in me and it hurts terribly, much worse than I ever imagined anything could hurt. I am angry-not at God or at my son for leaving me as some have suggested. I am not angry at anyone or anything in particular. I am just angry. I want to scream and strike out at something. Sometimes I feel as if I am going to explode and I expect to see pieces of me flying in all directions.

I want to fill this hole in me so that everything that is left within me will not spill out. I want someone else who loved him to hug me when I cry and tell me it will be all right, even though I think it will never be.

Johnie Maxwell, TCF; Lake Jackson, TX



**The Compassionate Friends, Inc.**  
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**Real Life Situations  
That May Revive Grief  
Years After A Sibling's Death**

**The  
Sibling  
Page**

Reaching and surpassing the age that your sibling died  
Thinking you saw him or her in a car or walking down the street.  
Hearing or singing a song the two of you shared  
Playing a game the two of you used to play  
Visiting a place the two of you used to go.  
Seeing pictures or videos, or listening to audio tapes birthdays, holidays, or the annual date of your sibling's death.

Seeing a movie or reading a book  
Planning your wedding and realizing your sibling will not be there to take a part.  
Having a family portrait made after your sibling's death  
Milestones in your life (graduation from college, getting a good job, etc.) that you will be unable to share and talk about with your sibling  
Celebrations of milestones in your parents life (special wedding anniversaries or birthdays) that will be planned without input from your sibling.