



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Brandywine Hundred Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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January 2012

**REFLECTIONS
ON THE
CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE....**

Our chapter's Worldwide Candle Lighting Service, was held at Silverside Church. The lovely church was filled with so many of us: bereaved parents, siblings, friends and family. Just like our credo, some of us are further along in our grief so we were able to listen to the beautiful poems and songs without losing our composure. Yet, for some of us our wounds are so fresh that all we could do was shed tears.

The service was so moving. As every child's name was read and bells were tolled, we raised our candles in honor of our children. From my perspective, I equated the light to coming out of the dark after my son's death, or the light in his eyes every time he smiled, or the burning light that will forever burn in my heart. The light of the candles and the mood of the service filled the room with such warmth.

With every beautiful poem recited and every beautiful song, I felt a sense of comfort as probably most of you did as well. The bond we share is so strong and it surely was felt as we gathered in the fellowship hall to share some laughs and of course lots of great goodies.

During this time of the year, while the mood may be festive, we might feel sad and lonely because no one can understand our pain. Yet, this night allows us to cry or laugh as we remember our children and those old holidays with them. It is such an inspiring night to be surrounded by so many people who can still share a smile and a hug in the midst of tears.

Our children are no longer in this world, but just as Brother David shared with us, "our children are always with us...they have not left us." Therefore, as we progress in our journey, we should always keep this thought present in our minds. For it is their spirit that gives us the strength to get through the holidays and the courage to find beauty and a new meaning to life. Our children live in us!

Millie Acosta

LOVE GIFTS

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

Joseph & Diane Adamo
in memory of their daughter Joyce Seidman
Janice Antinoph
in memory of her daughter Elyce Antioph Marsh
Edward & Lynda Bergeron Sr.,
in memory of their son Ted
Mary Ann Byrne
in memory of her son Jeffrey
Alan Dolan
in memory of his nephew Kyle Dolan
Michael & Clare Dunning
in memory of their daughter Laura S Samuel.
Troy & Ann Marie DuBois
in memory of their son Eric Connelly
Caroline Figenshu
in memory of her daughters
Donna, Laura & Paula Kelly
Charles & Tina Mitchell
in memory of their son Brian
Joe & Janice Molitor
in memory of their son Danny
Sonya McCormick
in memory of Shantal Cacho
Gary & Susan Robbins
in memory of their son Gary, II
Thorpe & Jackie Smith
in memory of their sons J.T. & Alex
Andrew & Allyn Soporak
in memory of their son Drew

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.

A Native American Prayer

I give you this one thought to keep-
I am with you still- I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not think of me as gone-
I am with you still- in each new dawn

This newsletter is sponsored by
Gerry & Sue Holmes
In loving memory of our son.



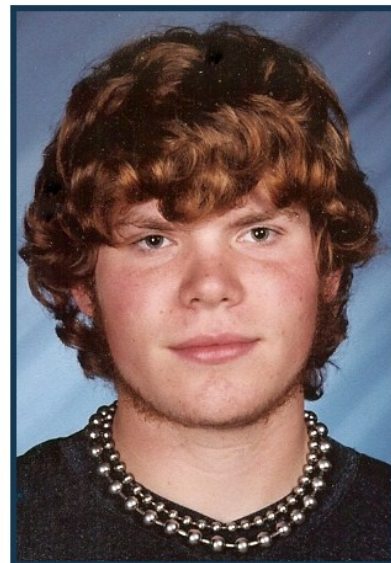
Vincent J. Holmes
November 4, 1983 - October 21, 1997
Courage with a smile.
Happy 28th Birthday
Love, Mom & Dad, Mary Elise and Jeff

Newsletter Sponsorship Criteria:

\$100 Donation to BHCTCF Newsletter
(this still only covers part of cost)

E-mail: othellTCF@verizon.net
Phone: 656-9288

This newsletter is sponsored
in loving memory of our son
Michael John Seery, Jr.
September 24, 1986 - February 19, 2006



Michael at age 15

JANUARY CALENDAR

January 10

6:30 pm

Birthday Cake

7 pm

General Sharing

January 24

7 pm

General Sharing

THANKS

Thanks to all who helped make our Children's Memorial Service memorable.

Jean Toy & Brother David said it was the best turnout of gifts ever:
and at a particularly great time of need.
These gifts make in difference for many lives.

Thanks again.

If you would like to bring the birthday cake for January Birthdays
Call Othell:
656-9288 or 377-7403

Volunteers Needed for Set Up

Our leaders first priority should be to welcome those coming to the meetings, not setting up refreshments, books, etc.

You can assist by helping with meeting set ups.

Call or Contact

Barbara

Debbie

Othell

Reminder

You can make a donation to our chapter through your United Way Donation.

We are a "write-in agency" therefore, please write on the pledge card

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. (TCF)

Code number 9016

PO Box 114

Rockland, DE 19732-0114

Pictures & Other Mementos

Your child's pictures can be displayed anytime on our "Birthday Table" but especially on those special days in your child's life.

Where Do We Meet?

Brandywine Valley Baptist Church
7 Mt. Lebanon Road

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.



Nancy Taylor
(Suicide & Only Child)
234-1654

Mary Mullin
(Suicide)
(610) 497-3447

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

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

January Children; Loved, Missed and Remembered

BIRTHS	
WARREN BATCHELDER	January 12
CLARE KEARNEY CHURCH	January 06
MICHAEL FITZPATRICK	January 27
KATHERINE GRIMSHAW	January 11
BRANDON HALL	January 22
JESSICA HESS	January 13
MICHAEL INGRAM, II	January 02
MARK LICHTENSTADTER	January 30
ELYCE ROBIN MARSH	January 02
EMMA MARIE MILLER	January 13
BRIAN MITCHELL	January 12
KIMBERLY MURPHY	January 02
BILLY RATZ	January 12
JOSEPH SCHAFFSTALL	January 08
WILLY TEED	January 11

DEATHS	
STEPHANIE BARRY	January 11
AIMEE BITTENBENDER	January 19
TOMMY BOOTH, III	January 20
ADRIENNE BURGER	January 18
LEIDDA CALEB	January 04
AIDAN CANTARERA	January 02
ROBERT BRADY CLARK	January 28
MARCO CRUZ	January 25
KARA MAC IVER	January 03
MICHAEL MATSUMOTO	January 30
RALPH C. MCCALL, JR	January 25
PAUL GERARD MCCUSKER	January 08
BRIAN McSHANE	January 16
JENNIFER NEYMAN	January 25
MARK REEDY	January 14
ASHLEY RESNICK	January 31
DANIEL ROMANO	January 04
JOSEPH SCHAFFSTALL	January 28
SHARON SCHMEHL	January 31
BRIAN MICHAEL SCHOLL	January 23
JOYCE ADAMO SEIDMAN	January 24
DREW SOPIRAK	January 27
STACY LYNN TESZNER	January 23
TIMOTHY THORNTON	January 24
MCKENZIE TRAVIS	January 22
LAURIE RAE WALDEN	January 19

*I resolve
in memory of
my child
to do something
to help someone else.
For I believe that
in this way
my child will on
through me.*

**If name is not correct
or missing,
Contact
OthellTCF@verizon.net**

HAPPY NEW YEAR

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the

heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at The Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our

time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, . . .

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

Dory Rooker
TCF, Upper Valley, VT

Depression

WHAT do you do when you've lost all hope?

HOW do you carry on
when tomorrow holds no promise?

WHERE do you go to escape your pain?

WHO do you turn to
when no one seems able to help?

WHEN do you simply give up
and throw in the towel?

Most of us have felt the weight of the world on our shoulders at one time or another. Depression often follows an upheaval in one's life: financial reverses, divorce, chronic illness, loss of a loved one. Most depressions of this type, though relatively short-lived, are extremely painful and frightening.

If the five questions above describe your state of mind, professional counseling should be sought.

If counseling is not a viable option in your life,

the very best piece of advice I can pass on is one of the basic tenets of the many wonderful twelve-step programs (originated by Alcoholics Anonymous):

live life one day at a time.

If even this is too difficult,

cut it down to one hour at a time.

Small time sequences are much easier to live and deal with than an open-ended future of too many days, months or years.

When you are depressed, time drags endlessly and it seems impossible that you will ever feel better.

**Be assured - you can and you will.
It takes courage and patience and trust -
trust in me because I tell you it is so;**

trust in yourself, though you feel so very weak right now; trust in the human spirit which has the power to overcome the greatest obstacles. Hang in with all your might: It will be worth the effort when you emerge from the darkness of depression into the light of all that is still possible in your life.

Carole Babush, TCF, N. Atlanta

A NEW YEAR-S PRAYER

At the beginning of the Jewish New Year there is a special service held in remembrance of loved ones. This is a prayer that we say and I thought you and the chapter might like.

LaJean Stroman, TCF, Ft. Worth. Texas



I remember in this solemn hour, beloved child, the many joys you afforded me during our lifetime. I recall the days when I delighted in your physical and mental growth, and planned for your future. Though death has taken you from me, you are not forgotten. Your spirit is enshrined in my heart. Oh Heavenly Father, I thank thee for the precious gift which Thou didst entrust to my keeping and which in Thine infinite wisdom Thou hast called back unto Thyself.

Though few were the years wherein I rejoiced with my child, many were the blessings that he brought into my household. Teach me to live more nobly and to extend my love and devotion to other children in thankfulness for the privilege of having had and loved this child, though but for a few, brief years. ! Thus may his soul be bound up in the bond of life ' and his memory remain an inspiration to me. Amen. "

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION VOLUNTEER

Over thirty year's ago, The Compassionate Friends (TCF) was founded in Coventry, England by Reverend Simon Stephens, a Hospital Chaplain.

When called upon to comfort two bereaved families, in the hospital, he discovered they had far more to say and to share with each other, than he could ever say to comfort them. From that simple beginning we now have 600 chapters in the U.S. and other chapters all over the world.

How did TCF grow to be the vital organization it is now? Who were these wonderful people who gave of their time and money to help other bereaved families over the stepping stones of grief? We may never know their names but they had an important title

VOLUNTEERS.

Phyllis Gilbert, past chapter leader saw a sign on a church in Newport, DE;

"COMPASSION IS LOVE IN ACTION".

Why not put the love you have for your deceased child into action by helping others so that sometime in the next century families whose child has died may not know your names but they will be happy you shared your compassion and love to continue the important work of The Compassionate Friends.

VOLUNTEERING NOT LIMITED TO TCF.

Go To: GetInvolved.VolunteerMatch.org

Enter your zip code. I found close to 400 opportunities for volunteers including libraries, Hot Lines, Grand Opera House, animal care, training, etc., museums etc., etc.

So consider a New Year's Resolution to help yourself by helping others in one way or another.

BUT YOUR SON WANTED TO DIE MINE DIDN'T

I cringed as once again I heard this remark, repeated so often since Warren took his life 3 1/2 years ago. Even now, when I thought I had steeled myself to the harsh meaning of the words, they still left me hurt and demolished.

Is it all that simple? Could anyone "feeling good" just choose to die like that ... if they knew the pain and suffering that then engulfs their surviving family.

How can I explain why he died when I do not know myself! How can I make anyone understand his emotional pain, increasingly obvious to us, so skillfully masked from others?

Our son was so handsome, intelligent and sensitive, it is still incredible that he shot himself one morning shortly after returning from the hospital "cured" of his terrible depression.

Our beautiful first-born baby grew into a perfect son, but somewhere, somehow, our masterpiece had a flaw as cruel and as tenacious as any disease that strikes any young person.

So, until research proves otherwise, we have to go along with the words of Professor Erwin Ringel that "Suicide cannot really be chosen since an intense and overwhelming inner compulsion renders any free choice null and void."

Our loss is as great as any other parent. We grieve just as deeply. Remember this and do not judge we beg. We, and all Survivors of Suicide suffer too much already from a horrendous tragedy that can, and does, happen to anyone.

Maureen Hargreaves
TCF, Melbourne Australia



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Brandywine Hundred Chapter
P.O. Box 114
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US Postage Paid
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How to help surviving children Remember these Three T's

from *Not Just Another Day*
by Missy Lowery
TCF, Phillips, WI

Touching

Tender touching says, I love you and I care. Everyone in your family needs to be touched and held. Children especially need to be hugged, held and cuddled. Strong arms feel secure when your world is falling apart. A three-minute hug is a good idea.

Tears

Everyone needs to be able to cry and know it's okay. Your children need to know they don't have to be afraid of your tears.

Talking

All of you need to talk. Listen to your kids. They'll have some big questions like:

Did I somehow cause the death?

Is this going to happen to me
or to my Mom or Dad?

Who is going to take care of me?

Let them know they are not to blame, other people aren't likely to die and that there will always be someone to love and care for them.