

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
Othell Heaney, chapter leader
P.O. Box 114
Rockland, DE 19732-0114
302/376-0300 e-mail: OthellTCF@verizon.net



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

www.compassionatefriends.org
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
877/969-0010 (toll free)

Editors: Othell & Bill Heaney

E-mail: OthellTCF@verizon.net

January 2011

Happy New Year

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break,
let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

1. Try not to imagine the future; take one day at a time.
2. Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
3. Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
4. Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. If each of us is unique and different, how can there be perfect understanding?
5. When a good day comes, relish it. Don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. They will come again and multiply.
6. Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water, take stress-type vitamins, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal as well as your mind.
7. Share your feelings with other compassionate friends and let them share with you. You will find that as you begin caring about the pain of others, you will start to come out of your shell - a very healthy sign.

I know that following these resolutions won't be easy,
but what has been? It is worth a try.
There is nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

Mary Ehmann, TCF, Valley Forge, PA



Chapter Leaders

Along with the New Year will come new chapter leaders. Barbara Spadaccini & Debbie Ferguson will step up as the new leaders, taking over from Othell. Barbara & Debbie have been very important to the chapter for some time now so this will be a smooth transition. Othell will continue as newsletter editor as well as steering committee member.



GIFTS of LOVE

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

Jacqueline Caleb
in memory of her daughter Leidda
Michael & Claire Dunning
in memory of his daughter Laura Samuel
Ann Marie DuBois
in memory of her son Eric Connolly
Chick & Tina Mitchell
in memory of their son Brian
Dawn Moore
In memory of her son Andrew Baranowski
Frank & Cheryl Moore
in memory of their grandson
Andrew Baranowski
Mary Mullin
in memory of her son Mark
Rick, Cheryl & Laura Salvato
in memory of Derrick & Nathan
Andrew & Allyn Sopirak
in memory of their son Drew
Ann Thornton
in memory of her son Tomothy
John & Judy Travis
in memory of their daughter McKenzie
Donald R. Sagers
in memory of Danny DuRoss

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.

Did You Know?

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

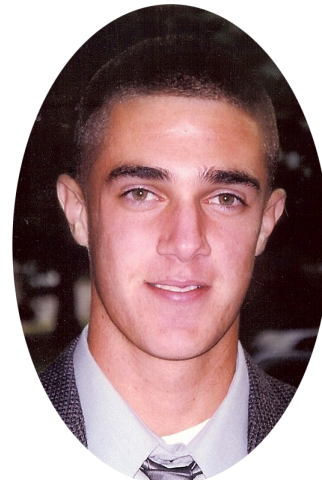
**We are a “write-in agency”
therefore,
please write on the pledge card
The Compassionate Friends, Inc. (TCF)
Code number 9016
PO Box 114
Rockland, DE 19732-0114**

This newsletter is sponsored
by Larry & Chris Giordano



in loving memory
of our son,
Mark Giordano
July 22, 1976 - August 6, 1995

This newsletter is sponsored by
Jane & Terrence Fitzpatrick
in loving memory of our son



Michael Ryan Fitzpatrick
1/27/1984 - 6/4/2003
Happy “Golden” Birthday
You are always with us
in our hearts eye.
All our love, Always,
Dad, Mom & Susan

JANUARY CALENDAR

January 11
7:00 pm General Sharing

January 25
7:00 pm General Sharing



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

Phone:

656-9288

It was so great to see old friends
and new friends
at the Candle Lighting Memorial.
Thanks to the 4 speakers
from our chapter:

Mary Welch who spoke
about long term illness
Allyn Sopirak who spoke
about suicide & mental illness
Linda Simione who spoke
about sudden death
Jean Toy who spoke
regarding losing an only child
We enjoyed our new musician,
Mary Ellen Kopp.

Chapter Photo Collage

Start the New Year
by bringing or sending
a photo of your child
to add to our
Photo Collage

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.



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

Othell & Bill Heaney
(Sudden Death & Suicide)
(302) 656-9288

Mary Mullin
(Suicide)
(610) 497-3447

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

Nancy Taylor
(Suicide & Only Child)
234-1654

Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered

**Anniversaries and Birthdays
are difficult times for bereaved parents
But as long as we live, they too shall live,
for they are part of us in our memories.
In the days ahead,
we lovingly remember these children
And we send our love and support
to their parents.**

JANUARY BIRTHS

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| MACKEY ABERNETHY | January 14 |
| WARREN BATCHELDER | January 12 |
| CLARE KEARNEY CHURCH | January 06 |
| BRIAN DAHN | January 19 |
| MICHAEL FITZPATRICK | January 27 |
| KATHERINE GRIMSHAW | January 11 |
| BRANDON HALL | January 22 |
| JESSICA HESS | January 13 |
| MICHAEL E. KEOSAYIAN | January 24 |
| MARK LICHTENSTADTER | January 30 |
| ELYCE ROBIN MARSH | January 02 |
| EMMA MARIE MILLER | January 13 |
| BRIAN MITCHELL | January 12 |
| KIMBERLY MURPHY | January 02 |
| JUSTIN O'MALLEY | January 29 |
| MIKAYLA ANN PAOLI | January 20 |
| BILLY RATZ | January 12 |
| JOSEPH SCHAFFSTALL | January 08 |
| WILLY TEED | January 11 |

JANUARY DEATHS

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| MACKEY ABERNETHY | January 10 |
| STEPHANIE BARRY | January 11 |
| TIMOTHY BECKER | January 17 |
| 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 |
| BRADLEY HUBLEIN | January 08 |
| MICHAEL MATSUMOTO | January 30 |
| RALPH C. MCCALL, JR | January 25 |
| PAUL MCCUSKER | January 08 |
| BRIAN McSHANE | January 16 |
| JENNIFER NEYMAN | January 25 |
| MIKAYLA ANN PAOLI | January 20 |
| 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 |
| DONNA JEAN WATSON | January 24 |

I just can't believe it...

I just can't believe it...
The sun still rises and sets,
The moon and stars still shine,
The flowers still bloom, The birds still sing.
I expected a change in everything
I just can't believe it...
It still gets dark and light,
The ocean still has waves,
The rain still rains, The wind still blows,

Is it because they do not know?
I just can't believe it...
I thought the world would stop
When in my house I found
an empty chair, a missing smile
I thought it would stop. For just a while.
I just can't believe it...
*-Gretta Viney
rcr. Yakima. WA*

After Two Years

Two years ago my ten year old daughter, Stephanie, was struck by a car and died. To lose Stephanie will be the most difficult thing my family will have to survive. It has been a difficult time, not just for my husband Donald and myself, but for our two remaining children, Krista and Kevin. Our lives changed that day, and will never be the same again.

When asked, people will most likely tell you we are doing good, going on with our lives, and that we are fine. If you look up the definition of fine, it means superior or sharp. I can tell you the pain my family has had to bear from the loss of Stephanie is very superior and sharp, like the edge of a knife.

People's expectations of a grieving parent truly amaze me. It certainly hasn't gotten easier to face each day. Whether it is one week, one month, one year or two years, the pain is always there. Time does not change the fact she is dead and not a living part of my family. The only thing it does is distance the day you last saw her.

Let's face it, you actually have no choice, except to continue your life, even though that is the last thing you want to do. One thing I am learning is that

my grieving for Stephanie will never go away. What I have to do to survive is let it happen. Don't make apologies or excuses for the way I am. This is very hard because people who know you, want you to be the way you were before her death, and you just can't. It's impossible.



I can remember day dreaming about all the things Stephanie would do as she grew older. I imagined things she and I would do together; helping and guiding her and just being part of her life. Most important of all not just being her mother, but becoming her FRIEND. Now I find myself day dreaming of what would have been and how it should be. Desperately trying to remember everything she liked and enjoyed doing and praying I will dream of her each night when I sleep.

When I see other families together, I want the family I once had. I want my little girl to greet me at the door with her cheerful hello and her beautiful smile. I want to go to her school concert, and tuck her into bed each night. The list goes on and on. Knowing what I had, and what I could have, makes Stephanie's loss so much more painful. I do know if I was told "I have a special gift for you but you can only have her for 10 years", I would have wanted her. I just would have appreciated our time together all the more.

I am changing, my family is changing. I have no idea of what will become of us. Hopefully we will continue to grow closer with each passing day, in a way we never expected. We will survive. I do know what will never change, and that is the love I have in my heart for a beautiful blond, blue eyed little girl named Stephanie. I love her and wish I could change what has happened, but I can't. What I have to do is learn to live without her.

*Peggie Finan, TCF
Valley Forge, P A Chapter
Daughter:
Stephanie Ann Finan,
10/5/82 - 7/24/93*

What do I do with my child's things?

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents, We discuss it from time to time at our meetings.

Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything touched or removed.

Some find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing someone we love is wearing our child's clothes, or playing with his or her toys, brings us comfort.

Some of us feel we can deal with only a few items at a time; clothes one month; books another; perhaps toys a few months later.

Some of us find that as time goes on we would have gotten rid of the things anyway, it becomes easier. For instance, after a while we realize that if the child were still alive, he or she would have outgrown the clothes. Then it's easier to give them away.

Or your child would have graduated from college this year, and therefore would no longer use the study desk or clock radio. We can give these things away in the normal time sequence.

The important thing is not to let others rush us into doing something before we are ready, and not to let ourselves feel guilty about the amount of time it takes us to make decisions.

When the time is right, and the decision is right for us, we'll know what to do.

TCF, Honolulu; Hawaii,

Loneliness and How to Overcome It

Why are there times when a bereaved parent feels lonely even though surrounded by loving people and people the bereaved parent loves?

Loneliness is the outgrowth of separation from one who has given meaning to life. Yes, other relationships offer meaning, but it is normal for the searing pain from the loss of one's child to supersede the pleasure from other experiences.

Part of yourself had been invested in another person. When that person has died, in a sense, you are lonely for a part of yourself that has been destroyed. At times you look around you and think that no one else is experiencing the pain you are feeling, no one's world has been shattered.

This self-centeredness is a natural part of the grief process. Do not deny it, but DO NOT HOLD ON TO IT AS A WAY OF LIFE. Give yourself permission to accept help from others and then to reach out and help : others.

Although your child is not here to give continuity to your life, by having lived and having given purpose to your life, your child can be the bridge to your continuity with life as a thinking, loving and active person

Ruth Eiseman
TCF, Louisville, KY

PATIENCE Thought For The Day

It is not easy returning to the world of normalcy when your world is upside down. It is not easy to stop being a mother or father to your child that has died. The thought for the day is a word - Patience - patience with yourself who suddenly and powerlessly has been thrown into this horrid nightmare; patience with your spouse who always seems to be having an up day when you are having a down day; patience with relative and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt, with hollow advice and logical words; and patience with time, for it takes time to adjust, and time can move so slowly. PATIENCE!

Rose Moen TCF /Carmel - Indianapolis, IN

Grief

A Family Perspective

So often we think when grief strikes a family it will bring them together. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Because each person grieves differently and each person has a different relationship with the person who died, it is not always possible for families to express their grief to one another. Families sometimes become fragmented and torn apart because they believe that no one understands them, especially their own family members.

This frustration and alienation often fades with time, but there are some things we can do to facilitate mutual understanding when we are faced with grief as a family.

The first thing we can do is admit that each person is grieving differently. Try to understand each family member in the context of their relationship with the person who died.

Understand that the communication cycle in the family is interrupted. Think of it like an engine that is skipping. One of the personalities in the family is missing, therefore members have to learn

to relate without that person's presence and input.

Because the relationship lost varies for each person, it is important to remember that losing a spouse is different from losing a parent and losing a sibling is different from losing a child. Each person has their own unique circumstances to deal with based on their age, support systems and other relationships.

Because we are a family we might be tempted to think we will grieve alike. Nothing could be further from the truth

Because we are a family we might be tempted to think we will grieve alike. Nothing could be further from the truth. Therefore, advice given to one another is often met with reservation and resentment. Often we are tempted to tell one another to "be strong," rather than accept the strength of tears.

It's important for families to find common ground to remember and understand one another. Telling stories, recalling memories, looking

through photographs can help. Asking how a family member is coping and listening to what works for them, can offer great insight into their grief journey.

The history of family relationships with one another can trigger reactions under stress. If members don't ordinarily get along, death won't necessarily be the bridge we might want it to be. Stressful family relationships are often

magnified with the death of a loved one. Knowing this in advance can help family members deal with one another.

It's not always necessary that families grieve together or in the same way.

It is important to promote the understanding that everyone is going on their own unique journey. While we can share aspects of that grief journey, a part of it is carried alone in the depths of our heart in the unique love we shared with the person who died. By understanding this important concept, we can regroup and redefine ourselves as a family with a shared loss, expressed uniquely by each person.

Craig Greer, TCF, Maryland

Grief is a sacred time where we can arrange our fragments into a New definition of wholeness.

Stephanie Ericson
Living Enrichment Center
Wilsonville, OR

Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor loss of faith, It is the price of love.



The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
Brandywine Hundred Chapter
P.O. Box 114
Rockland, DE 19732-0114

Return Service Requested

Printed and Mailed by Debbie Ferguson "A Round To It" (302) 561-0120

Siblings Walking Together

**We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.
We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.
Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.
Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.
At other times we need our families to be there.
Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us,
continuing to become the individuals we want to be.
We cannot be our dead brother or sister;
however, a special part of them lives on with us.
When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.
We are living a life very different from what we envisioned,
and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.
Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others
the value of family and the precious gift of life.
Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are,
but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of
The Compassionate Friends.**