

Dear Family Members

This has been difficult and a struggle to write which is why it's arriving late. I guess it comes with the territory. I feel it's better to let everyone know that there are most likely changes coming than to just do them. This is more like a ***State of the Chapter*** address than anything else this month. I'm sorry that there's a need to use this space in this way. Please read on....

There are a few things that I feel need your attention and help. Where things go is up to you, our Chapter members. William, Amanda and Arlene provide a wonderful service and do an incredible job to create the Newsletter each month. Some may not remember that for about two years we didn't have a Newsletter. That's probably why I feel it's so important to keep getting it out to as many of our members as possible. As you know, we've made a concerted and intentional effort to send out the Newsletter each month not only with email but to also keep our family members without internet access connected. I think it's safe to say that for most that receive the Newsletter via USPS mailings, this is the only support they have. Sadly, we're on the verge of cutting back the USPS mailings from monthly to quarterly and we may have to eliminate it all together. A few months ago I proposed a plan for the USPS mailings each month. At that time, four very generous members of our total number of well over 500 stepped up to help get the Newsletter mailed out. Only one person out of 74 receiving it from the Postal Service has helped. This person did what they could in spite of being on a fixed income. These wonderful compassionate family members have done this not wanting any recognition. I'm truly surprised and disappointed that no one else receiving the hard copy of the Newsletter has offered to help in any way. I can't help but wonder if it's more important to me to ***keep*** everyone connected than it is for folks to ***be*** connected. If you are currently receiving the USPS mailing, have an email address and want to continue to receive the Newsletter I strongly suggest you either call or email me and provide that email address. Thankfully, we have one incredibly compassionate person who prints it out using their business equipment without any acknowledgement. It's truly unreasonable to expect him to absorb the cost of printing 74 copies of at least 5 pages, front and back, each month or even each quarter. Also, no one has offered to help with the labeling, stamping, folding, stuffing and getting them to the Post Office and we've asked repeatedly. It falls to me, another group I'm with or, if it can be printed out in time, gets done at the meeting for that month which means it goes out ***after*** the meeting. If it doesn't get done by then it goes out at least a week later. We'll ask, once again, to please consider assisting in any or all of the process before we have to decide the "what's next". It's up to you.

Sadly, another issue I need to share is the lack of financial support that your chapter has received this year. Our Holiday donations were sharply down from previous years. We are a 501(c)3 charitable organization and your donation is tax deductible. While we have always operated on a "shoestring budget", we do have a few expenses. I look back and remember the days when Barbara Allen had the website created. She and her husband, Tom, graciously funded it for a long time. Back then so many of the expenses were "absorbed" by those in leadership and some still are. The Website continues to be an incredible outreach and support for those who are lost and searching. Remember that feeling? It literally does reach around the world with those who have contacted us. I've shared before that the ongoing expenses we have are the Website, Post Office Box and the virtual phone line that goes into voice mail. This doesn't include purchasing the TCF brochures from the National that go out to other organizations, the expense for the Candlelight Memorial or the expenses for the envelopes, labels and stamps for the USPS mailings. If you wish to sponsor any of these things in the name of your loved one, please let me know. As I shared above, the mailings may be cut back or ended altogether depending on you. What you may not know is that at the end of the year we also have tithing/Membership fee back to the National and a donation to our meeting location, Govans Presbyterian Church, for the use of their space. The donation to the church is far less than what we should pay to lease the space.

Your Chapter ***still*** has the need for help. We need help in fundraising. Hopefully someone will step up and volunteer to champion this need. Maybe your work location has a program to assist 501(c)3 charitable organizations, which we are. It takes a few minutes to ask. We need help in getting the USPS Newsletter mailing out if it continues. Let's keep the outreach going. We still want to start a FaceBook page. Amanda has said she can work on it but with her schedule needs help with it.

Our reality changed with our loss. My family members, we live in a "what is" world. I think we can handle hearing this. Help me use this space next month for that "uplifting and encouraging" message by what you've been able to do to help.

May you find peace on your journey and find it within yourself to help someone else find theirs'.

Garrett Tollenger  
410-215-1873



*The  
Compassionate  
Friends*

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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P.O. BOX 2103 Ellicott City, MD 21041-2103  
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[www.baltimoretcf.com](http://www.baltimoretcf.com)

April 2019

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

**WEDNESDAY, April 3, 2019**

**WEDNESDAY, May 1, 2019**

**WEDNESDAY, June 5, 2019**

42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE



**RINGS OUT IN  
PHILADELPHIA**

**JULY 19-21, 2019**

The 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019 at the Philadelphia 201 Hotel. The Conference is a weekend spent surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. With inspirational keynote speakers, abundant workshops for everyone's wants and needs, and a remembrance candle lighting program culminating with the annual Walk to Remember, this time of healing and hope is the gift we give ourselves. Join us as together we remember and share the everlasting love we have for our precious children, siblings and grandchildren. Registration is now open. [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## **Poem to Brennan**

### ***Footprints***

By Maura Taylor

I touch the footprints on the page  
And feel your tiny feet in the palm of my hand

Soft, pink, and perfect  
Ticklish to the touch

Leaving a forever imprint on my heart



## **Angel of My Tears**

Author Unknown

Shared by Tyniesha Williams,  
TCF Bustleton, PA Chapter

How do you love a person who never got to be,  
or try to envision a face you never got to see?

How do you mourn the death of one who never got to live,  
when there's nothing to feel good about and nothing to forgive?

I love you, my little baby, my companion of the night.  
Wandering through my lonely hours, beautiful and bright.

What does it mean to die before you ever were born,  
to live the lovely night of life and never see the dawn?

Ah! My little baby, you lived like anyone!  
Life's a burst of joy and pain. And then like yours, it's done.

I love you, my little baby, just as if you'd lived for years.  
No more, no less, I think of you, the Angel of my tears.

## The Dying Child

*By John Clare, 1793–1864*

He could not die when trees were green,  
For he loved the time too well.  
His little hands, when flowers were seen,  
Were held for the bluebell  
As he was carried o'er the green.

His eye glanced at the white-nosed bee;  
He knew those children of the spring:  
When he was well and on the lea  
He held one in his hands to sing,  
Which filled his heart with glee.

Infants, the children of the spring!  
How can an infant die  
When butterflies are on the wing,  
Green grass, and such a sky?  
How can they die at spring?

He held his hands for daisies white,  
And then for violets blue,  
And took them all to bed at night  
That in the green fields grew,  
As childhood's sweet delight.

And then he shut his little eyes,  
And flowers would notice not;  
Birds' nests and eggs caused no surprise,  
He now no blossoms got;  
They met with plaintive sighs.

When winter came and blasts did sigh,  
And bare were plain and tree,  
As he for ease in bed did lie  
His soul seemed with the free,  
He died so quietly



## MEL'S VIEW

### Our Mask

We wear a mask to the world. Friends look at us and may think we're okay but we're still hurting from Andy's death. We mask this feeling on the surface, but the emptiness is still inside and doesn't go away.

My wife Carol, our daughter Lesley, and I are all trying to pick up the pieces of our lives. We keep busy with work, school, and social activities. School and work don't give us any choices; they are obligations that must be met. But we also, I think, are consciously making efforts to keep busy socially. We do things on the weekend – go to restaurants, take day trips, and run around a lot. But I think these activities are just our mask to the world.

It was never more apparent than at the end of January when Lesley and I threw a surprise birthday party for Carol. When Lesley first broached the idea, I had qualms because the party would take place at the same time that a year ago we learned that Andy's "99.9%" benign tumor was malignant. It would be a difficult time and I didn't know how Carol would handle it – whether the emotion of what happened a year ago would overwhelm whatever happiness we hoped to achieve. Fortunately, it turned out well. We had a good time and laughed and enjoyed the party – but someone was missing.

The "but" of Andy's absence wasn't mentioned until the next morning and then it was in a humorous context as Lesley decided that he would have told his mother to dress well before she left the house because a lot of people would be there when she got back and he wanted her to look good for her surprise. But he wasn't there to do so nor to enjoy the party; yet we still enjoyed it. I have trouble wrestling with these conflicting emotions. Andy is gone and not here to share pleasant events with us. Whenever I have an enjoyable time I feel guilty and as if I should be showing my emotions not masking them.

The birthday celebration was a perfect example. Carol's birthday and mine are two days apart and the party fell on my birth date. When things quieted down, I couldn't help thinking about last year's birthday. Because we had just learned of Andy's cancer. I remember saying to one of my close friends at that time that it was the worst birthday of my life. She replied that the next year could be worse because Andy was still alive and we didn't know what course the disease would take.

Well, the year passed and Andy died. As we celebrated our birthdays this year, I had trouble dealing with these conflicting emotions. We enjoyed the party, but in the most important part, it was worse because Andy wasn't there to share it with us. As Carol said, we would give up all parties and celebrations forever to have Andy back. But, Andy loved parties.

Maybe that's why we keep going. Andy tried to do so much in the time he had. I like to think that we are helping keep his spirit alive by trying to do as much as we can, by trying to cram as much enjoyment out of life as we can because as we sadly learned, we don't know what the future holds. He said to us when he was in the hospital that he didn't want us to be sad if he didn't make it. Well Andy, if you are listening from some place, we are sad but we're also trying to live life the way you did and would have continued to do if given the chance.

Mel

# *The Sibling Nook*

## *Birthdays*

Birthdays are a reminder each year that our siblings existed. Every April 3<sup>rd</sup> I'm faced with the same question – what do I do with this day now that my brother is gone?

The first few years I tried to do something meaningful on that day. I made a Facebook event, a pay-it-forward type event where I asked everyone to be nice to someone, pay for someone's coffee or lunch. That first birthday people seemed to be on board. The second year some people participated and by the third year people had grown tired and stopped responding, or removed themselves from the event. Starting in year four I tried to focus on all the good birthday memories I have of him. His second birthday fell on Easter, and my mom made him a bunny cake. In elementary school he would have friend birthday parties at the pool in the Inn my grandmother worked at. Twenty one birthdays Brian celebrated. The one gift I've given myself in all these years of grief, is that I'm not worried that I cannot remember each of these birthday and that is okay.

A few years ago I bought cupcakes. And maybe I'll do that again this year.

How do you celebrate your siblings birthday?

Amanda Greenwood  
TCF Greater Baltimore



## I'M SORRY FOR THE THINGS I DIDN'T DO

It's too late to say "I'm sorry"  
for the things I didn't do.  
It's too late to say, "Forgive me,  
and I'll make it up to you"  
For you're gone now, forever.  
Oh, if you only knew,  
"Kid Brother," just how much  
I miss you.

No more teasing, no more  
pleasing,  
No more borrowing the car,  
No more promising to be careful,  
No more sneaking in the pickle  
jar.

God in Heaven, please take care  
Of that brother of mine.  
He was so sweet, so tender, and  
kind.

Oh, Dear God, when you see him  
Please tell him for me  
That I miss him something awful,  
Though I have my memories.  
And, Dear God, there is  
something  
That I'm asking of you –  
Ask Jimmie to please forgive me  
For the things I didn't do.

Laura Mae Martin TCF, Grand Junction,





### **Rhythm...**

I watched you tear up those keys and pour your heart

You held court boy

And they still talk about it, I mean, how you did it

Because there's still something

About that rhythm

The way you played the key and strummed the chords

After they told you the first time

You played

After they poisoned you, you said "thank you" and

You played

When they said their final goodbye, before you left the hospital

You played for them

I watched you tear up those keys and pour your heart

You held court boy

And they still talk about it, I mean, how you did it

Because there's still something

About that rhythm

For my son Michael R. Cretella, a fine person, period.

Arlene R. Gioia, Baltimore, MD



**April****May****Birth Days**

Claire Tae Madsen  
 Ian Scher  
 Brian Allen Sweet  
 Benjamin Gehring  
 Zachary Beresford Clement  
 John Adam Corvin, Jr.  
 Karin Suzanne Masal-Hurley  
 Kent Ferree  
 Earl John Kohlhepp  
 Joseph Edward Belcher, Jr.  
 Samantha Lynch  
 Kenny Klingmeyer  
 Brendan James Huber  
 Joseph Sanfilippo  
 Robert Lee Johnson  
 Marcie Elizabeth Warch  
 Ashlyn Marie Sutherland  
 Jonathan Paul Daily  
 Jagger Lee Whisler-Crawford  
 Nicole Harlow  
 Lauryn Marie Little  
 Hayden Bradley Hoffman  
 Julie Ann Webster  
 Joseph Miranda  
 Channing Lane Wiles  
 Isabella Sue Pennel  
 Dillon James Shelton  
 Chelsea Rae Propper  
 Alan Scott Greenbaum  
 Genevieve Wilson  
 Daniel Scottodifrega  
 Amelia Panuska  
 Joseph Edward Benham  
 Steve Posedenti, Jr.  
 Yves Hugo Cubillos  
 Robert Palese  
 Carmen Odessa Dixon

**Remembrance Days**

Thomas Russell Coburn, Jr.  
 Kyle Aaron Snow  
 Sofia Francesca OLoughlin  
 Rozanne Storm  
 Curtis Jerome Gaither  
 Andy Dorsey  
 Mark D. Sokolik  
 Virgil Maupin  
 Esther Ann Brown Adler  
 Michael Vincent Manieri  
 Judah Ahiva Blakeslee-Ringer  
 Brian McBride Morris  
 Corinne Palo Ferguson  
 Beth Szczepanski  
 Hugo G. Jeffery Orbach  
 Hayden Bradley Hoffman  
 Ramie Lamont Mays, Jr.  
 Channing Lane Wiles  
 Garrett Nelson  
 Matthew Jonis Johnson  
 Isabella Sue Pennel  
 Rowan Grace Maisey-Brownfield  
 Mason Griffin Medicus  
 Steve Posedenti, Jr.  
 Christopher Ryan LePore  
 Cathi Faye Horst  
 Samuel Sam Raymond Cook  
 Jonah Alexander Respass  
 Galen Harig-Blaine  
 Michael James McQuaid  
 Joshua Matthew Belanger

**Birth Days**

Beatrice Bug Taggart-Hurst  
 Sidney Louis AuFseeser Tremoulet  
 Andrea Shari Heymar  
 Thomas B. Malenski  
 Henry (Hank) Long  
 Anthony Pierce, Jr.  
 Joel Aiden  
 Michael Rosario Cretella  
 Brian Eanet  
 Sarah Jayne Orton  
 Tom Sawyer  
 Aiyana Clime Coates  
 Chester Kirk Drew, Jr.  
 Rickey Donnell Henry II  
 Erica Jane Green  
 Louis Ashok Lowenthal  
 Franklin Woodrow Hughes, Jr.  
 Parker Michael Willoughby  
 Kelly Murphy  
 Joshua Clark  
 Belicia Hirsch  
 Angelina Hirsch  
 Eric Nolan Ramey  
 Tracy Lee Freeman  
 Devon Maryl Jagler  
 Dahlia Katherine Osman  
 Bryan Bolster  
 Ryan Michael Sheahy  
 Lillian Naomi Johnson  
 Anthony Brannock  
 Ian Brannock  
 Taavon L. Brown  
 Kevin Michael Ryan  
 Ramie Lamont Mays, Jr.  
 Stacey Lourn Gregg  
 Jessica Brower-McGonigal  
 Jenne Elynn Gans  
 Karie Rebecca Dietz  
 Kyle Brandon Rembert  
 Dimitra Y. Whittington  
 Marie Kamara  
 Tiffany Renee Russell  
 Shannon Lynne Van Gilder  
 Brooklynn Wilhite  
 Keteylan Garner  
 Mateo Brannock  
 Danny Lee Gruz  
 Wanda Louise Lulu Huester  
 Ashley Paige Tollenger  
 Daniel Vincent Staib  
 Patrick Michael Butler  
 Stanley Jermone Schisler

**Remembrance Days**

John Joseph Grandruth  
 Colin Arthur Mascuch  
 Reese Annette Bowman  
 Claire Tae Madsen  
 Sidney Louis AuFseeser Tremoulet  
 Caleb Aaron Moulton  
 Tara Ardetta Davis  
 Joel Aiden  
 Gregory David Albrecht  
 Eric Thalwitzer  
 Aiyana Clime Coates  
 Chester Kirk Drew, Jr.  
 Erica Jane Green  
 Drew William Putzel  
 Gregory Thomas Le Sueur  
 Brendan James Huber  
 Belicia Hirsch  
 Angelina Hirsch  
 Shawn Michael Fischer  
 Jewel Donte Thomas  
 Sarah Marie Stebbins  
 Nicole Harlow  
 Julio "Speedy" Gonzalez II  
 Anthony Brannock  
 Ian Brannock  
 Mackenzie Helen Caudell  
 Rebecca Hild Caudell  
 Taavon L. Brown  
 Connor Elliott King  
 Daniel Anderson Bowling  
 Angela Cheek-Barnett  
 Alan Scott Greenbaum  
 Amy Marie Adams  
 Genevieve Wilson  
 Mateo Brannock  
 Angela Iyonna Amaya Jones  
 Yves Hugo Cubillos  
 David Culbertson  
 Reece Taylor Stevens  
 Jesse Hollen Elkins  
 Matthew John Payne

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**Meeting Information**

The First Wednesday of the month at:  
Govans Presbyterian Church  
5828 York Road  
Baltimore, MD 21212  
7:30-9:30 PM

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**To Our New Members:**

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. We do understand.

**To Our Seasoned Members:**

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. TCF is here to welcome you, share your grief and encourage you.

*APRIL SHOWERS*



*ARE LIKE GRIEF*

*PART OF THE NATURAL  
PROCESS*

**The Sibling Corner**

Our chapter hosts a Sibling Group which coincides with our regular meeting time. There are so many special issues that occur when you lose a brother or sister. This group offers a safe place for you to share your challenges, concerns and successes when you walk this path. Siblings age 18 and over are welcome and encouraged to attend. This will be facilitated by siblings for siblings.