



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Greater Baltimore Chapter
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Newsletter

May/June 2011

Dear Compassionate Friends:

Along with April showers, May flowers, and some really beautiful weather, spring also brings challenges for many of us. Beginning with Mother's Day and graduations in May and Father's Day in June, we are often blindsided and our loss can be magnified. Being part of the supportive circle at Compassionate Friends can help us to work through our loss.

Please remember that this newsletter is for you to provide an opportunity for additional support outside the meetings, maintain a connection with members who cannot always get to meeting, and provide outreach to those who may not be ready to attend a meeting.

We welcome your:

- *Poetry (original or poems you've read and like)*
- *Book reviews (what books have really helped you?)*
- *Fundraising/events (either in memory of your child or in support of national organizations)*

All input can be sent via email to:

newsletter@BaltimoreTCF.com

Or via hard copy mail to:

The deadline for the next bimonthly newsletter is the June 25.

Thank you.

Linda, Diane and Maura

"When the child you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure."

~Author Unknown

Monthly Meeting Information

Baltimore County-The First Wednesday
Brown Woodbrook Memorial Presbyterian Church
6200 N. Charles St. Baltimore
7:30-9:30 PM

Harford County-The Third Wednesday
Mountain Christian Church
New Life Center Room 124-126
1802 Mountain Rd. Joppa
7:00-9:00 PM

TCF Chapter Contact Information

Chapter Leader: Garrett Tollenger,
410-879-5422, info@baltimoretcf.com
Newsletter editor: Maura Taylor,
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The Sibling Corner

Our Towson chapter meeting 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 will offer a safe place for you to share your challenges, concerns and successes when walking this path. Siblings age 16 and over are welcome and encouraged to attend. This will be facilitated by siblings for siblings.

GRANDMA'S ANGEL

By Rosetta Hall

**CAME TOO SOON!
SHE WAS ABOUT THE SIZE OF A TABLE
SPOON.
COULDN'T HARDLY SEE HER WHEN YOU
WALKED IN THE ROOM.
SO SMALL AND FRAGILE YOU COULD HAVE
SWEEPED HER AWAY WITH A BROOM.
SHE HAD A PRETTY ROUND FACE THAT LIT UP
LIKE THE MOON.
NEVER MISSING A DAY AT THE HOSPITAL,
ARRIVING AT NOON.
GRANDMA LOVE BROOKLYN
GONE TOO SOON!**

Lemons to Lemonade

Sunshine's Angels

Sunshine's Angels, Inc. is the creation of Vicki Bull and her family who are members of the Harford County Compassionate Friends Group.

This non-profit organization was founded by Vicki Bull, the mother of 28 yrs. old Sunshine Royston. On September 13, 2008, Sunshine was killed in a limousine accident one week before she was to be married. She left behind three small children, 5 years, 3 years, & 8 months old, a groom, and a grieving family.

The foundation's goal is to help children, like her own grandchildren, who, at a very young age, have experienced trauma or grief. The motto and goal is Benefiting Therapeutic Care for Trauma & Grief Stricken Children

The next fundraiser will be the 2nd Annual SUNSHINE 5k run/walk on July 17th.

Vicki Thiess-Bull

Donations/ registrations needed. Please join us in our task to raise funds for Children in need of Grief/Trauma Therapy. Sunday, July 17th for our 2nd Annual 5k walk/run @ 8:00 am starting @ North Harford High School. We need you! www.sunshinesangels.com



Sunshine & daughter, Easter 2008

Ryan's Gift

We are happy to announce we are returning to the newly renovated University of Maryland Golf Course for our 4th Annual Kevin Ryan's Gift Memorial Golf Tournament. The course will be in great shape, as it will have just been the host of the Nationwide Tour's Melwood Prince George's County Open.

Our first three years have all been great successes; all of the proceeds have gone to the Kevin Ryan's Gift Memorial Endowed Scholarship at Towson University. We have raised over \$125,000 through the generosity of many companies and individuals. The support has been nothing short of incredible. Our family is eternally thankful to all of the participants of our previous outings.

Many of you know Kevin's story, but some do not. We lost Kevin when he was struck by a drunk driver in October, 2007, his freshman year at Towson. Kevin was a fun loving young man truly full of life. He was able to touch many lives, which is why so many people support our cause of helping others. This golf outing is a testament to Kevin's caring nature and larger than life spirit. You can join us and help college students facing college debt by honoring Kevin.

In each of the past two years, we were able to award two scholarships to a very special, young man and a talented, young woman, Jim Podhomik and Kathryn Kelly. Your tax-deductible donation will help them and other deserving students realize their dreams at Towson University. Students qualify for the scholarship if they demonstrate academic excellence, participate in Scouting and show a strong desire to achieve in their college career like Kevin did. It is our hope that we will assist many young people in the future with this tribute.

We are going to work hard to make this year's tournament the most successful to date. Please join us as a business sponsor or silent auction donor, which we will advertise at the tournament. Feel free to contact me at (410) 531-8531 with any questions. For additional sponsorship and registration information, see the attached form or go to www.KeinRyansGift.org.

Sincerely,

Jamie Ryan
Golf Committee Co-Chair

Gifts to the Foundation qualify as charitable contributions to an IRC Section 501(c)(3) public charity for federal income, estate and gift tax purposes.

PO Box 145 ♦ Simpsonville, MD 21150-0145 ♦ Phone 410-531-8531 ♦ www.kevinryansgift.org



Save the Date: TCF's 34th National Conference will be held in Minneapolis/St. Paul July 15-17, 2011 at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel. You will find it to be another great conference with around 100 workshops, sharing sessions, special keynote speakers at the Opening, Closing and Friday Afternoon and Saturday Evening banquets, Hospitality Room, Butterfly Room, Reflection Room, a completely stocked bookstore, special Friday evening entertainment and a Remembrance Candle Lighting. TCF's Walk to Remember will be held Sunday morning.

Reservations can now be made at special conference rates for hotel rooms for the 2011 TCF National Conference at the host hotel, the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, Minneapolis South. Reservations can be made online or by calling a special reservation number. For more information, please see www.thecompassionatefriends.org and click on News & Events.

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May/June Remembrances

In May and June, we remember the following children.

May Birthdays

*Dahlia Katherine Osman
Bryan Boister
Chester Kirk Drew, Jr.
Ryan Michael Sheahy
Lillian Naomi Johnson
Anthony Brannock
Ian Brannock
Taavon L. Brown
Kevin Michael Ryan
Ramie Lomont Mays, Jr.
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
Ali Muhammed
Keteylan Garner
Mateo Brannock
Danny Lee Gruzs
Ashley Paige Tollenger
Daniel Vincent Staib
Patrick Michael Butler
Stanley Jermone Schisler*

May Heaven Days

*Julio Speedy Gonzalez
Chester Kirk Drew, Jr.
Anthony Brannock
Ian Brannock
Mackenzie Helen Caudell
Rebecca Hild Caudell
Taavon L. Brown
Connor Elliot 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*

June Birthdays

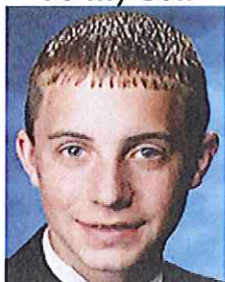
*Christopher (Lois Clark)
Daid Michael Kappes
Rachel Marie Wade
James R. Cullum
Anna Marie Stickel
Kelsey Elaine Brown
Daniel James Russell, jr.
Chip Carroll Wyrde
Rowan Grace Maisey-Brownfield
Larry Schultz, III
Paul J. Schmitt
Heather Anderson
Christopher Black
D.J. Knight
Jacob Edward Ramos-Grey
Matthew Sam Young
James Walter Babcock*

June Heaven Days

*Wayne Granger
John Christopher Adams
James R. Cullum
Michael Orien Colotti
Christina Lee Boles-Fitch
Daniel James Russell, Jr.
Nelson Yargar, III
Emily Ann Higgins
Benjamin Huxtable
Steven Gregory Radford
Kayla Anna Boone
Stephen John Schultz, III
James Theodore Smith
Stephen J. Schultz
Aubrey Christina Wiseman
Daniel Vincent Staib
Jamshid Ghannad*

****Please let us know if anyone was left off the list. We are still updating our database.*

To my son



DANIEL VINCENT STAIB
(May 15, 1983 to June 20, 2006)

IN MEMORY - FIVE YEARS LATER

That beautiful June morning, summer dreams
streaming light, opening your bedroom door,
forever, for me the brightness, the sunshine,
turned to eternal night.

Unbelievably,
my son was gone, my sun was gone
forever, for me nothing could ever be right.
Blackness, darkness closed in
blankness, shock, disbelief,
seeing your body at rest,
knowing your soul at peace

But for me, my son was gone,
my sun was gone forever, for me
the heartbreaking sorrow, the loss,
the unrelenting sadness, the despairing grief
in this life, will never cease.
Without you, Dan,
this never ending journey of grief
Forever, for me is too hard, too long
Yet, in my heart, I remember other goodbyes
When, my son was gone, my sun was gone

Before you left you would hug me tight,
telling me not to cry, that it would be alright,
saying "Mom, just be strong!"
So remembering your love,
I will hold you in my heart and
think of your request,
through this unending journey of grief
I will do my best!

Unbelievably, heartbreakingly
from this awesome life
you are already gone!

But because you loved me
and you asked me to
for you, for always
until we meet again..
I WILL BE STRONG!!

Peace!

Dan... you are forever loved, always missed,
never forgotten!
In my heart forever!!
love, mom

Linda Ann Staib, 6/20/2011
Member, Harford County Compassionate
Friends

Dan has an official website that was created
for him by his older brother "Duffy".
www.DanielStaib.com There you can scroll
down and click to see special slide shows
and presentations, read my eulogy, sign the
guest book etc.

Those who knew Dan can visit this tribute
site and remember their times with him.
Those who did not know Dan can visit his
website and see what a special person he was
to all of us who loved him and miss him now.

We really appreciate that YOU would be part
of the remembrance of DAN!!!

Father's Day Is Still a Time for Celebrating . . .

A long time has passed since I've enjoyed
a holiday—or for that matter any special occasion.

With Father's Day coming up shortly, I've
decided that this year I'm celebrating.

The kids used to love when special
occasions came along. I can still remember Stef's
eighth birthday, only three months before her
death, and how proud she was when we told her
she could invite her best friends over for a
birthday party. She wore her prettiest blue
trimmed party dress with the lace ruffles.

The games they played still stick in my
mind. There was "pin the tail on the donkey" and
then "Simon Says." I remember clothes flying
everywhere in a contest to see which child could
put on a complete set of clothes fastest over her
party clothes. I remember the hotdogs, punch and
cake, the party favors. I remember Stef's giggles.

The memories also wander back to the
party our family threw for Stephen's fifth birthday,
only three days before the accident which also
claimed his life. I still have the picture in my mind
of that goofy orange cap someone had given
Steve. He loved it, but it was at least two sizes too
small. When he tried to put it on, the bill of the
cap was up and Stephen flashed us one of those
impish grins that reminds you of Spanky and Our
Gang.

As I'm writing this, the tears are flowing down my
cheeks remembering the good times we had
together.

A lot of things changed when the kids died. Christmas, Easter, birthdays all became days other people celebrated. But not us.

I've done a lot of thinking since then. I know Stef and Steve are in a better place than I could ever imagine and that every day is a holiday for them. In my mind, I think Stef and Stephen would be sad if they felt their Mom and Dad couldn't celebrate life anymore.

Pat and I now have another son, Christopher, plus we have our fourth child on the way. We're trying to rebuild our lives and I feel we have been blessed along the way. Of course, Christopher is too young to understand Father's Day, but even without him here, I would still consider celebrating Father's Day.

I can still remember the Father's Day a couple of years before Stef and Stephen died. With their mom, they had searched all over for something special for me, finally deciding on a T-Shirt that said "World's Coolest Dad." I still wear that now faded shirt occasionally despite the many grass stains and grease marks.

When Father's Day arrives, I think I'm going to pull out that old T-Shirt and wear it.

I'm going to lay down out in the grass, letting the warm breeze hit me. And I'm going to pretend I'm being caressed by Stef and Steve. I'm going to remember . . . and I'm going to celebrate!!!

Wayne Loder
TCF Lakes Area, MI



The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

Siblings Walking Together (formerly *The Sibling Credo*)

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.

Sign up for Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter

The Compassionate Friends National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its 630 chapters.

Published once a month (as well as occasional special editions), the e-newsletter includes information on such things as TCF National Conferences, the Walk to Remember, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, regional conferences, and other events of importance.

Each e-newsletter also includes a story specially selected from a past edition of *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends. For the siblings, the e-newsletter features a past question and answer column by Dr. Mary Paulson.

All you have to do to receive The Compassionate Friends e-newsletter is sign up for it online by visiting The Compassionate Friends national website at www.compassionatefriends.org and clicking on e-newsletter at the top of the Home page.

This Healing Journey an Anthology for Bereaved Siblings

Questions and Answers

"I can't remember exactly how she looked. Does this mean I'm forgetting her?"

No, even if your sister were alive you wouldn't be able to recall everything about her. It is natural to forget some details, but many gestures and memories will be in your heart forever.

"I'm so tired of trying to make it through every day. I smile on the outside, but inside I scream! I'm still not over his death - but everyone expects me to be. Is there something wrong with me?"

No. Your brother was close to you and his dying hurts. Probably no one but another bereaved person can fully understand what you're feeling. You can contact a group of bereaved siblings so that you can express your feelings and be understood and accepted.

"I can't concentrate. I can't think and I can't remember a thing. I think I am losing my mind."

You have not lost your mind, although it may feel that way. Your mind is probably just overloaded. Not only do you have to continue to go through your daily routine, but your mind is flooded with thoughts and feelings for your brother or sister. This is temporary. Your memory and concentration will return

Mother's Day Floods the Heart with Memories

By Annette Mennen Baldwin

I remember the day you were born; it was the Wednesday after Mother's Day in 1967. The first time I held you and looked at your sweet face, your rosebud mouth, tiny nose, big, soft eyes and long eyelashes, my heart was forever captured. You wrapped your little hand around my finger and looked at me as if you'd known me forever. For over an hour, silent tears trickled down my face

An unexplained sadness swept over me. I blamed it on the war of the day in the Middle East, Vietnam, the mess we mortals had made of the world. But mostly it was fear for your future in an uncertain, mean world-how to keep you safe yet not smother you. In that hour I came to see the deepest meaning of a Mother's love.

Last year was my first Mother's Day without you. I went to the cedar chest you gave me

and took out all the Mother's Day cards you had ever given me. I put them on the piano. The hand painted cards, the little hand plaque, the carefully written cards and finally the many cards you selected from age 12 until your 35th year. It was a painful day, a heartbreaking time for me. I thought of myself as a childless Mother. Will I torture myself again this year? I don't think so. This year I will quietly and thankfully remember that you were in my life for over 35 years. I will reflect on the fact that the single defining moment in my life was your birth. I reframed my life on that day. Had you never lived, I would be a different person today. Learning to put the needs and wants of my only child ahead of all else has made me a better person. I loved being your Mom, watching you learn to walk and talk, grow and learn. Answering your questions, helping you with your projects and studies, encouraging you, talking with you, candidly discussing your strengths and teaching you to capitalize on those strengths while minimizing the impact of any weaknesses. Gradually you became self-sufficient, kind and gentle, concerned about others, soft-spoken and quietly independent. You learned to keep your own counsel, lend a hand when needed and see people with your heart but evaluate situations with your mind. Intuitively I cautioned you against violence, alcohol, drugs, meaningless pursuits, dysfunctional and negative people. In the process of helping to form who you were and how you perceived the world, I became a better person. You became the man that every Mother wants her son to be: strong, self-sufficient, kind, loving, balanced, mature and accomplished.

You are my son. And while we no longer inhabit the same plane, the wonders and joy of our time together on this earth will sustain me always. While I live there will always be silent tears of overwhelming sadness, but these are tempered by the wonderful memories we shared. In my heart I hear your wishes for a Happy Mother's Day.

