



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Greater Baltimore Chapter  
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## Newsletter

November, 2010

Dear Compassionate Friends:

Greetings! As we revive the newsletter for the Greater Baltimore Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, we want to hear from you.

The goal of our newsletter is to share information, 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.

In addition to including general chapter and national information, some examples of input we would like to have from you are:

- 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)

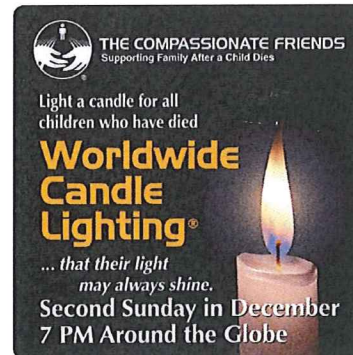
All input can be sent via email to:  
[newsletter@BaltimoreTCF.com](mailto:newsletter@BaltimoreTCF.com)  
Or via hard copy mail to:  
The deadline for the monthly newsletter is the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Thank you.

Linda, Helen, Diane and Maura

### Candle Lighting Ceremony

Sunday, December 12, 2010, 7 pm  
Brown Memorial Woodbrook  
Presbyterian Church  
6200 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore/Towson



Our Children Remembered will be held in memory of our children who have gone before us. During the service a family member will read the name of their loved one. During the reading of name(s), each family will light a candle for their child(ren). Families are invited to read a story, a poem, sing a song or play music in honor of their child. Families are also invited to create a decorative butterfly with their child's name on it. Bring your special butterfly to be included in Madeline's Butterfly Garden. This precious garden use to adorn the hallway into the Chapel but has been moved to the lobby outside of the Sanctuary. Inspired by the following true story, this garden is dedicated to Abigail and Madeline. Please continue reading for Madeline's story. If you would like to include your child's name in the program or to request to speak, read a poem, play a song, etc., please email (with candlelight in the subject line): [info@baltimoretcf.com](mailto:info@baltimoretcf.com) by Dec. 1.



## Madeline's Butterflies

Inspired by the following true story, this is dedicated to Abigail and Madeline. Here's Madeline's story:



## Madeline's Butterflies

Every year TCF has a memorial service in December to honor and remember all of our children. Last year (2003), I brought my daughter Madeline who was 2 years old. We were going to remember her twin sister Abigail, who was stillborn.

We were running late, as usual, and were the only ones walking down the hallway to the Chapel. The hallway had bare white walls with no decorations anywhere. As I was rushing to get inside the Chapel, Madeline stopped in the middle of the hallway and said, "Mommy, look at all the butterflies." I asked her where they were, and she said they were everywhere.

I know she was seeing the spirit of her sister and of all our children who are always with us. It's comforting to think that they all know each other as well. I like to think that they can look out for each other in the same way that my TCF sisters and brothers look out for me.

*Sharon*, mother to Abigail and Madeline

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## Holiday Help---

The holidays can be a particularly challenging time for us all. Some of us find comfort in maintaining traditions, some of us find comfort in changing traditions, some of us simply let the holidays go by as if they were just another day. If you do not have a place to spend a holiday, or simply want to do something different and would like to join the family of one of our members, let us know. If, as a member, you would like to open your home/holiday tradition to another compassionate friend, let us know. We will see that people get connected.

Email to: [newsletter@BaltimoreTCF.com](mailto:newsletter@BaltimoreTCF.com)

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## 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.

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## 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

## Something new for our chapter!

Beginning in January at Towson, a separate **Sibling Group** will meet and coincide 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. This will be facilitated by siblings for siblings.

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### Fire In The Trees (An Ode To An American Fall)

Is summer really over?  
A few more days, please!  
Look - it's just beginning -  
There's fire in the trees.

Indian summer fooled us;  
Now I feel a cool breeze.  
Don't forget a sweater!  
There's fire in the trees.

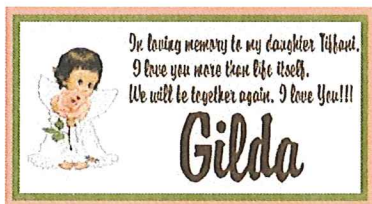
Pine cones and acorns,  
Pretty dancing leaves,  
Orange, crimson, gold  
Make a fire in the trees.

Birds fly south, squirrels hide nuts,  
Mice come in, seeking cheese.  
Somehow they know when  
There's fire in the trees.

Lovely smiling flowers  
Unaware of the coming freeze;  
Raked are piles of ashes  
From the fire in the trees.

Beautiful fall, so quickly gone;  
Cold outside; cover that sneeze!  
Get out the blankets, turn on the heat.  
There's fire in the trees.

Harvest of pumpkins, grapes and corn,  
We give thanks on bended knees.  
Gray skies mean winter's coming!  
Gone is the fire in the trees.



## November Remembrances

In November, we remember the following children.

### November Birthdays

*Abigail Calvano*  
*Alex Shippee*  
*Daniele Anderson bowling*  
*Darrell Maurice Holmes*  
*Ian Howard*  
*Irene Matthews*  
*James Theodore Smith*  
*Jeffrey Van Wade*  
*Justin Matthew Gregg*  
*Kaia Morgan Moten Brown*  
*Karlee Marie Andrews*  
*Kaylan Arnold*  
*Sean Hayes*  
*Tiffani Rose Wiberg*  
*William Michael Hogan*  
*Galen Harig-Blaine*

### November Heaven Days

*Abigail Calvano*  
*Brandon Douglas*  
*Cesear Augusto Villacres*  
*Gene Rossmark, Jr.*  
*Ian Howard*  
*Joe Harlee*  
*Kaia Morgan Moten Brown*  
*Kyle Brandon Rembert*  
*Larry Dix, III*  
*Mikhail Alexander strong*  
*Ruairi McCracken*  
*Tiffany Renee Russell*

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



### Our Children's Playground – Dedication Ceremony

Tuesday, October 26, a new playground for children was dedicated at Sweet Air Park in Jacksonville, Maryland. The culmination of several dreams came true that blustery morning.

After years of struggling to cover our low monthly expenses, we were blessed with a substantial bequest in 2007. Frances Harris remembered our chapter in her will with a simple request in return. We plant a tree in memory of her son – Jeffery Alan Harris – and that it be planted on the grounds of GBMC. For over 18 months we were repeatedly stonewalled calling various departments within this organization. It took one year to get a single response from the Board saying they would look into it and then nothing.

Already linked into the Halloween Hustle, a fund raising activity for the MOMS Club of Cockeysville/Jacksonville and Parkton, an idea began to form. Why not plant the tree where children would be playing? So began another journey of supporting this group of moms who, over time ended up losing not just little 4 year old Ben Huxtable but also Wade Duff, Quinlan Kolb and others from this same group. Once the date for the dedication was set, Garrett Tollenger got busy getting approvals from Baltimore County, choosing a location for the tree and getting tree bids. He dogged this effort resulting in success at the very last moment!

The morning of the dedication threatened rain. As dignitaries gathered and news crews set up, the sun played peak-a-boo – appropriate for a children's playground. Several groups of pre-school children gathered and grew restless as the ceremony played out. Finally the ribbon was cut with the aid of the children. Tears of relief and gratitude were shared by Christine Huxtable, Ben's mom, and her family along with the committee who tirelessly worked to make this dream come true. The playground is awesome! Since pictures don't do it justice, consider taking a fall drive to the park to see for yourself.

As you approach the portal entrance you'll see a lovely crepe myrtle planted just to the left. This is the Harris family tree. On behalf of Frances Harris and her son, Jeffrey Alan Harris, we hope it

provides shade and beauty to generations of families playing, laughing and remembering together.

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### The Book Nook

*A Broken Heart Still Beats After Your Child Dies*, by Anne McCracken and Mary Semel

"We Need Not Walk Alone" – this reminds us that through TCF we are not on this journey of grief by ourselves. Through monthly meetings, phone conversations, newsletters, conferences or other gatherings, we learn there is hope. When my son, Jim, died, I turned to books as usual. Whether browsing shelves at the local Barnes & Noble or getting recommendations, I was picky about what came home. Something had to touch me, inspire me or it wasn't invited to join my journey.

Leafing through this book, I was taken by the names of bereaved parents – Albert Camus, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Sophocles, Eric Clapton, W.E.B. Du Bois, Rita Dove, Charles Lamb, Abraham & Mary Lincoln, Mark Twain, William Shakespeare, Anne Lindbergh to name only a few. Tom and I were already meeting a steady stream of newly bereaved parents as the months of our own grief were unfolding. Here was a much needed reminder that we were now part of broader reality previously set aside in our daily move through life.

Within the excerpts of poems, articles, speeches I began to breathe easier and my mind softened. These parents lost their children in every way imaginable and yet, they found reason to move forward. Some found greatness, others followed quieter paths. But all held onto a purposeful life. I often recommend this book if only to grab it off the shelf and randomly read in moments of despair. An excerpt:

*Isadora Duncan after the drowning death of her two young children:*

"From then on I lived at Viareggio, finding courage from the radiance of Eleanora's eyes (actress Eleanora Duse). She used to rock me in her arms, consoling my pain, but not only consoling for she seemed to take my sorrow to her own breast and I realized that if I had not been able to bear the society of other people, it was because they all played the comedy of trying to cheer me with forgetfulness.

Whereas, Eleanora said: "Tell me about Dierdre and Patrick, and made me repeat to her all their little sayings and ways, and show her their photos, which she kissed and cried over. She never said, "Cease to grieve" but she grieved with me, and, for the first time since their death, I felt I was not alone."