



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

Greater Baltimore Chapter  
P.O. Box 2103  
Ellicott City, MD 21041-2103  
410-560-3358  
[www.baltimoretcf.com](http://www.baltimoretcf.com)

## Newsletter

Winter 2011/2012

Dear Compassionate Friends:

*The new year has begun, and with it we are left to face the reality of another year without our loved one. It is often difficult to find joy in celebrations, or anything when we are immersed in our grief. And, for those of us who have come to a place of acceptance, it is still often difficult to fully enjoy certain events and/or times of the year because they bring back memories that remind us how much our heart aches.*

*For me, the new year is always a challenge because my grandson was born on January 5, 2009, and starting around December, I begin remembering each day leading up to his birthday. On his birthday, I remember each hour until the hour he was born and I first held him. I try to hold on to the immense joy and love I felt when he entered my life, but even writing about it just now brings tears to my eyes. I think about him every day and miss him always. On my bad days, I miss the life I think my family would have had if he were still here. On my better days, I am grateful for the love I do have in my life. On my good days, I feel blessed to have had him touch my life, even if it was only three months.*

*I think everyone has a time or times of the year that are particularly difficult, and Compassionate Friends is always here to help carry us all through those times when we can't always pick ourselves up.*

*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](mailto:newsletter@BaltimoreTCF.com)**

Or via hard copy mail to:

The deadline for the next newsletter is March 30.

Thank you, Maura

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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

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### TCF Chapter Contact Information

Chapter Leader: Garrett Tollenger,  
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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.

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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.



## Worldwide Candle

### Lighting

Once again, the Baltimore Chapter of The Compassionate Friends held its annual Worldwide Candle Lighting. The December 11 event nearly filled the church.

It was a beautiful and moving event from start to finish. Family members were greeted as they entered and invited to make a butterfly to add to our permanent butterfly wall. Harford County TCF member, Diane P. and her sister once again put together a beautiful memory table. Neil G. once again gave his sound talent to the main event. And, Barbara and Howard once again ensured a lovely and plentiful reception afterward. And, of course there is no way to thank our chapter leader, Garrett Tollenger, for the countless hours he spends putting together the program and our regional leader Barbara Allen for all her time and talent.

As family members shared memories, poems, music, and read the names of their children, grandchildren, and siblings, I was deeply moved. Each year, this event gives me the strength I need to get through the tough upcoming holiday weeks. The love and compassion in the room fills me up and brings light into my being. If you have not attended before, I encourage you to mark your calendars now for this year's candlelighting, which will take place on December 9.

I am working on a special edition newsletter with pictures and stories, thoughts about the 2011 Candlelighting and would love to hear from you. What it meant to you, your reflections, etc. Also, if you have pictures of your loved one that you would like to include, please send (newsletter@BaltimoreTCF.com) them by March 25. My goal is to complete this project in April.

### Upcoming Chapter Event

At the **April 4** meeting of the Baltimore TCF, Sharon T. Strouse, M.A., A.T.R. will share her own powerful journey of healing grief through the creative process of collage making. She will present pieces of her own artwork, take you into the depths of self discovery, while discussing and answering questions about the evocative images of horror and hope that arose from her loss. You will see images that reflect fragmentation, chaos, reorganization, integration, forgiveness, and healing. Participants will have the opportunity to view the transformational use of images in healing, for "a picture is worth a thousand words."

Sharon has 25 years of clinical experience in both group and individual settings. She became a survivor of suicide on October 11, 2011, when her 17 year old daughter, Kristin Rita Strouse, ended her own life. This event began her journey into the depths of grief, self discovery, and healing. Her own creative process of collage making, in response to trauma of loss, has developed into a template of work with others. Currently, Sharon's work includes her Collage at the Refuge Circle, Soul Gatherings Meditation Circle, individual and Group Private Practice and Workshop Presentation of "The Art of healing" and "Wisdom Bowls" at local and national conferences. She was featured at the Bereaved Parents of the USA: Local, Regional, and National Conferences in 2004 and 2011, the National Compassionate Friends Conference in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011. She is a workshop presenter for The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. She is involved with Survivors of Suicide, The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and the Johns Hopkins Medicine: Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences: Adolescent Depression Awareness program. Sharon and her husband, Douglas, are also founders of The Kristin Rita Strouse Foundation ([www.krsf.com](http://www.krsf.com)), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to supporting programs that increase awareness of mental health through education and the arts.

We are very pleased to have Sharon Strouse ([www.attherefuge.com](http://www.attherefuge.com)) present to us at the April 4 meeting and hope you will be able to join us. Ms. Strouse will be presenting for the first 30 minutes of our meeting, so we will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m.

*Let yourself be silently drawn by the greater pull of what you really love. ~ Rumi*

### Upcoming Meeting Topics

What would you like to talk about? We'd love to hear your topic suggestions. Please email chapter leader, Garrett Tollenger, with your suggestions at [info@BaltimoreTCF.com](mailto:info@BaltimoreTCF.com).



## Gifts of Love

A love gift is a gift of money to The Greater Baltimore Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but it can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of the chapter. Some people contribute in memory of other's children...this is a wonderful way for others to say, "I am remembering your child." Other "Gifts of Love" are evident by all other compassionate and giving volunteers we have within our TCF Baltimore organization. If you would like to support the work of The Greater Baltimore Chapter of The Compassionate Friends by making a love gift, please send your check to:

The Greater Baltimore Chapter of TCF, P.O. Box 2103, Ellicott City, MD 21041-2103. Please indicate to whom you would like your gift dedicated. All gifts are tax deductible.

All chapters within TCF are totally dependent on funds from our families. We DO NOT receive funds from the National Office. Everything we need to operate our local chapters is paid directly from our local resources and our local family contributions. Thank you to all who contribute and support your local chapters.



The following donations are in support of the Baltimore Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

Maria & Rich Pang  
*In memory of their son*  
*Samuel Ying Fu Pang*

Marcia & Gary Smith  
*In memory of their son*  
*James T. Smith*

Paula Orbach  
*In memory of her son*  
*H.G. Jeffrey Orbach*

Anthony & Carol Gatto  
*In memory of*  
*Kelsey Elaine Brown*

*Pearl Greenbaum*  
*In memory of her son*  
*Alan Scot Greenbaum*

Rose and John Link  
*In memory of their son*  
*Kenny Walter Link*

Mary Beckenholdt  
*In memory of her sister*  
*Wanda Louise "Lulu" Huester*

Whitney Treseder and Craig Bettenhausen  
*In memory of their daughter*  
*Anna Treseder Bettenhausen*

Kathleen Sharps  
*In memory of her son*  
*Chester Kirk Drew, Jr.*

Joyce Rossi and Erick and Lynn Petterson  
*In memory of their grandson and son*  
*Chad Petterson*

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**The Bustle in the House (1108) by Emily Dickinson**  
*The Bustle in a House*  
*The Morning after Death*  
*Is solemnest of industries*  
*Enacted upon Earth —*

*The Sweeping up the Heart*  
*And putting Love away*  
*We shall not want to use again*  
*Until Eternity —*

## Member Corner.....

### *Lemons to Lemonade*

Baltimore TCF member, Maita Pang is on the run again! Maita Pang has signed up to run in six sprint triathalons and would like to offer our membership the opportunity to sponsor her and raise funds for the Baltimore TCF.

#### ***Get to know Maita....***

Maita started working out with Jane Fonda's first video when she was 19 after suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome. Since then, she dedicated herself to aerobics, spinning, yoga and weight training. Sporting amazing energy, she took her athleticism to the gym 5 times a week during school and after work when she was in New York. When she moved to San Francisco in 2000 she found that running was much more enjoyable because of the wonderful outdoors and scenery of Golden Gate Park and the Presidio. However, having done a few marathons and some 5 and 10Ks, Maita began to need a little variety in her workouts. She started training for triathlons in the last few years and found it great!

When finding some down time from training, Maita takes care of her daughter Yasmin. Athleticism runs in the Pang family, with Yasmin being a soccer and lacrosse player, as well as a Girl Scout Troop Leader. In addition to lots of culturally motivated and fun activities, the Pang family practices good eating habits and physical activities. The triathlon world led Maita to Fil-Am Tri by chance a few years ago, where she Googled triathlon clubs in the Philippines. She wanted to see how global triathlon training had become and quickly came across FAT's organization. She couldn't be happier to have found a Filipino organization that supports a physically active lifestyle in addition to eating pancit and lumpia!

This past 2011 year brought challenges and triumphs to Maita's life. Surrounded by friends, fellow trainers, and a neighbor, Maita and her husband trained for and raced the Baltimore half marathon. Their son had died in the beginning of the year, so continuing the training meant so much to them. She remembered she could have taken off 30 minutes from her time, having become emotional while racing. However, official times aside, she found inspiration during that race as she thought of her son. There were, she saw, other people racing to raise money for wonderful causes. Their efforts encouraged her, as the Pang family had raised money for the Baltimore Chapter of the Compassionate Friends, an organization committed to helping grieving parents due to the loss of their children.

The Pang's strength and determination never faltered throughout the race. Her husband Rich could have done the race in about 1:50 but stayed with Maita until the very end. He had developed

really bad leg cramps at mile 11, but never left her side. What a guy! Maita's athletic endeavors and hopes for the 2012 year are family focused. After 10 years of coaxing, needling and begging, she has finally convinced her husband Rich to live a much healthier and more active lifestyle, which he is currently doing! They are both doing the DC Rock and Roll half marathon this March. Maita will also be doing a sprint triathlon in August. One of her upcoming projects is to learn how to veganize some Filipino recipes. Lastly, she wants to learn to run like Phoebe in Friends!

Maita leaves us with a favorite fact: There's a 55 year old woman in her local Road Runner's Club who purposely stops swimming, biking or running during the races, because she thinks the sights and sounds of where she's at are too wonderful to miss. Using that as inspiration, Maita thinks it's time to spread the word to the couch potatoes of the world to go outside and play sports and enjoy 5D TV!

She wishes everyone a wonderful, prosperous and healthy New Year! Mabuhay! Very Respectfully, Maita

### ***How Many Children do You Have?***

How many children do you have? A simple, innocent question, but one a bereaved parent struggles with.

If we don't include our children who died when we answer the question, we feel as if we are denying their existence. One mother told me that she cried for hours because she told someone she had no children (her two children had been killed earlier that year).

If we do include our deceased children when we answer, somehow we fear the response or discomfort that is felt by the person hearing the news.

For the bereaved parent, there is relay no "right" answer to this question. We must respond the way our heart and the situation dictate. We should not fear how the person we are talking to feels about the truth. We should only be concerned with how we feel at the moment we are telling it. We need to be considerate of our own feelings and, if the situation is such that we do not include our children who have died in the answer, that's okay too....because we may be at a point in our grief that doing so may be painful.

We are the only ones who need to be pleased with our response!!

~Pat Loder, Lakes Area TF Chapter, Commerce Twp., Michigan

## **Remembrances**

### December Birthdays

*Tylour Long*  
*Sarah Marie Stebbins*  
*Keith Joseph Soskin*  
*Aquil Abdullah*  
*Kathy Ermatinger*  
*Z. M. Dawson*  
*David William deSabra, Jr.*  
*Daniel Grubb*  
*Mike Nelson*  
*Jessie Badders*  
*Christopher Gregory*  
*Brian Speckmeier, Jr.*  
*Michael Iwashko*  
*Joseph Allan Caskey, Jr.*  
*Robert James Berg*  
*Matthew John Payne*  
*Tony Michael Richey*

### December Heaven Days

*Daniel Carl Torsch*  
*Emily Elizabeth Blische*  
*Jason Louis Patterson*  
*Bryan Bolster*  
*Lance Locklear*  
*Z. M. Dawson*  
*Jessica Brower-McGonigal*  
*Daniel Grubb*  
*Dillon James Shelton*  
*Chelsea Rae Propper*  
*Melisa Rene Lisa Shamer*  
*Daniel Keith Richardson*  
*David Franklin Howell, Jr.*  
*Jessie Badders*  
*Mark Anthony Elicerio*  
*Matthew Sam Young*  
*Chad Petterson*  
*Rachel Lynn Orr*  
*Patrick Michael Butler*  
*Robert James Berg*  
*Elijah Joseph Virago*

### January Birthdays

*Brett Hofferberth*  
*Kallie Lynn Esquer*  
*Ernest Bo Neeke Gales, III*  
*Jason Louis Patterson*  
*Matthew Salafie*  
*Robert M. Bryant*  
*Hugo G. Jeffery Orbach*

*Michelle Celeste Wade*  
*Andrew Alton Dowley*  
*Brennan Michael Doll*  
*Owen Inaganti*  
*Curtis Jake Wethington*  
*Mark Anthony Elicerio*  
*James Stallings*  
*Jamshid Ghannad*

### January Heaven Days

*Alexandra Ally Beaulieu*  
*Matthew Salafie*  
*Samuel Ying Fu Pang*  
*Jenna Katherine Miller*  
*Dahlia Katherine Osman*  
*Michael Verleysen*  
*Keith Joseph Soskin*  
*David Michael Kappes*  
*Irvin Bernard Lawson, Jr.*  
*Amanda Kay Arnold*  
*Joey Wayne DeHaven, Jr.*  
*Bryan Canter*  
*Michelle Celeste Wade*  
*Anna Marie Stickel*  
*Matthew J. Lewis*  
*Bruce Francis Vasil*  
*Brandon Zoch*  
*Marcel Mitchell*  
*Owen Inaganti*  
*Gaebriel Patrick Kelly*  
*Curtis Jake Wethington*  
*Michael Iwashko*  
*Michael Ruben Zelaya*  
*Nathan Patrick Fenchak*  
*Chamara Ashby*

### February Birthdays

*Carl Edward Palo*  
*Janice Biondo O'Neill*  
*Kenneth W. Link*  
*Garrett Daniel Staib*  
*Natalia Erin Miller*  
*Lawrence Dunmore, IV*  
*David L. Murphy*  
*DeShawn Christopher Green*  
*Mason Griffin Medicus*  
*Jose Luis Perez, II*  
*Reece Taylor Stevens*  
*Jasmine Daye Bishai*  
*Sallie Pattillo*  
*Marc Rory Goldberg*

## February Heaven Days

*Tylour Long*

*Meghan Ann Murphy*

*Devon Maryl Jagler*

*Kenneth W. Link*

*Garrett Daniel Staib*

*Nelson Yargar, III*

*Deborah Ann Tipton*

*Kelsey Elaine Brown*

*David William deSabra, Jr*

*William Michael Hogan*

*Dimitra Y. Whittington*

*DeShawn Christopher Green*

*Naomi Cabrera Osorio*

*Brian Speckmeier, Jr.*

*Alexia Jo Bock*

*Justin Matthew Gregg*

*Chanda Leigh Painter*

*James Walter Babcock*

### **Rabbit Hole, a movie review – Five Stars By Barbara Allen**

Starring Nicole Kidman, Aaron Eckhart and Diane Wiest, this is a story all too familiar to those who have lost a child. As it begins, we don't know about the young son who died recently; we do know the silences between the husband and wife. We know the pain on their faces and we recognize the frustrations in trying to make sense of the senseless. These are some of the aspects which make this movie compelling.

We recognize the struggle, the hesitations between two people who thought the world was bright and hope filled not that long ago. Ultimately the story reminds us of the unfolding of time after the loss of our beloved child. Perhaps we glimpse a piece of ourselves... there on the screen. Choices are made – some good, some with potentially dire consequences. But in time the courage to breathe, to keep moving forward has its rewards. Secrets are unlocked, pains healed and the sun shines more brightly again.

We are changed forever. And we should be changed. We are no longer the same person; wiser, kinder and perhaps more forgiving. Most importantly we now celebrate the time we had with our child rather than stuffing the memories along with the dreams that ended. It's time to make more dreams.

The screenwriter and the actors tap into what we have come to know in this deep loss. The Rabbit Hole can help us feel saner, less alone, less understood. It can also be a means of sharing some of our inner experiences with those who love us enough to watch it, too.

## **My Brother, Carl**

We once shared a bunk bed in the same room.  
I looked up at you.  
Dad played the name game.  
I was: Linda Lee Leveskoko Leveskoko Lupsus.  
You were: Calla Ca Cavelliko Cavelliko Cupsus.

You watched over me when we went out to play.  
You said I could jump it but  
I landed in that rosebush anyway.

In the car traveling north on 75  
Three of us now sit knee-to-knee  
Singing, "There's a hole in the bottom of the sea."  
To the Bootjack Camp where everyone came for a  
boost  
Mom hung a sign saying "Relatives' Roost"

Later you traveled up with your own family—  
Big Wanda, Little Wanda, and Kristin Jo  
Fishing, picking berries, tanning, and more  
Your rock hound, Ginger, sat gull-like on the pier.

You launched your Bass boat and fishing gear  
As you calmly explained to the nephews  
How to bait the hook and throw in the line  
Shhh! Be patient! You'll scare all the fishes!

Around the bonfire, night after night  
You entertained with your many stories and  
adventures  
To everyone's delight.

Over the years we both grew closer  
Trusting each other more and more  
Visiting with each others' friends and families  
Sharing a meal, a paperback book or two.

But this last summer I knew...  
I knew to treasure these precious moments...  
The ones that are now so dear.  
It's hard to think of them without shedding a tear.

The time to move on came too swiftly  
As we looked deep into each other's eyes  
Neither wanting to say "Good-bye"  
We held each other in warm embrace  
With each "I Love You!" an extra squeeze.

You always were kind of special, Carl,  
Someone to look up to. I Love You.

*Linda Jo Palo*

*In loving memory of my brother, Carl (2/18/43 –  
8/19/05)*

## Remembering Gilda...

Many members of the Baltimore Chapter of the Compassionate Friends will remember Gilda Wiberg. Gilda's big personality and her enduring love for her daughter, Tiffani Rose, who passed away at the age of 18, touched all who knew Gilda. Sadly, Gilda passed away on March 8, 2011. We had been missing her at meetings and after several attempts to reach her failed, our chapter leader, Garrett Tollenger, went to visit her and discovered that she had passed away last year.

I know Gilda believed that she would be reunited with her daughter, Tiffani, and truly hope Gilda has found peace. Below is a poem Gilda wrote in memory of Tiffani. I share it in memory of Gilda, the keeper of our memory table, and often the person who could make the room laugh in the midst of tears.

### MY FOREVER LOVE

What? Expecting?  
Happening to me?  
I knew before the doctor did!  
Oh, no! Oh, yes!  
Worries and joys;  
Turbulent times.  
Wonderful, growing miracle!  
"Haven't you had that baby yet?"  
Any day now, belly so big,  
"It's a son. No, a daughter!"

Teeny, tiny you!!  
Mazel Tov! Rejoice!  
The family's baby had a baby!  
"Pretty little nose,  
Pretty little toes,  
That's my Tiffani Rose!"

I sang to my new Perfect Princess,  
John sings "Oh, My Love" and  
"Beautiful Boy".  
Stevie sings "Isn't She Lovely".  
Named for my father,  
I was never so blessed  
As the day you were born.  
Safe and secure  
In Mommy's arms;  
Apple of But you were the center  
Of my world! Absolutely!  
Did the best I could...  
Ballet and karate,  
Measles and mermaids,  
Beaches and roller coasters,  
Giggles and kisses,  
Hopes and dreams,  
Whispers and fears,  
Always nightly prayers.

No ordinary Princess, you!  
Sleepovers and Tommy Girl,  
Tom Cruise and Aerosmith,  
Parties and proms,  
Beautiful young woman, you!  
Precious time flies too fast.

Anger and fighting,  
Misunderstandings.  
Daddy once in a while;

Dear Bubbie is gone;  
CRY, CRY, CRY!  
You two were so close;  
I worry about you.  
Helps us find our way back -

HAPPY, HAPPY, JOY!  
Where are you?  
Cell phone - we laugh.  
Now you're late  
(And somehow I know).  
Then that phone call -  
NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!  
Makes the news; oh, so real!  
What treachery is this?

Bubbie's dotting eye.  
Bottles and diapers,  
Sleepers and booties,  
Sweet, sweet baby smell.  
Pink lace and ribbons,  
My little dress-up doll.  
Puppies and kittens,  
Colors and stories,  
Teddy bears and baby talk,  
Barbies and Simba,  
Love all the time.  
Adorable toddler, you!

So lucky to have Bubbie,  
With Daddy far away,  
Mommy always busy;  
I worked very hard  
To take care of us three;  
Took lots of my time,  
Unconscionable betrayal!  
Horrible, screaming nightmare;  
Oceans of so many tears.  
Ugly, gaping, bleeding hole,  
Where my heart used to be;  
NEVER can heal...

All who knew you, loved you.  
All who knew you, came.  
Mick sings "Paint It Black"  
And "As Tears Go By";  
Josh sings "Remember"  
And "To Where You Are";  
The Beatles sing "In My Life";  
Paul always sings "Yesterday"  
and "All My Lovin'"

Good-bye, Sweet Princess





## 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.

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## Register Now for These 2012 Regional Conferences:

### **The Frankfort, KY Regional - March 23-24, 2012**

With the theme "Wilderness of Grief - Is There Hope?" the Frankfort, KY Regional will be held Friday and Saturday, March 23-24, 2012. The conference will feature great speakers including Dr. Heidi Horsley, Dr. Gloria Horsley, Dr. Darcie Sims, and entertainment by Alan Pedersen. Planned are 14 workshops covering many areas of grief. For more information, download the brochure [2012 Frankfort, KY Regional](#). To register, please download and mail the registration form, [FrankfortKYConference2012](#). For more information, contact Dusty Rhodes at 502-223-1505 or by writing [drhodes@fewpb.net](mailto:drhodes@fewpb.net).

The Western Pennsylvania Regional - April 20-21, 2012

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**NEW! Register now for the Western Pennsylvania Regional Conference: To register, fill out and return the registration form contained within the [Conference Information and Registration Form](#). To make hotel reservations, please use fill out [Meadville group reservation form](#) and mail.**

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The 9th Annual Western Pennsylvania Regional, themed "Treasured Memories," will be held April 20-21 in Meadville, PA. Keynote speakers include TCF Executive Director Patricia Loder; Carla Blowey, author of *Dreaming Kevin: The Path to Healing*; and Lillian Meyers, PhD, FT, a bereaved parent and licensed clinical psychologist, certified grief counselor, and a Fellow in Thanatology. Planned are eight sharing sessions and 12 workshops. There will be pictures boards, a butterfly table with a variety of items available for purchase. Registration fee for the conference is \$50 which includes all materials, entrance to all workshops, sharing sessions, break time refreshments, and a buffet luncheon. Special rates will be available at the host Days Inn. For more information, contact Ralph and Norma Mc Clay at [rcorvette@windstream.net](mailto:rcorvette@windstream.net),

## TCF 2012 National/International Conference

*Costa Mesa, California Site of 35th TCF/USA National Conference; 5th International Gathering!*



The Compassionate Friends/USA is pleased to announce that, in conjunction with the 35th National Conference, it will also be hosting The Compassionate Friends 5th International Gathering. The combined conference will be held July 20-22, 2012 in beautiful Costa Mesa, California.

Here is some additional information just released regarding the conference:

- Friday after the workshops is a free period for those attending and we always try to provide appropriate entertainment. We are pleased to announce "An Evening with Darcie Sims" where her topic will be: *Finding Your Way Through Grief: Does Grief Come in "One Size Fits All?"*
- The sibling program will include a "Meet and Greet" as well as the sibling choir and a Friday evening program to Dave and Buster's that includes a buffet and interactive and video games on the "Million Dollar Midway."
- Thursday there will be a special Spanish language workshop and sharing session
- There will be excursions available Thursday and Monday for those visiting who wish to include some vacation time with the conference. Thursday's pre-conference excursion is to the popular and beautiful Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Garden. Monday's post conference excursion is to see the magic of Disneyland

- "Remembrance of Love" memento fundraiser includes a specially commissioned and designed stainless steel ornamental heart combined with the logo and a picture of a special child. Available shortly to order online and will be displayed at the conference.

A final lineup of popular keynoters has now been announced. In addition, those wishing to attend and stay at the host hotel may now make reservations!

- Lois Duncan is the prolific and award winning author of 48 books. But, the most difficult one she ever had to write was *Who Killed My Daughter?*, the story behind her search for the truth in the death of her 18-year-old daughter Kaitlyn Arquette in what police called a random drive by shooting.
- Kathy Eldon, journalist, author, producer, activist, and mother found her life changed forever when her 22-year-old son, Dan Eldon, A Reuters photographer, was stoned to death by an angry mob as he did his job in Somalia in July of 1993. Among her books are *Angel Catcher: A Journal of Loss and Remembrance* and *The Journey is the Destination*.
- Darcie Sims, always popular international keynote speaker, brings her wit and wisdom as a bereaved parent and certified grief management specialist to the podium in Costa Mesa. Co-founder of Grief, Inc., an international grief consulting firm, Darcie is a well known and respected author and speaker.
- The Reverend Canon Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends worldwide and bereaved sibling, will travel from his home in Moscow to share his thoughts with the large International and U.S. crowd that is expected to gather.

"We welcome to this conference all who are grieving the death of a child, for grief is a universal language and one that TCF'ers around the world know all too well," says TCF/USA Executive Director Patricia Loder.

The International Gathering will include a Spanish workshop and sharing session for our Hispanic/Latino families and bilingual families. More than 100 workshops will be held on most topics related to grief after the death of a child. Because many of those attending will be traveling long distances from countries around the world, special excursions are being planned for before and after the conference, so everyone is invited to combine their stay with visits to some of California's great attractions. Special events related to the conference will be held from Wednesday, July 18 through Monday, July 23. We will provide more details as they become available!

#### ***Hotel Reservations Now being Accepted!***

You can now make reservations for the conference host hotel. Although The Compassionate Friends has arranged a room block for the conference that includes every room within the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa hotel, we recommend that you reserve your room early if you wish to stay at the host hotel. Because our national conference includes the International Gathering, there is little doubt that all rooms will be filled. Room charge is \$129 per night plus tax of approximately 11%. The room block is available July 17-24. You can also receive the special room rate July 14-16 and July 25-27, but subject to more limited availability. Rooms are King Size (holds 2, roll-away bed available for \$10 per night) or double queen (maximum 4 per room).

To reserve your room online, please go to [Online Reservations](#). Please note that the first night's deposit is required at the time you reserve your room. Should your plans change, this deposit will be refunded as long as the room is cancelled at least one day prior to the start of your reservation. You can also call your reservation directly to the hotel at 714-540-7000. Room block reservations will be taken until June 26 or until the room block is sold out, whichever comes first. If the room block sells out, as we anticipate, we will advise you regarding overflow hotels. There will be complimentary shuttles every 20 minutes between the hotel and John Wayne Airport (SNA). On-site parking for conference guests is \$7 per night or Valet \$25.00 per night.

**The Hilton Orange County Costa Mesa Hotel is described as one "that exemplifies class, and elegance with a modern twist." You can read about the hotel in English, Spanish, and French at [Hilton Orange County Costa Mesa](#).**

**Call for Presenters closed on October 15, 2011.** Watch here for the latest details, as they develop, on this event!

**Comments from Compassionate Friends who attended the 34th National Conference held in Minneapolis:**

*"This conference was life changing for me--my daughter died last year. Thank you to everyone that made my experience possible."*

*"The conference was great as usual. It is great to have a place like the National Conference to be ourselves. The unfortunate part is going home and back to the real world."*

*"Attending the conference was the best thing I could have done for myself. It's a vacation with my son that I will take every year!!!"*

#### **Compassionate Friends Unveils "Create a Memorial Website" Program**

When you ask bereaved parents their greatest fear, you're likely to hear that they're afraid their child will be forgotten.

That fear can now be put to rest through The Compassionate Friends new "Create a Memorial Website" program. In partnership with online memorial leader Legacy.com., the new Compassionate Friends program allows you to easily create an online memorial website so that your child, sibling, or grandchild will always be remembered. A portion of the proceeds from the memorial website you create will also go to support The Compassionate Friends and its many national programs designed to aid families going through the natural grieving process following the death of a child.

With these unique, easy-to-create memorial tributes, you can: customize the design, yet create a site in five minutes using Legacy.com's four-step process; include photos, videos, stories, and more; add music; invite family and friends to contribute and join in celebrating the life of the child you're remembering; and much more.

There is a 14 day free trial period and 25% discount off the first year's sponsorship. To learn more and to take advantage of these offers, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and under "Resources" click on "Create a Memorial Website."

Memorial websites make a great gift that shows you care!