


The Compassionate Friends TCF of POTOMAC , MD

TCF meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM
Potomac Presbyterian Church
10301 River Road
Potomac, MD 20854

TCFPotomacMD.com

Spring 2012

Co-Leaders	Nancy Frank Mary Mandeville
Treasurer	George Beall
New Members	Barbara Beall
Remembrances	Mary Nader
Librarian	Nancy Pinto
Outreach	Susan Johnson
Hospitality	JoAnn Gelman
Newsletter	Katherine Bloom
Google Group Manager	Barry Gordon
Member at Large	Rob Goor

The Compassionate Friends Mission

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national, self help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families, who have experienced the death of a child or sibling. TCF members provide information and support . Volunteers run the more than 600 local chapters in the U. S. and TCF has chapters in many other countries.

The Compassionate Friends:
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60255-3696
National Website:
WWW.Compassionatefriends.org



If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Letter From the Editor

Happy Holidays! Happy New Year! Happy Hollow Days seems more appropriate to many of us. For bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents, the holidays do not mean what they used to before tragedy struck. Coping with the seemingly endless cheery displays of different decorations, whether Jewish or Christian, is a task we all have to go through every year henceforth. For some, the holidays can be a time of bitterness for our losses, for others, it can be a trial by fire. And yet, for those who have found some measure of coming to terms with loss, the holidays can be a time of sweet remembrances of happier times.

Most of us will find there is time enough, years in fact, for all kinds of feelings to feel. For many, gift buying is now a chore we can barely endure. Writing holiday cards no longer seems remotely doable. Christmas decorations from years past stay in boxes, the festive lights on a menorah mock us with their dancing flames. Some of us can bring ourselves to mingle with caring family and friends. We find a measure of comfort in traditions, even of one stocking is now empty, or one seat at the table is unoccupied.

Death knows no calendar, and the hand it reaches out pays no attention to holidays, birthdays or anniversaries. How we choose to acknowledge the holidays often depends on how far along in our grief journey we are. Some will prepare a

meal which includes their loved ones favorite dish. Some will visit a grave and tell their loved all about what went on at Thanksgiving, what Aunt Tillie was wearing, who is dating who, or what Cousin Herbert said about someone. Some of us will travel to a new place, somewhere no memories of times past haunt them. And, some will stay home, under the covers, until the shining ball in Times Square drops and it's all over with.

Hearing the stories during the January Chapter meeting, it was apparent to me we all found we had one thing in common. Holidays will come every year, like it or not and we have survived another round.

Winter, being a time of long dark days, is also still around for two or three months more. For the grief stricken, we need to summon all our energies just to wait for Spring. And when Spring surrounds us with sunshine, singing birds and bright colored flowers, we will have to face this time of renewal with even more fortitude. Every season brings new challenges for the bereaved, and having been with TCF Potomac, for over two years, I have seen there is hope in each passing season, each passing new year., each passing Spring.



Special Announcements

Jeremy's Run

Memorial Day May 28, 2012 at 8 AM in Olney, MD

This event is a 10K Run, 5K Walk/Run and a 1 Mile Fun Run

the beneficiaries are the Kolmac Foundation, the Partnership at DrugFree.Org and the Family Support Center's school program "Dying to Get High"

The race is in loving memory of Jeremy Glass and the purpose of this event is to raise awareness to the dangers of substance abuse. The Website is <http://www.Jeremysrun.com>

Run for Your Life

by
Cyndi Glass

In order to cope with my overwhelming grief after losing my wonderful and passionate son Jeremy to an accidental drug overdose, I decided to organize a run to honor his memory and to raise awareness to the deadly consequences of substance abuse.

By organizing this event, I brought together all of Jeremy's friends and family which proved to be very therapeutic for all of us. We turned our grief and our love for Jeremy into something which we could pour all of our energy. In some way it seemed I was keeping him alive and letting his passion burn on through my love for him.

The Run started on Memorial Day 2009 (Jeremy died on September 7, 2008). We had over 500 people there! It was difficult for me to even speak at this event because my grief was still incredibly raw. The next year, Jeremy's Run grew to 750 people and last year we had 1,000 participants. It is overwhelming to me to see the love people had for Jeremy and the support which has been given to me family through this process. We have raised \$55,000.00 so far for the prevention, education, treatment and rehabilitation from substance abuse in 3 years.

I find the most difficult and painful stretches of time are when I am NOT planning or executing Jeremy's Run. It seems the grief flows outward into something positive when involved in Jeremy's Run, and when I have time and lack of involvement in this endeavor, my grief doesn't have an outlet and I find myself getting more depressed.

Jeremy was such a kind, sensitive, talented and passionate person, and his absence is so painful it is hard to handle. My friend gave me this quote and I think it hits the nail on the head.

"Tell yourself none of this ever had to happen, and the go and make it stop, with whatever breath you have left. Grief is a sword, or it is nothing".



TLC Library Report

Contributed by Nancy Pinto

A Guide to Understanding Guilt During Bereavement
By Robert Baugher, Ph.D.

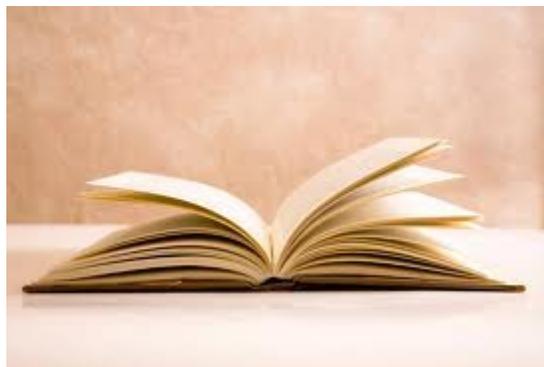
The author Robert Baugher has written several short self-help books for bereaved parents or siblings. This includes A Guide for the Bereaved Survivor, which I found very useful because it contained straightforward questions and simple, concise answers that were helpful. This book is not as clear, perhaps because the issues surrounding guilt are more complex.

Baugher begins by saying that the well-meaning words “Don’t feel guilty” gloss over the deeper understanding of guilt that we must reach. This will free ourselves to confront other issues, such as anger in the mourning process, and cope with our loss in the long run. Baugher states that guilt is hiding in our “grief closets”; he wants this book to open the door for us.

It is a complicated read, not easy to digest in a few hours. He reviews how we perceive guilt, and lists seven behaviors that characterize guilt reactions. He categorizes dimensions of guilt, and types of guilt found in the bereavement process. Each of these chapters have short writing exercises that one can complete, and it is hoped that after putting these thoughts on paper, the understanding of the “whys” and “if onlys” found in our grief will be better recognized.

The last chapter presents 17 suggestions for coping with grief. Well, 17 is a very large number, and I am not ready to tackle so many things at once!!

I recommend this book if you like lists, and you find comfort in the challenge of writing down your most intimate thoughts concerning the loss of your child. I still am not at that point, so I found it to be an overwhelming read at this time.



The Daffodil Principle

Contributed by Debbie Thornton

Several times my daughter had telephoned to say, "Mother, you must come to see the daffodils before they are over." I wanted to go, but it was a two-hour drive from Laguna to Lake Arrowhead "I will come next Tuesday", I promised a little reluctantly on her third call.

Next Tuesday dawned cold and rainy. Still, I had promised, and reluctantly I drove there. When I finally walked into Carolyn's house I was welcomed by the joyful sounds of happy children. I delightedly hugged and greeted my grandchildren.

"Forget the daffodils, Carolyn! The road is invisible in these clouds and fog, and there is nothing in the world except you and these children that I want to see badly enough to drive another inch!"

My daughter smiled calmly and said, "We drive in this all the time, Mother." "Well, you won't get me back on the road until it clears, and then I'm heading for home!" I assured her.

"But first we're going to see the daffodils. It's just a few blocks," Carolyn said. "I'll drive. I'm used to this."

"Carolyn," I said sternly, "Please turn around." "It's all right, Mother, I promise. You will never forgive yourself if you miss this experience."

After about twenty minutes, we turned onto a small gravel road and I saw a small church. On the far side of the church, I saw a hand lettered sign with an arrow that read, "Daffodil Garden." We got out of the car, each took a child's hand, and I followed Carolyn down the path. Then, as we turned a corner, I looked up and gasped. Before me lay the most glorious sight.

It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it over the mountain peak and its surrounding slopes. The flowers were planted in majestic, swirling patterns, great ribbons and swaths of deep orange, creamy white, lemon yellow, salmon pink, and saffron

and butter yellow. Each different-colored variety was planted in large groups so that it swirled and flowed like its own river with its own unique hue. There were five acres of flowers.

"Who did this?" I asked Carolyn. "Just one woman," Carolyn answered. "She lives on the property. That's her home." Carolyn pointed to a well-kept A-frame house, small and modestly sitting in the midst of all that glory. We walked up to the house.

On the patio, we saw a poster. "Answers to the Questions I Know You Are Asking", was the headline. The first answer was a simple one. "50,000 bulbs," it read. The second answer was, "One at a time, by one woman. Two hands, two feet, and one brain." The third answer was, "Began in 1958."

For me, that moment was a life-changing experience. I thought of this woman whom I had never met, who, more than forty years before, had begun, one bulb at a time, to bring her vision of beauty and joy to an obscure mountaintop. Planting one bulb at a time, year after year, this unknown woman had forever changed the world in which she lived. One day at a time, she had created something of extraordinary magnificence, beauty, and inspiration. The principle her daffodil garden taught is one of the greatest principles of celebration.

That is, learning to move toward our goals and desires one step at a time--often just one baby-step at a time--and learning to love the doing, learning to use the accumulation of time. When we multiply tiny pieces of time with small increments of daily effort, we too will find we can accomplish magnificent things. We can change the world. "It makes me sad in a way," I admitted to Carolyn. "What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal thirty-five or forty years ago and had worked away at it 'one bulb at a time' through all those years? Just think what I might have been able to achieve!"

My daughter summed up the message of the day in her usual direct way. "Start tomorrow," she said.

She was right. It's so pointless to think of the lost

hours of yesterdays. The way to make learning a lesson of celebration instead of a cause for regret is to only ask, "How can I put this to use today?"

Use the Daffodil Principle.

Stop waiting.....

Until your car or home is paid off
Until you get a new car or home
Until your kids leave the house
Until you go back to school
Until you finish school
Until you clean the house
Until you organize the garage
Until you clean off your desk
Until you lose 10 lbs.
Until you gain 10 lbs. Until you get married
Until you get a divorce
Until you have kids
Until the kids go to school
Until you retire
Until summer
Until spring
Until winter

Until fall
Until you die...

There is no better time than right now to be happy.

Happiness is a journey, not a destination.

So work like you don't need money.

Love like you've never been hurt, and, Dance like no one's watching.

If you want to brighten someone's day, pass this on to someone special.

I just did!

Wishing you a beautiful, daffodil day!

"Don't be afraid that your life will end, be afraid that it will never begin." ~anonymous

Live for the journey and not just the destination!



Message from Kenny

by

Mary Mandeville

It was August of 2007, and I was in Oklahoma City with hundreds of other bereaved parents. It was the Compassionate Friends Annual Conference. I went with my good friend, Nancy Frank. We were new at this... we had both lost our sons the previous summer.

Elizabeth Edwards was the Keynote Speaker. The woman was amazing. After speaking for almost an hour, she autographed her book with a personal message for each and every one of us. The fact she was suffering from terminal cancer didn't faze her a bit.

Nancy and I had toured the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building and saw the museum of personal belongings of the people killed in that terrible bombing.

The next day was the closing walk. Our 2 mile walk was strictly sidewalk walking. It was very hard on the feet. Nancy and I never were at a loss for conversation. She asked me about Kenny and his wife Dawn. I talked about the fact they were living in Portsmouth, VA at the time he died. Dawn was still in Med school and Kenny was in a wheelchair recuperating from foot surgery. He loved to sit on the front porch of their house in the morning and watch the 8:20 am train go past. I had no sooner gotten those words out of my mouth when the train in Oklahoma City went zooming past us. I looked at my watch and it was 8:20 am! A coincidence... or my son sending me a reminder of him? You know what I believe. This was the first of many signs I have gotten from Kenny. They don't come as often... but I know he is thinking of me.



Poetry Corner

His Journey's Just Begun

by
Ellen Brenneman

Don't think of him as gone away
his journey's just begun
Life holds so many facets
this earth is only one

Just think of him as resting
from the sorrow and the tears
in a place of warmth and comfort
where there are no days or years

Think how he must be wishing
that we could know today
how nothing but our sadness
can really pass away

And think of him as living
in the hearts of those he touched...
for nothing loved is ever lost
and he was loved so much

Time Will Ease the Hurt

Unknown

The sadness of the present days
is locked and set in time
and moving to the future
is a slow and painful climb

But all the feelings that are now
so vivid and so real
can't hold their fresh intensity
as time begins to heal

No wound so deep will ever go
entirely away
yet every hurt becomes
a little less from day to day

Nothing can erase the painful
imprints on your mind
but there are softer memories
that time will let you find

Though your heart won't let the sadness
simply slide away
the echoes will diminish
even though the memories stay



LOVE GIFTS

Anita & Gary Fields for Adam
Nancy Schultz for Steven
Nancy Cox for Bradley
Charles Pacholkiw for Chuck
Barbara & Barry Gordon for Jonathan Blank
Debra & Daryl Thornton for Crystal
Gloria Hensel for Christopher
Micki & Irv Koniak for Lesley Garalick
Georgeann & Keith Bailey for Kira Bloom



Love Gift Giving

The Compassionate Friends is a self supporting, non-profit organization solely dependent on LOVE GIFTS and other donations for operating expenses of all TCF chapters. If you would like to send a LOVE GIFT in memory of your child or any other loved one, or in honor of any occasion, it would be greatly appreciated. **Love Gifts are fully Tax Deductible.** There is a basket at monthly meetings with Love Gift envelopes or

You may mail Love Gifts to:

George Beall
798 Kimberly Court E
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Gifts received by the monthly meeting deadline will be acknowledged in the next newsletter.

Our Children Remembered



December 2011

Olivia Featherson
Beverly Freund
Mary & German Nader
Carolina & Percy Narvaez
Ginny & Tim O'Conner
Catherine Papoi
Nancy & Brian Pinto
Joan Uhlig
Jeannie & Tom Warfield

Troy
Paul (Quattlebaum)
Carolyn
Alexander
Robert
MacKenzieAnn
Claire
Chris
Richard

January 2012

Sonia Vasquez & Rodrigo Chaparro
Leslie & Max Cohen
Nathalie & Matthew Dyskra
Betty & Donald Fick
Anita & Gary Fields
Lynn & Fred Lee
Linda & Charles Lubin
Cheryl Everson & Geoffrey Mack
Hope Phillips
Wendy Reid
Margaret Simpson & Bill Smith
Susan & Misbah Tahir
Barbara Tatge
Lisa & John Valenta

Nicolas
Adam
Jasmine
Kenneth
Adam
Nicole
Todd
Brenton (Everson)
Hilary
Hope (Roth)
Benjamin
Noah
Alexander (Finamore)
Troy

February 2011

Terry Bendell
Colleen Books
Evelyn & Michael Byrne
Ann & Joe Duffy
Lorie Fisher
Betsy Frohlich
Mary MacDonald
Wanda Michael
Marsha & Robert Weinberg
David Wilmot
Mary Wilmot

Teresa
Joshua (Simmons)
Madlyn
Caroline
Audrey
Jacqueline (Hawking)
Keith (Sovey)
Stacy (Gross)
Matthew
David
David