


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
Website: TCFPotomacMD.com

Spring 2013

Co-Leaders	Nancy Frank
	Mary Mandeville
Treasurer	George Beall
New Members	Barbara Beall
Remembrances	Mary Nader
Librarian	Lilyan Heupel
Outreach	Susan Johnson
Hospitality	JoAnn Gelman
Newsletter	Katherine Bloom
Google Group Manager	Barry Gordon
Member at Large	Rob Goor
Local Contact	Barbara @ 301-253-8740

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.

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



If people did not love one another, I really don't see what use there would be in having Spring By Victor Hugo

Letter from the Editor – Katherine Bloom, TCF Potomac, MD

Have you ever just been sitting around, or even engrossed in a task, and all of a sudden a random song pops into your head and you can't get away from it? Apparently it's a common enough phenomenon that it has a name, Earworm. I know, it sounds really gross. A short time ago, I was on the Metro on my way to work, reading a book, and it happened to me. What was the song? Singin' in the Rain. Not only does it have a catchy tune, but it brings up the song and dance routine by Gene Kelly in the film of the same name. Have you seen it? To me, it's one of the best examples of pure joy. I love that movie, and I think of it whenever I am caught in the rain, usually totally unprepared. Of course, in the movie, the rain was fake and Gene had an umbrella. But he stomped through the puddles and danced along the curb, refusing to let the rain "dampen" his spirit. At the end, he gives his umbrella to an elderly man without one. Could this lighthearted song and dance have a deeper meaning? I hummed the song on and off the whole day, wondering why my brain chose that day to remind me to "laugh at the clouds, so dark up above".

As grieving parents and siblings, we all have our storm clouded days and nights. How do we best handle them? Each of us has to figure out that question for themselves, however, there are some universal truths we discover along the way. When our child or sibling dies, there is the initial shock and horror of the reality and finality of the event. As the shock wears off, the terror begins. What am I do to without my beloved person? How can I live through this, and often the question, do I even want to? For some, we find refuge under the covers, some literally, sometimes figuratively. For those with surviving children, we are pushed into

caring for them, if they are young, or we just make ourselves crazy worrying about them all time. Having a spouse is helpful, though generally couples grieve differently and separately. Work often forces our return to the now "other world" where no one on the outside understands us. So what are our choices? Wallowing in self pity sure feels good from time to time, and a good cry is cleansing to a point. But is that where you want to stay.. day after day... year after year?

One of my favorite authors, Victor Hugo, writes in *Les Miserables*, "Desiring always to be in mourning, he clothed himself with night". It is a choice we can make. However, Hugo also wrote, in the same book, "Even the darkest night will end and the Sun will rise". Hugo knew what grief meant. He outlived 4 of his 5 children, and the surviving daughter was institutionalized for years as mentally ill. His grief, however, did not stop him from being one of the greatest novelists, poets and thinkers of all time.

It's been said the depth of grief is the breadth of love. I think it's true, and now, almost four years after the death of my daughter, Kira, and more recently the death of my younger brother, Maurice, I am still trying to find my way in the rain. I don't look for rainbows, they seem almost too corny, though they are a thing of rare beauty. Let us think of the rain as nature's way of cleansing, the earth and our souls. As always, I have no answers for anyone else's grief journey, there is no one size fits all remedy. Just think, now and then, of that wonderful sequence, and instead of hurrying for cover, jump in a puddle and "walk down the lane, with a happy refrain, just singin' and dancin' in the rain".



ANNOUNCEMENTS



TCF 2013 National Conference

Save the date: July 5-7, 2013 in Boston, MA

TCF is always known for having great keynoters and many have been waiting anxiously to find out who they will hear speak at the conference. We now have that information! They are:

Dr. Heidi Horsley, Dr. Gloria Horsley, founders of "Open to Hope" Foundation and Phil Horsley (Chair of TCF Foundation's Board of Trustees), a family united after the loss of sibling and son Scott, will combine to welcome you as Opening keynoters at the National Conference.

Tina Chery who, after the murder of her son Louis, created the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute with a mission to create and support an environment where families can live in peace and unity.

Ken Druck, bereaved parent, founder of the Jenna Druck Foundation, and one of the nation's pioneers in personal transformation including healing after loss.

Bill Hancock, director of the Bowl Championship Series (college football), author of *Riding with the Blue Moth*, and father of Will, who was killed during the January 27, 2001 crash of an airplane carrying members of the Oklahoma State University men's basketball team.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING REGISTRATION: We are now anticipating

that online registration for the national conference will begin within 2-4 weeks from today, Tuesday, February 5, 2013. Watch here for details as they become available!

Washington, D.C. NEDA Walk (NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS ASSOCIATION) Email: DCNEDAWalk@gmail.com

Join us for the Washington, D.C. 2013 NEDA Walk on Sunday, April 7th, 2013!

Walk Venue: Freedom Plaza

Walk Date: Sunday, April 7, 2013

Check In Time: 10AM

Walk Start Time: 11AM Walk End Time: 1PM

Walk Fundraising Goal: \$35,000

Contact: Leah Siskin

The Google Group

As many of you know by now, Barry Gordon has started a Google email group. Many of us are already writing to one another, and Barry invites everyone in our chapter to participate. Many of the emails recount very intimate feelings about our loved and lost children. The responding emails offer insight and comfort. The email address, in case some have not received it is:

Compassionate-Friends-Potomac@googlegroups.com.

We all thank Barry for undertaking this challenge and encouraging us to share our thoughts during the days when the Group does not meet.

Newsletter Contributions

The Potomac Chapter wants to hear from each of you, to share your ideas and feelings. To hear about what works for you in handling your grief, and what doesn't. What helps you cope, and how you deal with new situations.

Please send articles, stories, poems, or quotes for the next newsletter to Katherine Bloom @ Katherinx@aol.com

Please forgive any misspelled names or typos

The Steering Committee would like to invite members to attend our Quarterly meetings to see if they would like to join in the running of the Potomac Chapter. Please be willing to be an active participant. The Steering Committee is all volunteer, and is an integral part in planning how the group is run month to month and the Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony.

The Committee is also looking for a new Co-Leader as Nancy and Mary will be stepping down later this year. There is a requirement to take special Leadership training which is available on a limited basis.



LIBRARY REPORT

PARTING IS NOT GOODBYE, COPING WITH GRIEF IN CREATIVE, HEALTHY WAYS

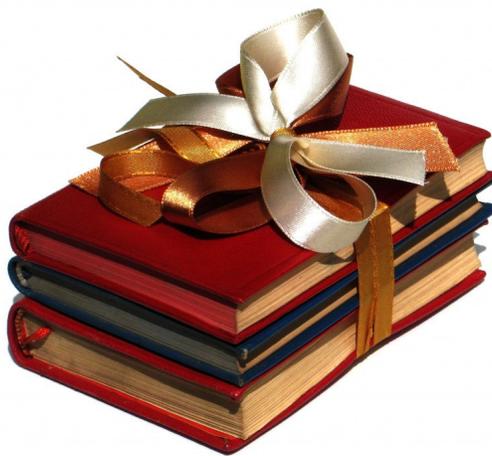
BY KELLY OSMONT

Contributed by Susan Johnson

I highly recommend Ms. Kelly Osmont's book, Parting is Not Goodbye, Coping with Grief in Creative , Healthy Ways. It is well written, and tells of her life as a single parent of her only child, son Aaron, who was coming into adulthood. Aaron chose to work on a farm that had horses because he loved animals. It is a warm account of his growing up and becoming a young man. Life goes on well for them both until tragedy strikes. Aaron is seriously injured by a frightened horse which kicks him in the abdomen, is taken to the hospital, and enters the ICU. Thus starts a long, difficult road.

His mother devotedly, and with increasing concern, stays with him almost constantly. She runs into problems with doctors not communicating with her and answering her questions. Aaron suffers through several increasingly difficult operations to stop his internal bleeding, his mother's concerns mounting each time. She asks the surgeon for another opinion, but it is too late, and Aaron, such a beloved son, dies.

The book recounts Kelly's struggle with her loss and to have an appropriate funeral and remembrances. For all of us who have gone through this, the book will probably sound very familiar. It has good ideas in it and is endorsed by The Compassionate Friends. Indeed, Kelly Osmont renewed her therapy career and found ways to help and counsel other bereaved families. It is a moving and fast paced story.



The Pity Party

Peggi Johnson, TCF Arlington, VA

I feel that every day I engage in a battle with my very own personal adversary. It plagues me and pursues me relentlessly. It has many tricks. It's a master at the sneak attack. My adversary's name is Self Pity.

I know the mistakes I'm making in this daily battle. I am supposed to ask "Why not me?" instead of "why me?". I'm supposed to focus on the things and people I have and not on what I have lost. But there is a significant gap between knowing in my head and what I'm supposed to do and actually being able to do it.

My most effective defense against it is to focus on people who are enduring a similar loss; I hold them to my heart and mind. I am grateful that because of TCF, they have names and faces and are real to me. I also try to remember those who inspire me by the way they endure different challenges, such as serious illness or financial misfortunes. However, this perspective takes effort and energy. Energy is in short supply for me.

I try not to give in to it, my self-pity beast.

It's hard when my son's friends and classmates are graduating from college and have photos of their celebrations all over Facebook (note to self: this is not a good month to look at Facebook).

I don't understand why it's called a "Pity Party".



It sure doesn't feel like a party. It feels like a war.

Special News

On November 21, 2012, we had Sophia Kaitlynn Pereira, Savannah's little sister. We are very happy to have a child in the house again and appreciate what you all did for us in the early days of our grief over Savannah's accidental death. Savannah lives with us in spirit and mind every day and she now has a little sis to look over and be with when we are all rejoined.

See attached pictures and note the Forever in my Heart Butterfly band on my wrist in the pictures. I have not removed it from my wrist since the day I purchased it at our meeting with you in 2010. (Sorry I was not able to download the photos, but will bring to next meeting, KB)

Have a Merry Christmas and know how important your group is to many, especially those fresh into the grief of child loss.

Love,
Charley and Lisa Pereira



POETRY CORNER

WERE YOU EVER MINE?

By

Debbie Thornton

Were you ever mine?
Were you really here?
I have memories of you
but I no longer hear your voice in my head.

When you were young, I dedicated you to the Lord.
You were a gift to me, on loan for a time.
A time that came to an end way too soon and too abruptly.

There was no warning, no time for goodbyes.
"She's gone", said the voice on the line.
What do you mean – she can't be gone, she's only 30 and healthy. Why?

She wasn't here long enough, she has a daughter to raise
and a baby on the way. She can't be gone,
she was the one always here, the one to look after us when
we are old. But that was not to be and I want to know "Why"?

Why did you need her more than us? Why does Faith grow up without a Mom? She did a lot in 30 years, but had so much more to do.

Asking "why?" does no good, there isn't an answer to come.
But I can say "I love you" and you were a huge part of my life.

IN MY POCKET

by

Martin Bauer, TCF North Shore-Boston

I have memories in my pocket
They rattle just like change.
My memories of you are treasures I carry
wherever I go.
They are stored in bits and pieces., part of a beautiful whole.
They give me comfort when I think I am alone.
Yes, I have memories in my pocket, like so much other stuff
I keep there.
But of all the treasures I have,
It's the memories of you that are the most precious.

In that Moment

by

Katherine Bloom

What were you thinking?
That morning you slipped away
Did you know you were leaving
forever and a day?
I would give my own life
if I had the choice
To be able to once more hear your sweet voice
I know that you loved me
and I know that you knew
How much love I have always had
especially for you
It's hard to imagine how I get through my days
Walking around in a fog
in a haze
I love you, I miss you
Can you hear me at all?



LOVE GIFTS

Penny & Manny Flecker	Norman
Nancy Cox	Bradley
Mary & Herman Nader	Carolyn
Nancy Pinto	Claire
Rita & Walter Pancik	Bruce
Halley Dunn	Jacob
Colleen Baskin	Patrick Elasik



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



November 2012

Cheryl & Bob Evans
JoAnn Gellman
Peggy & Ainsley Gordon
Beth Hilliard
Micki & Irvin Koniak
Sherri & Brad Newman
Janet & Charles Pacholkiw
Theresa & Steve Spencer
Joan Uhlig
Margaret & Philip Waclawik
Joece & Matt Yeun

John
Julia
Ainsley III
Jeanette
Lesley Garelick
Joshua
Charles
Lukas
Jason
Carl
Michael

December 2012

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

Troy
Carolyn
Alexander
Robert
MacKenzie Ann
Claire
Chris
Richard

January 2013

Sonia Vasquez & Luis Chaparro	Nicholas
Leslie & Max Cohen	Adam
Nathalie & Matthew Dykstra	Jasmine
Betty & Donald Fick	Kenneth
Anita & Gary Fields	Adam
Brian Lake	Alanna
Lynn & Fred Lee	Nicole
Cheryl Everson & Geoffrey Mack	Brenton (Everson)
Hope Philips	Hilary
Betsy & Bart Popeck	Alexander
Wendy Reed	Hope (Roth)
Margaret Simspon & Bill Smith	Benjamin
Susan & Misbah Tahir	Noah
Barbara Tatge	Alexander (Finamore)
Lise & John Valenta	Troy

February 2013

Terry Bendell	Teresa
Coleen Books	Joshua (Simmons)
Lorie Fisher	Audrey
Letha & Ty Healy	Kiran
Marge Mathieu	Philip
Wanda Michael	Stacy (Gross)
Marsha & Robert Weinberg	Matthew

March 2013

Colleen Boskin	Patrick (Elasik)
Gail & Mark Garfinkle	Harris
Karen & Fred Johnson	Katherine
Chris & Terry King	Terry
Doris & Carl Sensabaugh	Tammy
Marlem & Alex Stein	Claudia
Linda Vasquez	Sonya

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Potomac MD Compassionate Friends
c/o Mary Mandeville, Co-Leader
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Silver Spring, MD 20906