

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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NORTHEAST BALTIMORE CHAPTER  
WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE  
VOLUME IX, # 1, SPRING 2005  
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*Baltimore Chapter Meetings are on the First Wednesday of each month. Brown Memorial Church, 6200 N Charles Street Towson*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NEW GROUP COORDINATORS

Sharon Calvano and Garrett Tollenger began in January 2005. Thanks to Michelle Pooner and Michelle Backe for all their love and devotion these past years

### NOTE FROM SHARON

My name is Sharon Calvano and I came to Compassionate Friends three years ago when my daughter Abigail died. She was stillborn, but her twin sister Madeline lived and is now 3 1/2 years old. Compassionate Friends was there for me when I thought (as all of us have) that I would lose my mind. As time has gone by, my healing has taken many roads and I am now ready to help others who come to the group. I am excited about becoming the group's new co leader with Garrett Tollenger and I hope I can give back to the group what it so gracefully has given me. I am looking forward to the coming year as we all learn to live and support one another

### FUNDRAISING

We are looking at different fundraising ideas. We have not done a fundraiser in some years and it is time. The active members are currently selling candy and we hope to raise a few hundred dollars from that. If anyone in the group membership (whether you are active or not) has ideas, time, or a willingness to help, please feel free to call me at 410 662-8879, or email to [scalvano@dpscs.state.md.us](mailto:scalvano@dpscs.state.md.us)

### GRIEFWALK

#### SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2005 AT 3PM

GriefWorks sponsors a healing walk each year in the tranquil setting of Brookside Gardens, at Wheaton Regional Park, to offer a reflective time to honor the deep and aching wounds of grief and loss. As you take the path to healing, decide what it is that YOU want to have happen - forgiveness, freedom from inappropriate guilt, a closure on some part of your past, or just a connection with other hurting people? The walk is free. 3:00 p.m. (rain or shine). Begin at the Visitor Center, where you will be given a written guide suggesting how to use the walk through the gardens in a helpful way. There is no need to pre-register, no T-shirts, no pins, just show up! [GriefWorks.com](http://GriefWorks.com).

### UNITED WAY

You can designate your contribution to us by writing in "The Compassionate Friends Northeast Baltimore"



If you have something you would like to appear in the Newsletter, send it to me by the 1st of the month.

David Bishai  
11118 Pool Rd.  
Hunt Valley, MD  
21030  
[dbishai@jhu.edu](mailto:dbishai@jhu.edu)

## OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Anniversaries and Birthdays are difficult times for bereaved parents, but... As long as we live, they too shall live for they are part of us in our memories. In the days ahead, we lovingly remember these children, and we send our love and support to their parents.

Brendan Baynes	3/21/94-4/8/94
Parents: Sheila & Kevin	
Joshua Matthew Belanger	9/30/90-4/9/98
MaryAnn Weatherholtz & George Belanger	
Lauren Michelle Bonsall	5/3/90-12/19/95
Parents: Douglas & Karen	
Evan Gareth Brugger	5/30/00-6/23/00
Parent: Melissa Travers	
Shane Christopher Czarnowsky	5/8/1994
Parent: Lora	
Jamshid M Ghannad	1/7/69-6/29/99
Parent: Heideh Shirazi	
Aaron Christopher Grogan	6/29/96-9/22/96
Parents: Patrick & Michelle	
Christian Horchler	3/8/91-5/9/91
Parents: Gabe & Joani	
Scott James Lehew	5/3/88-8/12/97
Parents: Gary & Michaelen	
David Ronald Leonzio	5/24/84-3/12/96
Parents: Eileen & Larry, sister: Linda Harkness	
Bob Palese	4/1/56-9/4/97
Parents: Bob & Aline, sister: Sherry	
Ashley Paige Tollenger	5/1/89-8/10/01
Parent: Garrett Paige Tollenger	

## MOTHER'S DAY

As Mother's Day approaches, I go back to my box of memories and seek out my mementos of days past. I go back to the times when there were two cards, some home-made of construction paper with crayoned verses proclaiming me the "greatest Mom of all." They were made at school with some S's reversed and with no semblance of order, but brought home and presented to me with great pride and accepted in the same vein. Later, more sophisticated cards, store bought, but the message was the same and the love was still there. I accepted them, loved being made to feel special, and tucked them away, never realizing how valuable they would become. Now there is one card. There seems to be a double portion of love in that card, and I recognize and appreciate that effort. I am thankful there is one card, and I value very much what I have left. My heart goes out to those of you who have no card this Mother's Day. But even with the pain, I'll bet if you were given the choice of no child/no pain, you would, like me, gather up as many memories as your child's life span permitted and hold them close to your heart, sorry there wasn't time for more, but never for one moment, willing to exchange for no pain the pleasure of his or her company for however long you had them. When all is said and done, the memories are the most important thing. Relish them, but gather about you all those you have left and who love you, and let them help you through this special day. Know that this day takes patience, but that you will survive and go on to better days.

I hope your Mother's Day is a peaceful one.

Mary Cleckley, TCF  
Atlanta, Georgia  
(from May 1991 newsletter)

## MEETING SCHEDULE

**Northeast Baltimore Chapter Meeting** First Wednesday 7:30 pm  
May 4                      July 6                      June 1                      August 3

**Brown Memorial Church, 6200 N Charles Street Towson**

Directions: Beltway to Exit #25 Charles Street; South on Charles St approximately 2 miles to church on the right, directly across from 7-11  
For information on other area chapter meetings please call  
410-560-3358 or visit The Compassionate Friends online.

## WHICH QUESTIONS TO ASK

If you haven't yet discovered the author Gordon Livingston, you have missed connecting with a wise and gentle man (from Columbia, MD) who has endured the loss of two sons and writes honestly and compassionately about living with grief.

I first came across him in a guest column titled "Don't bury hopes for relief of Asia's incalculable grief" in the Jan. 3, 2005 Baltimore Sun where he wrote in response to the unfathomable images of loss and grief we were daily seeing on TV from the Tsunami disaster. In that column he affirmed:

- People who are bereaved hate the word "closure," that state beloved by the media that implies that we have accepted our loss and moved on.
- Parents of dead children are especially revolted by the idea that one can ever accept such an irredeemable loss.
- The process of mourning requires that we keep fresh the memories of our child.

I knew from those few words that Dr. Livingston was an author I wanted to read more from. I obtained his first book: *Only Spring: On Mourning the Death of My Son*, and read and wept my way through it. I recommend it highly to anyone who finds solace in shared grief, which is probably everyone who attends The Compassionate Friends.

In a chapter from his current best seller, *Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart*, Dr. Livingston has a chapter titled "Love is never lost, not even in death." In that chapter he writes, "I am a parent twice bereaved. In one thirteen-month period I lost my oldest son to suicide and my youngest to leukemia... To lose that which means the most to us is a lesson in helplessness and humility and survival. After being stripped of any illusions of control I might have harbored I had to decide what questions were still worth asking. I quickly realized that the most obvious ones—Why my sons? Why me?—were as pointless as they were inevitable. Any appeal to fairness was absurd.

"...The idea that I could reach a point when I would no longer miss my children was obscene to me and I dismissed it. I had to accept the reality that I would never be the same person, that some part of my heart, perhaps the best part, had been cut out and buried with my sons. What was left? Now there was a question worth contemplating."

--Elizabeth Bishai

## THE "VETERAN" BEREAVED PARENT

Have you ever attended a TCF meeting to see a "veteran" bereaved parent shed a tear, or openly show grief, and have wondered "why" after all that time?

Please don't get the wrong idea. The wrong idea being:

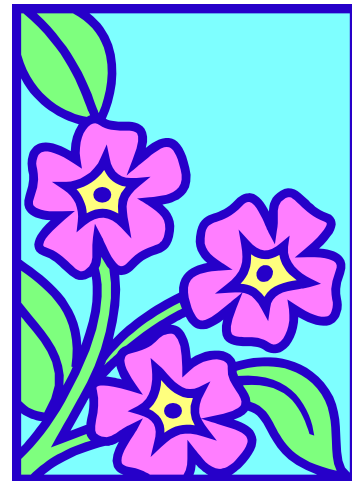
1. You won't ever cry after 10 years or more.
2. You won't feel a need to still attend TCF meetings.
3. You won't feel like sticking with TCF in case a newly bereaved parent needs you.
4. You won't care enough to stay and help organize future meetings.

You won't feel compassionate enough to hear a newly bereaved parent talk of their grief.

Yes, some veteran bereaved parents move on and we wish them peace. But, I am personally grateful for veteran bereaved parents who stay with TCF.

What would newly bereaved parents do if they attended their first meeting and no one was there?

Sandy Smith  
Valley Forge TCF



*Love Gifts— a monetary donation to our chapter lovingly given by family or friends in honor of a child who has died. Love gifts help to maintain our newsletter and mailing.*

*Postage donated in loving memory of Andrew Robert Ritchie*

*Special thanks to Barbara and Tom Allen for all their support*

## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS—WHAT WE CAN DO

We can't give you, the new members, much...not in comparison to what you have lost.

We can't give you the answer to your "WHY" questions.

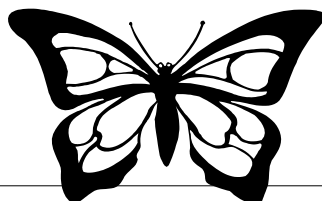
We can't give you a simple philosophical statement that will give you instant peace.

BUT...We can shake our head "yes" when you say how it hurts, because we have felt it.

We can warn you of the stumbling blocks along the way, because we have fallen.

We can come back and walk the grief path with you, because many of us have walked the whole path, and we made it!

Oklahoma City, TCF



## SPRING THAWS THE WOUNDED HEART

That first Spring  
came too soon  
why did daffodils  
show sunny faces  
around the gravestone  
why did warm breezes blow  
clouds away  
my world, a cold gray dismal  
had no room  
for this season.  
Now years later  
the blossoms of love  
hope and healing  
have broken through  
grounds of utter despair  
warmed by memories of you  
I join the daffodils  
bringing my own smile  
--Alice J. Wisler

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