



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

APRIL 2008  
Vol 17, No 4

Arlington, DC, Leesburg, Prince William, and Burke-Springfield-Fairfax Virginia Chapters  
Trinity Presbyterian Church, 5533 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Arlington, Virginia 22205  
TCF National Headquarters, PO Box 3606 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696,  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org), 877-969-0010 toll free

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive.

## WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO?

Rabbi Earl A. Grollman said, “ Time may heal. It may help to dull your pain. But the medicine of time, taken by itself, is not sure. Time is neutral. What helps is what you do with time.”

In the early days after the death of a child you may be so numb that it is all you can do to get out of bed in the morning. You toss and turn unable to sleep or you sleep for hours or days.

You can stumble through your days unaware what is happening around you. Eating is not something you can or want to do.

If you have other children it will effect how you function or not, depending on their ages.

Eventually you will begin to want to join the world but may have a hard time in certain situations and you may have to retreat back to the safety of your “cocoon”

Be kind to yourself. Don't let others tell you “ isn't it time you got over “it” and moved on with life?” You have to take all the time to grieve and begin to heal that is necessary. Each person is different, even spouses grieve differently.

When you begin to get comfortable in your world, your changed world, you can begin to think of how you want people to remember your child.

This may be a time for you to join a support group. Compassionate Friends is where you can talk about your child. You can celebrate their birthday. You can show pictures of your child. It is a place where no one has the answers but they are willing to share what has worked for them and what hasn't. It is a place where we do not judge or tell you that you are wrong in what you are doing. We are there to hold your hand, to offer love and support, to listen to your story. Someone said you have to tell your story at least 100 times. Your family and friends may not be able to listen 100 times but your Compassionate Friends will. Why? Because we have been there and someone listened to us so it is our turn to give back what has been given to us. This is what we do. This is what we do with time.

Our children, grandchildren and siblings will never be forgotten as long as we share them with others. We can set up scholarships, plant memorial gardens, purchase benches engraved with their names, start a foundation to support a cause or disease connected with their death, volunteer our time with a charity, help other children with one on one mentoring and many more ways.

As we travel this painful road we can reach out to other bereaved people with love and hope....that is what to do.

©HUGS, Betty Farrel, Sarah Louise's Nana  
[bcfnana@aol.com](mailto:bcfnana@aol.com) Arlington, VA Chapter TCF

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# Calendar of TCF Meetings In Your Area

**APRIL**

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Fairfax, VA 22032

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We Need Not Walk Alone  
~~~~~

**2008**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2 LEESBURG	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 ARLINGTON	11	12
13	14	15	16 DC	17 PW	18	19
20	21	22	23 BSF	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

<b>Arlington Chapter</b> For info contact Lois Copeland 301-530-1115 or <a href="mailto:locopeland@aol.com">locopeland@aol.com</a> Please send "Love Gifts" to Kent Womack 1013 Riverside Dr. Woodstock, VA 22664	Trinity Presbyterian Church 5533 N. 16 <sup>th</sup> St Arlington, VA	Meets the Second Thursday This month's meeting will be <b>April 10, at 7:30 PM</b>
<b>Burke/Springfield/ Fairfax Chapter (BSF)</b> For info contact: Carol Marino <a href="mailto:camarino@cox.net">camarino@cox.net</a> or Jane Trimble <a href="mailto:janetrimble@juno.com">janetrimble@juno.com</a> Chapter Phone 703-622-3639 Please send "Love Gifts" to John Trimble, 5209 Wenlock Way, Burke, VA 22015	OLD ST. MARY'S HALL NEXT TO THE ST. MARY'S HISTORIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY Fairfax Station Road and Route 123, Fairfax, VA 22030	Meets the Fourth Wednesday This month's meeting will be <b>April 23, at 7:30 PM</b>
<b>Leesburg Chapter</b> For info contact Bev or Bernie Elero 540-882-9707 Please send "Love Gifts" to Mrs. Anne Shattuck, 224 Walnut Ridge Lane, Palmyra, VA 22963	St. James Episcopal Church Janney Parlor 14 Cornwall St NW Leesburg, VA	Meets the First Wednesday This month's meeting will be <b>April 2, at 7:30 PM</b>
<b>Prince William Chapter</b> For info contact Ken Adams 703-361-6574 or <a href="mailto:adamsksbjk@comcast.net">adamsksbjk@comcast.net</a> Please send "Love Gifts" to Peggy Beach, 10404 Schaeffer Lane, Nokesville, VA 20181	Grace United Methodist Church <b>Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor</b> 9750 Wellington Rd Manassas, VA	Meets the Third Thursday This month's meeting will be <b>April 17, at 7:30 PM</b>
<b>Washington, DC Chapter</b> For info contact Olivia Gunter, 301-552-2798 Please send "Love Gifts" to Coralease Ruff, 3314 Applegate Ct., Oak Hill, VA 20171	The Howard University The Blackburn Center 2397 Sixth Street, NW Washington, DC 20059	Meets the Third Wednesday This month's meeting will be <b>April 16, 7-9 PM</b>
<b>TCF National Headquarters</b> P O Box 3606 Oak Brook IL 60522-3696	<a href="http://www.compassionatefriends.org">www.compassionatefriends.org</a>	877-969-0010 (Toll-Free)
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<b>Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Web</b>	<a href="http://www.tcfbsf.org">www.tcfbsf.org</a>	
<b>Prince William Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tcfprincewilliam.org">www.tcfprincewilliam.org</a>	<a href="mailto:webmaster@tcfprwm.org">webmaster@tcfprwm.org</a>



# Arlington Chapter

**TCF Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, April 10  
**Place:** Trinity Presbyterian Church, enter 2<sup>nd</sup> level  
**Time:** 7:30pm  
**Topic:** Expressing your grief in writing. Share your writing with the group.

## Arlington Chapter News/Info

**\* Volunteers Needed:** help planning our December 2008 Candle Lighting Ceremony. There are small jobs as well as large jobs; you will not be expected to do anything you are not able to do. Contact Lois Copeland at 301-530-1115 or [locopeland@aol.com](mailto:locopeland@aol.com)  
**\* Wanted:** your poems or writings. Be sure to list author and source. Remember, this is **your** newsletter. Deadline always the 1<sup>st</sup>. Submissions for May (Mother's Day) is April 1. Contact Lois Copeland at 301-530-1115 or [locopeland@aol.com](mailto:locopeland@aol.com)  
**\* Remembrances:** if your child's, grandchild, or sibling's birthday or remembrance month is April, May, etc. plan to bring a photo, birthday cake, favorite food, whatever you wish to our meeting.  
^^

## Strange Words Welcome New Members

I am always amazed at the instant empathy we each feel as new members come to their first meeting. We have the strangest welcome for these parents: "We are so sorry you have to be here."  
In other organizations the questions are probing: where did you go to school, where do you work, where do you live? All designed to "size up" the newcomer, put him or her in the proper perspective of a neatly ordered world. For us, this information is meaningless. We know the world isn't neat and orderly: we discovered that when we lost our children. We care about you, the newly bereaved parent, whose whole life was tossed into a cosmic blender when your child died.  
We care because we are you. We have been here a while in this purgatory of pain. We have learned to live our lives in a different way, to place value on understanding and hope, the intangibles of the purest meanings of life. We have learned to value each other, to reach out and talk, to wait patiently during the silences needed to form thoughts. We listen intently as you quietly say your child's name, tell your child's story, and speak of your heartbreak.  
Yes, this is a different welcome. But it is the most deeply sincere welcome we will ever receive. We are kindred souls, you and I. Each of us lives in the "after death" world of losing our child. Each of us has learned gradually that the hope we have attained has made life better, lessened the pain, and moderated the isolation, tears, emotional devastation and pure mayhem that once overtook us. Each of us has learned this slowly, in our own time and in our own way.  
Each month new parents who have suffered the most horrific loss that a human can endure are welcomed into our group. We reach out, we listen with our hearts and we remember.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen, TCF, Kathy, TX*

## A Whisper in Spring

I wish that you were here to share this  
Hopeful Spring with me,  
The blooming of the flowers and  
New leaves upon the trees,  
The sound of songbirds trilling  
As the sun begins to rise,  
The joy I'd feel if somehow  
I could gaze into your eyes.

These days of spring are lovely  
With all the sights they bring;  
I welcome the warmth the sun's rays  
Bestow on everything.  
Still, these days could be even finer  
If only one thing more were here,  
And that would be to have you close  
to me to whisper in my ear.

*~LB Jones, Bereavement Seasons of Grief Calendar*



## The Child Who Wasn't Perfect

I cannot say, as I have heard other parents say, "My child has always been a joy and pleasure; never gave me a minute's trouble." I cannot say that.  
I had a son who was always trouble. He was born cross and irritable: a real trial from the word "go". He seemed to be in protest at having been born, from his very first breath and outcry through the rest of his life. His 37 years of life were one long outcry of protest, misery and unhappiness. But in spite of the pain that was in his heart, he had a wide smile and a hearty, big laugh for every one that belied the torment that raged inside him. He had a strange, mysterious wild charm, to which all who met him fell victim.  
So, he was hard to love. But WE LOVED HIM, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. We had him because we wanted him and we loved him every minute of his life. Our grief has been no less because he was not a perfect child. It has been an extenuation of the grief we lived with all those years, as we watched him destroy himself, an extenuation of the agony that we were helpless against the "monster" called addiction that destroyed him.  
Yesterday was his birthday. I longed for the sight and sound of him, and that wild, melancholy charm that vanished a year and a half ago. My heart stays full of tears; they are always just beneath the surface. I struggle daily to keep them out of my fellow man, who does not want to share my pain. So, I come home and sit on my porch in the dark; listen to the night sounds; stare into space. And I cry and I cry for my CHILD WHO WASN'T PERFECT  
*~Lee's Mom, Jane Miller, TCF, Atlanta, GA*



# Arlington Chapter



## Happy Passover

Jews throughout the world will celebrate the holiday of Passover this month. Passover has been called our favorite holiday because it operates on so many levels. It is a time of triumph, but it is also a time of tears...

Perhaps at no other time do we feel the absence of our loved one more than at the time of Passover. As we gather around the table, we cannot help but recall those who were so dear to us in life and who are with us here no more. We recall them in friendship and in love, for Passover is the time of family service. But even as we mourn their loss, we understand that the life of the dead is now placed in the memory of the living. Spring and Passover are a time of new hope and new life.

~Rabbi Dr. Earl Grollman



## A Little "Hello"

Whenever Camille and I would go to any department store and "happen" to pass through the toy department and go through the isle with the stuffed animals, she would stop and line up the stuffed animals all in a row, facing forward. I have to admit; at times it was a bit aggravating, especially when we were in a hurry. But, Camille loved stuffed animals.

Last Sunday, we went to Target to pick up a sand box for the baby to play in outside. Target didn't have a sandbox, but that didn't stop us from looking around the toy department. Glenn found a hand puppet and was playing with Alex. The baby was giggling and just having a great time.

Now, I always get a little sad when walking through the toys. I see the things that Camille would have liked, the things she would have pointed out to me. The toys I wouldn't buy her because she had "too many toys". So as the boys were playing I just wandered off to look at the toys and think about Camille. There was a game about "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" (her first book) and I know she would have like to play that game at home with me.

I'm still thinking about the game when I turn the corner and go around to the next isle over when I notice that the isle is actually blocked. What's blocking it? A row of stuffed animals all lined up across the floor and facing me. I just started laughing; my little girl was up to her old tricks. I immediately called Glenn over to see and he knew exactly what it was; a little "hello" from my Camille. It was so *her* that there was no mistaking it. Well, we didn't get a sandbox, but we did get Alex a little stuffed dinosaur from the isle just before the row of animals and we left them just as they were.

Grace Shelton, TCF Orlando



## For Siblings



## Nothing More

We play with the dog, you and I.  
Nothing Special, Nothing Unusual, Nothing More...

We say good-bye, see you later.  
Nothing Special, Nothing Unusual, Nothing More...

You go one way and I go another.  
Nothing Special, Nothing Unusual, Nothing More...

We will meet again in a few hours.  
Nothing Special, Nothing Unusual, Nothing, More...

I return, but you are gone.  
Nothing is Special, Nothing is Usual.  
There is Nothing any More...

~Jane Johnson, for her 17 year old brother, Charles Jackson, MS newsletter

## The following is taken from the opening statement at the "Survivors After Suicide" Meeting:

"For each of us our loss and pain is private and individual, but we do share in common grief that results from the self inflicted death of someone we love. We have a heavy burden, for not only must we resolve the grief for our loss, but we also grieve the choice that caused our loss. This choice makes our grieving difficult - full of isolation, conflicts and complexities. We must work through and resolve these conflicts so we are not warped by this death. We can choose to grow bitter or to grow better." ✨



## Love Gifts

Lois and Jay Copeland, to **Sam Morton** for a speedy recovery



Grace Rosamond, mother of **Charlie Hayes**, a member of the Arlington Chapter of TCF died November 2007.



# Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Chapter

The BSF chapter is grateful for the generosity of our members and friends for their love gifts. Our sincere appreciation to:

STEVE AND MARGIE TITUNIK  
*In Loving Memory of Their Son*

*Michael Titunik*

*November 5, 1985 ~ November 30, 2001*

♥♥♥♥♥

*In memory of ...*

*Conor Keegan*

*Feb. 11, 1989 – Feb. 11, 2005*

You were my light, my heart, my gift of love,  
So every day, I vow to make a difference,  
Share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for both of us,  
So all I do, I do to honor you.

Remembering you always Conor – all my love,  
Mom

–Mary Keegan

*Leslie Ann Conners*

*April 30, 1979 – Nov. 24, 2000*

**In honor of Leslie Ann's 29th birthday**

Whenever I see the words "she died," I feel so sad.

However, it's not the words, "she died," but of the life that was, before those words, that left its mark on this world.

April, with its warmth and sunshine, always seems to bring the promise of hope and of brighter days ahead. Our "hope" is to, one day, be re-united with that "April smile" that we lost over seven years ago.

Leslie, you certainly left your mark in this world and every day we still look for your signs to remind us of your love, your truth and your light.

Happy 29th birthday, Grinch.

Love forever and always, Dad, Mom, Michele,  
Jay III and Morgan Mari

## This is your newsletter!

Please submit your articles, poems and remembrances to Steve Marshall by the first of the month. As the new newsletter editor for our chapter, I look forward to receiving your contributions, so send 'em along to [steve.marshall@yahoo.com](mailto:steve.marshall@yahoo.com). Many thanks.

## Tips for writing your story or journal

Recently, several new TCF members have asked me for suggestions about what they can do at the early stages of grief and what helped me in my experience in those earlier days of grief when my son, Bobby, died. In thinking about that, I remember my *journal* and what a meaningful and effective way of venting that was for me. As you may know, very often our close friends think we should be "moving on with life" or "letting go," etc. Unfortunately, for me, they just didn't get it. So, I looked back through some past newsletter issues and found an article on ideas for writing your story or journal – I hope you find it helpful:

Bereaved parents who have written about their loss unanimously agree that writing unleashes enormous stress and pain. In my own experience, I recall one night when I locked myself in the bathroom and wrote a long letter to my son, Bobby. It was my chance to express my feelings without having them diminished by well meaning and caring people around me trying to be helpful. I will never forget the pressure that letter released for me. Although the letter was not saved, the positive result was everlasting.

Have you ever thought of writing your story or keeping a journal? You may find it helpful to clarify your thoughts about your child by recording your feelings in the form of a letter. Write a letter to your child, expressing your thoughts and feelings about the following:

- *A special memory that I have about you.*
- *What I miss the most about you and our relationship.*
- *What I wish I'd said or hadn't said.*
- *What I'd like to ask you.*
- *What I wish we'd done or hadn't done.*
- *What I've had the hardest time dealing with.*
- *Ways in which you will continue to live on in me.*
- *Special ways I have for keeping my memories of you alive.*

If you would like to share your writing at a TCF meeting, please do. You never know how many other parents will be touched and benefit from your experience.

– Pat Akery,  
TCF, Medford, Ore.

## Omissions

Due to database issues, some children weren't listed in *Our Children Remembered*. They include:

- Conor Keegan, Feb. 11, 1989 – Feb. 11, 2005
- Kelly Elizabeth Baker, Feb. 25, 1986 – Aug. 8, 2005
- Matthew Potter, March 12, 1997 – March 28, 2006

If we missed listing your child's name, please advise BSF newsletter page editor Steve Marshall at [steve.marshall@yahoo.com](mailto:steve.marshall@yahoo.com). Thanks a lot.

# Our April Children Remembered

**Jayanth Charya**

**Apr 14, 1983** Mar 05, 2003  
Usha Charya  
Arlington

**Andrew Rutowski**

**Apr 29, 1987** Nov 11, 2004  
Pam and Mark Rutowski  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Cassandra Anne Akers**

Aug 17, 2003 **Apr 06, 2005**  
Daria and Todd Akers  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Bryce Anderson**

Jan 02, 2004 **Apr 10, 2006**  
Emily and James Anderson  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Jakob Bellamy**

**Apr 19, 1981** Sep 12, 2002  
Wayne and Linda Bellamy  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Benjamin Gerald "Ben" Berry**

Mar 31, 1979 **Apr 11, 1998**  
Gary and Denny Berry  
Arlington

**Mitchell Alan Blackwell**

**Apr 20, 1962** Jul 23, 1992  
Vanessa Lemme  
Arlington

**Adrian Gregory Buchanan**

Sep 25, 1984 **Apr 01, 2002**  
Pamolyn Buchanan  
DC

**Julia Campbell**

Jan 25, 1967 **Apr 08, 2007**  
Linda and Ron Campbell  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Suhail "Sid" Chowdhury**

**Apr 11, 1980** Jul 06, 2000  
Anwar and Patricia Chowdhury  
Prince William

**Leslie Ann Connors**

**Apr 30, 1979** Nov 24, 2000  
Jay and Audrey Connors  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Patrick Cowhig**

Feb 08, 1987 **Apr 30, 2004**  
David and Jesse Cowhig  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**James Russell Dail**

**Apr 16, 1974** May 04, 2007  
Margaret Armstrong  
Leesburg

**Jason Kenneth Duvall**

**Apr 12, 1978** Jun 09, 2001  
Kenneth and Sally Duvall  
Arlington

**Kevin Eveland**

Jun 16, 1998 **Apr 04, 2007**  
Alyssa and Jeff Eveland  
Leesburg

**Veronica Crystal Exum**

**Apr 07, 1983** Aug 29, 1997  
Cecil and Darlene Exum  
Arlington

**Jerry Ferguson**

**Apr 23, 1967** Jan 03, 2007  
Anita Ferguson  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Adam Foote**

**Apr 23, 1986** Mar 22, 2005  
Jennifer and Steve Young  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Nathaniel Jonathan Fossett**

**Apr 06, 1999**  
Ken and Tammy Fossett  
Leesburg

**Rob French**

Dec 15, 1977 **Apr 13, 2002**  
Douglas and Susan French  
Arlington

**Matthew Harrington Hale**

Jul 06, 1987 **Apr 26, 2007**  
Susanne Hale  
Leesburg

**Karen Marie Harrelson-Eugene**

**Apr 12, 1966** Jul 09, 2002  
Sandra Harrelson  
DC

**Lucy Love Harrison**

Sep 17, 1975 **Apr 13, 1991**  
John and Sandy Harrison  
Arlington

**Brigid (Sullivan) Healy**

Jun 15, 1964 **Apr 16, 1992**  
Paul and Flora Sullivan  
Arlington

**Douglas Wayne Hosier**

**Apr 18, 1961** Jul 02, 1997  
Wayne and June Hosier  
Arlington

**Rachel Howard**

Aug 25, 1994 **Apr 11, 1998**  
Marlys and David Howard  
Leesburg

**Allison Grace Kerr**

**Apr 29, 2004** Jun 29, 2004  
Jill Kerr  
Leesburg

**Kamran Hamid**

Jun 26, 2001 **Apr 30, 2002**  
Linda Kimbell  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Colin Michael Koos**

Nov 04, 2002 **Apr 23, 2003**  
Philip and Tricia Koos  
Prince William

**Marina Landi**

**Apr 07, 1956** Jun 05, 1977  
Federica Landi  
Arlington

**Herve J LeBoeuf, IV**

Oct 21, 1970 **Apr 23, 2006**  
Renee and Herve LeBoeuf  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Susie Li**

Mar 01, 1976 **Apr 18, 2000**  
Raymond and Lily Li  
Arlington

**Brenda MacDonald**

Mar 25, 1963 **Apr 10, 2005**  
Cathy Bowen  
Leesburg

# Our April Children Remembered

**Jessica Megan McClenahan**  
**Apr 23, 1987** Jan 23, 2005  
Helena McClenahan  
Leesburg

**Steven A. McGrath**  
Feb 28, 1963 **Apr 17, 1995**  
Federick and Nancy Shultz  
Arlington

**Christopher Migliozi**  
**Apr 24, 2003** Jun 11, 2004  
Paige and Joe Migliozi  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Isabella Moore**  
Mar 06, 1972 **Apr 19, 2002**  
Christopher and Marie Moore  
Leesburg

**Sean Stephen Noble**  
**Apr 24, 1970** Sep 30, 1993  
Mary Anne Noble  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Taylor Augustine Noll**  
**Apr 22, 1999 Apr 27, 2000**  
Adam and Deborah Noll  
Arlington

**BB Nyce**  
Feb 18, 1954 **Apr 17, 2007**  
Lynn Nyce  
Arlington

**Scott Peters**  
**Apr 28, 1978** Nov 25, 1997  
Bill and Jennifer Peters  
Prince William

**DeVaughn Phillips**  
Sep 10, 1987 **Apr 03, 1993**  
Barbara Phillips  
DC

**Amber Marie Platas**  
Dec 26, 1992 **Apr 22, 2002**  
Tricia Platas  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Don R. Poehler Jr.**  
Nov 17, 1948 **Apr 30, 1996**  
Richard and Evelyn West  
Prince William

**Daniel "Dan" Whitaker Potts**  
Feb 08, 1956 **Apr 07, 1975**  
William and Elaine Potts  
Arlington

**Madeline Marie Potts**  
Feb 29, 1944 **Apr 18, 1995**  
William and Elaine Potts  
Arlington

**Adam Powalski**  
Feb 04, 1979 **Apr 12, 2007**  
Carli Hall  
Rosemarie Powalski  
Leesburg

**Mary Karen Read**  
Jan 03, 1988 **Apr 16, 2007**  
Peter and Cathy Read  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Rick Rhodes**  
May 24, 1960 **Apr 23, 2003**  
Barbara Rhodes  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Charles Thomas "Charlie" Rizzo**  
**Apr 26, 1960** Oct 03, 1999  
Victoria Rizzo  
Arlington

**Suzanne Elizabeth "Suzi" Robertson**  
**Apr 20, 1972** Nov 10, 1993  
Patricia Robertson  
Arlington

**Lauren Sausville**  
**Apr 05, 1988** Dec 03, 2004  
Debbie and Peter Sausville  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**John Silva**  
**Apr 30, 1984** Feb 27, 2007  
Mary Reddy  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Adam Christopher Smoot**  
Jul 23, 1978 **Apr 12, 2003**  
Lynn Burwitz  
Prince William

**Erin Stanfield**  
**Apr 18, 1985** Jul 14, 2002  
Jack and Susan Stanfield  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Kelly Marie Stanfield**  
**Apr 10, 1982** Sep 07, 2003  
Jack and Susan Stanfield  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Eugene Steele**  
May 10, 1966 **Apr 09, 1976**  
Elaine Steele  
Arlington

**Patrick Stowell**  
**Apr 20, 2001** Jun 15, 2006  
Rebekah and Eric Stowell  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Jean Swayse**  
Jan 24, 1968 **Apr 04, 2004**  
Kaz and Phil Swayse  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Mark Andrew Tabak**  
Dec 03, 1987 **Apr 16, 2003**  
Sam and Kathy Tabak  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Neale Thompson**  
**Apr 07, 1971 Apr 09, 1993**  
David and Angie Neel  
Prince William

**Marlee Rae Treger**  
**Apr 12, 1999** Nov 13, 2006  
Paula and Steve Treger  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**William Eric Vaugh**  
Oct 16, 1960 **Apr 29, 1991**  
Vanessa Lemme  
Arlington

**Todd Richards Nicholas Williamson**  
Mar 09, 1967 **Apr 12, 2003**  
Syd & Barbara Williamson  
Prince William

**Theresa "Terry" (Hands) Windham**  
Aug 02, 1956 **Apr 02, 1993**  
Leonora Hands  
Arlington



**Steering Committee  
DC Chapter**

**Chapter Leader**

Olivia Gunter  
(Darnell's mom)  
301 552-2798 (h)

**Co-Leader:**

Barbara Johnson  
(DeVaughn's mom)  
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**Secretary:  
Vacant**

**Treasurer:**

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**AMBER**

**Happy Birthday.** You would be turning 30 this year. I do honestly dread the year when you will have been gone longer than you were here with us. It is also hard to realize that I have outlived you by almost 8 years. I wish you were here so I could throw you a big blowout. 30 deserves a big blowout! Coming up this year it will be 10 since the car accident. So much has happened in those ten years and although I know you've been watching the whole time I just wanted you to know that I do miss you and when I have missed you the most.

I missed you at my college graduation. Although I had so many family and friends there to support me, I know you would've screamed just a little louder. I missed you when I got my first real job. No matter how proud others were I missed the sarcasm you would've thrown my way too. I missed you when my son was born. You were always the one that could comfort a child in no time at all. I love that he is getting to know you through stories, but my heart aches when I realize you aren't physically here to make more memories with us.

I missed you when I got married. Although I had your name down in the program as my Honorary Maid of Honor, I wish I could've seen the look on your face when I actually said my "I do." Part of me knows there will forever be a lingering sadness because my husband, who is a very big part of my life, never knew my sister who is also a big part of my life. I miss you everyday. I miss you when something exciting happens. I pick up the phone and even after 9 and a half years you are still the first one I want to call.

I miss you every time we eat pizza. I miss you when I see my friends interacting with their sisters. I can only hope that they really know how lucky they are to have that relationship. I know it is one that I too often took for granted. I miss you whenever I hear Pink Floyd. I just plain old miss you... you are my best friend. This list is not all inclusive! These are just the things that are sticking out in my mind right now.

Jon is getting married in May. His future wife and our future sister-in-law is wonderful. She truly balances him out. I am also having another baby in July. I know the best gift we can give our son, is the gift of being a brother and having a sibling. Life, although I thought it never would, does continue to go on. I know

it never would, does continue to go on. I know without a doubt that you are with us each and every day.

Please know that I have missed you, I do miss you and I love you so much. I count myself lucky for having had the opportunity to be your baby sister, even if it was for a very short 18 years. Happy Birthday! Always your baby sister - Di

**In Loving Memory of Amber Michelle Black  
April 11, 1978 – October 10, 1998**

**Robert Earl Wilkins  
May 1, 1966 – March 22, 1998**

You were born on Mother's Day, my very special gift.

God blessed you with many talents. You were a gifted athlete who could play all kinds of sports and excelled as a football player for the Bisons of Gallaudet.

Your smile was as radiant as the sun and you had a smile for everyone. You left a lasting impression on each one you met.

You were popular and had many friends, every one loved you. Oh how I miss seeing your lovely smile and wish you were here with me right now. You were my sunshine on a cloudy day.

I Love You and Miss You

**Submitted by Lenora Bracey  
In Loving Memory of my son,  
Robert Earl Wilkins**

**Daylight Savings Time**

No matter if Daylight Savings Time changes, nothing will change in our heart for our missing loved one. But our love will always remain the same, and never changing for you. You can change the time, but not our mind, no matter if Daylight Savings Time changes. Changing time in our life will not change how we feel about our lost loved one. We are forever together even in the Daylight Savings Time. Missing you forever. Always

**Written by Marion M. Jones  
In Loving Memory of my son, TJ**

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Please remember to submit your poems, stories, or a special note to your loved one to be placed in the May Newsletter by the 2nd of April. Please let us hear from you. Thank you for your cooperation. MichelleLake 202-583-3292  
[malake@hotmail.com](mailto:malake@hotmail.com)

# Leesburg Chapter

## ***Behind this mask...a new day begins***

Behind this mask...  
I lead a double life -- the masked and the unmasked.

Behind this mask...  
A new day begins and I'm off to work, park my car and hide my face beneath my mask. My mask frees me from troubles, emptiness, sorrow, and guilt. No one can hear my heart scream. I must hide in a world that does not heal.

Behind this mask...  
I hide my grief, sadness, and broken heart for survival. Much like the joker, the mask helps me to grin and lie with bright, care free eyes, rosy cheeks, and a superficial smile concealing a sad face and a drawn face. For it is behind the mask I can hide my swollen eyes.

Behind this mask...  
I feel like a mysterious outcast at a costume ball, whose mask conceals the face beneath. A hidden face that sheds tears behind every smile and fights thoughts of a thousand "what ifs" churning through my mind while I desperately try to focus professionally.

Behind this mask...  
I feel like Ebenezer Scrooge's partner, Jacob Marley, who wore the heavy chain he forged in life. While every normal person takes each stride gracefully with little effort, I drag a heavy chain with each step that I will never rid.

Behind this mask...  
My new path takes me through a whirling detour while others take the straight and narrow road. I'll get there... but it will take longer to reach my destination.

Behind this mask...  
My heart screams silently with rage and confusion, angry and confused for what has been labeled a senseless death.

Behind this mask...  
My thoughts become storm clouds on sunny days lingering over my head and through my soul revealing an empty space. Although time does heal, it will never fill the hollowness, but only redeem its hole as a life sentence.

Behind this mask...  
Time encompasses ...and a new day begins.

Behind this mask...  
I know I'm not alone, and my story becomes yours as we struggle through the pain

***Masked***—we are free from the troubles, worries, and pain from our constant ache. We scream and cry silently because nobody can hear us behind the mask.

***Unmasked***—our world crumbles and our hearts fill with sadness. Unveiling thoughts of what they might have been and about how we thought it might be, and if they would have fulfilled their many dreams.

***Behind this mask...***  
I wonder when I'll be able to wear my own face, make a "new" normal and begin to move *forward*, but quickly put on my mask for fear it's too soon.

~By **Bonnie Roberto**, Nov. 2007  
Sharing thoughts of her grief since the death of her only son, Ricky, on September 25, 2006. He was 16 years old at the time of his death. Bonnie is a teacher for Loudoun County Public Schools. She and her husband, Rich, have two surviving daughters.

## **\*\* NEWS \*\***

~ We thank Allen Pederson for joining us for our March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. He performed songs about his grief journey that he has written since the death of his daughter, Ashley, in 2001. Thank you Anne Shattuck, Julie and Burton Simonds, and Bev and Bernie Elero for helping plan such a meaningful event. For more info, visit [everashleymusic.com](http://everashleymusic.com).

~ **Please** visit our new website at [www.tcfleesburg.org](http://www.tcfleesburg.org)! We are still building and hope to have many new links. Thank you to Burton Simonds for taking on this endeavor

~ Anne Shattuck, our treasurer, had to go out of the country unexpectedly. If you have tried to contact her and haven't heard back, please know she will return your calls and emails when she returns.

~ I would very much appreciate any contributions you have for OUR newsletter. I can scan pictures, include poems or stories you would like to share about your child and/or your grief. I work a month ahead of printing. For May, I need your contributions by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Feel free to email or call with any information: [theresaheitz@msn.com](mailto:theresaheitz@msn.com) or 703-729-6974.

~Wishing you all some peaceful moments as spring approaches. It can be a very bittersweet time for the newly bereaved. Take a little time for yourself.

Theresa Heitz  
Leesburg Editor



# PRINCE WILLIAM CHAPTER

## *I am Torn*

At this point in my life I am torn between staying here with my living children who are surrounded by people who love them and care about them

And

Going to join Katie who I am afraid is alone and confused and needs me.

I am torn between Katie being alone, afraid, confused and needing me

And

Me being alone, afraid, confused and needing her.

I am torn between getting out of the bed each day

Or

Staying under the safety and silence of the covers

I am torn between taking down the posters in Katie's/now her sister's room

Or

Insisting that everything be put back just the way Katie left it and the way I wanted it left.

I am torn between going out with family and friends and "pretending" to be "ok"

Or

Telling them thanks but my daughter is dead and I am grieving and I really don't feel like "celebrating" anything right now.

I am torn between talking to the boy Katie was dating to find out about Katie's last moments of life

Or

Hoping that I never see him again because I would probably be arrested for what I have to say to him and for the way I will surely react to the lies he will tell to cover his own skin.

I am torn between just asking him the one question that I want to know the answer to but will never get a straight answer from him

Or

Just living the rest of my life never knowing how it truly ended, how my baby's last moments were spent.

I am torn between being mad with Katie that she didn't "share" her problems with me

Or

Being mad at myself for spending so much time with her and not knowing, for thinking that we had this great special relationship when I really didn't know my daughter – not her inner self.

I am torn between feeling guilty, like a bad mother, like a pushy mother, full of blame and unqualified to even be a mom

Or

Trying not to feel at all.

I am torn between trying to discipline her sisters but not get them mad at me, wanting them to be happy and not become the unhappy person Katie evidently was

Or

Being the mom I was and trying to guide them and teach them life lessons even if they think I am mean and nosy.

I am torn between "getting on with my life"

And

Having Katie's memories start to fade, the sound of her voice, the feel of her hugs, the fun in her laughter, the friendship and love I felt from her.

I am torn between looking at her pictures, videos, and writings

Or

Not looking at the pictures, videos and writings

I am torn between annoying people by planting trees, raising scholarship money, printing newspaper articles, praising my daughter who made a really bad decision at the end but lived a wonderful life

And

Letting her legacy end

I am torn between really being happy for all of the teenagers who are off on ventures in NYC and college

And

Being jealous and resentful that it isn't Katie being really happy off on the ventures she dreamed of in NYC and college.

I am torn between living

And


Dying.

This is the way I spend each day and I wish I could wear this around my neck so everyone would know the inner turmoil I have

Or

I can walk around with a smile and try to "be happy" and not ruin anyone else's day or make them uncomfortable. Such is my life now.

Written by Peggy Beach 2006 – one year after the loss of her beautiful daughter Katie.

 **The Compassionate Friends**  
% Trinity Presbyterian Church  
5533 N. 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
Arlington, VA 22205

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## SEASONS

In many parts of the country the ice and snow have disappeared at last  
Warm days are here and flowers are blooming  
The birds are coming back from their winter in the south  
They are singing the songs of spring  
Butterflies are doing their dance from flower to flower

Soon it will be Mother's day and then Father's day  
Graduation Day won't be far behind  
Some families will be planning Summer Weddings  
Babies will be born  
Family reunions are held on days that are bright and sunny

This is an opportunity to stop, smell the flowers, listen to the birds and take out the wonderful memories you have of your child and all the things you shared. If you can manage it focus on the good things, the funny things, the touching things, the precious things

I send you warm thoughts and hugs  
Betty Farrel, Sarah Louise's Nana, TCF Arlington Chapter

# APRIL 2008