



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND DC CHAPTERS ARLINGTON, BURKE/SPRINGFIELD/FAIRFAX, LEESBURG, PRINCE WILLIAM, RESTON, VIRGINIA AND WASHINGTON, DC

VOLUME 18, NO.3

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*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.*

## **Use of Children's Birth and Death Year in TCF Newsletters-Web Sites Prohibited**

*By Chuck Collins*

Our Executive Director Pat Loder recently announced new TCF policies related to chapter newsletters and web sites. Included is a prohibition against using our children's birth or death anniversary years in any chapter newsletter or website. While children's names, anniversary months, and days may still be included, the specific year must now be omitted.

These changes were prompted by alarming reports from the Identity Theft Resource Center documenting instances of children's identifiable information being converted after their deaths to commit crimes. I recall a sad case when a distraught family was struggling after the sudden disappearance of their daughter. After dealing with this painful uncertainty for a considerable time, their hopes were lifted when investigators discovered a student, identified as their daughter, attending college several states away. Sadly, the investigation revealed that the student had adopted their daughter's identity, apparently as part of a scam.

Unfortunately, identity theft has become a sad reality in our society. This new policy is an important precaution being taken to protect all our member families and their

children's names. Our very committed webmaster Allen M. Lawrence (Barry's Dad) is revising the *Our Children Remembered* section to incorporate this very necessary change. Our meticulous editor Kate Morton will work together with each dedicated chapter editor to comply with the new requirement.

## **Help Your TCF Chapter Reduce Expenses**

You can save money for your TCF chapter by agreeing to receive your TCF newsletter electronically, instead of by mail. By receiving your newsletter electronically, you can still print out your own copy if you prefer not to read it on your computer screen. To convert to an electronic copy of the newsletter, simply send an email to [ccollins21@cox.net](mailto:ccollins21@cox.net) including your name, chapter, and contact number. Please be sure to add [tcfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnewsletter@gmail.com) to your safe senders list to prevent it being caught by your spam filter. We appreciate your help during these tough economic times!

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**Arlington Website**

http://www.tcfarlington.org  
Webmaster: Mary M. Bell  
m.m.bell@verizon.net

**Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Website**

http://www.tcfbsf.org

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http://www.tcfleesburg.org  
webmaster@tcfleesburg.org

**Prince William Website**

http://www.tcfprincewilliam.org  
webmaster@tcfprwm.org

**March 2009**

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed                          | Thu                               | Fri | Sat                           |
|-----|-----|-----|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4<br><i>Leesburg</i><br>7:30 | 5                                 | 6   | 7                             |
| 8   | 9   | 10  | 11                           | 12<br><i>Arlington</i><br>7:30 PM | 13  | 14<br><i>Reston</i><br>2-4 PM |
| 15  | 16  | 17  | 18<br><i>DC</i>              | 19<br><i>PW</i><br>7:30           | 20  | 21                            |
| 22  | 23  | 24  | 25<br><i>BSF</i><br>7:30     | 26                                | 27  | 28                            |
| 29  | 30  | 31  |                              |                                   |     |                               |

**Arlington Chapter**

Contact: Lois Copeland  
(301) 530-1115  
locopeland@aol.com

Please send  
"Love Gifts" to:  
Kent Womack  
1013 Riverside Dr.  
Woodstock, VA 22664

Trinity Presbyterian Church  
5533 N.16th St  
Arlington, VA

**Second Thursdays 7:30 PM****Burke/Springfield/Fairfax (BSF) Chapter**

Contact: Carol Marino  
Carolmarino1@gmail.com  
or Jane Trimble  
[janetrimble@juno.com](mailto:janetrimble@juno.com)

Please send  
"Love Gifts" to:  
John Trimble  
5209 Wenlock Way  
Burke, VA 22015

OLD ST.MARY'S HALL,  
next to St.Mary's Historic  
Church and Cemetery  
Fairfax Station Rd  
and Route 123  
Fairfax, VA 22030

Chapter Phone:  
(703) 622-3639

**Fourth Wednesdays 7:30 PM****Leesburg Chapter**

Contact: Bev or Bernie Elero  
(540) 882-9707

Please send  
"Love Gifts" to:  
Mrs. Anne Shattuck  
224 Walnut Ridge Ln.  
Palmyra, VA 22963

St. James Episcopal Church  
Janney Parlor  
14 Cornwall St NW  
Leesburg, VA

**First Wednesdays 7:30 PM****Prince William Chapter**

Contact: Ken Adams  
(703) 361-6574  
adamsksbjk@comcast.net

Please send  
"Love Gifts" to:  
Peggy Beach  
10404 Schaeffer Lane  
Nokesville, VA 20181

Grace United Methodist Church  
**Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
9750 Wellington Rd  
Manassas, VA

**Third Thursdays 7:30 PM****TCF Reston (for no surviving children)**

Contact:  
Harriett Evenson (VA)  
(703) 525-9311  
Sharon Skarzynski (MD)  
(410) 757-5049

North County Gov Bld.  
Reston Police Station Bld.  
12000 Bowman Towne Drive  
Reston, VA

**Second Saturdays 2-4 PM (for no surviving children)****Washington, DC Chapter**

Contact: Olivia Gunter  
(301) 552-2798

Please send  
"Love Gifts" to:  
Coralease Ruff  
3314 Applegrove Ct.  
Oak Hill, VA 20171

The Howard University  
The Blackburn Center  
2397 Sixth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20059

**Third Wednesdays 7-9 PM**



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS ARLINGTON CHAPTER

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

## OUR TREE PLANTING DEDICATION AND PICNIC

IN MEMORY OF OUR CHILDREN,  
SIBLINGS AND GRANDCHILDREN

SUNDAY, MAY 3 AT 11:00 AM



**LOCATION: TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 5533 NORTH 16th ST, ARLINGTON**

**This is a day when chapter members and family will gather together to commemorate the lives of our children who have died too soon.**

**Donations may be sent to Kent Womack, 1013 Riverside Drive, Woodstock, VA 22664 to defray the cost of the tree and plaque.**

**Questions or those interested in taking on tasks such as; tree dedication, opening and closing ceremonies and refreshments contact: Lois Copeland at [locopeland@aol.com](mailto:locopeland@aol.com), 301-530-1115 or John and Mary Bell at [john65.bell@verizon.com](mailto:john65.bell@verizon.com), [m.m.bell@verizon.com](mailto:m.m.bell@verizon.com), 703-536-2672**

# Arlington Chapter

**TCF Meeting:** March 12, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday

**Place:** Trinity Presbyterian Church, enter 2<sup>nd</sup> level

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Topic:** Spring, A Season of Renewal and/or current issues

**Steering Committee Meeting, 6 p.m., before regular TCF meeting, potluck dinner, all welcome.**

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## Arlington Chapter News

**\*May 3, 2009**, Sunday. Tree planting and dedication. See details on page 9.

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## **Other Resources**

National TCF, [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). Visit the site for news from national on upcoming conferences, resources, and to receive the **e-newsletter**. Members may register for hotel rooms for the **National Conference in Portland, OR, Aug. 7-9**. They fill up fast!

\*\*\*\*\*

**WELCOME** to our new steering committee members: Elaine Anzevino, in memory of her son Aaron, Program Planner

Kate Morton, in memory of her brother Chris, Newsletter Editor

We really appreciate their willingness to share their time and talents to keep our chapter going so we can help many more bereaved families.



## **Just Spring**

This spring is no ordinary spring at all.

It dances on with unbecoming weather;  
Now more like winter than December was,  
And then again as soft as early summer

This is no ordinary spring at all.

It meets your heart with unexpected dangers,

Now with the loneliest of memories,  
And then again with unforgettable laughter.

This is no ordinary spring at all.

This is like life itself, a changing season.

Accept the wintertime of grief, and then  
Reach for the hope of summer and of healing.

Sascha Wagner "For You From Sascha"



## **New Members**

*Maria Binkley, who lost her daughter, **Jennifer Binkley***

*Annette Aaron, who lost her cousin, **Jennifer Binkley***

It is always hard to "welcome" new members coming to their first meeting. We are glad you found the courage to



## **Love Gifts**

Jay and Lois Copeland, in loving memory of their son,  
**David Michael Copeland**

Jay and Lois Copeland, in memory of **Alain Coune**,  
husband of Nadine and father of Emmanuelle Kramer,  
Oliver and Larry Coune

Mary Frances Moriarty, in loving memory of her daughter,  
**Mary Margaret "Molly" Moriarty**

Katy and Kent Womack, In loving memory of Kent's sister,  
**Joanna Womack Youngblood**

*Thank you for your love gifts. There are no dues or fees to belong to TCF, but love gifts are welcome, often given in memory for a holiday, birthday, or death anniversary.*



## **David's Book of Life**

*If we compare our lives to a book,  
Yours seems so short and brief.  
But your words are full of love, laughter  
And strength  
While my words seem full of grief,  
sadness and anger.*

*Your book was a notebook and journal,  
Well traveled across this beautiful country.  
While my book  
Is dark and forlorn*

*Your pages tell such a great story,  
Even though the chapters are few.  
Your book has been read time and time again,  
Through wonderful memories of you.  
While my book seems one dimensional,  
read by only one, your mother.*

*Your book has been transformed  
Into a book shared by many  
By a proud and loving mother.*

*But this mother wishes those words  
Were still in that notebook  
With her son continuing his great on going story.*

*Dance Me  
to the End*



BY HIM, FOR HIM AND TO HIM

David's  
Life  
in Words

*Lois Copeland, TCF, Arlington, VA,  
in memory of my son, David Michael on his birthday*

(I have taken some words and the format from a loving poem written by Linda McInturff in memory of her son, Bobby Ching, TCF Southern Maryland)

## Leesburg Chapter

Dear Leesburg Members,

We welcome all of you to attend our monthly meetings. You can come as often or as little as you like. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact our Leesburg Chapter Leaders, Beverly and Bernie Elero at 540-882-9707 or [belero@aol.com](mailto:belero@aol.com). Thank you.

Other contacts:

Theresa Heitz [theresaheitz@msn.com](mailto:theresaheitz@msn.com) 703-729-6974

Anne Shattuck [shattuck@cstone.net](mailto:shattuck@cstone.net)

~Leesburg TCF Chapter



### Thank you for your Love Gift

Carmen Spirio, in loving memory of his son,  
**Paul Carmelo Spirio (9/2 – 3/22)**

We greatly appreciate the donations made to the Leesburg Chapter of The Compassionate Friends in memory of your loved one. These tax-deductible contributions help our chapter with the expense of the newsletter, additions to our lending library and other needs, in order that we may help bereaved families in our community. We are also glad to print any poem or memories you may want to print about your child, sibling or grandchild.

Please send your Love Gift to:

Mrs. Anne Shattuck  
224 Walnut Ridge Lane  
Palmyra, VA 22963

**Checks payable to: TCF Leesburg**

We would like to apologize for any information that is printed incorrectly. All of our volunteers are also bereaved parents, siblings or grandparents. We try our best to keep the information correct and up to date. Thank you for your understanding. We especially remember:

**Paige Mackenzie Johnson (7/20 – 12/3)**

Daughter of Trish Stoskus and Dave Johnson  
Stepdaughter of Dave Stoskus

**Jennifer Coyne (2/16 – 7/24)**

Daughter of Julie and Burton Simonds

Please email Theresa Heitz at [theresaheitz@msn.com](mailto:theresaheitz@msn.com) with any corrections. Thank you.

### A GRIEVING PARENT IS:

A grieving parent is someone who will never forget their child no matter how painful memories are.

A grieving parent is someone who yearns to be with their dead but cannot conceive leaving their living ones.

A grieving parent is someone who has part of a heart as the rest is buried with his or her child.

A grieving parent is someone who begs for relief from the memories which plague them and then feels guilty when they get it.

A grieving parent is someone who pretends to be happy and enjoying life when they really are dying inside.

A grieving parent is someone who can cry or laugh at the drop of a hat whenever they remember their beloved child.

A grieving parent is someone who feels as if they just lost their child yesterday no matter how much time has passed.

A grieving parent is someone who fears for their remaining family because they cannot bear to have any more losses.

A grieving parent is someone who sits by their child's gravestone and feels a knife stabbing their heart.

A grieving parent is someone who wants to help others who have lost loved ones because somehow their loss is theirs all over again.

~Author Unknown

People in mourning have to come to grips with death before they can live again. Mourning can go on for years and years. It doesn't end after a year, that's a false fantasy. It usually ends when people realize that they can live again, that they can concentrate their energies on their lives as a whole, and not on their hurt, guilt and pain.

~daily message from [Healing After Loss](#)

by Martha Whitmore Hickman. Lifted from Atlanta Compassionate Friends online daily newsletter.  
[www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)



# Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Chapter



## The Ties that Bind In Memory of Richard Eric Davis Sunrise: Sept. 26 Sunset: March 5

I've heard it said over the years that there is no greater loss than that of a child. There is no playbook of rules to follow -- no right or wrong way to handle such a loss. Even finding the words that will appropriately express the depth of your grief can't be found because they don't exist. The number of times you discuss your loss never seems to be enough. The truth is, others can never know how profoundly the loss of a child is until they have walked down that path themselves.

Eventually, people cease to ask about your loss, and isolation grows.

Seven people at my workplace have lost children. I remembered those parents with cards and thoughts, but I never truly knew how they felt because, honestly, I didn't want to find out. Suddenly, I found myself at my own son's viewing greeting those very parents. Greeting them and hearing their condolences, I said, pausing, "Oh, now I'm a member of your group."

Gazing at me, they agreed, and I said it was a group none of us wanted to join.

I always wanted to be a mother, and was elated to have a beautiful son, then a beautiful daughter.

I adored them, and adored every opportunity we had to share time together.

Richard was my first child, Jennifer my second, about four years apart. The three of us spent an enormous amount of time together as they grew up because I wanted to be involved in all parts of their lives.

We all loved adventure and loved to travel. We started going to air shows at Andrews when Richard was 3, and it became an annual ritual.

From that, his interest in becoming a Navy pilot was born. We watched for years as Richard played soccer, little league baseball, and karate.

We've spent our fair share of time in batting cages, driving ranges, swimming pools and miniature golf. One of our great past-times was going to movies.

By age 12, Richard had earned his certification as an Open Water Scuba Diver -- just like mom. We went diving off of Maui -- the best dive of our lives. By high school, he was in the JROTC, destined for his childhood goal. He was appointed Commanding Officer in his junior year -- the youngest in the school's history. He was proud, he was heading toward his goal. *(Continued, next column)*



Please send newsletter submissions to  
steve.marshall@yahoo.com



I had a goal with my children, and it was communication. I wanted to establish a relationship with them that would result in their ability to come to me in times of need.

My children are exceptionally protective of me and readily share their feelings. I made sure that in the years before we lost Richard, I always told him I loved him and gave him a hug. He easily reciprocated each time.

Richard always wanted to meet a special woman and have children of his own. I often thought about what a nice husband and father he would make.

I remember how hurt, but how supportive he was when I was diagnosed with cancer. I remember how sad Richard had always been that he had never been loved or accepted by his father -- something he traded everything he wanted in a hope to achieve.

I could fix some things, but not that.

Jennifer now finds herself to be an "only child," dealt many life-blows that normal young adults would find impossible to cope with. No relationship with her father has been difficult, but the loss of her brother has been devastating.

I think of my son all day, every day. I can't turn back the hands of time, but through the volunteer work Jennifer and I are involved in, he will be remembered.

I will never forget him -- he is a part of me. If I could wish for one thing, I would want him to hear me now telling him how much I love him and hope that I can count on being with him again one day. Just like old times.

My handsome son. We love you, Richard.  
Mom and Jen

*Submitted by Susan Davis*



## TCF combats identity theft

By Steve Marshall, BSF newsletter reporter

Beginning with this issue, we are complying with a directive from the national office of The Compassionate Friends concerning the full dates of our children's births and deaths.

We have been asked not to print the full dates because to do might enable the theft of our children's identities.

The Identity Theft Resource Center has advised us that those who have died are often victims. Everyone with a Social Security number, from a newborn on, is a potential victim, so TCF has decided to make it tougher for unsavory characters to hijack the data that enables these crimes.

# Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Chapter



**In Loving Memory of  
Ryan Marie Boykin  
March 4 – July 1**

How does one exercise their paternal instincts when their child has passed on? Many look to memorialize their children by planting gardens, building ponds, journaling, creating foundations and simply thinking of their child from the moment they rise until the last blink of the eye each day. Even though our child may not physically be with us, we still have a need to be their parent.

In the days leading up to the first anniversary of Ryan’s passing, we searched our hearts for another way to keep her spirit close by. Among her favorite toys was a Red MINI Cooper Matchbox car. We laid the car to rest with Ryan along with a few other favorite things of hers.

After months of collecting we had amassed nearly three hundred of the same Matchbox MINIs.

We decided to have 103 of them customized with Ryan’s handprint on the roof along with a quote from her third birthday card, “Little Girls Can Do Big Things”. The number ‘03’ adorns the doors in racing style, and “Ryan Marie” is printed on the hood. The cars are very special to us.

When Julie (Ryan’s Mom) took a business trip to Vegas in April 2008, Bruce (Ryan’s Dad) thought it would be a good idea to pack one of the MINIs to keep Julie company. Julie took a few photographs of Ryan’s MINI in Vegas and a couple at Hoover Dam.

*Continued in the next column)*

That was enough to spark the idea of creating a website about Ryan’s MINI and its travels.

Thus, Ryan’s MINI Adventure was born.

We opened the site in March 2008 with a handful of photographs. The idea...let Ryan’s spirit and memory travel to see and experience places and events she never had an opportunity to experience. We encourage folks to take Ryan’s MINI for a spin, where ever they think she would have enjoyed, and while there snap a few photos for the memories.

In less than a year, Ryan’s MINI has traveled six continents, twenty countries, and twenty-seven states.

It’s even slated to go to space this year aboard a space shuttle mission. Ryan was just three when she passed away and had just started life.

Through the Ryan’s MINI Adventure website and with the kind and supportive commitment of both friends and caring strangers, her spirit and memory continue to grow.

There are no words to express the pain and loss that we feel with Ryan’s passing, but the joy and comfort which we have received through the creation of a website in her honor has helped to bring a smile back to our faces.

If you would like to explore or participate in Ryan’s MINI Adventure please visit:

[www.ryansminiadventure.com](http://www.ryansminiadventure.com)

Come join the journey.

We love you more that words can express, Ryan, and we will continue to honor you in every way imaginable.

Mommy, Daddy, and little brother Ian  
*Submitted by Bruce Boykin*

## PRINCE WILLIAM CHAPTER

### In Loving Memory of Alyssa Leighann Beach

#### Hugs from Heaven

*By Charlotte Anselmo*

When you feel a gentle breeze  
Caress you when you sigh  
It's a hug sent from Heaven  
From a loved one way up high

If a soft and tender raindrop  
Lands upon your nose  
They've added a small kiss  
As fragile as a rose

If a song you hear fills you  
With a feeling of sweet love  
It's a hug sent from heaven  
From someone special up above

If you awaken in the morning  
To a bluebird's chirping song  
It's the music sent from heaven  
To cheer you all day long

If tiny snowflakes land upon your face  
It's a hug sent from heaven  
Trimmed with angel face

So keep the joy in your heart  
If you're lonely my dear friend  
Hugs that are sent from heaven  
A broken heart will mend

### How Long Does It Take to Mend a Broken Heart?

*by Karyl Chastain Beal*

Julian Austin, Canadian country singer, released a song called *Should Be Over You*. He sings, "How long does it take to mend a broken heart? After the heartache and tears, lonely and hurting, one night stands and drinking ain't working, and missing you has near killed me a time or two, then after that I should be over you."

Austin's explanation of how long it takes to get over a broken heart refers to a romantic love that ended, but his words could apply to hearts that break when someone we love dies, also.

Broken hearts are not like broken legs. If I fall down the steps and break my leg, it will hurt, but a doctor can prescribe medicine to take away the pain. The medical staff can set my leg so that the bones will grow back together. Within a few months, I should be able to run as well as I

did before the fall. Our bodies have a wonderful way of healing themselves.

On the other hand, if we experience a broken heart, it's a whole different story! As Austin sings, "drinkin' won't work, and there's no medicine that will take away the pain. And if there are doctors that can fix our broken hearts back, they must be hiding in Tazmania because I can't find them in south Georgia or on the World Wide Web.

In spite of the bleak picture, our hearts do have the capability of healing, in due time. They may never work as they did before the tragedy, but they should be able to attain a level of functioning that we can be comfortable with. The key words are in due time.

### Are You There?

*by Diane Robertson*

Misty breeze wraps about my shoulders, thinly clad.  
I shiver not, despite the coolness on my skin.  
Comfort, I now feel.

Is it you my precious Angel?

Are you there? I cannot hear your quiet voice,  
But bird song fills the air  
From high treetops to grassy marsh.  
I wonder – is it you, Dear? Are you there?

The roses in your garden bloom large,  
And varied in hue from crimson deep, to barely pink.  
I cup the velvet bud, its fragrance soothes a troubled mind.

This must be you, my little girl. Are you there?

Are you the fiery autumn maples,  
Or the star-like flakes of snow?  
Are you the sparkle in the water of the lake that we both  
loved,  
Or, perhaps, the warmth I feel in the sand beneath my  
toes?

Though your quiet voice I cannot hear,  
Nor can I see again your sparkling eyes,  
Or feel your dainty hand laid gently on my own,  
You are here.

For memory's book will never close –  
Each lovely sound, or sight, or scent,  
Another page from special times that we have shared.  
Oh, yes! You are here child – everywhere

# Washington DC Chapter

## Steering Committee DC Chapter

### Chapter Leader & Hostess/Refreshment:

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

### Co-Leader & Acting Secretary:

Barbara Johnson  
(DeVaughn's mom)  
202 526-4855 (h)  
[brbphilli1@aol.com](mailto:brbphilli1@aol.com)

### Treasurer:

Coralease C. Ruff  
(Kandy's mom)  
202 806-5576 (w)  
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### Member at Large

Reginald Woodard  
(Reggie Jr's dad)

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### Webmaster:

Tanya Smith  
(Darnell Jr.'s Mom)  
202-305-9708 (w)  
301-808-1007 (h)



## *In Appreciation to Barbara J. Johnson*

For the past two years Barbara J. Johnson has served as the DC Chapter Leader in an outstanding manner. Barbara joined the new DC chapter in 2000 along with three other women who had the same name of Barbara. She became a bereaved parent in 1993 following the death of her five year old son DeVaughn Phillips, from domestic violence. She was affiliated with Survivors of Homicide prior to joining TCF and shared the TCF story with members of that group.

Barbara brought many gifts to her role as chapter leader. Most noteworthy were newsletter writings about her grief and domestic violence experiences. She readily serves on panel discussions in the Grief course at Howard University School of Nursing where she shares her grief journey with student nurses who are learning how to work with grieving families. In addition she has been an advocate of DCTCF through several displays and presentations about the organization. Barbara transitioned the leadership of the chapter to the new chapter leader, Olivia T. Gunter in January, 2007.

*Barbara we thank you for your great service to our chapter, in memory of DeVaughn. We look forward to your continued support.*



*We also want to say a special thanks to Barbara Johnson for continuing the role of Chapter Leader until Olivia Gunter's return. We miss you, get well soon ♥!*



### *To the Beautiful Ladies,*

There are so many things that I'd like to say, but first I want to let you know that I've arrived okay.

I'm writing this letter from heaven where I dwell with God above, here there are no tears to shed; it's just eternal love. Please do not be unhappy just because I'm out of sight; remember that I am with you every morning, noon and night. November 10th I had to leave you because my work on earth was through, God picked me up and hugged me and He said, "I welcome you." He said, "It's good to have you back Gerald, you were missed when you were gone, and as for the ladies of G PHI G, they will be here later on."

He said, "G, I needed you here badly, as part of my Master Plan; there's so much work for us to do to help our mortal man."

God gave me a list of the things that He wished for me to do, and foremost on that list was to watch over each of you. And when you lie in bed at night

after the days chores are put to flight; God and I are closest to you in the middle of the night; when you think of my life on earth and all 40 of those loving years, because you are only human it is bound to bring you tears; but do not be afraid to cry because it does relieve the pain; remember there would be no flowers unless first came the rain.

I wish that I could tell you all the things that God has planned; but even if I told you right now you would not understand. But one thing is for certain though my life on earth is over; I am closer to you now than I ever was before. There are rocky roads ahead for you and many hills to climb, but together you can make it taking one day at a time. It was always my philosophy, and I'd like for you too; that as you give unto the world, the world will give to you.

If you can help somebody who's in sorrow or in pain, then you can tell God and I at night "My day was not in vain. Because of you ladies I am contented that my life was worthwhile, Just knowing that as I passed through earth, I made each of you ladies smile.

So if you meet somebody who is sad and feeling low, just lend a hand to pick them up, as on your way you go. When you are walking down the street and you've got G-Bear on your mind; ladies, I'm walking in your footsteps, only half a step behind. And when you feel a gentle breeze of wind upon your face; that's G-Bear giving you a hug or just a soft embrace. And when it's time for you to go from that body to be free, remember, you're not leaving; you're just coming here with me.

I will always love you from this land way up above; I'll be in touch with you again real soon.

P.S. God sends His love.

Love, G-Bear

by: Annoyance devoted fan

### Original Letter from Heaven written by: Ann MaHaffey

*Let us all remember to keep Mr. Gerald Levert's parents in our thoughts and prayers. For we at The Compassionate Friends know exactly what they are going through and know the journey they now travel.*



Please remember to submit your poems, stories, or a special note to your loved one to be placed in the May, 2007 Newsletter by the 3rd of April, 2007. Please let us hear from you. Thank you for your cooperation. Michelle Lake, 571-227-3016, [malake@hotmail.com](mailto:malake@hotmail.com)

# T C F R E S T O N

It is with sadness that we tell you of Lil English's death. Lil and her beloved husband, Elbert, were long time members of our Reston family after their only child Bert, Jr. died. In the words of Linda Nielsen; "We feel very sad – but also are very happy that she is with her son and her beloved Elbert. " "She, like all of us who have lost our only child missed her beloved Bert, Jr. terribly." She is now at peace with her husband and son.

\* \* \* \* \*

**What helps the pain?** At one of our fall meetings we talked about what helps us get through each day. Some of the poems that were shared are printed below.

**The Mask of Grief** By: Kerry Marston

Submitted by: Harriet Evenson in loving memory of her son Alan.

When our children died, we discovered that the raw and horrible pain we were in probably showed up on our faces, in the way we stood, in the way we walked and talked. We soon discovered that, even though we had many close and loving friends and family, they were not very comfortable with watching us bleed to death from the inside out...so we constructed a mask. We force our mask to smile when the lump in our throat and the heaviness in our chest threaten to choke us. Our eyes leak profusely, despite the waterproof mascara and pancake makeup we women keep applying...Men put on a stoic and strong facade, sometimes failing miserably and breaking down with terrible beauty. I urge you to be gentle with your mask.

Put it on thoughtfully and take it off with great care. There are safe places to leave it and one of those places is with those of us who travel this path with you.



## **The Beautiful Music**

By: Joe Pawlak one of our Reston members.

In loving memory of his son Daniel

I need to hear his name – I want you to say it

I want you to listen to my recollections

I need you to talk of him, to remind me that he is not forgotten

To heal, I must be allowed to grieve

So that my life will find renewed purpose

Yes, it's painful, disturbing and distressing

Yes, it evokes difficult and perplexing emotions

And it's sad to think all I have are my memories

But those reminiscences focus me on the frailty of life

And affirm my dedication to its preservation

His life was a present that taught me to love

And it continues to inspire me to promote the best in others

To say his name will bring tears to my eyes

My voice will quiver and my body will tremble

My grief will be apparent to all

But it never fails to leave a song in my heart

If you are my friend, please let me hear that beautiful music.



# TCF RESTON

A poem by Samuel Morton  
Submitted by Kathy & Don Barrett in loving  
memory of their son Donnie

I dozed today as an old man will,  
sprawled out in an easy chair  
and I saw you there by the kitchen door,  
So strong and happy still.  
You grinned at me as you turned to go,  
with a wave you'd gone away,  
'till I woke with a start and felt you there,  
Remembering when we were still a pair,  
a Dad and his only son.  
So thanks for stopping by today,  
it made me feel less sad,  
that somewhere you are strong and well,  
and I am still your Dad.

\* \* \* \* \*

## William Shakespeare's Sonnet 29

Submitted by Jeff Petrino

In loving memory of his daughter Julia

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone bewep my outcast state,  
and trouble deaf heaven with my bootless  
cries,  
and look upon myself and curse my fate,  
wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
featured like, like him with friends possess'd,  
desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
like to the lark at break of day arising,  
from sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's  
gate;

For they sweet love remember'd such wealth  
brings,

That then I scorn to change my state with  
kings.



\* \* \* \* \*

There were several books suggested that were  
helpful to members.

**Embraced by the Light** by: Betty J. Eadie &  
Curtis Taylor. Recommended by Nancy Vollmer in  
loving memory of Jimmy.

**Lament for a Son** by: Nicholas Wolterstorff  
Recommended by: Kathy Barrett in loving memory  
of Donnie

**When Bad Things Happen to Good People:** by  
Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, Recommended by  
Donna & Skip Habblitz un loving memory of Todd

Hopefully these poems and books will bring you  
additional comfort and peace.



Reston, VA Compassionate Friends is a group  
of parents who are now childless. We meet at  
the No. County Government Center, Reston  
Police Station Bldg., 12000 Bowman Town  
Drive, Reston from 2:00 – 4:00 PM on the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Saturday of each month. Virginia residents  
call Harriett Evenson at 703-525-9311;  
Maryland residents call Sharon Skarzynski at  
410-757-5049 or [benskal@verizon.net](mailto:benskal@verizon.net)  
Contact Kathy Grapski @ [specialkmg@aol.com](mailto:specialkmg@aol.com)  
or 301-253-5509 if you would like to put a  
poem or article on this page. This is your  
newsletter let's print what you would like to  
see. Deadline is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of each month.

## LESSONS FROM MY SON

*Alice J. Wisler ~ TCF, Wake County NC*

After you were born  
my life became a challenge  
Seeing your poised big sister  
who did everything right  
you escaped out of your crib  
knocked the houseplants over  
decorated a closet wall  
with a bright blue marker.  
You didn't hesitate to scare me  
at eight months pregnant  
waddling like a beached whale  
with a trip to get stitches  
when you fell in the bathtub  
telling jokes and laughing  
as the doctor sewed your chin  
naming the stitches 'my itches'.

I can still see those bright eyes  
the excitement over a frog,  
picking green tomatoes,  
covered in birthday cake,  
drinking pool water,  
climbing a pecan tree,  
kissing a neighbor's puppy  
and running naked down the cul-de-sac.

From you I learned the art of patience,  
the joy of mothering a son,  
that there are never enough  
hours for cuddling and reading.  
You taught me well  
although you were so young.  
And within my heart,  
I will always hold my gratitude for you.

— *In Memory of Daniel Wisler*

## Butterfly Wings, Bricks and Lead

When I saw her load of grief, it looked to me to be merely a light load of butterfly wings, as compared to my full load of heavy bricks. Then I saw another man, and he seemed to be carrying a small load of lead. But as I watched her step on the scales bearing her load of butterfly wings, the scales read "one ton." When he stepped on the scales with his load of lead, the scales also read "one ton." I knew my grief-load of bricks would weigh more, but those scales read for me, "one ton." Our loads of butterfly wings, lead and bricks weighed exactly the same to the one carrying that particular load of grief.

We bereaved parents often feel resentment when a non-bereaved person speaks about our child's death. HOW can THAT PERSON know or even dream of how I feel or what I am going through? These feelings may be justified. But when we begin to feel resentment toward another bereaved parent "That child's death was easy compared to my child's death," "I have suffered more than she/he ever did" —we should remember that each of our grief-loads weights two thousand pounds to the one under it. Compared to Rose Kennedy, who had one child in a mental institution, and lost one daughter and three sons in violent deaths, my grief-load begins to look as if it were made of gossamer soap bubbles, but when I again step on that scale, it still reads, "one ton."

Our grief-loads may appear to weigh less because we who are under them have grown stronger through time and grief process maturation. The load actually weighs no less; it is we who have grown stronger and can carry it more easily. Sometimes we can even completely ignore the weight that is still there. Always be careful in judging another's grief-load. Remember the lead, butterfly wings and those bricks, and how they all weigh the same to the one under that load of grief.

--*Tom Crouthamel, TCF, Sarasota, FL*

## TCF “Online Support Community” Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

The Compassionate Friends national website offers “virtual chapters” through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include “Pregnancy and Infant Loss,” “Bereaved 2 Years and Under,” “Bereaved 2 Years and Over,” “Men Only Sharing Session,” “No Surviving Children,” “Survivors of Suicide.” There are also sessions for surviving siblings.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click “Online Support” in the “Resources” column.

## Sibling Corner

### Ten Years Later

February 15th marked the ten year anniversary of my brother's death. As I begin to plan my wedding, I realize that it will be difficult to celebrate that day without him there. I often wish my fiancé had the opportunity to meet Chris and learn first hand what a fun and loving person he was. Instead, I share stories and photos to keep his memory alive.

Chris had such a passion for life, was always smiling and living life to the fullest. I know he would want me to do the same. So I go on living my life and planning for my future, still remembering the happy memories, still wishing he were still here on Earth, still missing him like crazy; but trying my best to live a happy, fulfilling life and make him proud.

~Kate Morton, Chris' sister

### 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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### (The Best of) Ask Dr. Paulson

*Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone.*

**Q.** How can I explain to my friends that going out—the prom (just a few months away), what we are going to wear, and other issues like that, are not important to me right now? All I can think about is my brother and everything that he is missing out on.

**A.** There is a long, as well as a short, answer to this question. The short answer is that you will have about as much luck explaining this to your peers as you would have explaining issues related to international policy, currency exchange, and the International Monetary Fund. The fact is that you just matured about 12 years. The death of your brother stripped away all of the pleasantries of being able to be concerned with the “unessential.” You see the big picture, and know how suddenly things can change. You know what is important in life and may have some of the perspective of a 60-year-old in a teenager's body. You have to remember, most people experience the death of a sibling in middle age or well into old age. Even then, this is one of the most traumatic events that can happen. If you were 65, your friends would understand. At your age, though, you will have to go on the assumption that you are more mature than most of your peer group because you've had a lot more to face and overcome than most of your age mates. You will quickly learn that your friends are the ones who stick with you during this time, and it's not unusual for your group of friends to change dramatically. The same thing would happen if you suddenly could only speak Italian or French. Your friendships would eventually shift to being those who also knew Italian or French. The best thing to do is talk openly with your friends. Your true, lifelong friends will be able to understand and will still be your friends years from now!

*Written by Mary A. Paulson, PhD for "We Need Not Walk Alone," the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends. Copyright 2007.*

# Our March Children Remembered

**Jayanth Charya**

Apr 14 **Mar 05**

Usha Charya  
Arlington

**David Michael Copeland**

**Mar 27** Jan 30

Dr. Jay and Lois Copeland  
Edward Copeland  
Jonathan Copeland  
Amy Copeland  
Arlington

**Alexandra Damico**

**Mar 18** **Mar 18**

Mike and Tammy Damico  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Susan**

**Mar 02** Aug 14

Libby and Tony Davidson  
Arlington

**Alex Atanasov**

Oct 20 **Mar 26**

Kathy Atanasov  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**David G Bailey Jr.**

Aug 07 **Mar 25**

Debby Bailey  
Leesburg

**Andrew Baker**

**Mar 02** Jul 06

Ellen Baker  
Prince William

**Marla Thomas Barnes**

Apr 21 **Mar 03**

Laura Thomas  
Leesburg

**Child**

**Mar**

Helen Baumer  
Leesburg

**Susan Elizabeth Bell**

**Mar 10** Feb 25

John and Mary Bell  
Arlington

**Benjamin Gerald "Ben" Berry**

**Mar 31** Apr 11

Gary and Denny Berry  
Arlington

**Jennifer Binkley**

**Mar 20** Dec 06

Maria and James Binkley  
Arlington

**George Boiardi**

Jul 30 **Mar 17**

Mario and Debra Boiardi  
Arlington

**Susan Bolgaty**

**Mar 02** Aug 14

Libby and Tom Davidson  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Ryan Marie Boykin**

**Mar 04** Jul 01

June Barry  
Julia and Bruce Boykin  
June Berry  
Arlington

**Rik Budd**

Sep 30 **Mar 30**

Marge and Mark Budd  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Timothy Burks**

**Mar 31** Jun 06

Trudy Burks  
Prince William

**Shelton Antoinne Burton Jr.**

Jan 03 **Mar 01**

Faith Adams  
DC

**Karson Carroll**

**Mar 07** Jun 10

Nancy Davis  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**David Patricio Castro**

**Mar 22** Jul 23

Patricio and Clementina Castro  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Matthew Sean Clem**

**Mar 04** Jul 09

Suzann Clem  
Leesburg

**Jill Lauren Cohen**

Jun 25 **Mar 21**

Christie and Dennis Cohen  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax  
Arlington

**Sherri Marie Corbin**

**Mar 20** Jan 22

Kathleen McCartney  
Reston

**Richard Davis**

Sep 26 **Mar 05**

Susan Davis  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Franklin Overton "Frank" Day**

Aug 18 **Mar 06**

Overton and Jayne Day  
Arlington

**Walter Dedrick**

Jul 20 **Mar 17**

Ruby Dasher  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Barry Douglas**

Feb 13 **Mar 27**

Pearl and Carl Douglas  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Adam Foote**

Apr 23 **Mar 22**

Jennifer and Steve Young  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Frank Franklin**

**Mar 08** May 01

Brenda Ford  
DC

**Joshua Isaiah Free**

**Mar 28**

Micelle Lake  
DC

**Katherine Marie**

**"Katie" Galloway**

**Mar 11** Feb 28

Rich and Lori Galloway  
Leesburg

**Garrett Christopher Guinn**

**Mar 12** Oct 18

Gary and Linda Guinn  
Prince William

**Maxwell Harmon**

**Mar 28** Jul 19

Rana and William Harmon  
Arlington

**Maxwell Harmon**

**Mar 28** Jul 19

Rana Harmon  
Arlington

**Renard Anathony Harris**

Jul 02 **Mar 24**

Pamela Williams-Walker  
DC

**Kristin Marie Harkness**

**Mar 19** Feb 22

Linda and Tom Harkness  
Prince William

**Kasey Haynes**

**Mar 05** Jul 20

Elizabeth DiCristifaro  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

# Our March Children Remembered

**Danny Hyes**  
Mar 12

Candy Hayes  
Leesburg

**David Evans Hobson**

Jul 31 Mar 11  
Anne Shattuck  
Leesburg

**Eddie Hurley**

Jan 18 Mar 10  
Edward and Kathy Hurley  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Eric Alexander Jones**

Mar 26 Jul 13  
Patty and Ralph Jones  
Reston

**Isaac Klosterman**

Mar 20 May 18  
Shannon Pacheco  
Arlington

**Susie Li**

Mar 01 Apr 18  
Raymond and Lily Li  
Arlington

**Kevin Michael Littley**

Aug 02 Mar 07  
Jack and Sharon Littley  
Arlington

**Brenda MacDonald**

Mar 25 Apr 10  
Cathy Bowen  
Leesburg

**Shari Malone**

Mar 03 Aug 11  
William and Francia Malone  
Leesburg

**Thomas Malkowski**

Aug 10 Mar 04  
Robert and Kathleen Malkowski  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Terri Malone**

Mar 03 Aug 09  
William and Francia Malone  
Leesburg

**Beryl L Martin**

Mar 10 Dec 07  
Bertha M. Martin  
Reston

**Lauren Marshall**

Mar 22 Jan 30  
Donna and Ralph Goodrich  
Lucille Bartley  
Mike Marshall  
Leesburg

**Jennifer Masters**

Mar 24 Nov 23  
Ronald and Betty Masters  
Leesburg

**Sherr Marie Corbin**

Mar 20 Jan 22  
Kathleen McCartney  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Juliet Elaine McCormick**

Mar 16 Mar 28  
Victoria McCormick  
Arlington

**Austin Patrick "Pat" McHale III**

Mar 16 Jun 15  
Austin and Angela McHale  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Bryan Kevin McLaughlin**

Mar 18 Sep 16  
Gail and Steven McLaughlin  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Alejandro "Alex" Melara**

Nov 09 Mar 12  
Melissa and Luis Melara  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Joe Miller**

Mar 02 Jun 24  
Sharon Lightner  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Ila**

Mar 18  
Polly Misra  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Amanda Jacqueline Pardue**

Mar 21 Aug 28  
Lou Ann Devers  
Arlington

**Alexandra Patterson**

Mar 21 May 11  
Sheryl and James Patterson  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Matthew Potter**

Mar 12 Mar 28  
Marie and Marty Potter  
Marcelle Potter  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Taylor Ragland**

Jan 12 Mar 16  
Mary Robinson  
Toni and Leroy Ragland  
Arlington

**Brent Jason Rhoads**

Mar 21 Oct 05  
Stephen and Lynn Rhoads  
Arlington

**Nels Oley Roningen**

Nov 22 Mar 24  
Vern and Jane Roningen  
Anne Roningen  
Arlington

**Christopher Sharon**

Nov 12 Mar 30  
Mary Ellen and Dennis Sullivan  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Paul Carmelo Spirio**

Sep 02 Mar 22  
Carmelo Spirio  
Leesburg

**William Furey Sullivan**

Mar 07 Sep 03  
Paul and Flora Sullivan  
Arlington

**Brendan Tash**

Mar 27 Mar 06  
Sandra Moore  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Taylor Erin Thomasson**

Mar 02 Nov 14  
William Thomasson  
Reston

**Nash O. Thompson III**

Sep 02 Mar 03  
Nash and Manuela Thompson  
Arlington

**Colin West**

Mar 25 May 30  
Hilary and Louis West  
Burke\Springfield\Fairfax

**Todd Richards**

Nicholas Williamson  
Mar 09 Apr 12  
Syd & Barbara Williamson  
Prince William

**Robert Williams**

May 01 Mar 22  
Lenora Bracey  
DC

**Julia Young**

Sep 10 Mar 13  
Gretchen and Donald Young  
Leesburg





The Compassionate Friends    Trinity Presbyterian Church  
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Arlington, VA 22205

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## I Am Spring

I am the beginning.  
I am budding promise.  
I spill cleansing tears of life  
from cloudy vessels  
creating muddy puddles  
where single cell creatures abide  
and splashing children play.

I am new green growth.  
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.  
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.  
With compassion, we feather nests  
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.  
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream  
I whisper truth – life is change.

I am spring.  
I bless long, dark wintry days.  
I crown mankind's pain  
with starry skies  
in deepest night  
lighting solitary paths from  
sorrow to joy  
as the wheel of life turns  
'round and 'round.



~*Carol Clum*

*(written after attending a workshop  
presented by John Fox, author of 'Finding  
What You Didn't Lose' and 'Poetic Medicine'.)*

# MARCH 2009