

Dear Family Members,

We're in the full swing of Fall. It's getting dark early, the leaves coming off of the trees and we've been able to turn off our air conditioning before we have to turn on our heat. Thanksgiving is just around the corner and Summer, with its heat, is now a distant memory. I hope your Summer was the best that it could be. No matter how long it has been since your loss, hopefully you were able to take a break from your grief even if it was for a few moments. I know that can be difficult for those whose loss is so fresh and raw that, as the Credo says, **"...but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope."** No matter where you are now, I believe we've all felt this way at some point. I know I did. If you're further along the grieving and healing journey, maybe you can see that your grief is "changing". Not that it's "better" ("better in regards to our hurting being such a difficult word for me) but maybe it's, well, "different". Maybe you're able to look in the rearview mirror since the early moments of your loss and see where you can do some things now that you were unable to do early on. If you can, it means that your grief is "changing". It doesn't mean that it's all "better" or that you are forgetting your loved one. It means that you're entering a different season in your healing journey and that's okay. It's what we're supposed to do, but sometimes we can feel guilty about it. That guilt can be a self-imposed feeling with the result of isolating from that next season. Guilt can also be something that others, some very well meaning, can bring to us as an attempt to motivate us in one way or another. Have you heard something like, *"I know you'll feel better if you.."*, *"It's what they would want you to do"*, or *"Don't you think it's time that you..."*. You get the idea. Like the changing seasons of the year, I believe our life is a series of changing "seasons". Those "seasons" last as long as they last and sometimes there is nothing we can do to stop them. The changing seasons of the year can affect us just as the changing seasons of our lives can. While we may not be able to control when those seasons end or have the answer to the question **"Why?"** the change, there are some answers to questions that we **can** control. **"What?"** do I do with this and **"When?"** do I do it are those things we can control. The changing seasons are **"a"** defining moment for us but it doesn't have to be **"the"** defining moment. That's a choice in life's journey, too, and it may take years to get there.

It's hard to believe that our **Worldwide Candlelight Memorial** is just a few weeks away. The date is Sunday, December 8, which is the second Sunday of the month. We begin **promptly** at 7:00pm. The Memorial is at the same location as our monthly meetings, Govans Presbyterian Church at 5828 York Rd. in Baltimore just one short block south of the Senator Theatre and across from Staples. It's a wonderful, emotional and uplifting event all at the same time. "Madeline's Butterfly Garden" is an amazing display of love and of our loved ones. It's a physical reminder that they will always be remembered. Go to our website, www.BaltimoreTCF.com and read the story behind the garden. I was there when it happened. It's amazing on so many levels. Please **arrive** at 6:30pm to create and add a butterfly to honor your loved one to our Garden. We follow the Memorial with a reception. The food is provided by those who attend so bring a dish to share, maybe even a favorite of your loved one. We're attempting to create a **Signupgenius** link for everyone to see what we need. If we can do it, it will be included in the next Newsletter. Also, we need help with the reception. Please consider volunteering to help set it up and to help with the clean up. It seems to be the same folks each year. If you do volunteer, please show up. We're hoping you'll be with us and want to help make your Chapter's event a success. Please submit the name of your child, grandchild, brother or sister to Candlelight@BaltimoreTCF.com so they can be included in our program. Join us so **you** can light a candle, speak their name, read a poem, play a song, sing a song or just "be". Take the two hours to attend and share the journey with others. Even if you haven't been in a while or if you've never attended a Memorial, come and be with others.

We will be having our regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 4th. We made the decision years ago to have the December meeting in addition to the Memorial. Not every chapter has both. With knowing how difficult the Holidays can be, not everyone has the ability to attend the Memorial but still need support. In this age of social media and having "friends" that we may never meet, the virtual group can become a replacement as opposed to a supplement for folks gathering. I don't think anything can really replace that personal interaction that says "I get it". Coming together and sharing the journey is part of the healing. Isn't that what we're supposed to do?

Anyone that has come to our Memorial the past few years would know John and Rose Link. The Links joined our Chapter after the passing of their son, Kenny. John and Rose have been the caretakers of the Butterfly Garden. Walking up to the Garden you would have been greeted with love, compassion and a smile that would lift you up and fill you with hope. The Links have become an important part of our Chapter in so many ways. I don't think the word "No" exists for them. When we were looking for a new location, I asked John his thoughts and if he would look at the church. He didn't hesitate to say, "Let me know where and when and I'll be there" and he was. It saddens me to have to share that John passed away August 12th. Along this journey there is "collateral damage" but there are also "collateral blessings" if we look for them. Rose and John are two of the blessings.

Garrett Tollenger-Chapter Leader



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Greater Baltimore Chapter
P.O. BOX 2103 Ellicott City, MD 21041-2103
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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2019

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2019

WORLDWIDE CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019

HELP

Yes, I need your help! First I want to apologize for missing an issue. I had some medical issues, but I am back and will continue the newsletter.

But again, I need your help. I NEED CONTENT FROM YOU!

Poems

Memories

Helpful hints

Special Times

Special Events

Photos

special instructions later in this newsletter

FLOOD MY INBOX

Newsletter Editor: William C Ermatinger newsletter@baltimorectf.com

Something I couldn't tell you about happened at least a decade ago.

It was October—a brilliant day of sunshine and quick changes. Clouds raced across the sky, and the sun went blank, then reappeared—such light as one sees when leaves have quickly left the trees and all is bare. I could tell you about the garden—just how barren it lay except for the cherry tomatoes, which happened to cling to the dry vines whose crinkled leaves smelled of declining life that cool October day when a child, trailing a scrap of blanket went outside to eat tomatoes. The changes made that day are with us still: they change us even now. I couldn't tell you how bare that day has made me. Such a blankness should come to all who think they know what happens next, and next, and after October comes November. Unplanned events can leave us detached, cut off, untried, like leaves blown here and there. I won't tell of changes. I'll only say what happened in October when stopping work, a cold I couldn't bear came over me. Running out, I happened to see my face reflected. It was blank, pale, afraid, soon to gain a new blankness. I ran to the pond, dyed dark with leaves, dyed red with the shirt of him who happened to be floating there. If only I could change that day, the hour, the harvest I would dripping wet and cold from the water, that old October. I was a mother for three years and four days in October. On the fifth day, I rested blankly from mothering. I cannot bear to tell you any more. New leaves have greened and grown. New changes, children since then, have happened. Since that October, countless other leaves have blanketed the pond, changed it from October's reds and browns. I've barely noticed.

Susan Pitner TCF-CINCINNATI, OHIO SOMETHING I COULDN'T TELL YOU





Peggy died the morning of November 6, 1915. The joy in the fullness of life went out of it then and has never quite returned. Deep in the hidden realm of my consciousness my little girl has continued to live, and in that strange, mysterious place where reality and imagination meet, she has grown up to womanhood. There she leads an ideal existence untouched by harsh actuality and disillusion. Men and women from all classes, from nearly every city in America, poured upon me their sympathy.... Women wrote of children dead a quarter of a century for whom they were still secretly mourning, and sent me pictures and locks of hair of their own dead babies. I had never fully realized until then that the loss of a child remains unforgotten to every mother during her lifetime. –Margaret Sanger

MEL'S VIEW
CHEATED

It is one year since Andy died. It makes no more sense to me now than it did then.

He was strong, healthy and full of life one minute; then within five months, he was gone.

All we have left are the memories as pieces of him slowly leave – his Jeep, his skis, his bike. I don't want to see the pieces leave because their presence confirmed his existence; giving them away only reinforces the reality of what happened.

He was cheated by fate and I ask why – why did cancer strike Andy and rob him of life when he had so much to live for and look forward to. In cheating him, fate also cheated us because he is no longer here to share our lives.

We've been going through a cycle of weddings and graduation parties this past month. In the midst of these celebrations, we've had to plan for the official "unveiling" of the marker on his grave. So while our friends and relatives have had plans for happy events, we've been preparing for a very different type of event.

I look at the happy brides and grooms and at some of his friends dancing happily at one of the weddings and wonder why he is not here to someday have his own happy event. Why was he cheated from enjoying life – he looked forward to finishing school, to going skiing in Colorado, to seeing California, to enjoying the ocean and to someday marrying and having his own family. Why was his life cut short while others can enjoy these events?

The father of the bride at one of the weddings spoke of how he told his children that life has its "valleys and peaks." But for some there is just the valley. Andy entered a valley and never came out of it; and, all too often, despite some small steps up, we feel like we are also in a valley.

While in the hospital, Andy once asked why we were sad because he was the one who would not be here. Well, his sister lost a brother to confide in and to be there for her when she needed him; we lost a son and seeing what he would become; we all lost a friend. But, he was right. He was the one cheated of life and our loss pales next to what he lost – a chance to live and enjoy the peaks of life.

(September 2019)

The Greater Baltimore Chapter
P.O. BOX 2103
Ellicott City, MD 21041-2103
(410)560-3358
www.baltimoretcf.com

Meeting Information

The First Wednesday of the month at:
Govans Presbyterian Church
5828 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
7:30-9:30 PM

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The Sibling Corner

Our chapter meeting hosts a Sibling Group which coincides with our regular meeting time. There are so many special issues that occur when you lose a brother or sister. This group offers a safe place for you to share your challenges, concerns and successes when walking this path. Siblings age 16 and over are welcome and encouraged to attend. This will be facilitated by siblings for siblings.



To Our New Members:

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. We do understand.

To Our Seasoned Members:

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. TCF is here to welcome you, share your grief and encourage you.

In nature there is death. But there is always the promise of Spring. So too with grief. There is the promise of recovery and joy again. Believe those of us who have made the journey.

Holiday Donation and Membership Update

Dear Family Members,

As we near the end of the year, we are asking you to consider making a contribution to The Greater Baltimore Chapter of Compassionate Friends. Our newsletter, phone line, website, outreach efforts and monthly sharing meetings are made possible by your generosity. TCF is a non-profit organization and your donations are tax-deductible. More importantly, they are vital to the continued operation of your group. If requested, all contributions will be recognized in Loving Memory of your loved one in our newsletter. If you choose to make a donation, please include the completed form below. Please help in whatever way you can. We are deeply grateful for your kindness. If you prefer to not make a donation, please fill out the rest of this form so we can update our contact information. This will assist us in keeping you updated to Chapter events and activities.

Your Chapter Leadership

*****Holiday Donation*****

Yes, I wish to support the work of The Greater Baltimore Chapter of The Compassionate Friends and help grieving parents and their families by contributing the donation below:

___\$5 ___\$10 ___\$15 ___\$20 ___\$25 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___Other

(Please make checks payable to: The Greater Baltimore Chapter of The Compassionate Friends)

Given By: _____

In Loving Memory of: _____ Month: _____

___ I / We would like to volunteer my/our time.

___ I / We are making this donation in memory of my/our child(ren) or loved one.

___ I / We do not want the donation acknowledged.

(No donation is required to have your loved one acknowledged in the newsletter for life dates)

If you haven't already given us written permission and you wish to have your children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters name included in our **"Lifedates"** section, please fill out this form and mail it to us. We are required to have your written permission to print it.

*****Member Update*****

(Please print and complete the information below so we can update your information.)

To keep costs down select US Mail **only** if no email address is available.)

Member Name: _____

Other Parent: _____ Spouse/Partner: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of Loved One(s): _____

Relationship to Loved One(s): _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Passing: _____

List Parent(s) as: _____ Names of Siblings: _____

Receive Newsletter: Yes/No

Deliver By: Email/US Mail

Mention Loved One: Yes/No

Mail Completed Information to: **The Greater Baltimore Chapter of TCF**
P.O. Box 2103 Ellicott City, MD 21041-2103

Lifedates

September

October

Birth Days

Remembrance Days

Birth Days

Remembrance Days

Philip David Hobson
Reese Annette Bowman
Larry Allan Samet
Zachary Wolfe Pressman
Edward George Kiesling
Grace Gabrielle Erline
Michael Mikey Eades
Anna Elizabeth Rombach
Kelly Bateman
Gregory David Albrecht
David Leavitt
Richard J. Curran
Michael Francis Gist
Brian McBride Morris
Beth Szczepanski
Robert William Biondo
Bryan Canter
Nelson Yargar III
Melisa Rene Lisa Shamer
Nickolas Benjamin Pippen
Camryn Grace Wilson
Jeffrey Alston
Christine Kelly Enders
Nathan Patrick Fenchak
Chad Eric Petterson
Elijah Joseph Virago
Joseph Michael Ackermann

Charles Adrian Alois LaChapelle
Ian Scher
James Patrick McElroy
Cynthia Melissa Greenberg
Catherine Theresa Carnes
Susan Soltes
Thomas B. Malenski
Jaxxon King Thomas Haun
Anna Elizabeth Rombach
Andrew Thomas Russell
Patrick Kenny Dieringer
Kent Ferree
Jocelyn Chilvers
William Patrick Ford III
Tom Sawyer
Conor James O'Sullivan
Hannah Renken
Kyle Richard Canter
Shanae Nicole Griffin
Lydia Shirazi
Parker Michael Willoughby
Morgan Smith
Tracy Lee Freeman
Lauryn Marie Little
Robert M. Bryant
Robin Tonette Thomas
Andrew Dewey McQuade
Jeremiah DeMario
Sunshine Marie Royston
Chip Carroll Wyrde
Karie Rebecca Dietz
Larry Schultz III
Kareem Kelly Guest
Michael Ryan Atkins
Irene Matthews
Camryn Grace Wilson
Christopher Black
Danny Lee Gruzs
Robert Palese
Jasmine Daye Bishai

Gregory Lockwood Davis II
SPC Devon Terrell Hardwick
Ariella Stein
Susan Smallwood
Samuel Cain Lennon
Thomas Tommy Edward Winkler III
Bobby Bateman, Jr.
Daniel William Beckenholdt
Luke D'Antoni
Mark D. Sokolik
Elizabeth Conway Nass
Kyle Richard Canter
John Ohmann III
Eric Montgomery
Michael Vincent Manieri
Jewel Donte Thomas
Michael Verleysen
Andrew Dewey McQuade
Jeremiah DeMario
Jessie Koch
Garrett Nelson
Connor Elliott King
Benjamin Thomas Huxtable
Amy Marie Adams
Bruce Francis Vasil
David Knox
Gaebriel Patrick Kelly
Isaiah Eli Scott
Christopher Ryan LePore
David Culbertson
Cathi Faye Horst
Samuel Sam Raymond Cook
Jason D. Verfaillie
Andrew Wohlfort

Susan Smallwood
Diamonic Arca-Jones
DeYonte Clarence Hicks
Deyonte Hicks
Ryan Thomas Harris
Michael Angelo Osborne
Baby Cole
Daniel Levitt
Edward Joseph O'Quinn
Britney Marie Grinder
Tommy Bakie
Jeffrey Brian Reilly
Sherri Lynn Wooten
Timothy Edward Hinmon
Thomas Tommy Edward Winkler III
Bohde David
Brian P. Hause
Brenda Thorne
Anthony Pierce, Jr.
Hannah Paige Potis
Thelma Louise Johnson
Joseph Polovoy
Sarah Jayne Orton
Zachary Michael Larson
Luke D'Antoni
Franklin Woodrow Hughes, Jr.
Sherry Latrece Montgomery
Brittany Leigh Ey
Travis Anthony Jenkins
Ernest Bo Neeko Gales III
Brearah Karli Stevens
Kevin Michael Ryan
Jessie Koch
Vicki Gail Sears-Hube
Stacey Lurn Gregg
Jenne Elynn Gans
Elisa Michelle Guibas
David Knox
Isaiah Eli Scott
Christine Kelly Enders
Andrew Wohlfort
Jeffery Van Wade
Joseph Allan Caskey, Jr.
Trenton B. Reightler
Joseph Michael Ackermann