

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



NORTHEAST BALTIMORE CHAPTER
WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE
VOLUME VIII, #9, DECEMBER 2003/JANUARY 2004
EDITORS, DAVID BISHAI, ELIZABETH BISHAI
TCF PHONE # 410-560-3358

Baltimore Chapter Meetings are on the First Wednesday of each month. Brown Memorial Church, 6200 N Charles Street Towson

HOW TO REMEMBER YOUR CHILD AT THE HOLIDAYS

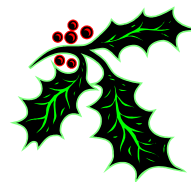
Holidays can create feelings of dread and anxiety in those who are bereaved. Creating new rituals and new traditions that pay tribute to the memory of your child is one way to survive, and perhaps even embrace the holidays. Here are some suggestions of what you can do.

- Decorate a wreath with pictures and items that were loved by your child and place the wreath at their grave.
- Tell the stories behind the ornaments on the Christmas tree and the role your child had in choosing or making them. Create a special ornament labeled with the name of your child and hang it on the tree.
- Decorate a candle and light it at mealtime in memory of your child. If you celebrate Chanukah, recall a memory of your child on each of the eight nights that you light the Menorah.
- Make a book of pictures and memorabilia about your child. This is an activity siblings could share as well.
- Make a donation to a charity in your child's name.
- Bring your child's favorite food to share at the holiday dinner and mention their name in the blessing over the food.
- Share anecdotes and stories about your child. Sometimes others need permission to talk about the deceased. Let them know you would prefer to keep the memory of your child alive rather than pretend nothing has changed.
- Make sure you remember yourself. Take care of yourself. Be gentle, do what you can do—no more and no less.

Adapted from "Grief and the Holidays"

UNITED WAY

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



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

David Bishai
11118 Pool Rd.
Hunt Valley, MD
21030
dbishai@jhu.edu

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

to help keep the group going
call Michelle Backe
410-486-8716 or
Michelle Pooner
410-526-5956

Our Children Remembered

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

Lauren Michelle Bonsall 5/3/90-12/19/95
Parents- Douglas & Karen

Joseph Allan Caskey, Jr 12/16/86-10/12/87
Mother- Joan

Sarah Christina Evans 1/26/1995
Parents: Kathleen & Alan

Jamshid M. Ghannad 1/7/69-6/29/99
Mother: Heideh Shirazi

Rachel Lynn Orr 7/11/80-12/3/95
Mother- Penny

Daniel Scott Pooner 8/13/95-1/2/96
Parents: Michelle & Alan

James "Jc" Taylor III 10/17/95-1/25/96
Parents: Kimberly & James



Remembering

Friends may think we have forgotten
When at times they see us smile.
Little do they know the heartache
That our smile hides all the while.

Beautiful memories are wonderful
They last till the longest day.
They never wear out.
They never get lost and can never be given away.

To some you may be forgotten,
To others a part of the past.
But to those who loved and lost you
Your memory will always last.

Author unknown

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

Postage donated in loving memory of Andrew Robert Ritchie

Phone Friends— If you need someone to talk to, we are here.

Michelle Backe 410-486-8716
Michelle Pooner 410-526-5956
Kate Gehr 410-444-4998

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Candlelight Remembrance
December 3rd 7 PM

At Brown Memorial Church.

Please Call Michelle Backe at 410 486-8716 by November 26 to have your child's name read at the service or to arrange for a reading or music. Please bring a covered dish to reception.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Northeast Baltimore Chapter Meeting

First Wednesday 7:30 pm
December 3, 2003
January 7, 2004

Brown Memorial Church, 6200 N Charles Street Towson

Directions: Beltway to Exit #25 Charles Street; South on Charles St approximately 2 miles to church on the right, directly across from 7-11

For information on other area chapter meetings please call 410-560-3358 or visit The Compassionate Friends online.

Barely Prayable Prayers

December seems to bring vanity in truck-loads. As a bereaved parent, it's hard to be patient during a season of artificial sentiment, and contrived merriment. The "true meaning of Christmas" dramas that air on Lifetime Network still fail to draw our attention to what matters most at Christmas. Christmas is the anniversary of a child's birthday. All births deserve to be remembered and celebrated. Each birth is a harrowing experience survived by a mother and an infant. Birthdays celebrate an unbreakable connection that has formed. For me, Christmas is all about Mary.

Underneath this season is the story of the birth of a child to a dirt poor Jewish girl who would 30 years later stand by helplessly to watch his execution. In the mind of this one woman, between 30A.D. and 70A.D. Christmas was the birthday of the boy she lost. What she said to Gabriel when she found out she was pregnant with this child is worth remembering. Her submissive prayer at the Annunciation is "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). T.S. Eliot recalls Mary's prayer at the Annunciation in his 1927 poem, "The Dry Salvages" - a poem which he considered his masterpiece.

... Where is there an end of it, the soundless wailing,
The silent withering of autumn flowers
Dropping their petals and remaining motionless;
Where is there an end to the drifting wreckage,
The prayer of the bone on the beach, the unprayable
Prayer at the calamitous annunciation?

There is no end, but addition: the trailing
Consequence of further days and hours,
While emotion takes to itself the emotionless
Years of living among the breakage
Of what was believed in as the most reliable-
And therefore the fittest for renunciation. ...

There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,
No end to the withering of withered flowers,
To the movement of pain that is painless and motionless,
To the drift of the sea and the drifting wreckage,
The bone's prayer to Death its God. Only the
hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation.

In the earliest years of the first millenium, I wonder if Mary remembered her barely prayable prayer. I hope she did. In it there is not just submission. There is in that prayer the very faintest hint of something that could never be guessed at in the presence of vanity. There is gratitude.

I can imagine a teary-eyed Mary looking over Jerusalem in Christmas 50 A.D. longing for the boy she lost. She remembers the pain of losing him. She remembers the toddler years spent in Egypt. She remembers him consulting with the temple elders at 12, She remembers her motherly pride when he rescued her friends from embarrassment at that wedding in Cana. A smile breaks for a moment and at the next instant she mouths again with thanks her prayer-"Be it unto me according to thy word" .

—David Bishai



HOLIDAY TIME! The whole world seems consumed with tinsel and glitter, but those who grieve are only aware of the terrible hole in their hearts and in their lives. Knowing the intense pain of the Holiday Season, here are some helpful thoughts which other bereaved persons have shared. We hope they make your holidays a little easier to handle.

Keep in mind that grieving persons have definite limitations. You are not functioning at normal capacity. Therefore, it is helpful to evaluate your priorities and decide what is really meaningful for you and your family.

I. Decide what you can handle comfortably – let these needs be known to your family, friends and relatives:

- Whether or not to talk about your loved one.
- Whether you can handle the responsibility of the family gathering.
- Would you like someone else to take over some of these traditional tasks?

2. Don't be afraid to make changes:

- Have your holiday dinner on a different day or time.
- Open presents on a different day or time.
- Attend a different place of worship for the holiday service.

3. Your greatest comfort could come from doing something for someone else. Some persons feel they can acknowledge their loss more meaningfully by:

- Giving a gift in memory of your child.
- Donating what would have spent on that child to a charity
- Adopting a needy child or family for the holidays.

REMEMBER TO

Be realistic – recognize the value in setting limits for yourself and do only those things which are meaningful to you and your family.

Know that whatever you choose to do this year, you may decide to handle things differently next year. Growth and change go hand in hand.

And do not forget that comforting discovery that many have confirmed: the realization that when the “Special Day” arrives, it is truly not usually as bad – by any means – as you anticipated.

