



NEWSLETTER

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.

January-February 2013

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YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:30 pm in the library of St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 16, Washington St., Holliston. The parish center is located between the church and the rectory. Our next two meetings will be on:

January 15th February 19th

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month next to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford at the parish center. **Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last Monday or earlier if you plan to attend.**

Directions....On Route 16 (Main St.) going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at Tedeschi's Market on the left, take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church. Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left, bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room. Our next two meetings will be on:

January 29th February 26th

WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

Our primary purpose is to assist the bereaved in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings for those who wish to understand. Our objective is to help members of the community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers, and professionals to be supportive.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. No dues or fees are required to belong to the Metrowest Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace, but whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.

We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2013

Weather Cancellation

In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:

**Ed or Joan Motuzas at
(508) 473-4239**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239
 * Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Secretary

* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

Librarian

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Newsletter

Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

* Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
 Linda Teres 508/620-0613
 Mitchell Greenblatt 508/881-2111
 Judith Cherrington 508/473-4087

The chapter address is:

The Compassionate Friends
 Metrowest Chapter
 26 Simmons Dr.
 Milford, MA 01757-1265

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

Regional Coordinator
 Rick Mirabile
 11 Ridgewood Crossing
 Hingham, MA 02043
 Phone (781) 740-1135
 Email: Rmirabile@comcast.net

The Compassionate Friends has a national office that supports and coordinates chapter activities. The national office can be reached as follows:

The Compassionate Friends
 P.O. Box 3696
 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
 Voice Toll Free (877) 969-0010
 Fax (630) 990-0246

Web Page: www.compassionatefriends.org

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

There are no dues or fees to belong to *The Compassionate Friends*. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations enable us to send information to newly bereaved parents, purchase pamphlets and books, contribute to the national chapter and meet other chapter expenses.

THANK YOU to the friends who help keep our chapter going with their contributions.

Love Gifts

Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Leoni in loving memory of their son **Nicholas Michael Leoni**.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert King in loving memory of their daughter **Caren King-Firth** on her anniversary January 26th.

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boudreau in loving memory of their son **Nicholas L. Boudreau**.

Mrs. Minerva Ciccarella in loving memory of her daughter **Cynthia Zottoli** on her birthday February 8th.

Mr. & Mrs. Earl Pearlman in loving memory of their son **Marc R. Pearlman** on his birthday December 14th.

Mrs. Virginia Lombard in loving memory of her son **Robert L Lombard Jr.** "You are so missed by all".

Mr. & Mrs. Burton Stuchins in loving memory of their son **Alan Stuchins** on his birthday March 2nd.

Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Greenblatt to honor the life of their wonderful son **Ian Greenblatt** on his birthday March 3rd.

My apologies to Mr. & Mrs. David Holland for the omission of their son Kevin Holland's anniversary date of December 14th, in the last newsletter. Sorry.





Our Children Remembered

As a regular feature, the newsletter acknowledges anniversaries of the deaths of our children/siblings and their birthdays. This issue covers the months of January and February. If information about your loved one is missing, incorrect or our chapter files are in error, please send the correct data, including your name, address, and telephone number, the name of your loved one and the birthday and date and cause of death to the newsletter editor, Ed Motuzas, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265.

Anniversaries

January

ROY RANDALL
JUSTIN BAILEY
NOELLE SARAH JOHNSON
BRIAN JAMES MOORE
MICHAELLA W. LIBBY
CAREN KING-FIRTH
WILLIAM TOCCHI

February

SCOTT W. RUTH
DANIEL J. SCOTT JR
MATTHEW SHEA
R.J. SUTHERLAND
ELIZABETH CASEY
SHAWN P. MARKS
JEFFREY CHERRINGTON
KAITLYN KENNEDY
MICHAEL D. DUPONT
MICHAEL HEBDEN

Birthdays

January

KELSEY MULKERRINS
JOAN M. PETERS
RUSSELL D. HUNTINGTON
MICHAELLA W. LIBBY
CHRIS GRIFFITHS
TRACY SMITH
JASON BOGHOSIAN
LARSAN GOBEH KORVILI

February

CHRISTOPHER MARC DULLEO
LEA M. SIEBERT
MATTHEW DENICE
CYNTHIA ZOTTOLI
RICHARD J. LaJOIE
JACKI PAULINE BRAMBERG
MATTHEW SHEA
DAVID PELLETIER
OLIVER STRASENBURGH
STACEY ANN MAHONEY
BEATRICE ELIZABETH HUDSON
MICHAEL J. PAULHUS

Compassionate Friends Offers Grief Related Webinar Series

The Compassionate Friends is expanding its outreach to bereaved families by offering a series of free online grief related seminars. The webinars, to be held once per month, are on various grief topics and guests are well-known experts in the field.

Webinars have included such topics as "Handling Grief Through the Holidays," "Getting 'Stuck' and 'Unstuck,'" "Caring for Your Health While Grieving," and "Coping with Guilt During Bereavement." These webinars were recorded and are available to view on demand on TCF's national website.

To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to www.compassionatefriends.org>News & Events>Special Events>Webinars. Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



THE SIBLING CORNER



This page is dedicated to siblings together adjusting to grief thru encouragement & sharing

"Siblings Walking Together." 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.

TWO VIEWPOINTS

The following letter, signed "Sibling", appeared in the Louisville, KY newsletter. It is a poignant expression of love and pain that is typical of siblings' reactions. It is hoped that, for those of you with teenagers, it will offer clues leading to freer communications and sharing of feelings.

Dear Parents of "Compassionate Friends":

I am writing to let you know how I feel and maybe how some of the other siblings feel. There have been times when my parents start really getting extra down about my brother. I usually leave the room. I feel that no matter how hard I try, I will say or do something that will hurt them more, or that they won't understand what I'm really trying to say. They already feel enough pain. I really love them and I understand enough about how they hurt, but I'm just not good at saying what I feel. It seems like it never sounds right. I also hold my emotions back from them. I always hear it is best to let it out, and I do, but not in front of my parents. I'm afraid they might try to hold their emotions back in front of me, so I won't get upset. I've had rough times for the past couple of years, and I'm still having hard times, so I'm always afraid they will hold back if they see me getting upset. I know that would just hurt them more when they try to hold it back. I love to talk about the good times my brother and I had, but I'd just rather be alone when I cry for him. Just once in a while my sister and I can talk about him, but that's the only person I can really talk to. I hope and pray with all my heart that my parents will understand, but I just can't talk to them. I miss my brother a lot, more than I think they really realize. I love and care for them too much to go and upset them even more. Maybe I'm wrong, but please parents, understand how I feel. May we always be close.

Love, Sibling

Please Don't Discount Sibling Grief

I have come to think of sibling grief as "discounted grief." Why? Because siblings appear to be an emotional bargain in most people's eyes. People worry so much about the bereaved parents that they invest very little attention in the grieving sibling.

My personal "favorite" line said to siblings is, "You be sure and take care of your parents." I wanted to know who was supposed to take care of me, I knew I couldn't.

The grief of siblings may differ from that of a parent, but it ought not be discounted. People need to realize that while it is obviously painful for parents to have lost a child, it is also painful for the sibling, who has not only lost a sister or brother, but an irreplaceable friend.

While dealing with this double loss, he or she must confront yet another factor. The loss of a brother or sister is frequently the surviving sibling's first experience with the death of any young person. Young people feel they will live forever. A strong dose of mortality in the form of a sibling death is very hard to take.

The feelings of siblings are also often discounted when decisions are being made on things ranging from a funeral plan to flower selections. Parents need to listen to surviving siblings who usually know a lot about the tastes and preferences of the deceased.

Drawing on the knowledge that surviving siblings have about supposedly trivial things, such as favorite clothes or music, can serve two purposes when planning funeral or memorial services. First, their input helps ensure that the deceased receives the type of service he or she would have liked. Second, their inclusion in the planning lets them know they are still an important part of the family.

I realize that people are unaware that they are discounting sibling grief. But then, that's why I'm writing 4 this, so people will know.

*Jane Machado
TCF, Tulare, CA*



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



ANGER AT GOD AFTER A CHILD DIES

Many people who suffer the death of a child find themselves feeling angry at God. This anger is sometimes expressed directly: "I'm angry at God for allowing my child to die."

Most often, however, the anger reveals itself in less direct phrases such as, "Why would a loving God allow my child to die?" "Doesn't God have any mercy?" "Where was God when my child experienced so much suffering?" "With all the horrible abuse being done to children by some adults, why did God take the child of loving parents?"

It is important to understand that anger is a normal, healthy part of grief. While not all parents who suffer the death of a child feel angry at God, most will feel this way at someone or something over the long process of grief. The best support we can provide to these individuals is to listen in silence. This will allow them to work through the anger in their own time frame.

Michelle remembers the intense anger she felt at God when her daughter, Robin, died a year after being diagnosed with leukemia. "The depth of my feelings surprised and concerned me," she recalls. "I thought I was losing my mind. Although God was the chief target of my anger, I was also angry at my family, friends and strangers I'd see at the mall with their children. Even the weather affected my mood. When it rained I was angry, and the same was true when the sun shone brightly. And most of my energy was directed at God."

Michelle's anger gradually subsided. She attributes this to the permission she received from her minister to express her feelings during their many pastoral counseling sessions. "Reverend Johnson told me that God could take my anger and still loves me as His child," she remembers. "This was very important for me to hear. Many other people tried to defend God, saying that He didn't cause Robin's death. I know they meant well, but I didn't find their efforts helpful at all."

Recently I spoke to a group of hospital chaplains at a medical center in the Los Angeles area. The subject addressed was death and dying. At the beginning of the workshop I showed a videotape of a woman grieving the death of a loved one. The woman said that she was angry at God for allowing her loved one to suffer with cancer for nearly two years before dying.

GRIEVING PEOPLE DON'T NEED THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT GOD STIFLED OR REDIRECTED. GOD CAN HANDLE THE ANGER OF HUMANS WITHOUT OUR DEFENSE OR JUSTIFICATION. ANGER IS A NORMAL, HEALTHY PART OF THE GRIEF PROCESS.

At the conclusion of the video I asked the chaplains how they were going to care for the grief-stricken woman. Several of them replied that their first agenda was to get the woman's "anger off of God."

When I asked why they felt this was necessary one chaplain replied, "Because God didn't cause her loved one to suffer." I then asked the group if they thought that God could handle the anger of one hurting woman, whether or not God caused the suffering? They all agreed that God could.

Mona knows the pain of not only having a child die, but also being told that her anger at God was wrong. Her first child, Jason, died shortly after being born.

"When Jason died," she recalls, "I asked God where was His mercy? It had taken my husband, Tim, and me more than two years to conceive. It didn't make any sense that God would allow our child to die. I was definitely angry at Him." Mona says that many people tried to shift her anger away from God. This was especially the case with her and Tim's minister.

"The first thing my Pastor said," she remembers, "wasn't, 'I'm sorry for your loss,' or some other compassionate words. Instead, he said, 'Mona, God's not to blame. Remember He, too, suffered the death of a child. We simply live in a world where tragedies occur.'"

Mona did not find his words helpful. "I know Pastor was well-meaning," she said. "But he seemed to be more concerned with defending God than caring for Tim and me. Although I continued to be angry at God, I no longer expressed my feelings out loud. Pastor seemed to imply that my anger was misguided or wrong."

Grieving people don't need their feelings about God stifled or redirected. God can handle the anger of humans without our defense or justification. Anger is a normal, healthy part of the grief process. Given the permission to be expressed, it will eventually help bring about healing and a renewed sense of wholeness.



Reverend Al Miles

The Reverend Al Miles is the Coordinator of Hospital Ministry with Interfaith Ministries of Hawaii at The Queen's Medical Center.

As Long As I Can

As long as I can, I will look at the world for both of us.
As long as I can, I will laugh with the bird, I will sing with flowers, I will play to the stars, for both of us.
As long as I can, I will remember how many things on this earth were your joy. And I will live as well as you would want me to live, as long as I can.

Sascha Wagner
The Compassionate Friends



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories...sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

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

But You're Absolutely Normal!

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect. If you've...

- been angry with doctors or nurses for not doing enough
 - been sleeping too much or not enough
 - noticed a change in appetite
 - felt no one understands what you're going through
 - felt friends should call more or call less or leave you alone or invite you along more often
 - bought things you didn't need
 - considered selling everything and moving
 - had headaches, upset stomachs, weakness, lethargy, more aches and pains
 - been unbearable, lonely, and depressed
 - been crabby
 - cried for no apparent reason
 - found yourself obsessed with thoughts of the deceased
 - been forgetful, confused, uncharacteristically absent-minded
 - panicked over little things
 - felt guilty about things you have or haven't done
 - gone to the store every day
 - forgotten why you went somewhere
 - called friends and talked for a long time
 - called friends and wanted to hang up after only a brief conversation
 - not wanted to attend social functions you usually enjoyed
 - found yourself unable to concentrate on written material
 - been unable to remember what you just read
- ...you're normal. These are all common reactions to grief. They take up to two years (or more) to pass completely, but they will pass. You'll never forget the person who has died, but your life will again become normal, even if it is never exactly the same. Take care of yourself. You will heal in time.

***Joanne Bonelli
TCF, Greater Boise Area, ID***

"Wounds do not heal without time and attention. Yet, too many of us feel that we don't have the right to take the time to heal from emotional and physical wounds."

***From Judy Tatelbaum's
Courage to Grieve***



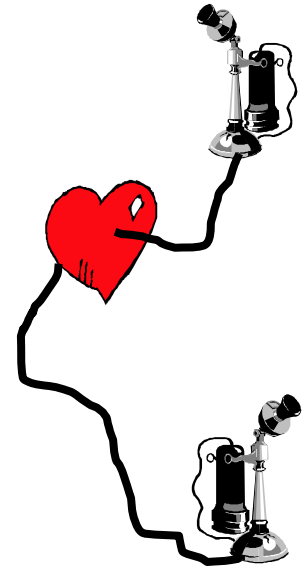
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Phone Friends

Sometimes it helps to just be able to talk to someone; maybe at a time when pain or stress seems too much to bear. We maintain a list of Telephone Friends; people who are willing to listen, to commiserate, to give whatever support they can. In a time of need, feel free to call one of our Telephone Friends.

- Ed & Joan Motuzas, ...**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
- Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
- Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942.
- Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)620-0613
- Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
- Judith Cherrington,...**Jeffrey**, age 48, Cancer,(508)473-4087
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan C. Plunkett**, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106



It is always useful to have more Telephone Friends; individuals who are willing to provide support and comfort via the telephone. The chapter provides guidance for those who want to help. When you listen and talk to the bereaved, you make a difference. A longer list of Telephone Friends increases the likelihood that someone will be available when needed. Call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 if you would like to be a Telephone Friend.

There's No Law Against Grieving-- Even for Men

Two years have now passed but I still remember that day like it was yesterday.

If you are reading this, then you have probably lived that day, too. It may have been slightly different, but still the same.

Even though there was a bunch of relatives and friends in the waiting room with me, it was like I was completely alone. I had been called to the hospital less than an hour before. There had been a car accident. My wife was injured but not in danger. But no one would tell me anything about my 8 year-old Stephanie or 5 year-old Stephen who were riding in the car with her.

I had been led to a waiting room, hoping for word from the emergency room doctor. The minutes seemed like hours. Then the doctor came in. Stephanie was in critical condition and would be flown to Children's Hospital. But they were unable to revive my precious Stephen.

The words echoed over and over in my brain.

"Your son has died." The shock and the grief struck me at the same time. I had expected them to come in and tell me the kids were injured but would be just fine thanks to the excellent efforts of everyone involved. After all, that's the way it always happens on "Rescue 911".

But that wasn't the way it happened this time!

I only half remember being led back to my wife where I broke the news to her.

A moment later when I had been led into the corridor, someone asked me if I wanted to see my son. I don't even remember my response, just walking down the hallway, a nurse on each side holding my arms. All I could take were little half steps. My legs had no strength. Through the tears I could see all the nurses and hospital personnel stop everything they were doing and stare at us. Apparently they hadn't seen a grieving father before.

Finally we reached the emergency room at the end of what seemed like the longest corridor in the world. The door swung open and I spotted my son lying on a table at the far end of the room. I was helped to him and then left alone.

Waves of grief overcame me as I looked at Stephen's sweet face, laying there as if asleep. And the realization that I would never hear his laugh, I would never see him smile, I would never feel his kiss again.

After a few minutes a nurse came back and told me I would have to go because my daughter was being loaded into the helicopter and I should give her some words of encouragement, even though she might not be able to hear me.

I did that and I was driven to Children's Hospital where Stephanie died later that night.

The grief that I felt was so intense. The shock was incredible. This couldn't be happening. Both of my children were dead.

I remember the newspaper reporter who showed up at my house the next day. I had gone home to get some clean clothes and take a shower.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



NEWSLETTER MAILING LIST UPDATE (THIS PAGE WILL BE PRINTED EVERY OTHER EDITION)

We continue to update our mailing list. We want everyone who reads our newsletter to receive it; however, mailing costs make this update necessary. We want to send it where it is being read. Your donations allow us to print and mail this newsletter and to reach out to hundreds of parents and siblings.

Please fill out this form now if you wish to be added to or removed from our mailing list. This form should be filled out annually. If we don't hear from you in a year's time you will be notified through the newsletter that your name will be removed from our mailing list unless we hear from you.

If you are able to make a donation at this time, it will be gratefully received. Please mail to address below.

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

I (do___) (do not___) wish to continue receiving the TCF newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent___) (professional___)

(Donation included___) Make checks payable to "The Compassionate Friends" or TCF

If there are any errors in spelling or other information in this newsletter, please call it to my attention so that I may correct it. Please use this page to send back information, reverse side is addressed for your convenience.

Mail to: TCF Metrowest, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

PLEASE ADVISE US OF ADDRESS CHANGES TO INSURE YOUR RECEIVING THE NEWSLETTER, THEY ARE NOT FORWARDED BY THE POST OFFICE.

Fold & Tape _____

The Compassionate Friends
Metrowest Chapter
26 Simmons Dr.
Milford MA 01757-1265

Fold & Tape _____



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 8)

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said, "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

Mary Clark
In memory of Max
TCF, Sugar Land-SW Houston Chapter, TX

A very special thank you goes out to those people that facilitate our meetings every month. It is through their unselfishness in stepping up, that makes our chapter a safe place for the newly bereaved to get through the grieving process. Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

- Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian's Dad)**
- Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)**
- Rick Dugan (Larry's Dad)**
- Janice Parmenter (Tyler's Mom)**
- Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)**

Why I Do What I Do

Today, as I start writing my column, it is January 19, 2004. It is an anniversary of **The Day**. The day which changed the course of my life and the lives of my wife and daughter forever. Eight years ago the three of us were plucked out of our normal routines and dropped into a horror chamber. The words still ring clear, "We found your son's Body" They will forever ring in my heart.

Weeks later, still reeling from the impact, we were at the stone mason's place trying to figure out what words should be on his gravestone. It was a time to break down again. Are we supposed to be making that decision over the life of a twenty year old son? It was decided that the fitting words should be "You Made A Difference." The difference for the better Carl made in me is, for the most part, why I lead a Compassionate Friends chapter. He taught me about compassion and caring.

I also do what I do now because of the wonderful folks in the old Hanford TCF chapter who nurtured me, heard my pain, and gave me hope when I needed it the most. They modeled proper grief recovery for me. They modeled the life of survival after child loss by sharing their experiences and wisdom.

They offered suggestions on how to handle tricky issues of grief like how to grieve, how to handle days of significance, and how to handle the ignorant words or actions of family and friends. Newly bereaved parents need role models. They need to see successful grief survival modeled to them. That is why our chapter encourages parents and siblings with many years of successful recovery to come back and show others the way. They can become the lived out examples of joy and purpose, with time, in life again.

I do what I do to provide education to the bereaved and to the general public as well. There is so much misinformation out there about grief. Grief is a natural process after child loss. Strangely, painful as it is, it is the start of the healing process. It needs to be felt. It needs its proper expression. Yes, child loss/sibling grief hurts deeper than one can know, outside of experiencing it. However our sorrow runs so deep because the love for sons and daughters runs so deep. Sorrow and love are intertwined here.

Concerns arise in me whenever newcomers say, "This is too painful. I can't talk about it," or, "If I think of him or her, I will start crying." Mourning delayed is just mourning denied, and, **it will not be denied!** Left untreated, it wreaks havoc emotionally and physically. Unresolved mourning probably takes its toll on many marriages. The road to recovery is a journey going through child loss survival in all of its stages. Then one eventually arrives at peace and happiness.

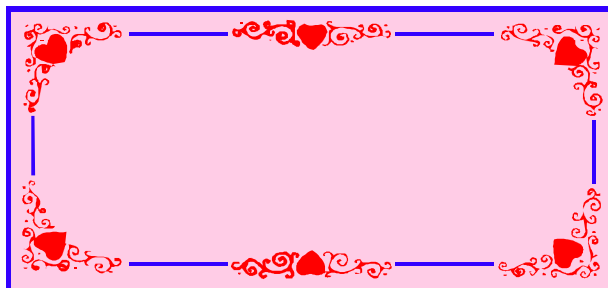
One of the healthiest steps in recovery I have ever taken is to attend the annual Compassionate Friends National Conference. There is power and healing in numbers of folks coming together in remembrance of their loved ones. Listening, learning, and sharing with people around the nation with this common bond of loss, creates a powerful tool in healing ourselves. I strongly encourage all readers to attend. Going to the National Conference would be a great way to **be good to yourself**. So, be good to yourself. Aaron.

Aaron Pueschel
In Memory of my son, Carl

Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are.
Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.
Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.
One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow,
or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky, and want more than all the world for your return. ~

by Mary Jean Irion

The Compassionate Friends
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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. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person - or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.



TO OUR OLD MEMBERS

*We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. **THINK BACK...** what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”*