



**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 2014**

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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 21st February 18th**

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 28th February 25th**

**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. ©2014**

**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.

**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

Ed Motuzas 508/473/4239

### 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  
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774

The chapter address is:

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

**Chapter Web Page**  
[www.tcfmetrowest.com](http://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](http://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. Earl Pearlman in loving memory of their son **Marc R. Pearlman** on his birthday December 14th.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert King in loving memory of their daughter **Caren King-Firth** on her anniversary January 26th.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Steven Baisley in loving memory of their only beautiful daughter **Stacey Ann Mahoney** on her birthday February 20th. "We know you are with Jesus, Grandpa & Nana this Christmas." Our beautiful angel, love Dad & Mom.  
 Mrs. Minerva Ciccarelli in loving memory of her daughter **Cynthia Zottoli** on her birthday February 8th.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Burton Stuchins in loving memory of their son **Alan R. Stuchins** on his anniversary November 5th.  
 Mrs. Dorothy Pisapia in loving memory of her son **Matthew Pisapia**.  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Bardol in memory of their beloved son **William Bardol Jr.** "Love and miss you always"  
 Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Scott Sr. in loving memory of their son **Daniel J. Scott Jr.** On his anniversary February 9th.





# 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
- JEFFREY D. SAMBUCETI
- JUSTIN BAILEY
- NOELLE SARAH JOHNSON
- CHRISTOPHER D. DILORENZO
- BRIAN JAMES MOORE
- KAITLYN B. SCHLEGEL
- MICHAELLA W. LIBBY
- CAREN KING-FIRTH
- WILLIAM TOCCHI

#### *February*

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

### *Birthdays*

#### *January*

- KELSEY MULKERRINS
- MICHAELLA W. LIBBY
- CHRIS GRIFFITHS
- TRACY SMITH
- JASON BOGHOSIAN

#### *February*

- CHRISTOPHER MARC DULLEA
- LEA M. SIEBERT
- MATTHEW DENICE
- CYNTHIA ZOTTOLI
- RICHARD J. LaJOIE
- MATTHEW SHEA
- CYNTHIA A. RENAUD
- DAVID PELLETIER
- OLIVER STRASENBURGH
- STACEY ANN MAHONEY
- MICHAEL J. PAULHUS





# 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.

## ***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 this—so people will know.

***Jane Machado  
TCF, Tulare, CA***

## **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.

(continued on next page)



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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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*

### *A Candle for My Child*

Each night as darkness settles over our home, a little candle begins flickering in the east window of our staircase landing. The tiny light burns until dawn and then silently is quenched with the rising sun. This is my son's light. About a year after Todd died, the leader of our chapter suggested a candle in the window for the holidays, as I had no inclination to decorate. I placed a candle there, and I have now replaced that candle with yet another candle. This is Todd's candle, this is Todd's light.

Todd's candle has a Victorian appearance and will burn steady or flicker. When the darkness comes forth, Todd's candle begins its nightly vigil, a vigil that will not end until I am dead. Although this is a small gesture, it has deep meaning for me. Sometimes I awaken in the middle of the night and walk into the atrium at the foot of the steps by the light of Todd's candle. I'll grab a glass of water and watch the candle flicker. Other times in the early evening, when only a reading lamp is lit in the living room, I will look into the atrium. Todd's light shines. I feel as if he is with me somehow, in the light of this little candle. I think about him, his life, his joys, his sorrows, his immense capacity to love and to laugh. I feel a deep closeness to my son that cannot be explained to anyone but those who have lost a child. I understand that there is much peace and solace in keeping my child in my heart and life and in establishing my own private rituals of remembrance.

Leaving a candle in the window has been an American tradition since the Colonial Era. The candle symbolizes the warmth and security of the family home and its message is loyalty to a family member who is not present. So, it is fitting that Todd's candle shines each night, reminding all that he is absent from our home, but not our hearts.

Each of us has a ritual of remembrance of our child. Some of us have consciously established this. Others have unconsciously done so. But there is a ritual that brings our child close to us, only to us. Our rituals are a very personal choice. I chose not to share my ritual for 2 1/2 years. Then one day a child who lives across the street asked me about the candle.

I told her that it is my son's candle. She asked if he was in Iraq. "No," I said, he's in heaven."

A momentary look of fright passed over her face, and then she smiled. "I thought you had kids. You act like a mom."

Her innocent comment about me "acting like a mom" once again reinforced the fact that we will always be parents. Those of us who have children who have died will always be parents to those children. That role has shaped who we are, and intensified it more with the death of our precious child.

This is one element of losing a child that escapes the general population. If you have not lost a child, you don't understand, you can't understand the feelings and emotions that run so deeply in our psyches and our souls.

Our Compassionate Friends understand those emotions and our need to speak of our children, to deal with our overwhelming loss. Whether for a season or the rest of our lives, we have been good friends for each other. When I see Todd's candle, I think of my child, other parents, their children, their loss, my loss, the totality of the sorrow that enters our meeting room every month, and yet, I also think of the joy. There is a peaceful joy, a sense of serenity in knowing you are not alone and isolated in your unique grief. Others are walking with you on the road of life after the death of their children.

So now, when I gaze at Todd's candle, I remember his life, the security he felt within these walls, the growing up years, the love, loyalty and emotional stability he experienced as a child which enabled him to become a man of courage, self confidence and gentleness in the face of life's worst and best. I think of the other children and the parents left behind....the sons and daughters of my Compassionate Friends. These children are missed, they are loved and they, too, are kept forever in a parent's heart. Their parents share a common bond with me that will follow each of us to our last day. We have lost our precious, beautiful children. We know what pure and overwhelming grief really is. We walk this road together as Compassionate Friends. And we remember, each of us in our own way. Todd's candle is one way to tell him that I love him as only a mother can love, unconditionally and forever. And I will always remember. I will always be Todd's mom. I have found that being a parent is a lifetime journey, even when our children are not with us on life's road. As parents, we define ourselves as interwoven with the fabric of our children's lives. We always remember. There is comfort in that.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX*

*In memory of my son, Todd Mennen*



## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



### *The Silent Accident*

It was terribly cold, even for a January morning in northern New Jersey. Two feet of snow had fallen during the night, leaving the little hamlet where the child and her family lived isolated from the rest of the world.

Area schools were closed. Workers were requested to remain at home unless their jobs were essential to public welfare. Everywhere families were stranded. Since they had just moved into their new home, the child's family was totally unprepared. With practically no food in the house, the decision was made for the child's father and two older sisters to follow the snowplow to the nearest grocery. The child, only five years old, would stay with her mother. She was usually obedient and no one expected her to disobey. But she did.

Slipping on her boots, without bothering with socks, and her coat, the child sneaked out to where her family had parked waiting for the snowplow to complete its task on the next road.

Seeing the child as she crossed the street, the family rolled down the windows and shouted, "Go back, go back!" Only after their screams to go back, only when the child obediently turned to cross the street, only then, when it was too late did they notice another car gliding past them.

Her curly blond hair without a cap, her unbuttoned jacket clasped around her small body, her bare, cold feet covered only by rubber boots, all disappeared from view as the big car pressed forward past the now hushed family car. Twenty feet later the car slid to a halt. The child was gone. Not a sound could be heard.

It was terribly cold and now terribly quiet. The stillness of the moment was broken only by the echoing screams of the child's family. Then quietly, each filled with his own dread, the father, the sisters and the driver left their cars, moving cautiously over the slippery ice to the front of the offending car. Stiffly they inched their way forward, experiencing such fear that no one could speak. Only one thought was in their minds. "What would they find?"

Tiny red rubber boots lay scattered in opposite directions on the frozen earth; small hands clutched the bumper; large blue eyes were open wide with fright—still no one spoke. After a long moment the tiny child's voice broke the chilling silence with words of wisdom born of five years experience. "I think I did something wrong."

This declaration was followed by muffled cries and tears wiped on cold jacket sleeves, solemn promises made in the hearts of two older sisters, relief that defies description for both the father and the driver.

The child was checked for injuries and then checked again. She was bundled into fresh warm clothes and cuddled in front of the fireplace in her cozy home.

Loved more that day than in the weeks before. She had sustained no bruises, no scratches, no breaks. The family and the driver would never forget that terrifying, silent accident. The child would never remember.

There came a time when she would die, this precious child of mine, twelve years later, with her father in a small plane crash. I don't know why they died so young and so healthy, anymore than I know why she was spared so many years before.

But I do know that I would endure all the pain again just to have her grace my life. Even now memories of this wondrous child make my heart sing.

### *Sue Holtkamp*

*Sue Holtkamp is an author, having written several books including Grieving with Hope and Catherine: in search of something more. She earned her Ph.D. in 1991 with a focus on traumatic loss and recovery. Founder and director of Something More Bereavement Programs, Sue has served as a consultant to organ and tissue procurement organizations, hospices, funeral homes, and other organizations. She has been a keynote speaker at a past national conference.*

### **A MESSAGE FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES**

I was recently asked to give a brief meditation at a memorial service.

Attending this ceremony were more than one hundred individuals who had suffered the death of a loved one. Some of the attendees, I learned, had experienced the death of a daughter or son.

During my 10-minute talk, I encouraged those assembled to freely express their grief. I also advised the group to remember their deceased loved ones in ways which bring them comfort, joy, and peace. Grief is healthy and necessary I said, it is normal to experience various aspects of this natural process over the course of a lifetime.

"From the very day my son died and on numerous occasions since - I've been told by others that grieving is morbid and wrong," declared a man named Michael. Three years ago his 12-year-old son, Daniel, accidentally fell from a ladder while helping his father paint their home. The boy sustained massive head injuries and died a few hours later in a nearby hospital.

Already racked with guilt for not "saving" his son from this fatal tragedy (even though he was on the other side of the house at the time), Michael said the advice some people offered him made matters worse.

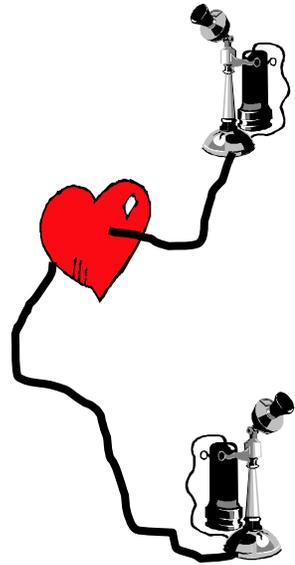
"My sister, Ellen, is a real sweetheart," Michael acknowledged sincerely. "She's 15 months older than I and we've always been very close. Danny just loved her, she was a wonderful auntie. Maybe that's why she said all the things she did in an attempt to ease my pain."



### **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.

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Michael said as soon as his sister arrived at the emergency department of the hospital where Danny would eventually die, she began to provide what he termed "empty rumbblings."

"I was standing all alone in a distant corner of this busy trauma room," Michael recalled. "I watched all these strangers desperately trying to save my son's life. It was an awful nightmare like viewing in slow motion the most frightening horror movie one could ever imagine."

Ellen arrived at the hospital shortly thereafter. Initially, Michael said, her actions were very comforting. "My sister gave me her usual warm embrace, told me she would remain by my side, and said her prayers would be nonstop," Michael remembered. "Given the grave circumstances, these responses were especially helpful. But, as Ellen continued to speak, her words became more cold and hurtful."

According to Michael, his sister began suggesting that Danny's death was condoned by God. "Ellen advised me to immediately 'let go' of my son. 'Don't be selfish,' she instructed. "Danny's death is God's will. It's simply his time to go"

Michael said Ellen also implied that God had "spared" him from witnessing his son's death. "My sister told me "God won't give you any more than you can handle. God knew you wouldn't be able to bear watching Danny fall from that ladder, so God placed you on the other side of the house. Therefore, you need to praise God for sparing you this terrible sight."

Even though he realizes the genuine effort Ellen put forth in her attempt to comfort him, Michael said his sister's words have added to the devastation he feels.

Michael said the responses he received from his spiritual leader following Danny's death were equally troubling. "Reverend Turner is a very kind and gentle soul," the grieving father admitted. "When I was a teenager, he helped to keep me on the right path. But, ever since my son died, the pastor's support has been lacking."

Three weeks after Danny's funeral, Michael said his pastor invited him out to breakfast. "I assumed Reverend Turner had suggested this meeting in order for him to see how I was coping, spiritually and emotionally, with my son's death," Michael said. "I really looked forward to being with my pastor. He had always been a very compassionate counselor. I felt depressed and grief stricken, and desperately needed the support of this fine man of God."

But, what Michael received instead of sensitive support was more "empty rumbblings."

"Reverend Turner said, 'Some people are unable to even conceive children. Others have to live with a constant reminder that their daughters and sons are dying before their eyes from AIDS, cancer, poverty and other ills.'"

According to Michael, his pastor suggested he did not have a good reason to grieve. "Since Danny didn't have AIDS, cancer, or some other terrible illness, I should be thankful."



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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Michael said. "Reverend Turner told me "You should thank God daily for all the years of happiness and health God allowed you to have with Danny. And, be thankful also that when it was your son's time to die, God took him quickly".

Michael told me he felt "demeaned" by his pastor's advice.

Because of the conversation I recently had with Michael, and due to the number of stories other fathers and mothers have shared with me the past 20 years, I want to offer three recommendations to all parents who have experienced the death of a daughter or son.

*Let no one tell you grief is morbid, selfish, wrong, or a sign of mental illness.* Grief is a healthy and natural response to death and other losses. It is a necessary process. (If however, you yourself find that you're having a difficult time coping with day to day life resulting from any loss, seek the help of a counselor trained specifically to deal with grief issues.)

*Let no one tell you it's wrong to feel angry at God.* Anger is a normal feeling experienced by parents who suffer the death of a child. Although not all bereaved fathers and mothers feel anger toward God, many parents do, and these feelings need not to be stifled. Remember, God can certainly handle the anger of humans!

*Let no one put a time limit on your grief process.* Following the death of a child, it is normal (and healthy) for parents to experience various aspects of grief for the rest of their lives. Therefore, remember your sons and daughters in all the ways that bring you comfort, joy, and peace!

### **The Rev. Al Miles**

*The Rev. Al Miles coordinates the hospital ministry department at The Queen's Medical Center for Pacific Health Ministry.*



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)**



### **Healing and Hope**

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, which control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, "It's different with me! You don't understand!" This is the "normal" response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face.

Fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way who have learned that, out of this morass of loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope. Though small and fleeting at first, this hope becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child's death. And this healing will occur even though there is still no understanding of "Why?"

It is by working through our guilt (both real and imagined), facing our anger including anger at God and even at the dead child, crying our way through our despair (with carefully chosen professional help if necessary), that the loneliness will lessen, and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought gone forever. Each one must use one's spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process.

Full recovery, in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear never to return, return not to occur, although the term "recovery" is used. I prefer the term "healing," a process whereby our lives come to a new "normal." Healing implies (a) our accepting the unacceptable (the death of our child), and (b) our slowly learning to resume productive relationships with others. This is done all while we continue to love and miss the dead child.

Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may slow the process by failing to do our grief work, but we cannot stop it!! One of the greatest hindrances to our healing is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time! Perhaps the greatest obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive—ourselves, the dead child, others involved with the child's death, even God if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others.

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# 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.**

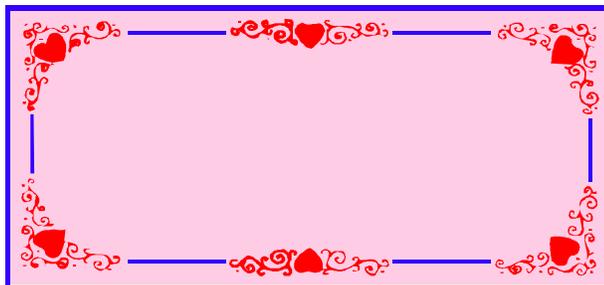
Fold & Tape \_\_\_\_\_

The Compassionate Friends  
Metrowest Chapter  
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Fold & Tape \_\_\_\_\_



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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.”*