



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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, 2022

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YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends Credo

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:00 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.
January 18th. & February 15th.

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.

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 weekend or earlier if you plan to attend.**
Directions...On Route 16, going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at the Town Hall on the right 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.
January 25th. & February 22nd.

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. ©2020

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	508/366-2085
Mitchell Greenblatt	857/225-7135
Wendy Bruno	508/429-7998
Carol Cotter	774/219-7774

The chapter address is:

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

Regional Coordinator
Dennis Gravelle
638 Pleasant St.
Leominster, MA 01453-6222
Phone (978) 537-2736
dennisgravelle78@gmail.com

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

The Compassionate Friends, National Office
48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
Wixom MI 48393-7736
Toll-Free (877) 969-0010

Web Page:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

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.

Mr. Michael Durkin in loving memory of his daughters **Casey Reuter Durkin and Molly O. Durkin** on Casey's Anniversary December 22nd and Molly's Birthday November 19th. Forever loved and never forgotten.

Ms. Maria Peniche in loving memory of her son **Manuel (Manny) Peniche** on his Anniversary November 27th. And his Birthday January 8th.

Ms. Betty Myers in loving memory of her son **William Bruce-Tagoe**. "Every day is One day closer to you".

Ms. Maureen McTiernan in loving memory of her daughter **Shannon A. McTiernan** on her birthday October 13th.

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

Mr. & Mrs. Burton in loving memory of their son **Alan R. Stuchins** on his Anniversary. "Always loved, forever missed."

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph K in loving memory of their son **Kevin K** on his Birthday, February 13th. and his Anniversary February 19th. "Every day is One day closer to you".

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Baisley in loving memory of their daughter **Stacey Ann Mahoney** on her Birthday February 20th. "Happiest day of our lives having you, Love, Dad & Mom".





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, 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

KYLE E. KOMARNICKI
JOSEPH J. ROY
CHRISTOPHER D. DiLORENZO
LILLIAN "LILLY" M. PROUTY
MIRANDA E. DeGUGLIELMO
MICHAEL P. GEEHAN

February

PATRICK L. CUFF
DANIEL J. SCOTT Jr.
TROY F. MARDEN
KEVIN K.
KAITLYN KENNEDY
BRIAN F. ALLARD

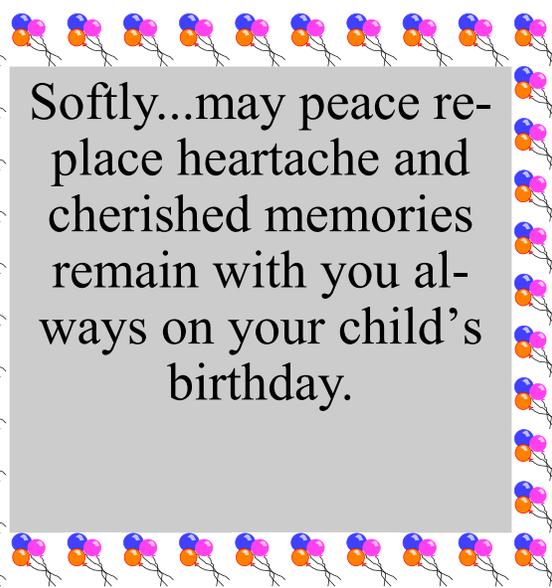
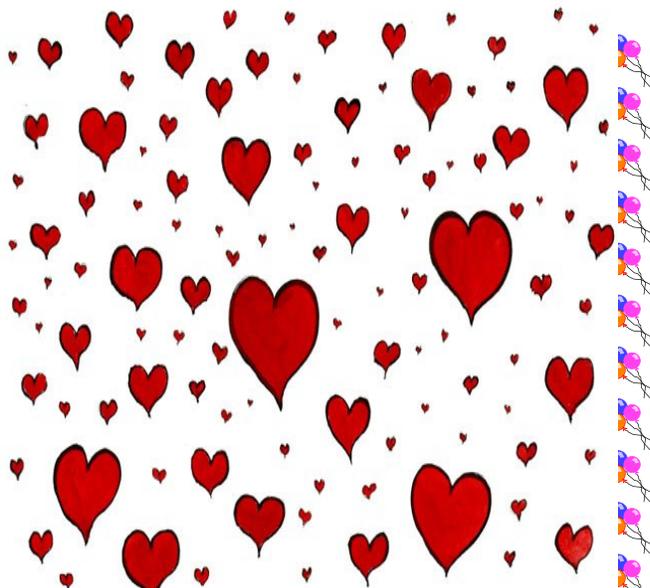
Birthdays

January

KELSEY MULKERRINS
MANUEL (MANNY) PENICHE
LILLIAN "LILLY" M. PROUTY
NATALIA FELINA KI

February

LEA M. SIEBERT
JOSEPH J. ROY
CYNTHIA ZOTTOLI
ETHAN WAYNE MILLER
KEVIN K.
SEAN M. THERRIEN
JULIE A. SLOCUM
STACEY ANN MAHONEY
CHRISTOPHER D. DiLORENZO
KARL DAYTON JANISCH



Softly...may peace replace heartache and cherished memories remain with you always on your child's birthday.



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.

A YEAR OF GRIEF

It has been a year
Since you went away
Time goes by so slowly.
I never knew so much pain,
Along with fear and emptiness
Could be felt by anyone.
Your death has sent me into a
Darkness and void,
Words can't describe.
I never knew I could cry
'Til there were no more tears.
But these came unannounced
The price of loving a brother,
As special as you,
Will take me a lifetime to pay.
My pain hasn't been for me only,
For friends don't want to see
The cost of loving and losing.
They say get on with your life-
But they don't understand,
How big a part of my life you were
Along with the special memories.
And live day by day
These memories from happier days,
Are all I have of you now.
So I will place them first in my Heart.
If I was given a choice,
Knowing the pain and devastation
That I feel today.

I would still want you
To be my big brother to love.
For memories can't be taken away.

Greta Sharpe (Sibling)
TCF, Andalusia, AL

A Scar That Just Won't Heal

The room you once lived in...
Doesn't look the same.
The people who used to call you,
Never mention your name.
The car you used to drive,
They may not be made anymore;
All the things you once treasured,
Are boxed behind closet doors.

The clothes you set the trends by,
Are surely out of date.
The people you owed money to
Have wiped away the slate.
Things have changed and
Changed again since you went away.
But some things have
Remained the same, each and
Every day.

Like this aching in my heart,
A scar that just won't heal.
Or the way a special song
Can change the way I feel.
Brother, you must know that
The music bonds us and will
Always keep us close.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 5)

TO those of you unable to cry, we wish you healing tears.

TO those of you who are tired, exhausted from grieving, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

TO those who return to homes and communities where you find no support or understanding, we ask you to take with you the very special love that fills this room, and to draw on it when you need it most in the days ahead.

TO all others with special needs that we have not mentioned, we wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.

**Joe Rousseau,
BP / USA, Saginaw, MI**

But since I can't be with you now, I will try to be content just to dream about the time that we'll be together again.

***In loving memory of Michael Green,
by his mother, Regina Connolly,
TCF, Phoenix, AZ***

Another Year

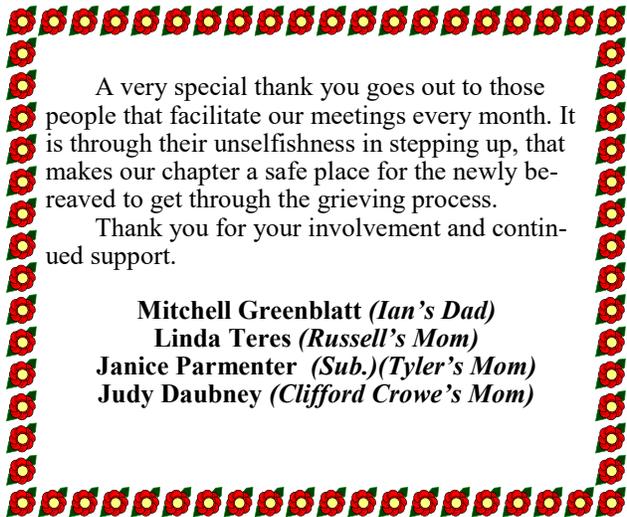
This is another year just beginning, afresh with new days, new opportunities, new challenges.

It occurs to me, however, that it is a very difficult task to keep from concentrating on past years and the sadness we endure just because it is a new year and the calendar has flipped the page.

Moving on to a brighter tomorrow and letting go of the pain of yesterday is a gradual process. We cross that threshold one step at a time, a small step, at first, faltering and stumbling - but somehow getting there. With patience, effort and persistence, once again we will be able to celebrate life as the year stretches on before us, putting behind us our sadness, our guilt, our failures and our pain.

We will be able to smile again. We will be able to remember our precious children in life rather than death. We will recognize in our days many little blessings and will be able to share our joys with others.

***Alice Weening
TCF, Cincinnati, OH***



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*)
Janice Parmenter (*Sub.*)(*Tyler's Mom*)
Judy Daubney (*Clifford Crowe's Mom*)**

February

To Michael.. I Miss You So

Though you are not here,
Wherever I go, or,
Whatever I do,
I see your face in my mind.
I miss you so.
I miss telling you everything,
I miss showing you things,
I miss your eyes giving me confidence.
I miss your smile and your hugs.
I miss everything we shared.
I don't like missing you.
It is a cold and lonely feeling.
I wish I could be with you right now,
Where the warmth of our love
would melt the winter's snow.

When February comes, there is finally an end in sight to the long winter.

Sometimes melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even the exquisite blossom itself, a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape of graying snow and biting wind and ominous sky, a small promise of new life to come.

My heart, grieving for my son who died, was like that image of winter. For somehow, even during the darkest, coldest moments, an unexpected sign of hope and days and months dragged on. My heart finally learned once again to be open to the promise of new life. Painful memories melt into loving ones. Life that seemed forever dormant once again sprang forth from my heart.

In living hopefully and lovingly, the season of the heart can change. The loving memories of your child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

***Mary Ann Kramer
TCF, Arlington Heights, IL***



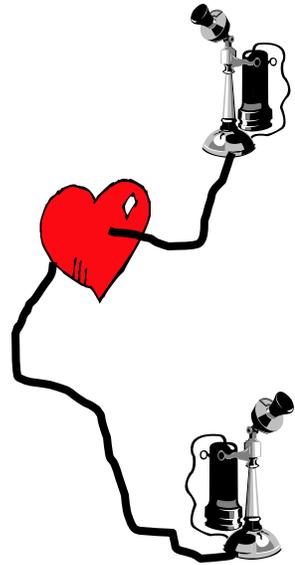
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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)366-2085
- Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)653-0541
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan**, age 17, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106
- Sarah Commerford....**Timothy**, age 21, Homicide.....(508)429-9230



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.

Dear Child of Mine

Dear Child of mine, who died before your time,
I am grateful for your life.
Though death brought the end of hopes and dreams,
Still I am grateful for your life.
Through you I have known joy and sorrow,
Laughter and tears.

Through you my life has been enriched,
My compassion heightened and I am more
keenly aware of the grief of others.
I am grateful for your life.

Now I draw upon my memories of you,
Some happy, some sad.
They keep you close in many ways.
They are priceless, precious memories that
help me bear the pain.

Through them I will learn to live again.
I am grateful for your life.
I have been blessed with your life and left
with your love.

I will share that love and strive to live to be
a blessing to others.

Dear Child of mine, though you died before
your time, you are never far away from me.
I have loved you in my heart of hearts and
there I will love you through eternity.
I am grateful for your life... Dear Child of mine.

Betty Stevens
TCF, Baltimore, MD

THE WOUNDED HEART

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now, right now it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending.

Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss, to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger, and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life.

A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed.

The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.



Nancy Green
TCF, Livonia, MI



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



A GIFT FOR SURVIVING CHILDREN

The most important gift you can give your children at this time is the feeling that life continues despite pain. Death, the loss of innocence, can either lead you to the edge of the abyss and threaten your existence with meaninglessness and futility, or you will start to build the bridge that spans the chasm with things of life that still count... memory, friendship, and love.

Earl Grollman

“...Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into today. **Love never goes away.**”

***Darcie Sims
TCF, Albuquerque, NM***

Letting Go of the Pain

A few weeks or a few months, after your child has died, you'll probably find yourself in a situation where you find yourself laughing or having a good time, then you say STOP laughing or having a good time and think to yourself, “How can I dare laugh or have any fun, now my child has died and I hurt so bad?” We've all had this feeling in the early stages of our grief.

I urge you newly bereaved, PLEASE don't feel guilty about enjoying the happiness that comes from "LIFE". When you find yourself laughing and enjoying something in life, it doesn't mean that you have forgotten your dead child...it just means that you are "letting go" of some of the pain. All of our lives there will be tears and all of our lives there should be laughter.

When people used to say to me, “You must put it behind you and let go of your child and start living again,” I wondered what they meant by “IT”. I would get very angry. How dare those people think that I could ever “let go” of my child, or even want to...but after a while I realized that I don't have to “let go” of my child in order to live again. I just have to “let go of the pain” that his death caused. His LIFE will always be part of me, and so will his death; I'll never forget him. But I don't have to keep the grief and pain with me always...So if you see me cry...I'm “letting go” of some pain. And when you see me laughing or having a good time, I'm living life again.

***Verna Smith
TCF, Fort Worth, TX***

WHEN SOMEONE TAKES HIS OWN LIFE

In many ways, this seems the most tragic form of death. Certainly it can entail more shock and grief for those who are left behind than any other. And often the stigma of suicide is what rests most heavily on those left behind.

Suicide is often judged to be essentially a selfish act. Perhaps it is. But the Bible warns us not to judge, if we ourselves hope to escape judgment. And I believe this is one area where that Biblical command especially should be heeded. For how do we know how many valiant battles such a person may have fought and won before he loses that one particular battle? And is it fair that all the good acts and impulses of such a person should be forgotten or blotted out by his final tragic act?

I think our reaction should be one of love and pity, not of condemnation. Perhaps the person was not thinking clearly in his final moments; perhaps he was so driven by emotional whirlwinds that he was incapable of thinking at all. This is terribly sad. But surely it is understandable. All of us have moments when we lose control of ourselves, flashes of temper, of irritation, of selfishness that we later regret. Each one of us, probably, has a final breaking point or would have if our faith did not sustain us. Life puts far more pressure on some of us than it does on others. Some people have more stamina than others. When I see in the paper, as I do all too often, that dark despair has rolled over some lonely soul, so much so that for him life seemed unendurable, my reaction is not one of condemnation. It is rather “There but for the grace of God...”

And my heart goes out to those who are left behind, because I know that they suffer terribly. Children in particular are left under a cloud of differentness all the more terrifying because it can never be fully explained or lifted. The immediate family of the victim is left wide open to tidal waves of guilt: “What did I fail to do that I should have done? What did I do that was wrong?” To such grieving persons I can only say, “Lift up your heads and your hearts. Surely you did your best. And surely the loved one who is gone did his best, for as long as he could. Remember, that his battles and torments are over. Do not judge him, and do not presume to fathom the mind of God where one of his children is concerned.”

A few years ago, when a young man died by his own hand, a service for him was conducted by his pastor, the Reverend Weston Stevens. What he said that day expresses, far more eloquently than I can, the message that I'm trying to convey. Here are some of his words.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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“Our friend died on his own battlefield. He was killed in action fighting a civil war. He fought against adversaries that were as real to him as his casket is real to us. They were powerful adversaries. They took toll of his energies and endurance. They exhausted the last vestiges of his courage and his strength. At last these adversaries overwhelmed him. And it appeared that he had lost the war. But did he? I see a host of victories that he has won!

For one thing - he has won our admiration - because even if he lost the war, we give him credit for his bravery on the battlefield. And we give him credit for the courage and pride and hope that he used as his weapons as long as he could. We shall remember not his death, but his daily victories gained through his kindness and thoughtfulness, through his love for family and friends, for animals and books and music, for all things beautiful, lovely and honorable. We shall remember not his last day of defeat, but we shall remember the many days that he was victorious over overwhelming odds. We shall remember not the years we thought he had left, but the intensity with which he lived the years that he had.

Only God knows what this child of His suffered in the silent skirmishes that took place in his soul. But our consolation is that God does know, and understands.

I have included a couple of poems I have written over the past few months or so. Poems and words that come to my head, strangely enough, while I am at work gazing out of the window, about my son. My greatly missed, immensely loved eldest son, Kai.

I have lived in two different worlds, two dimensions - one before the date of October 6th, when he died and one after that date. Eighteen months and in this world the pain is still immense, the anger still bubbling and simmering under the surface, covered over with anti-depressants, but not dissipated.

Many of the articles and poems I read are sad - but also full of hope and understanding, and even show some form of acceptance. They are wonderful. But perhaps there are parents like me, who have words they wish to express that describe the pain, the anger, the despair and the confusion. And deep pervading sorrow, so much sorrow. I'm sorry if my words don't finish with hope and enlightenment, sometimes I cannot feel hope, sometimes I wish I could just wallow in my sorrow.

I have two beautiful children, Bronwyn, sixteen years and Jack three years. Of course my life is made up of hope, laughter even, planning for the future, their future. But that is not what these poems are about, they are about being so sad, so lonely in my grief, and damned angry. Angry and confused about where this terrible event fits into our lives, and where my life fits into God's world. “Our friend died on his own battlefield. He was killed in action fighting a civil war.

He fought against adversaries that were as real to him as his casket is real to us. They were powerful adversaries. They took toll of his energies and endurance. They exhausted the last vestiges of his courage and his strength. At last these adversaries overwhelmed him. And it appeared that he had lost the war. But did he? I see a host of victories that he has won!

**Jennifer Jones,
mother of Kai Gregory Jones
Reprinted from Western Australia's TCF
Chapter Newsletter**

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

1. Let's not try to imagine the future. Just take one day at a time
2. Allow yourself time to cry, both alone, and with your loved ones.
3. Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
4. Try to be realistic about your expectations—of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. Each of us is an entity, therefore different. So how can there be perfect understanding?
5. When a good day comes, relish it. Don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. It will come again and multiply.
6. Take care of your health. Even though the mind will not care, a sick body will only compound troubles. Drink lots of water and take stress-type multi-vitamins. Rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body heal, as well as your mind.
7. Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you. As you find you are caring about the pain of others, you are starting to come out of your shell—a very healthy sign.

I know following these won't be easy but what has been? It's worth a try, don't you think? Nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

**Mary Ehmann
TCF Valley Forge, PA**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

I Resolve..

That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a timetable on my grief.

That I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.

That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now".



That I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.

That I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how it feels.

That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.

That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

That I will communicate with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that I won't feel compelled to explain this communion to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.

That I will try to eat, sleep, and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.

To know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.

To know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.

To let myself heal and not to feel guilty about feeling better.

To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous, that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods, too, will pass.

To try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.

That I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.

That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

*Nancy A Mower
TCF, Honolulu, HI*

What Kind Of "New Year" Will It Be?

Well, since you are reading this, you must have survived those dreaded holidays. Some of you may be holding onto your sanity by the skin of your teeth, but you're here. For now, that's enough. If this is your first or second new year without your child, consider that an emotional victory. I'm sure you wondered several times how you could possibly survive all that family warmth and frivolity without your child. Well, you did.

Now it is a brand new year. It's up to you what you make of it. Do you want to spend the year bitter, angry, withdrawn, and tormented? Or do you want to begin to enjoy life again and start healing? Believe it or not, it is up to you.

I'm going to assume that you want to begin healing. There are a few things that you must know. It absolutely is NOT disloyal to your child's memory to smile again or enjoy yourself. Would your child wish everlasting pain on you? Would he/she want you to cry every day for the rest of your life?

One of the key elements to softening the pain is to try to think about all the good things that you have instead of what you've lost. I know that seems impossible, but force yourself to try. If you've got family, friends, health, whatever, count your blessings.



Another important element to healing is to be grateful that you had your child at all. I know this seems ludicrous when you feel you've been robbed because you "should" have been able to watch your child grow old. The fact is that you aren't going to do that. Whatever memories you have of your child, or whatever joy you get from having loved him/her, no matter how briefly you had them, is worth hanging on to.

You also need to trust. Look around your next TCF meeting. Do you see the veterans laughing and sharing joyful stories with each other? Do you hear about new babies, weddings, hope, and love? Trust that these parents love their children as much as you love yours.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 10)

Trust that life can go on again. Even though it sounds impossible, trust us when we say you will find happiness again. No one will try to tell you that you eventually heal to the point where it doesn't hurt at all. No one will tell you that you'll be your old self soon. We realize you have been changed forever by the death of your child. For now, you'll just have to take our word that it does get better and the pain does dull itself a little with time.

It's a brand new year, why not try to make it one of healing and health, occasional smiles, reaching out to others, and remembering the good times? Maybe you can even start looking forward to the future.

As radical as all these concepts may seem to you now, guess what? When you do finally feel that you've made some progress, these will be what you did to get there. Take it easy on yourself. We're with you.

Kathy Hahn
TCF, Lower Bucks, PA

The Holidays Are Behind Us

It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of both, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there among all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also a thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out on a winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb—a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard, our throats tight from tears shed or unshed, our chests banded tightly by our mourning heart.

If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we too, in our searchings, find places of warmth and change and love and growth deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be armed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to tell about even that first dim shape of new hope or of new acceptance or of new understanding or of new love.

These are the new roots, born of our love of our child, that are forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deep way.

Marie Andrews
TCF, Southern Maryland Chapter, MD

HAPPY NEW YEAR

SURE, that's easy for you to say.

But how can I be happy when my children have gone away.

I look back upon what was And dream about what should have been.

Because I dread the new year, Can that really be a sin?

You loved your children dearly,
You held them in such pride.
Are all those feelings gone now,
Because your children died?
You see, my friend, by dying
Your children left you with a chore.
One that must be completed,
Though your heart and soul are sore.
You must reach out your arms in comfort,
Show folks they need not fear.
Teach them their children rest now,
In God's warm, loving care.

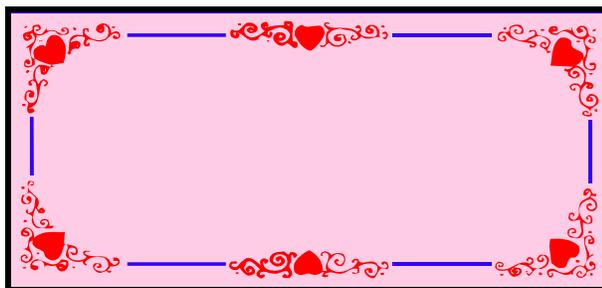
Once more I wish you HAPPY NEW YEAR
For now and years ahead.
You've learned to love and comfort,
And be a true Compassionate Friend.
And so your children's death now
Need never be in vain
They live on within you
And give again and again.



Dolores Fisher
TCF, Cape May, NJ



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



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Address Correction Requested

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.”*