



# 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.*

**March-April**



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**Vol. 19 Issue 2**

### 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:

***March 18th    April 15th***

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:

***March 25th    April 29th***

### 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. ©2014**

### *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

### 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)

**Chapter Web Page**  
**[www.tcfmetrowest.com](http://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. & Mrs. Raymond Bergeron in loving memory of their daughter **Dolores R. Bergeron**.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert King Sr. in loving memory of their daughter **Caren King-Firth**.

Mr. & Mrs. Charles M. Clark Sr. in loving memory of their daughter **Cynthia A. Clark-Renaud** on her birthday February 15th. And their son **Charles M. Clark Jr.** on his birthday March 30th.

Mrs. Tracy Dullea-Juliano in loving memory of her son **Christopher Marc Dullea** on his birthday February 21st.

Mr. Don DiLorenzo in loving memory of his son **Christopher DiLorenzo** on his birthday January 10th.

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Jackman in loving memory of their daughter **Alicia D. Jackman** on her anniversary March 8th. "Love you and miss you always, XOXO" and in loving memory of Mrs Pamela Jackman's brother **Douglas C. Curtiss**. "Love you and miss you always, XOXO."

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boudreau in loving memory of their son **Nicholas L. Boudreau** on his anniversary March 4th.

Mrs. Mariya Lomakina in loving memory of her son **Mikhail (Mike) Lomakina**.

Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Connolly in loving memory of their son **Ethan Patrick Connolly** on his birthday March 3rd.

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Kennedy in loving memory of their beautiful daughter **Kaitlyn Kennedy** on her Ten Year Angel Day February 22nd. "Love you and miss you always. Take care of our parents in Heaven love Mom and Dad."

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Eldredge in loving memory of their son **Kevin R. Eldredge** on his anniversary March 24th.

Mrs. Beverly A. Marks in loving memory of her son **Shawn P. Marks** on his anniversary February 15th. "Love and missed so much."

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Murphy in loving memory of their son **Michael Patrick Murphy**.

Mr. & Mrs. Rick Dugan in loving memory of their son **Larry Dugan** on his birthday April 6th.



# 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 March and April. 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*

#### *March*

- WILLIAM C. LEWIS
- NICHOLAS L. BOUDREAU
- ALICIA D. JACKMAN
- COLLIN T. MURPHY
- STACEY ANN MAHONEY
- HOLLY L. MACKENZIE
- KEVIN R. ELDREDGE
- PATRICK JORDAN FISCHETTI
- JEFFREY J. LEGGERI
- MICHAEL J. PAULHUS
- KRISTEN DONOVAN
- TYLER PARMENTER
- CHRISTOPHER SHEA

#### *April*

- JOHN GARVEY
- JOSEPH WEBSTER
- CHRISTOPHER J. MITRANO
- CHRISTIAN ALBEE
- MICHAEL BARRY
- BRIAN JOSEPH MacISAAC
- TRACY SMITH
- EMMA FRANCES DALTON
- KELSEY MULKERRINS
- MARC P. LEWIS
- KERI L. O'NEIL-DERBYSHIRE
- JUSTIN MAYER

### *Birthdays*

#### *March*

- ALAN R. STUCHINS
- IAN GREENBLATT
- ETHAN PATRICK CONNOLLY
- MICHAEL HEBDENI
- SHAYNE M. DESROCHES
- WILLIAM H. BARDOL JR.
- CHRISTOPHER JAKSTIS
- JEFFREY D. SAMBUCETI
- CHRISTOPHER J. MITRANO
- IAN MACINNES HODGMAN
- GARY S. POWELL
- RITA HUDSON-CARNEY
- RYAN J. McCUSKER

#### *April*

- LARRY DUGAN
- SEAN PATRICK COTTER
- LAURIE SLOPEK
- JESSE APPELL
- DOLORES ROSE BERGERON
- DANIEL J. SCOTT JR





## 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.

### 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.

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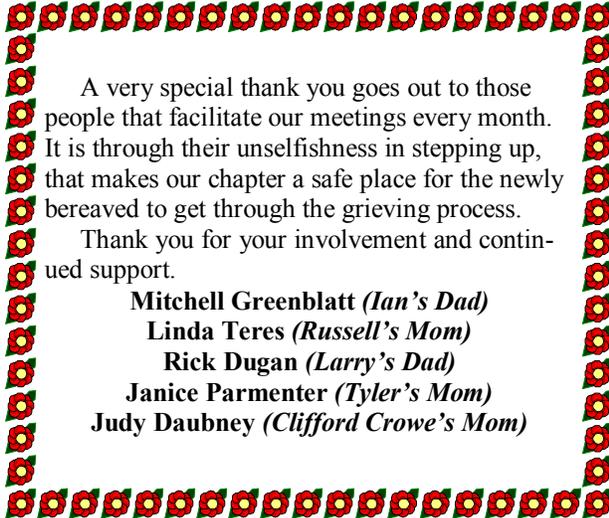
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I realize that people are unaware that they are discounting sibling grief. But then, that's why I'm writing this, so people will know.

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



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)**

## ***Butterfly Messages To Our Children***

As balloons fill the northern sky, floating up and away on the wings of wind and love, I am astonished by the sense of peace which sweeps over me. I have sent my child a message written on a butterfly shaped note attached to a balloon. In my mind's eye, I know that my child will read that message and understand that his mother's love for him is eternal and unconditional. The void left in his absence is often overwhelming, and the pain frequently escalates from a quiet sadness to a screaming ache which shatters me. My child knows the pain I have felt and will always feel without him in my life. I express it every year on a little butterfly note. He knows he is loved.



This butterfly message is an important ceremonial part of my life now. Instead of an e-mail or letter, I send my child a note once a year. This ceremony is moving, the bagpipes are haunting, the readings are reflective and touching. I stand with other parents and notice that they, too, are watching the balloons until they disappear into the heavens. I am imagining my son plucking his balloon from the heavens and reading my message. Other parents are imagining this, too. Our communication to our child will be understood.

As parents who have lost children to death, we face new ceremonies and new traditions. As the years roll by, many of us will cling to those ceremonies and traditions. We are forced to replace the traditions of the past, before our child died, with new, fitting tributes that acknowledge our child's life and the meaning of that life to us.

The Compassionate Friends provides us this opportunity to share our feelings and our need to honor our child in the company of others who understand us and encourage us to speak openly about our child and our sorrow. This tribute to our child has deep meaning and touches our souls with its simplicity and grace.



Our ceremony is brief by most standards, but meaningful beyond words. No speaker could reach us as this ceremony does. For a small window in time, we are reaching out to our children, honoring them, remembering them openly and communicating with them. Tears are shed. Hugs are shared. Memories form a kaleidoscope in each parent's mind as we watch our balloon join with the others on its journey to our children.

This tribute and message to our children is one of two ceremonial gatherings that we, as Compassionate Friends, share each year. Remember. Always we remember our children. Others may wish to forget, put the unpleasantness behind them, but we, the parents of children whose lives were too short, will never forget. We have established our traditions and we look to each other for hope and support as we walk this lonely road.

And so, as our balloons completely disappear into the heavens, we are immersed in peace and serenity, and we share a light meal and memories of our children with our Compassionate Friends.

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

## ***A Familiar Face***

My family was on vacation in 1985 traveling from Houston to the Black Hills of South Dakota. We were traveling through Kansas and it was getting dark and late. I got out of our car to check us into a motel. The woman waiting on me was obviously very tired. When she saw me, she opened her eyes widely and just looked at me for a while. The expression on her face was as if she saw someone who looked very familiar and very close to her. I knew instinctively that I reminded her of someone special.

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As I started to fill out the forms, she began to cry. She was in too much pain to explain herself to me. I reached over to hold her hand. The next morning when I came to check out, she was making small talk but her eyes were remembering a face that looked like mine. As I told her good bye, she started to cry again.

Years later my thirteen-year-old son, Ryan, died. Six months after his death, I was shopping and saw a young boy who looked a lot like Ryan. I followed him from aisle to aisle. I told this boy's mom that my son had just died and her son looked so much like mine. I pulled out pictures of Ryan and she agreed the boys did look a lot alike. Their clothes were even similar. The mom told her son to give me a hug: "a real one with both arms." While I was hugging this young man, I asked God to please let Ryan's spirit move through his body so I could touch Ryan again. The hug felt like Ryan. I closed my eyes and pretended it was Ryan. That hug felt like salve on my broken heart.

I wonder if God ever lets our children's spirits come into some other person for just a few seconds so we can feel some sort of relief? When that woman in Kansas was looking at me like I was someone else, I did - for a few brief seconds feel like another person. I hope the tearful woman felt it, too.

*Niecy Moss  
TCF, Houston-West, TX  
In Memory of my son, Ryan*

## *My Dog Died*

*"I know how you feel, my dog died."* These words can bring murderous rage to the hearts of bereaved parents when spoken by well-meaning, but errant friends. I never actually had this experience, but several of my friends did and the result was always the same, a compelling desire to strangle the person with one's bare hands.

On the morning of December 21, my husband and I said a tearful final goodbye to Gretchen, our beautiful Doberman, who had been a constant companion, loving friend, protector, and source of great joy for nearly eight years. She was, in a word, magnificent.

The pain and feelings of sadness are tremendous. As I look around at the empty bed, the dish in the kitchen, the favorite toy, I am overwhelmed with an intense sense of loss and sorrow. Memories of happy times, daily rituals and the unconditional love that only a pet can give assail from all directions. Tears flow uncontrollably. I really hurt.

No, it can't compare with the loss of my son. This pain will pass before long; we will get another dog (although there can never be another Gretchen); in years to come we will remember her with love and wonderful memories; she will never be forgotten.

But it is not the same. I know this because I have lost a child. Only one who has walked this road can know that no other loss, no matter how profound, can compare with the death of a child. If I had not had this experience, I, too, might be tempted to say "I know how you feel, my dog died."

We must endeavor to understand that these words are spoken from the heart, from someone whose pain is intense and who knows no better point of reference. And we must pray that those who speak those words will never know...

My pain is assuaged somewhat by my firm belief that Gretchen is now in the loving care of my beloved Robert, who will enjoy and love her as we did. She is in good hands. I know they are having a wonderful time.

*Carole Ragland  
TCF, West Houston Chapter, TX  
In Memory of my son, Robert*

## *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."

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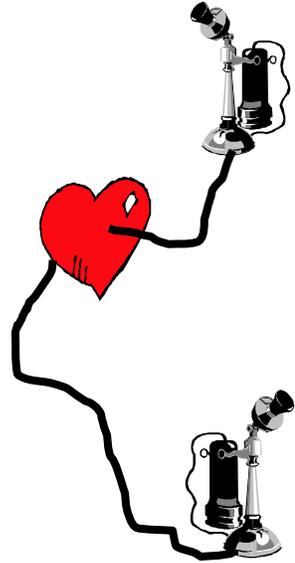
# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## 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.

## Support Resources

### TCF Online Chat Groups:

[WWW.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online\\_Support.aspx](http://WWW.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_Support.aspx)

- For questions, please contact Diana Jorden, 925-432-3854, who moderates the general grief and suicide loss rooms on Friday nights and Sunday. TCF online offers several specialized chat rooms, all moderated by moms who have been in chat for at least 2 years or more. We offer a sibling-only chat, loss under 1 year, loss over 2 years, loss of only child, suicide survivor, infant/pregnancy loss, and every night (and Monday mornings) there is a general loss room open to parents, step and grand, and siblings.
- You can sign up for the online TCF National newsletter at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)
- You can reach our TCF National Facebook page through the link on the same home page of our national website. You will be asked to join Facebook if you are not already a member, and we hope you'll find our Facebook page as interesting as do the more than 11,000 fans who have already found us!

### Other Grief Support Websites

- [agast.org](http://agast.org) - for grandparents
- [alivealone.org](http://alivealone.org)
- [aliveinmemory.org](http://aliveinmemory.org)
- [angelmoms.com](http://angelmoms.com)
- [babysteps.com](http://babysteps.com)
- [bereavedparents.org](http://bereavedparents.org)
- [beyondindigo.com](http://beyondindigo.com)
- [childloss.com](http://childloss.com)
- [goodgriefresources.com](http://goodgriefresources.com)
- [griefwatch.com](http://griefwatch.com)
- [GriefNet.org](http://GriefNet.org)
- [healingafterloss.org](http://healingafterloss.org)
- [opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)
- [pomc.com](http://pomc.com) - families of murder victims
- [save.org](http://save.org)
- [survivorsofsuicide.com](http://survivorsofsuicide.com)
- [Taps.org](http://Taps.org) - military death
- [webhealing.com](http://webhealing.com)



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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.*

## Editor's Note

Courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, you, your family, and your friends can now read the *We Need Not Walk Alone* magazine online without charge. To sign up for free access to this and future issues online, go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on "National Magazine." Sign-Up at the top of the page.



## Other Area TCF Chapters

- MA/CT Border Towns Chapter ( Dudley, Webster areas)  
Chapter Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu  
(508) 248-7144.....ampm1259@charter.net
- South Shore Chapter (Hingham, Weymouth areas)  
Martha Berman  
(781) 337-8649.....mmartha1@comcast.net
- Worcester Chapter  
Chapter Co-Leaders: Lisa Holbrook  
(774) 482-6066.....sixholes@charter.net  
Mary Vautier....  
(508) 393-7348.....mjvautier@msn.com
- Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)  
Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole  
(781) 444-1091.....cg603@aol.com



## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



### *Parenting Through a Glass Partition: After the Death of a Child*

Raising children and being bereaved makes me feel like I did when I was six years old. My red tights bagged around my ankles, I often had doggy poop on the bottom of my scuffed patent-leather shoes, and I was constantly running to catch the bus. Now, as a mother of three living children and one who died, I feel overwhelmed, forgetful and, to use a word my aunt Mollie often said, discombobulated.

At the fast food restaurant, my children laugh in the play area as I sit drinking coffee behind the glass partition that separates the play area from the dining section. While I have hugged them so tightly their tonsils could pop out, I am still, much of the time, finding myself watching them from a distance. They are mine but so was Daniel, and in the course of a moment I know they could be gone, as he is.

When Rachel, 11, was late coming home from a shopping trip with her grandmother, I thought they had been tied up in traffic, but then my mind leaped off into an insane spin and I was certain she'd been in an accident. My thoughts dove into planning her funeral.

She came home without a scratch, and I gulped my worries away, for the moment.

When my children say, "I love you, Mom," and spontaneously wrap their arms around me, I'm certain this could be the end.

"So you live in fear?" a friend asks. Well, no. I live in reality.

My reality is hearing my children call "Hi, Daniel" when we drive on Interstate 40 near Exit 270, where there's a view of Daniel's Place, what my children have named the cemetery. Ben, at five, older than his older brother ever got to be, asks which of our toys Daniel liked to play with and with a smile on his face, listens as I share a story about Daniel and the Fisher Price fishing rod. Elizabeth, age four, tells me out of the blue that Daniel isn't dead; he lives with God. Later, she hugs me and says she wishes Daniel was here. She's never been photographed with her oldest brother. She kicked in the womb as Daniel breathed his last. Three months later, this failed-vasectomy child was born. I was certain she'd be severely traumatized. But so far, at age four, she has only been known to tell the neighbor girl she doesn't like her.

My reality is that a part of my heart wanted to be childless when Daniel died so that I could have time to weep and wail without having to meet the demands of exasperated cries, without having to wipe little bottoms and without having to search for tiny shoes and socks. When infant Liz used to wake crying months after Daniel's death, I'd hold her and we'd sob together.

The hole in my heart looms large today. The new school year and Daniel's birthday are just around the corner. I finish my coffee and tell my kids it's time to attend the Open House. While grinning at my children and me, a friend exclaims, "One in middle school, one in kindergarten, and one in preschool! You will be busy." I paste on a phony smile and think, Not busy enough. I need my fourth grader. But Daniel, my would-be-nine-year-old, died four years ago before completing a year of preschool.



When we arrive home from the Open House, Ben trips onto the pavement while playing ball and I hold him as he cries and his knee bleeds. Whispering, I assure him, "It is going to be okay." What a luxury to be able to tell my children this line of comfort. For Daniel, with the cancer treatments he had to go through, it was not "okay." Although I prayed daily he'd be cured, it was beyond my control. A scraped knee will heal.

How do we do it? How do we continue living the role of the nurturing and loving parent with the enormous responsibilities, when at times, we can barely put one foot in front of the other?

Here are some tips that have worked for fellow bereaved parents and me:

- Take breaks. This is easier said than done, I know. But I believe you need more breaks than before the death of your child. Your energy for living has been depleted. If you're home all day with the demands of little ones as I have been, you need time alone. If your spouse is at home all day with the children, he or she needs a break.
- Let anger out in a constructive way. When you find you're constantly yelling at the kids, it's time to figure out another release for anger. Play basketball, go on a walk or bike ride. Shut yourself in a room and write. Use your pent-up frustration to pull weeds in the garden or sweep the garage.
- Learn to apologize, often. When you do find yourself unreasonably upset with your children, apologize for your reactions. Grief can make you irrational.
- Hug your kids more, even if the older ones whine and don't want you to. They know now as we do how important hugs and showing our affection real. Talk it out. Tell your children why you are feeling sad or discouraged. If you're having a frustrating day, let them know. Even my little ones could understand that "Mommy or Daddy is sad because she/he misses Daniel."

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# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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- Spend time with kids, one on one, if possible. Just you and your daughter can go shopping or out for ice cream. Don't force talk of her dead brother or sister. Just be together for the sake of spending time together. We focus a lot on our deceased children; our living children need to feel valued, too.
- Don't stifle your children as they grow and grieve in their own ways.
- Write love letters to your surviving children. Sometimes it is easier to convey feelings on paper. Give the letters to your kids or keep them to reread later.
- Share your child who died. He is a part of the family and his story needs to be told.

Don't fear your "glass partition" view of parenting. As with the other phases and experiences of grief, honor it, and don't fight it.

You are modeling survival. Even as your tears flow and you are overcome with sorrow, your children can learn this is okay. They will also reflect (although it may be years later) that Mom got out of bed, made us breakfast, shopped for school supplies, and went to our soccer games even when she didn't feel like it. They will learn life is tough and even when the storms hit the hardest, it is possible to live through them.



Believe your surviving children will be all right even as they see you suffering and as they face their own monumental pain. In time, they may learn a deeper sensitivity. Perhaps they will become more compassionate because of their experiences. You can guarantee they're more realistic. Your son or daughter might even become a winner of the Noble Peace Prize. (We can still dream, can't we?)

I have to remember that although once laid-back, I was never the perfect parent before Daniel died. I had vices and virtues then, just as I have now. Perhaps grief has helped us become better aware of what we are all about. Listen. There are many negatives, but there is much to smile about now, too. Devotion made us caring and loving parents before, and it can carry us through during this rocky road of bereavement. There is the ability to parent effectively through the glass partition.

**Alice J. Wisler**  
**TCF, Wake County, NC**  
**In Memory of Daniel**

## Whispers from the Library

I recently had an opportunity to make a list of all the books in our library. In my little list-making world, it seemed like the logical thing to do at the time. When somebody gives you a collection of things to watch over, you make a list and see what you have.

And I found out what I set out to discover. We have over 125 books and pamphlets in our library, including over 100 titles. However, I also discovered much more than mere numbers.

One would expect a library such as ours to have books on dealing with grief. And we do. Lots of them. We have books by experts, by self-help authors, activists, and grieving parents. We also have very specialized books for those grieving a loss of a child through AIDS, suicide, or miscarriage.

In addition, we have novels, poetry, affirmations and devotions. Some of the books are religious, others could be called "new age." They are not all for everybody, but they are very much like the members of TCF, a diverse group of individuals bound together by grief.



Please stop by our library before and after any meeting. To check out a book, write your name, phone number and date on the card found in the back of the book. Place the card in the file box. When you return a book, cross out your name, put the card back in the book and place the book on the table.

You may keep a book as long as you need. We have no late fees. However, we do ask that you show consideration for others and not keep a book too long. If you realize that a book is not for you and you set it aside, please remember to return it the next meeting. It may help someone else.

**Lauren Nagel, Chapter Librarian**  
**TCF, Sugar Land, SW Houston, TX**

## The Myth of Closure

"When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?" grievers often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievers hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one's room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes, "surely then, we will have closure," we think. We pray.

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# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us.

Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain, turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course.

Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings or for people we love.

Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn't exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us, the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let's not ever think that we'll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

**Ashley Davis Prend ACSW**  
**Hospice of North Idaho**



### **Save a tree**

To all members that receive this newsletter via snail mail. If you would like to get your newsletter a week earlier thru e-mail please send your e-mail address to: **headly@comcast.net**. This would save a tree and reduce postal cost.

## **THE STORM OF GRIEF**

It comes like a huge thunderbolt – shocking and deafening you to all else around you. Suddenly the world that has been so bright is black and desolate. There seems to be no hope.

The tears come like torrential rains. The winds of reality come, and your body is torn by the pains and fears caused by the storm. Even when the tears stop for a while, the dark clouds loom over you, threatening you with more tears and more pain.

Most passersby can't help you through the storm because they have never been caught in one like it – and some don't seem to care. There are a few who will reach out their hand and try to pull you from the storm, but the storm must be endured. And then there are the special ones, the ones who are willing to walk with you through the storm. Usually these are people who have been there before and know the storm can be survived.

After a time, the torrential rains turn to showers, and then the showers come less often. But the clouds don't go away. The sadness and pain remain, but they become more bearable.

Eventually, as the clouds begin to part, there may even be a rainbow, a sign of hope. And as the sun begins to shine a little more, flowers of memory will blossom to be enjoyed. I don't think the showers will ever end, but I believe as they get farther apart, the sky will get bluer; we will see more rainbows, and the flowers will bloom more and more.

Perhaps it's even good to have a shower now and then, to cleanse our souls and to revive those special flowers of memory.

**Mary Jo Pierce**  
**TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL**

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.

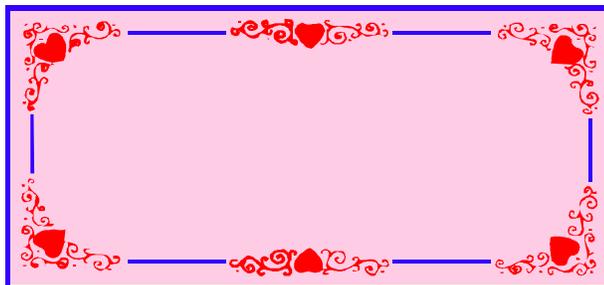
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.

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



*This newsletter is printed  
through the generosity of  
The Copy Stop  
Milford, MA*

### ***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.”*



# 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.*

**March-April**



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Vol. 19 Issue 2

### 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:

***March 18th    April 15th***

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:

***March 25th    April 29th***

### 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. ©2014**

### *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

### 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)

**Chapter Web Page**  
[www.tcfmetrowest.com](http://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. & Mrs. Raymond Bergeron in loving memory of their daughter **Dolores R. Bergeron**.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert King Sr. in loving memory of their daughter **Caren King-Firth**.

Mr. & Mrs. Charles M. Clark Sr. in loving memory of their daughter **Cynthia A. Clark-Renaud** on her birthday February 15th. And their son **Charles M. Clark Jr.** on his birthday March 30th.

Mrs. Tracy Dullea-Juliano in loving memory of her son **Christopher Marc Dullea** on his birthday February 21st.

Mr. Don DiLorenzo in loving memory of his son **Christopher DiLorenzo** on his birthday January 10th.

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Jackman in loving memory of their daughter **Alicia D. Jackman** on her anniversary March 8th. "Love you and miss you always, XOXO" and in loving memory of Mrs Pamela Jackman's brother **Douglas C. Curtiss**. "Love you and miss you always, XOXO."

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boudreau in loving memory of their son **Nicholas L. Boudreau** on his anniversary March 4th.

Mrs. Mariya Lomakina in loving memory of her son **Mikhail (Mike) Lomakina**.

Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Connolly in loving memory of their son **Ethan Patrick Connolly** on his birthday March 3rd.

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Kennedy in loving memory of their beautiful daughter **Kaitlyn Kennedy** on her Ten Year Angel Day February 22nd. "Love you and miss you always. Take care of our parents in Heaven love Mom and Dad."

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Eldredge in loving memory of their son **Kevin R. Eldredge** on his anniversary March 24th.

Mrs. Beverly A. Marks in loving memory of her son **Shawn P. Marks** on his anniversary February 15th. "Love and missed so much."

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Murphy in loving memory of their son **Michael Patrick Murphy**.

Mr. & Mrs. Rick Dugan in loving memory of their son **Larry Dugan** on his birthday April 6th.



# 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 March and April. 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*

#### *March*

- WILLIAM C. LEWIS
- NICHOLAS L. BOUDREAU
- ALICIA D. JACKMAN
- COLLIN T. MURPHY
- STACEY ANN MAHONEY
- HOLLY L. MACKENZIE
- KEVIN R. ELDREDGE
- PATRICK JORDAN FISCHETTI
- JEFFREY J. LEGGERI
- MICHAEL J. PAULHUS
- KRISTEN DONOVAN
- TYLER PARMENTER
- CHRISTOPHER SHEA

#### *April*

- JOHN GARVEY
- JOSEPH WEBSTER
- CHRISTOPHER J. MITRANO
- CHRISTIAN ALBEE
- MICHAEL BARRY
- BRIAN JOSEPH MacISAAC
- TRACY SMITH
- EMMA FRANCES DALTON
- KELSEY MULKERRINS
- MARC P. LEWIS
- KERI L. O'NEIL-DERBYSHIRE
- JUSTIN MAYER

### *Birthdays*

#### *March*

- ALAN R. STUCHINS
- IAN GREENBLATT
- ETHAN PATRICK CONNOLLY
- MICHAEL HEBDENI
- SHAYNE M. DESROCHES
- WILLIAM H. BARDOL JR.
- CHRISTOPHER JAKSTIS
- JEFFREY D. SAMBUCETI
- CHRISTOPHER J. MITRANO
- IAN MACINNES HODGMAN
- GARY S. POWELL
- RITA HUDSON-CARNEY
- RYAN J. McCUSKER

#### *April*

- LARRY DUGAN
- SEAN PATRICK COTTER
- LAURIE SLOPEK
- JESSE APPELL
- DOLORES ROSE BERGERON
- DANIEL J. SCOTT JR





## 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.

### 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.

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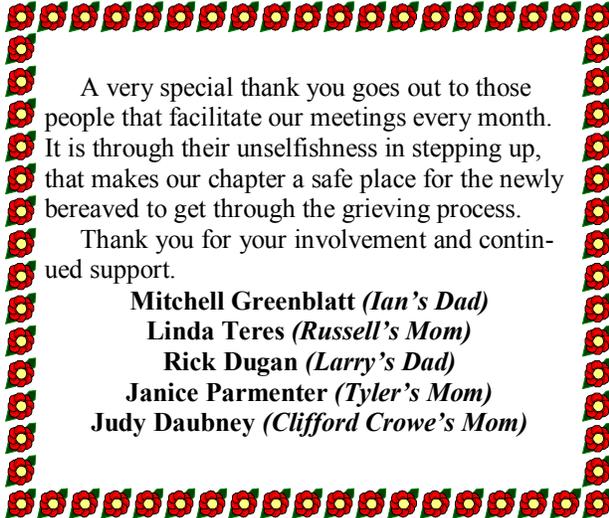
# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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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**



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)**

## ***Butterfly Messages To Our Children***

As balloons fill the northern sky, floating up and away on the wings of wind and love, I am astonished by the sense of peace which sweeps over me. I have sent my child a message written on a butterfly shaped note attached to a balloon. In my mind's eye, I know that my child will read that message and understand that his mother's love for him is eternal and unconditional. The void left in his absence is often overwhelming, and the pain frequently escalates from a quiet sadness to a screaming ache which shatters me. My child knows the pain I have felt and will always feel without him in my life. I express it every year on a little butterfly note. He knows he is loved.



This butterfly message is an important ceremonial part of my life now. Instead of an e-mail or letter, I send my child a note once a year. This ceremony is moving, the bagpipes are haunting, the readings are reflective and touching. I stand with other parents and notice that they, too, are watching the balloons until they disappear into the heavens. I am imagining my son plucking his balloon from the heavens and reading my message. Other parents are imagining this, too. Our communication to our child will be understood.

As parents who have lost children to death, we face new ceremonies and new traditions. As the years roll by, many of us will cling to those ceremonies and traditions. We are forced to replace the traditions of the past, before our child died, with new, fitting tributes that acknowledge our child's life and the meaning of that life to us.

The Compassionate Friends provides us this opportunity to share our feelings and our need to honor our child in the company of others who understand us and encourage us to speak openly about our child and our sorrow. This tribute to our child has deep meaning and touches our souls with its simplicity and grace.



Our ceremony is brief by most standards, but meaningful beyond words. No speaker could reach us as this ceremony does. For a small window in time, we are reaching out to our children, honoring them, remembering them openly and communicating with them. Tears are shed. Hugs are shared. Memories form a kaleidoscope in each parent's mind as we watch our balloon join with the others on its journey to our children.

This tribute and message to our children is one of two ceremonial gatherings that we, as Compassionate Friends, share each year. Remember. Always we remember our children. Others may wish to forget, put the unpleasantness behind them, but we, the parents of children whose lives were too short, will never forget. We have established our traditions and we look to each other for hope and support as we walk this lonely road.

And so, as our balloons completely disappear into the heavens, we are immersed in peace and serenity, and we share a light meal and memories of our children with our Compassionate Friends.

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

## ***A Familiar Face***

My family was on vacation in 1985 traveling from Houston to the Black Hills of South Dakota. We were traveling through Kansas and it was getting dark and late. I got out of our car to check us into a motel. The woman waiting on me was obviously very tired. When she saw me, she opened her eyes widely and just looked at me for a while. The expression on her face was as if she saw someone who looked very familiar and very close to her. I knew instinctively that I reminded her of someone special.

(continued on next page)



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from last page)

As I started to fill out the forms, she began to cry. She was in too much pain to explain herself to me. I reached over to hold her hand. The next morning when I came to check out, she was making small talk but her eyes were remembering a face that looked like mine. As I told her good bye, she started to cry again.

Years later my thirteen-year-old son, Ryan, died. Six months after his death, I was shopping and saw a young boy who looked a lot like Ryan. I followed him from aisle to aisle. I told this boy's mom that my son had just died and her son looked so much like mine. I pulled out pictures of Ryan and she agreed the boys did look a lot alike. Their clothes were even similar. The mom told her son to give me a hug: "a real one with both arms." While I was hugging this young man, I asked God to please let Ryan's spirit move through his body so I could touch Ryan again. The hug felt like Ryan. I closed my eyes and pretended it was Ryan. That hug felt like salve on my broken heart.

I wonder if God ever lets our children's spirits come into some other person for just a few seconds so we can feel some sort of relief? When that woman in Kansas was looking at me like I was someone else, I did - for a few brief seconds feel like another person. I hope the tearful woman felt it, too.

*Niecy Moss  
TCF, Houston-West, TX  
In Memory of my son, Ryan*

## *My Dog Died*

*"I know how you feel, my dog died."* These words can bring murderous rage to the hearts of bereaved parents when spoken by well-meaning, but errant friends. I never actually had this experience, but several of my friends did and the result was always the same, a compelling desire to strangle the person with one's bare hands.

On the morning of December 21, my husband and I said a tearful final goodbye to Gretchen, our beautiful Doberman, who had been a constant companion, loving friend, protector, and source of great joy for nearly eight years. She was, in a word, magnificent.

The pain and feelings of sadness are tremendous. As I look around at the empty bed, the dish in the kitchen, the favorite toy, I am overwhelmed with an intense sense of loss and sorrow. Memories of happy times, daily rituals and the unconditional love that only a pet can give assail from all directions. Tears flow uncontrollably. I really hurt.

No, it can't compare with the loss of my son. This pain will pass before long; we will get another dog (although there can never be another Gretchen); in years to come we will remember her with love and wonderful memories; she will never be forgotten.

But it is not the same. I know this because I have lost a child. Only one who has walked this road can know that no other loss, no matter how profound, can compare with the death of a child. If I had not had this experience, I, too, might be tempted to say "I know how you feel, my dog died."

We must endeavor to understand that these words are spoken from the heart, from someone whose pain is intense and who knows no better point of reference. And we must pray that those who speak those words will never know...

My pain is assuaged somewhat by my firm belief that Gretchen is now in the loving care of my beloved Robert, who will enjoy and love her as we did. She is in good hands. I know they are having a wonderful time.

*Carole Ragland  
TCF, West Houston Chapter, TX  
In Memory of my son, Robert*

## *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."

(continued on page 8)



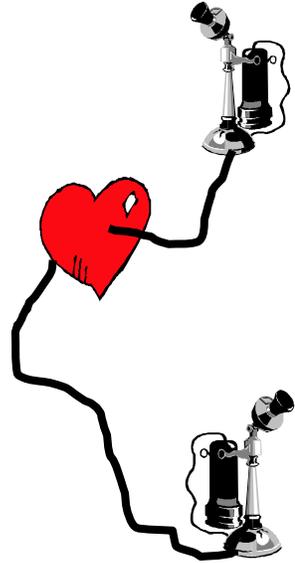
# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## 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.

## Support Resources

### TCF Online Chat Groups:

[WWW.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online\\_Support.aspx](http://WWW.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_Support.aspx)

- For questions, please contact Diana Jorden, 925-432-3854, who moderates the general grief and suicide loss rooms on Friday nights and Sunday. TCF online offers several specialized chat rooms, all moderated by moms who have been in chat for at least 2 years or more. We offer a sibling-only chat, loss under 1 year, loss over 2 years, loss of only child, suicide survivor, infant/pregnancy loss, and every night (and Monday mornings) there is a general loss room open to parents, step and grand, and siblings.
- You can sign up for the online TCF National newsletter at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)
- You can reach our TCF National Facebook page through the link on the same home page of our national website. You will be asked to join Facebook if you are not already a member, and we hope you'll find our Facebook page as interesting as do the more than 11,000 fans who have already found us!

### Other Grief Support Websites

- [agast.org](http://agast.org) - for grandparents
- [alivealone.org](http://alivealone.org)
- [aliveinmemory.org](http://aliveinmemory.org)
- [angelmoms.com](http://angelmoms.com)
- [babysteps.com](http://babysteps.com)
- [bereavedparents.org](http://bereavedparents.org)
- [beyondindigo.com](http://beyondindigo.com)
- [childloss.com](http://childloss.com)
- [goodgriefresources.com](http://goodgriefresources.com)
- [griefwatch.com](http://griefwatch.com)
- [GriefNet.org](http://GriefNet.org)
- [healingafterloss.org](http://healingafterloss.org)
- [opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)
- [pomc.com](http://pomc.com) - families of murder victims
- [save.org](http://save.org)
- [survivorsofsuicide.com](http://survivorsofsuicide.com)
- [Taps.org](http://Taps.org) - military death
- [webhealing.com](http://webhealing.com)



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 6)

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.*

### Editor's Note

Courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, you, your family, and your friends can now read the *We Need Not Walk Alone* magazine online without charge. To sign up for free access to this and future issues online, go to [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) and click on "National Magazine." Sign-Up at the top of the page.



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- South Shore Chapter (Hingham, Weymouth areas)  
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- Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)  
Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole  
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## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



### *Parenting Through a Glass Partition: After the Death of a Child*

Raising children and being bereaved makes me feel like I did when I was six years old. My red tights bagged around my ankles, I often had doggy poop on the bottom of my scuffed patent-leather shoes, and I was constantly running to catch the bus. Now, as a mother of three living children and one who died, I feel overwhelmed, forgetful and, to use a word my aunt Mollie often said, discombobulated.

At the fast food restaurant, my children laugh in the play area as I sit drinking coffee behind the glass partition that separates the play area from the dining section. While I have hugged them so tightly their tonsils could pop out, I am still, much of the time, finding myself watching them from a distance. They are mine but so was Daniel, and in the course of a moment I know they could be gone, as he is.

When Rachel, 11, was late coming home from a shopping trip with her grandmother, I thought they had been tied up in traffic, but then my mind leaped off into an insane spin and I was certain she'd been in an accident. My thoughts dove into planning her funeral.

She came home without a scratch, and I gulped my worries away, for the moment.

When my children say, "I love you, Mom," and spontaneously wrap their arms around me, I'm certain this could be the end.

"So you live in fear?" a friend asks. Well, no. I live in reality.

My reality is hearing my children call "Hi, Daniel" when we drive on Interstate 40 near Exit 270, where there's a view of Daniel's Place, what my children have named the cemetery. Ben, at five, older than his older brother ever got to be, asks which of our toys Daniel liked to play with and with a smile on his face, listens as I share a story about Daniel and the Fisher Price fishing rod. Elizabeth, age four, tells me out of the blue that Daniel isn't dead; he lives with God. Later, she hugs me and says she wishes Daniel was here. She's never been photographed with her oldest brother. She kicked in the womb as Daniel breathed his last. Three months later, this failed-vasectomy child was born. I was certain she'd be severely traumatized. But so far, at age four, she has only been known to tell the neighbor girl she doesn't like her.

My reality is that a part of my heart wanted to be childless when Daniel died so that I could have time to weep and wail without having to meet the demands of exasperated cries, without having to wipe little bottoms and without having to search for tiny shoes and socks. When infant Liz used to wake crying months after Daniel's death, I'd hold her and we'd sob together.

The hole in my heart looms large today. The new school year and Daniel's birthday are just around the corner. I finish my coffee and tell my kids it's time to attend the Open House. While grinning at my children and me, a friend exclaims, "One in middle school, one in kindergarten, and one in preschool! You will be busy." I paste on a phony smile and think, Not busy enough. I need my fourth grader. But Daniel, my would-be-nine-year-old, died four years ago before completing a year of preschool.



When we arrive home from the Open House, Ben trips onto the pavement while playing ball and I hold him as he cries and his knee bleeds. Whispering, I assure him, "It is going to be okay." What a luxury to be able to tell my children this line of comfort. For Daniel, with the cancer treatments he had to go through, it was not "okay." Although I prayed daily he'd be cured, it was beyond my control. A scraped knee will heal.

How do we do it? How do we continue living the role of the nurturing and loving parent with the enormous responsibilities, when at times, we can barely put one foot in front of the other?

Here are some tips that have worked for fellow bereaved parents and me:

- Take breaks. This is easier said than done, I know. But I believe you need more breaks than before the death of your child. Your energy for living has been depleted. If you're home all day with the demands of little ones as I have been, you need time alone. If your spouse is at home all day with the children, he or she needs a break.
- Let anger out in a constructive way. When you find you're constantly yelling at the kids, it's time to figure out another release for anger. Play basketball, go on a walk or bike ride. Shut yourself in a room and write. Use your pent-up frustration to pull weeds in the garden or sweep the garage.
- Learn to apologize, often. When you do find yourself unreasonably upset with your children, apologize for your reactions. Grief can make you irrational.
- Hug your kids more, even if the older ones whine and don't want you to. They know now as we do how important hugs and showing our affection real. Talk it out. Tell your children why you are feeling sad or discouraged. If you're having a frustrating day, let them know. Even my little ones could understand that "Mommy or Daddy is sad because she/he misses Daniel."

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# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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- Spend time with kids, one on one, if possible. Just you and your daughter can go shopping or out for ice cream. Don't force talk of her dead brother or sister. Just be together for the sake of spending time together. We focus a lot on our deceased children; our living children need to feel valued, too.
- Don't stifle your children as they grow and grieve in their own ways.
- Write love letters to your surviving children. Sometimes it is easier to convey feelings on paper. Give the letters to your kids or keep them to reread later.
- Share your child who died. He is a part of the family and his story needs to be told.

Don't fear your "glass partition" view of parenting. As with the other phases and experiences of grief, honor it, and don't fight it.

You are modeling survival. Even as your tears flow and you are overcome with sorrow, your children can learn this is okay. They will also reflect (although it may be years later) that Mom got out of bed, made us breakfast, shopped for school supplies, and went to our soccer games even when she didn't feel like it. They will learn life is tough and even when the storms hit the hardest, it is possible to live through them.



Believe your surviving children will be all right even as they see you suffering and as they face their own monumental pain. In time, they may learn a deeper sensitivity. Perhaps they will become more compassionate because of their experiences. You can guarantee they're more realistic. Your son or daughter might even become a winner of the Noble Peace Prize. (We can still dream, can't we?)

I have to remember that although once laid-back, I was never the perfect parent before Daniel died. I had vices and virtues then, just as I have now. Perhaps grief has helped us become better aware of what we are all about. Listen. There are many negatives, but there is much to smile about now, too. Devotion made us caring and loving parents before, and it can carry us through during this rocky road of bereavement. There is the ability to parent effectively through the glass partition.

**Alice J. Wisler**  
**TCF, Wake County, NC**  
**In Memory of Daniel**

## Whispers from the Library

I recently had an opportunity to make a list of all the books in our library. In my little list-making world, it seemed like the logical thing to do at the time. When somebody gives you a collection of things to watch over, you make a list and see what you have.

And I found out what I set out to discover. We have over 125 books and pamphlets in our library, including over 100 titles. However, I also discovered much more than mere numbers.

One would expect a library such as ours to have books on dealing with grief. And we do. Lots of them. We have books by experts, by self-help authors, activists, and grieving parents. We also have very specialized books for those grieving a loss of a child through AIDS, suicide, or miscarriage.

In addition, we have novels, poetry, affirmations and devotions. Some of the books are religious, others could be called "new age." They are not all for everybody, but they are very much like the members of TCF, a diverse group of individuals bound together by grief.



Please stop by our library before and after any meeting. To check out a book, write your name, phone number and date on the card found in the back of the book. Place the card in the file box. When you return a book, cross out your name, put the card back in the book and place the book on the table.

You may keep a book as long as you need. We have no late fees. However, we do ask that you show consideration for others and not keep a book too long. If you realize that a book is not for you and you set it aside, please remember to return it the next meeting. It may help someone else.

**Lauren Nagel, Chapter Librarian**  
**TCF, Sugar Land, SW Houston, TX**

## The Myth of Closure

"When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?" grievers often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievers hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one's room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes, "surely then, we will have closure," we think. We pray.

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# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us.

Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain, turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course.

Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings or for people we love.

Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn't exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us, the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let's not ever think that we'll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

**Ashley Davis Prend ACSW**  
**Hospice of North Idaho**



### **Save a tree**

To all members that receive this newsletter via snail mail. If you would like to get your newsletter a week earlier thru e-mail please send your e-mail address to: **headly@comcast.net**. This would save a tree and reduce postal cost.

## **THE STORM OF GRIEF**

It comes like a huge thunderbolt – shocking and deafening you to all else around you. Suddenly the world that has been so bright is black and desolate. There seems to be no hope.

The tears come like torrential rains. The winds of reality come, and your body is torn by the pains and fears caused by the storm. Even when the tears stop for a while, the dark clouds loom over you, threatening you with more tears and more pain.

Most passersby can't help you through the storm because they have never been caught in one like it – and some don't seem to care. There are a few who will reach out their hand and try to pull you from the storm, but the storm must be endured. And then there are the special ones, the ones who are willing to walk with you through the storm. Usually these are people who have been there before and know the storm can be survived.

After a time, the torrential rains turn to showers, and then the showers come less often. But the clouds don't go away. The sadness and pain remain, but they become more bearable.

Eventually, as the clouds begin to part, there may even be a rainbow, a sign of hope. And as the sun begins to shine a little more, flowers of memory will blossom to be enjoyed. I don't think the showers will ever end, but I believe as they get farther apart, the sky will get bluer; we will see more rainbows, and the flowers will bloom more and more.

Perhaps it's even good to have a shower now and then, to cleanse our souls and to revive those special flowers of memory.

**Mary Jo Pierce**  
**TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL**

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.

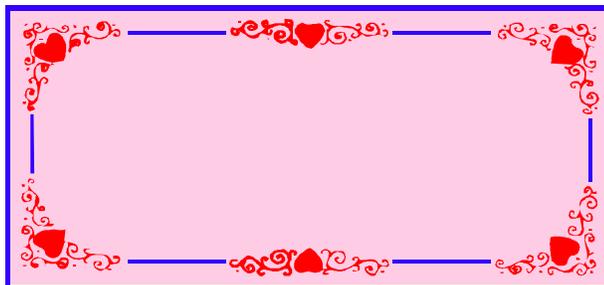
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.

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  
Metrowest Chapter  
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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.”*