



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 2018



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Vol. 23 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 20th & April 17th

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 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.

March 27th & April 24th

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. ©2018

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 508/881-2111
- Carol Cotter 774/219-7774

The chapter address is:

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

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

Regional Coordinator
Dennis Gravelle
638 Pleasant St.
Leominster, Ma. 01453-6222
Phone (978) 537-2736
dgtcf@aol.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
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Voice Toll Free (877) 969-0010
Fax (630) 990-0246
Web Page:
www.compassionatefriends.org

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

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

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

Love Gifts

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Baisley in loving memory of their only child *Stacey Ann Mahoney* on her birthday February 20th and her anniversary March 21st. "Always on our minds Beautiful Angel, forever in our hearts."

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

Mr. Donald DiLorenzo in loving memory of his son *Christopher D. DiLorenzo* on his anniversary January 10th and his birthday February 23rd.

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Scott Sr. in loving memory of their son *Daniel J. Scott Jr.* on his birthday April 19th.

Mrs. Phyllis Curran in loving memory of her daughter *Monica Michelle Curran*.

Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Greenblatt in loving memory of their son *Ian Greenblatt* on his birthday March 3rd.

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Jackman in loving memory of their daughter *Alicia D. Jackman* on her anniversary March 8th.

Betty Myers in loving memory of her son, who is always loved and missed *William Bruce-Tagoe*.

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph K. in loving memory of their son *Kevin K.*

CHAPTER TID-BITS

Al Kennedy has graciously volunteered to make up picture buttons of our loved ones. The buttons are 2 1/4 inch diameter. If you have a photo of your child, you can e-mail it as an attachment to aksound@comcast.net or bring it to the next meeting. Al has a tool that will cut out the 2 1/4 inch diameter picture to fit it in the button. The circle is an approx. diameter of the button. A special thanks to *Al Kennedy*.



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, 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

- EVAN GEORGE REA
- NICHOLAS L. BOUDREAU
- JOSHUA O'DETTE
- ALICIA D. JACKMAN
- TIMOTHY JAMES THORSEN
- PAULA BETH WATERS
- STACEY ANN MAHONEY
- LAURA PARADIS
- KEVIN R. ELDREDGE
- TYLER PARMENTER

April

- JOHN GARVEY
- FRANK W. TOPHAM
- KELSEY MULKERRINS
- TIMOTHY JOHN O'NEIL
- MICHAEL J. ANDERSON
- JUSTIN MAYER
- KATHLEEN ANN STETSON

Birthdays

March

- ALAN R. STUCHINS
- IAN GREENBLATT
- SHAYNE M. DESROCHES
- DAVID HEMINGWAY
- WILLIAM H. BARDOL Jr.
- ROB McDONALD
- WILLIAM NESBITT
- ELAINE HUDSON-McAULIFFE
- LAURENCE PONTREMOLI
- RYAN J. McCUSKER

April

- JOSHUA O'DETTE
- LARRY DUGAN
- JAMES DAVID SIMONIS
- SEAN PATRICK COTTER
- RACHEL O'DETTE
- STEPHEN NIKERD
- DANIEL J. SCOTT Jr.
- PAULA BETH WATERS
- CHRISTOPHER J. BROVELLI





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.

Dreamy Memories

Beckoning, dreamy memories
Call softly out to me,
Taking me back through the years
To the way it used to be.

Carefree and happy was our Brad,
The world was his shining toy,
Sunny days and summer nights
Two favorites of his joy.

He floated, drifting with the tide,
Never knowing care or sorrow,
Living each day as it came,
With no thoughts of tomorrow.

I shed a tear for him today,
My heart called out his name.
I longed to hold him in my arms
For a touch that never came.

I closed my eyes to see his face
And hoped to see his smile.
I waited to hear him say to me,
"I'll be back in just a while."

And then my eyes, so filled with fear,
My heart, so filled with pain,
Came back to see he wasn't here
My wishes were in vain.

Wistfully my mind returns
To the present day again.
I find in pleasant sweet surprise,
His soul still lives within.

Though he may not be here now
In a body we can touch,
His memory will grow each day
In our hearts that means so much.

So now I'll say the time will come
When we will be together again.
Until that day no good - yes we'll say,
Just "We love you, God bless."

Debbie Sadler Brown
TCF, Nashville, TN

WHO AM I NOW?

Who am I now that my sibling has died? I have asked myself that question many times over the last four years.

When I think of my brother, Sean, I think of how things used to be. I also think of all the things he will miss. For example, my husband or my children will never know Sean. Sean will never have children. There are just so many things that he will miss.

I began to question who I was about a month after Sean died.

He and I shared a great love of music. When I think of music, I think of Sean. At first, every song I heard made me cry. After a while, though, I began to try to find a deeper meaning in the songs. I know that a lot of teenagers and young adults identify important times in their lives by music. I am one of those people.

Now, I am trying to figure out what place the music has in my life. After Sean died, music took on a new meaning for me. The music I sing and listen to is my special connection to my brother. The song "Because You Love Me" by Celine Dion was especially powerful for me. I came to realize that, through simply loving and supporting me, my brother had helped to shape the person who I was becoming and who I wanted to become.



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I have realized now that my life's direction has taken a slight detour. I have had to reroute my image of myself.

When I hear music, I see my brother, and I hope that will never change. When I saw myself, in the past, I saw Sean by my side. That picture has now been altered.

The biggest part of the question, "Who am I now?" is also "Am I still a sister?" The answer to that is a simple yes! Sean will always be my brother and I will be his sister. Forever. Peace until next time.

**Traci Morlock
BP / USA, St. Louis, MO**

Nemo's Vigil

My son, Todd had two dogs in his life that were bonded solely to him. The first was a poodle who was with him from age five until age 21. Todd was always her person. Todd loved that dog.

Todd and his family decided to adopt Nemo in 2000. Nemo is a mixed breed, probably part Blue Healer, part German Shepard. Nobody really knows. Nemo was Todd's dog from the beginning. Todd loved Nemo and took him with him whenever he could. Nemo was the protector and playmate of Todd's children and Todd's loyal companion in life.

Nemo jumped in the car when Todd said "load up" or "let's go." Todd was building a new home for his family, and Nemo always accompanied him to the jobsite. When Todd left home to run errands, Nemo went along with him. At night Nemo would wait at the top of the stairs for Todd to come home. If Todd traveled, Nemo would spend every night at his post until Todd came home.

When Todd died in December of 2002, Nemo's world forever changed. His best friend, his partner in life, his joy, was gone. But Nemo didn't know this. Nemo sat at the top of the stairs and waited as family and friends came to the house after the Memorial Service. Nemo became so confused, so concerned, and yet, he didn't know what had happened. He knew all was in chaos, and he preferred the ordered world of his beloved master, Todd.

Todd never came home. Nemo changed. He no longer interacts with the family. He no longer participates in daily activities or plays with the kids. Nobody asks him to "load up." He simply observes the mounting chaos and distances himself from the family and the menagerie of animals that have been added. Each evening, he sits at the top of the stairs.

It is said that dogs do not understand time. And so, every time the door opens, Nemo perks up and turns his head from side to side and looks. But it's never Todd entering the house.

Nemo drops his weary head on his paws and he waits. Nemo's vigil will continue until he, too, leaves this plane.

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

Playing the Blame Game

Have you seen the movie, War Games? If you have, recall that final scene. The clock on the WOPR is ticking down to world annihilation. David, the teenage computer whiz, is locked into grim battle against Joshua, the computer. They are involved in a simulated game of Global Thermo Nuclear Warfare. The game is imaginary but the consequences are deadly. David asks Joshua to engage in Tic Tac Toe. Will Joshua learn the lesson of Tic Tac Toe in time to save the world? The huge screens at NORAD go crazy with defense strategies and results, all the same in the end, world annihilation. Still the clock keeps ticking. The games whiz by like a blur on Joshua's computer screen. The Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles are beginning to launch. Global holocaust is imminent! Zero hour hits!! A pause. Nothing happens. Joshua's computer voice breaks the silence, "Strange game. The best move is not to play the game at all. How about a game of chess?" The world is saved. Joshua learned the winning strategy for Global Thermo Nuclear Warfare. Don't play the game.

After a son or daughter dies, surviving family members can be sucked into a game like Tic Tac Toe, or Global Thermo Nuclear Warfare. So often its results are very tragic also. It is the Blame Game. Child loss leaves families with overpowering feelings of helplessness, despair, anxiety, outrage, and hurt. The pain is so immense, family members feel the need to strike out at each other. Placing blame is a normal reaction after child loss.

While blaming others is a normal reaction, I am learning to use one word with a lot of caution. It is should. I think about stories from the Old West with the folklore on the shootouts. Think about it. So many of those shootouts ended in much bloodshed. There weren't any winners.

Now replace shoot with should. Homes of grieving families can be places of "should outs", where in place of loaded guns, people point loaded fingers. Think of these words as bullets.

"You should have been a better father."

"You should have been a better mother."

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The loaded finger also creates self inflicted wounds. Ever say something like this, "I should have paid more attention to who Susie's friends were," or, "I should have recognized the danger signals when Billy was reaching out for help." All of these reactions are to be expected.

Whenever I have wanted to fix the blame for Carl's death on someone, I have found it worthwhile to take a step back and analyze what fuels my desire to fix blame. Often my blame is fueled by anger. Anger, which is a normal response to a youngster's passing. This starts to take a bit of the edge off.

Also, I am so thankful that when I have been at my lowest, even my angriest, I have found trusted friends to talk to. These friends, some of whom are parents experienced in child loss, give me healthy perspectives to look at my feelings.

What about when the finger of blame is pointed at me by someone else? Usually, it is someone I love deeply. What do I do? My immediate response is to load my finger, point, and shoot, or should back at them. Of course, that accomplishes absolutely nothing except to turn the circumstances into something even more horrific. My late father-in-law would talk to me in his gentle, indirect way. Hold steady. Evaluate the situation. He would remind me that the person pointing the finger at me was hurting because they loved Carl too. He gave me a perspective on the other person's feelings while validating my own feelings.



Blame is not necessarily negative. Remember, the root of blame is often anger. Anger can be the catalyst for grieving families to bring about positive changes. It fuels the desire to bring about something good from something bad. Anger was, for me, an ingredient in getting TCF started here in Visalia.

There's fixing the blame, and then there's playing the Blame Game. Fixing the blame for a child's death is normal and later subsides. Playing the Blame Game is different. The winning strategy for the Blame Game is simple. Don't play it. Nobody wins. Everyone loses. Pause. Take a step back. Analyze what fuels the desire to place blame of your child's death on someone or you. Find a trusted friend to talk to. You will be glad you did.

Be good to yourself. Aaron.

*Aaron Pueschel
In Memory of my son, Carl*

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)
Chapter Leader: Mercedes Kearney
(new).....mdkearney@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.....cgc603@aol.com

We're Only Human

"Guilt Days": There is neither rhyme nor reason to when they will occur, even eight and a half years after my daughter Nina's death. I had one just the other day. I suppose it didn't help that it was a dreary stereotypical Minnesota day in February with depressingly gray skies and temperatures outside registering teeth-chattering, sub-zero cold with just enough snow fall to make venturing out problematic. These surroundings made it quite easy, even without any apparent good reason, to plummet into a "blue funk". My state of mind then heads in a negative direction ultimately sliding into a bottomless pit of senseless guilt.

In my experience with my friends who are bereaved parents, most admit that they experience this same phenomenon. I don't think there is anyone among us who can say after the death of their child that they don't regret something that they did or didn't do, said or didn't say to that child while they were living. It doesn't matter that the reasons for our feelings of guilt may be unfounded or even seem foolish, the fact remains that we have them.

For example, on birthdays or holidays where I would customarily give a gift, if inexplicably I recall the "toy cash register incident," I am guaranteed an instant "guilt day". In explanation, year after year Nina requested a toy cash register for a present; even to an age that I thought was unreasonable to want such a thing.



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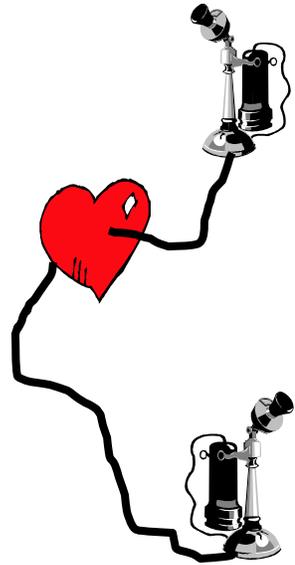
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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)366-2085
Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
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.

Support Resources

TCF Online Chat Groups:

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
- 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 - for grandparents
- alivealone.org
- aliveinmemory.org
- angelmoms.com
- babysteps.com
- bereavedparentsusa.org
- beyondindigo.com
- childloss.com
- goodgriefresources.com
- parmenter.org - children's bereavement
- griefhealingblog.com
- griefwatch.com
- GriefNet.org
- healingafterloss.org
- Jeff's Place-www.jeffsplacemetrowest.org.
- opentohope.com
- pomc.com - families of murder victims
- save.org
- survivorsofsuicide.com
- Taps.org - military death
- webhealing.com
- Griefshare.org



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For some reason, unbeknownst to even me, in my eyes it was a silly gift; something that she couldn't possibly really want or even use once she got it. Needless to say, I never bought it for her. I can tell you, though, that even to this day when I walk through the toy department and I see a toy cash register I feel a deep sadness and tears come to my eyes because I didn't buy her the so-called "silly" present that she obviously really wanted.

Just innocently strolling through a toy department and seeing a toy cash register can begin a domino effect of guilt feelings, a chain reaction of remembering even the tiniest self-perceived slight or any incident that I wish I could take back where Nina is concerned. Such as the time she wanted me to give her a ride to Girl Scouts, which was only four blocks away from our house. I had a migraine headache and could barely lift my head off the pillow and therefore couldn't give her one. So she hopped on her bike and about a block from our house hit a bump in the road and was thrown over the handlebars breaking her collarbone! Even though I know realistically that I couldn't have done anything different considering the circumstances, when I am in the throes of a "guilt day", the thought of that particular occurrence can send me in a downward spiral of culpability.

In actuality, chances are pretty good that if my daughter were alive today and I brought up these two happenings from the past she would probably tell me that I was correct in thinking she would have tired quickly of the toy cash register, and that she knows I couldn't physically have driven her to Girl Scouts with a migraine; that she never blamed me for the collarbone fracture in the first place. But because our child who died cannot give us confirmation that they understood our reasoning and that our actions were "okay" with them, we are left to wonder what they were thinking and feeling regarding the particular situation that makes us feel guilty. Therefore, when we are having a "guilt day" our tendency is to blow it out of proportion and thereby imagine the worst.

Expressing those feelings of guilt to a trusted friend or family member can be helpful. Talking about your feelings may also help you to let some of it go. That person may even remind you of something you had forgotten about on those days when you are sucked into a vortex of guilt and rendered incapable of remembering any of the positives. For example, a dear friend reminded me--one time when I was bushwhacked by a "guilt day"--of something she thought was extra special I had done for my daughter; something that she thought went above and beyond the call of duty as a mother.



One of the gifts was glow-in-the-dark stars like she had on her bedroom ceiling. She told me where to get them (a specialty store at a mall about 30 minutes away). I could tell by her voice how important it was to her, so I dropped everything and off I went to the mall. Little did I know that it would take three trips to three separate malls in different parts of town before I found a store that had any left in stock! Luckily, I made it home just minutes before she and her boyfriend arrived. I recall her exquisite smile and hugs of genuine thanks for my efforts. I remembered how gloriously radiant and pleased she looked when she came upstairs to show me the red shirt with the Tweety-Bird (her favorite) insignia on the turtleneck collar that her boyfriend had given her. Thankfully my friend steered me in the direction of these happy memories and positive reflections of Nina's last Valentine's Day and thereby broke the cycle of more negative thinking.

I believe that no one is harder on themselves than bereaved parents. Even as irrational as it is, we feel that we failed as our children's guardians, that we should have been super-human and able to protect them from cancer, drunk drivers, criminals, drugs, depression, congenital illnesses, and a host of other unspeakable evils with the potential to take away their precious lives.

The bottom line is that we are not invincible or perfect; we are only human. We did the best that we could with what we had to deal with at the time. Our children know this; they love and forgive us for our own humanness and associated imperfections, and I believe would want us to forgive ourselves as well.

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF, St. Paul, MN

In Memory of my daughter, Nina

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)**



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

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

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

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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent___) (professional___)

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

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

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

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

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

Fold & Tape

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

Fold & Tape



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



The Street Where I Used to Live

The street brought back so many memories of my early youth, a time when I had the world and my life in front of me. The possibilities were endless and dreams made up my day. On my drive to the “Memorial Walk” today I was unconscious of my surroundings until I came to that street.

First I passed the house where I lived when I was five. I saw the house as it is now and then saw it as it was then. It had been painted white with brown trim when I lived there. The front door was open and I was visited by memories of me and my squealing sisters as we went through our Easter baskets on Easter morning. I felt the breeze brought in by the attic fan. My place in the family was security to me and gave me freedom to wonder about my future. The idea of “friends” was introduced to me when I lived there and I loved the idea. My first friends were made on that street. I felt companionship and kinship with another person besides my family and I was excited as the world would be full of friends. But, I didn’t know.

A little further down on my right I came to my elementary school. I immediately saw myself walking across the street to school with my brown lunchbox in hand, the lunch box that always smelled like mayonnaise and bologna. Boy, I loved that lunchbox and what it represented, lunchtime and independence. I was seven. Life was good. But, I didn’t know.

The next memory that came to mind was of me riding my banana seat bicycle with my little dachshund dog, Schultz, running along beside me as I pedaled my weekends away around the playground of the school. I was 12 and was about to enter Jr. High School and my teenage years. Wow! I was on my way and would conquer the world and all it had to offer. Schultz and I would stop my bike and lie in the grass gazing up at the clouds and dream of life. One time I remember we even asked each other the question (well, I asked and he listened) “Will we remember this?” Funny thing, I do. But I didn’t know.

The next landmark was the ball field where I played hundreds of games from the time I was 10 to 18. I loved the feel of the ball in my hand and the sound of it hitting the leather glove. I was good at the game and I felt good while playing. It was one of my gifts. I knew there would be many gifts in my life and I was anxious to discover them. As I passed the ball field I could smell the corndogs and popcorn. I could remember the cleats that fit me snugly and made me feel strong and sure. I had life by the horns and was going someplace. I had a confidence in myself and felt that I was in control of my life and anything was possible. Good things were waiting for me. But, I didn’t know.

Finally I came to the end of the street and back to reality where my destiny awaited and I would meet the others in our group of “Compassionate Friends,” my new friends, where we would walk to remember our children. The children we lost. I wonder if it was a good thing that “I didn’t know.”

Dana Rogers
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In Memory of my son, Rick

The Irritability of Grief

As much as I have read about grief, I don’t think I’ve read anything about how irritable it makes me. I’m guessing I’m not alone. I am short tempered, easily annoyed, and just generally uncomfortable in my own skin. There seem to be many contributing factors.

First, even after four and a half years, I often do not sleep well. I go to bed too early, probably, because often I’m just “done” with the day and want it to be over. Then, I wake up in the middle of the night and can’t go back to sleep because I ruminate over and over about Jordan’s death, all the circumstances surrounding it, all the difficulties since. *I wish my mind had an “off” switch.* I could sure use one.



Next, my chest still hurts. Not as much of the time as it used to, but still often enough to bother me. There is an elephant who has planted its foot upon my chest.

Third, it takes a lot of energy to put on the mask I wear so that I can maneuver about in the world. The mask that smiles at the good news of others, the time they have with their intact families, the joys and challenges that come with an ordinary life. The kind of life I used to have.

There are fifty-five conditions listed on Wikipedia that can cause irritability. Grief isn’t one of them. Insomnia and sleep deprivation are. I think grief should be there too.

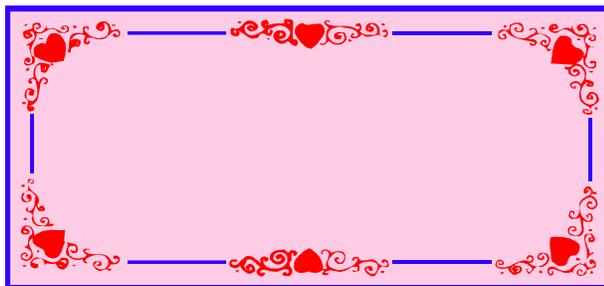
I find exercise makes it better as does a dose of sunshine. Having a dog helps, especially a dog who “has issues.”

Also, I’m not irritable when I am engaged in trying to be helpful to someone else. So I try to do more of that.

But I am still irritable. Grief makes me irritable.

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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.”*