



## 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 2020**

© 2020 The Compassionate Friends, All rights Reserved Vol. 25 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 17 & April 21***

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 31 & April 28***

### 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. ©2020**

### *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 508/612-0259  
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715  
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085  
 Mitchell Greenblatt 508/653-0541  
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774  
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998

The chapter address is:

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

**Chapter Web Page**  
[www.tcfmetrowest.com](http://www.tcfmetrowest.com)

**Regional Coordinator**  
 Dennis Gravelle  
 638 Pleasant St.  
 Leominster, MA 01453-6222  
 Phone (978) 537-2736  
[dgtcf@aol.com](mailto: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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

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

Ms. Roberta Arena in loving memory of her son **Michael J. Smith**. "Always loved, never forgotten."

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph K in loving memory of their son **Kevin K.** on his birthday February 13th. And his anniversary February 17th.

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Baisley in loving memory of their only child **Stacey Ann Mahoney** on her birthday February 20th. And her anniversary March 21st. "Every day is one day closer to you."

Mr. Scott Cohen & Lisa Gelin in loving memory of Scott's son **Brett Cohen** on his birthday December 20th. And his anniversary February 14th.

Mrs. Deborah Hart in loving memory of her son **Casey W. Calkins** on his birthday and anniversary. "Always loved, never forgotten."

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Eldredge in loving memory of their son **Kevin R. Eldredge** on his anniversary March 24th. "Miss you so much, every day."





# 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  
TIMOTHY JAMES THORSEN  
PAULA BETH WATERS  
STACEY ANN MAHONEY  
MICHAEL J. HAVER  
KEVIN R. ELDREDGE  
ANDREW J. DONOVAN  
TYLER PARMENTER

### *April*

JOHN GARVEY  
KELSEY MULKERRINS  
ERIC T. BURROUGHS  
JUSTIN MAYER  
KATHLEEN ANN STETSON

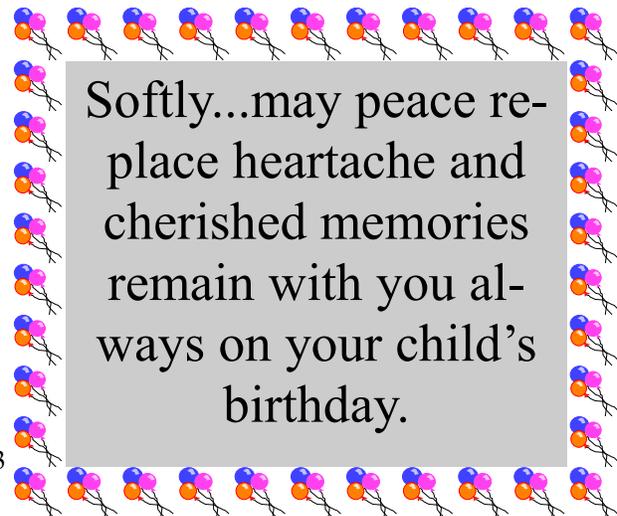
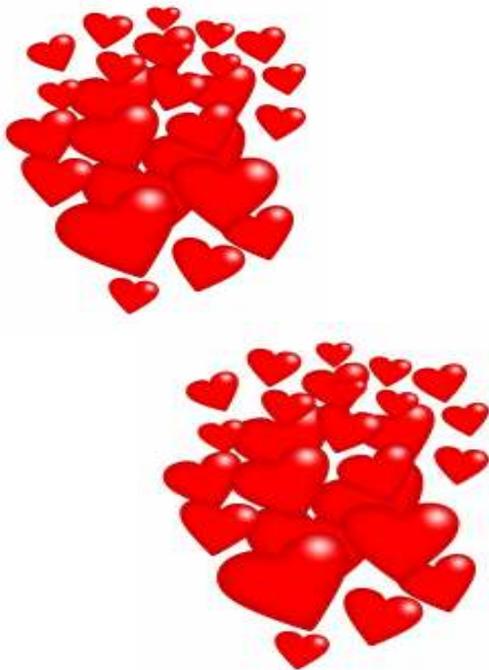
## *Birthdays*

### *March*

ALAN R. STUCHINS  
TIMOTHY JOHN KOVALCHIK  
IAN GREENBLATT  
JONATHAN (JAKE) STEELE MORAN  
DAVID HEMINGWAY  
CHRISTOPHER KENNETH GARABADIAN  
SHERIL SEARS JONES  
WILLIAM H. BARDOL Jr.  
ALEX GALANIS  
JONATHAN DAVID COHEN  
MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER BERKS  
SEAN PATRICK MOORE  
RYAN J. McCUSKER

### *April*

RYAN C. TOTH  
BENJAMIN ARTHUR MOUL  
LARRY DUGAN  
SEAN PATRICK COTTER  
DANIEL J. SCOTT Jr.  
PAULA BETH WATERS  
ANDREA RENEE BOSWORTH



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



# THE SIBLING CORNER



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

"Siblings Walking Together." We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

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

(continued on page 5)



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST

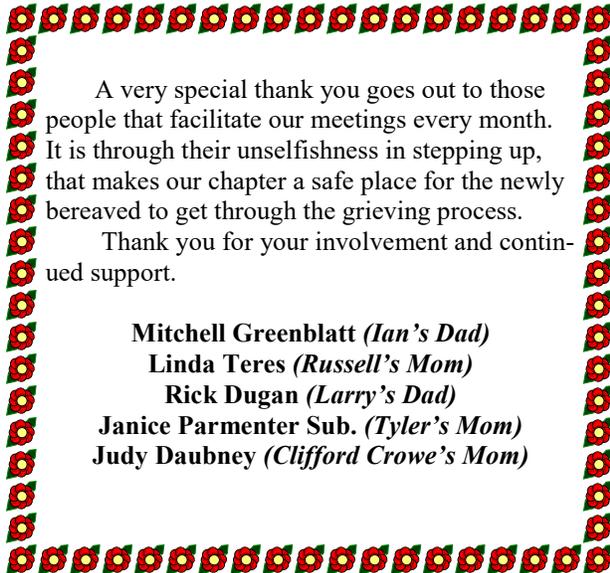


(continued from page 4)

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**



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

## ***The Dream***

Not so long ago I had a very strange dream. In that dream I was 18 years old and soon to become pregnant with my son. My husband was in the military. I would give birth alone and raise my son alone. It would be just him and me. I was shown the joy, love and dimension that my son would bring into my life. But I was also shown the terrible, terrible heartbreak of losing my son to death.

I was offered a choice: do you want to become a mother to this child who will one day die, leaving you feeling empty and hopelessly lost? Do you want the joys of this child's life or would you rather have an easier time of it, going to college without worry, moving forward in your career and enjoying your life with friends and acquaintances? There will be no real joys, of course, but there will be no real pains either. You must make this choice.

Of course I chose the joys and love and experiences and memories that my son would bring me. I wanted to be the mother of a unique human being whom I would love unconditionally.

I wanted to experience the pride and the pain of raising this child. I was willing to live life to the fullest knowing that one day, my heart would be permanently shattered.

The dream sequence moved forward and I was holding my son as I sat up in my hospital bed. Tears were streaming down my face. He was beautiful; he would be a wonderful son, a joy to raise, yet the tears persisted.

And now I understand the tears I shed when I held my son for the first time. This recent dream was a memory.

I made a decision to live life to its fullest and to enjoy my special child. Anything else life could have given me would pale in comparison. There will always be tears. But there will also be wonderful memories.

Dreams can be very revealing.

**Annette Mennen Baldwin**

**TCF, Katy, TX**

***In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen***

## ***The Sounds of Silence***

The sounds of silence are everywhere—it is the silent pain of the loss of our son Andy, it is the silence of our home because one of our children is gone, and it is the silence of the sudden quiet that comes over people when we mention Andy.

We have become both better and worse in the six years since Andy died of cancer at the age of 22. We are better because we are able to get on with our lives and even enjoy ourselves occasionally. We have gotten worse because, as the years go by, we feel his loss more deeply.

We feel his loss every time we participate in a celebration marking some milestone of our friends and relatives or their children. We feel the loss because any celebrations of our own will always be incomplete—one person will always be absent and not there to celebrate with us or to enjoy his own milestones. The pain of his absence is always present at these events.

When Andy died, the pain of his loss was a sharp acute screaming pain that tore a hole inside of us. Now, the pain is a silent quiet steady pain. The hole is still inside us, covered by a scar, but it is still there. It doesn't scream out loud any more but instead just remains as a quiet steady and never-ending ache and sadness—a silent pain.

The silence of our home is a different kind of quiet. By now, if Andy had lived, he probably would have been out on his own. We would have been "empty nesters" anyway. But, when a home becomes empty because of the death of a child, it is a different kind of empty nest. Our daughter Lesley is married and out on her own, the way it should be. But, Andy is gone for a different reason.

(continued on page 6)





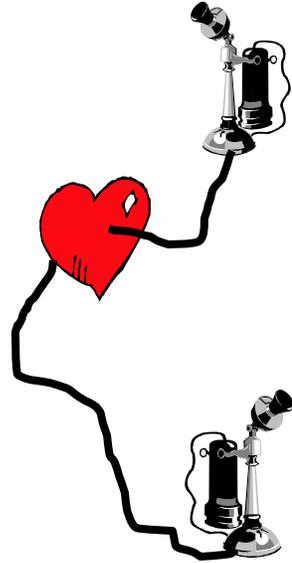
# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## 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-Natoli,....**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](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)
- [bereavedparentsusa.org](http://bereavedparentsusa.org)
- [beyondindigo.com](http://beyondindigo.com)
- [childloss.com](http://childloss.com)
- [goodgriefresources.com](http://goodgriefresources.com)
- [parmenter.org](http://parmenter.org) - children's bereavement
- [griefhealingblog.com](http://griefhealingblog.com)
- [griefwatch.com](http://griefwatch.com)
- [GriefNet.org](http://GriefNet.org)
- [healingafterloss.org](http://healingafterloss.org)
- [Jeff's Place-www.jeffsplacemetrowest.org](http://Jeff's Place-www.jeffsplacemetrowest.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)
- [Griefshare.org](http://Griefshare.org)



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 6)

One of the lessons we might learn from grief is who or what is really important in life. Those of us who know the pain of loss can become aware of and appreciate more our meaningful personal relationships. Somehow material possessions, jobs and financial concerns don't seem as important any more. There seems to be a shift in and reevaluation of priorities, hence the beginning of the growth process. Sometimes bereaved family members begin trying new activities, develop new interests, find "new causes," or are focused on building closer friends -- those who will listen. Part of the process of growth is to seek out those individuals who are open to sharing our pain. Sometimes people might disappoint us, but eventually we will find those who will be patient and willing to give us what we need from them. We will find we can draw closer to these friends who might not even be our long-term friends. We can focus the energies we gave to our child and work toward a cause to make a difference in our world.

The growth of grief will come when we seek to understand what it is to live without our child. We can journal to track our healing and enrich our understanding about the grief process by learning from others in our group, or from books/articles on grief. We can persevere in our attempt to go on with life, even though there are times when we want to give up and give in to the grief. *We can begin reaching out to others with the same love and care we once showered on our child or sibling.* We can be more open about reaching out to comfort and encourage others. We might learn we are more relaxed in being with others in grief. We can care for them expecting nothing in return. We can use our sufferings to make us more compassionate; we can reach out and help others during their trials.

The growth will also come when we can be thankful for the child we had in our lives, and that we were blessed to love and be loved. He or she was a gift and that gift can be shared with others by remembering, memorializing and making a difference in life for others. *Rejoicing in the gift of our child frees us to grieve as deeply as we loved without caring what others might think or feel.* There is no quick fix for grief. Grief endures and our task is to "out endure" the grief until we reach a state of reinvestment in life again. A time when each of us can look at ourselves and say, "I'm a better person because I have grieved well and have used the love I still have for my child to reach out to others, bear some of their burdens, give lavishly to life, believe in the strength of the human spirit, and embrace hope. Hope that life still holds joy and meaning for me, and I have things to do in memory and honor of my child." May we have grace and courage as we go forward.

Carole Dyck <sup>8</sup>

## Closure

I recently attended a community bereavement networking luncheon where representatives from support and grief groups met and exchanged information with each other regarding their various organizations and their goals and purposes. I listened as a person from each group introduced themselves and gave an overview of the mission of their organization. As each one took their turn to speak, I was struck by how many times I heard that they help people to find "closure."

To a parent whose child has died, the word "closure" no longer has any relevance. I no longer understand the meaning of the word. The word "closure" sounds like it comes from a strange and exotic foreign land that offers no translation for the English language. I turned to my ever trusty American Heritage Dictionary for the clarification. "Closure" it stated; was "The act of closing or the state of being closed. Something that closes or shuts. A bringing to an end; a conclusion."

I sat still and was taken a little aback. No wonder I could not grasp the meaning of this word as it related to the death of my child. Bereaved parents do not want "closure." We don't want the bright light that was our child to be forever snuffed out and brought to an end. We need another word.



Acceptance; perhaps. Resolution; maybe. But please, not "closure." It sounds so cold and final.

Do grieving parents have a bit of a "grief superiority complex" compared to those suffering from other types of grief? That may well be true. I keep hearing that "loss is loss." It seems that the only people who really believe that are those who have not experienced the death of a child. Yes, the loss of a job, pet, parent, or spouse, are all horrible experiences, but the loss of a child is a unique grief. It is visceral, forever life altering, and out of step with the balance of nature. Then I remembered and took comfort in the words of Dr. Heidi Horsley who always says that "Closure is for bank accounts, not love accounts," and I believe that's true.

Janet G. Reyes  
TCF, Alamo Area Chapter, TX

## A Love Song

The mention of my child's name may bring tears to my eyes. But it never fails to bring music to my ears.

If you are really my friend, Please, don't keep me from hearing the beautiful music of his name. It soothes my broken heart and fills my soul with love.



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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

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

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

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

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

I (do\_\_\_) (do not\_\_\_) wish to continue receiving the TCF newsletter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent\_\_\_) (professional\_\_\_)

(Donation included\_\_\_) Make checks payable to "The Compassionate Friends" or TCF

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

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

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS?**

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

Fold & Tape

---

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

Fold & Tape

---



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## Reaching Out

It's been over eight years since Dylan has passed away. Yet, each time I encounter a newly bereaved parent, I am filled with the memories of those first days, weeks, months.

This past week, my colleague and his wife were anticipating the birth of their first born. Thursday morning I received the news that their son died during delivery. It felt like someone had punched me in the stomach. I felt the air go from my lungs. I wanted to run right up to whatever hospital they were at and hug them tightly. I wanted to cry with them.

Hearing their news brought me back to a time eight years prior. It brought me back to our return home from the hospital with an empty car seat. To the funeral home to pick out the casket, flowers, and submit an obituary. To a vacant nursery that would eventually collect dust and other random deposits. To a postpartum body and no baby. To trying to live in a world that had not stopped. I recalled, so vividly, how much I yearned to be a mother, how I was a mother but there was no baby. How I drank to console and numb the pain. How I desperately tried to get pregnant to "fill the void." How I cried and screamed and cried some more, trying to release the pain and the anger. How I eventually did become pregnant and all the new terrors that having a baby again gave me.

When I came home from work that evening, it felt as if my soul had been crying all day. And really, it had. Once the kids were in bed and sleeping, I plucked our sleeping two year-old from his crib and carried him to bed with me. I rubbed his face and arms and back and cried, reliving so much pain that this family was just beginning to feel, to absorb, to recognize.

This isn't unusual for me to feel this when meeting or hearing of the newly bereaved. So why do I actively reach out to those newcomers? Why do I go to Compassionate Friends every month? Why do I edit the newsletter, which each time is soul draining as articles spark the emotions and memories? I do it because I feel it's necessary to help these parents. The journey is so hard, too hard to do alone. I believe it's helpful for them to have someone to listen to the same story over and over and over again. To be able to sit in silence when words fail. To be able to say to other parents, "You aren't going crazy!" To give them hope that there is life after death, that one can live after the death of their child. I have to do it for them.

Here's the interesting part. It helps me. Each time I recall or share the pain of losing Dylan, it's a little less painful, a little clearer.



I become a bit wiser. It helps me go on with the courage to love without fear. And it reminds me, this little boy did much to exist in this world. His 12 days of life wasn't a foggy dream. But it wasn't nearly long enough.

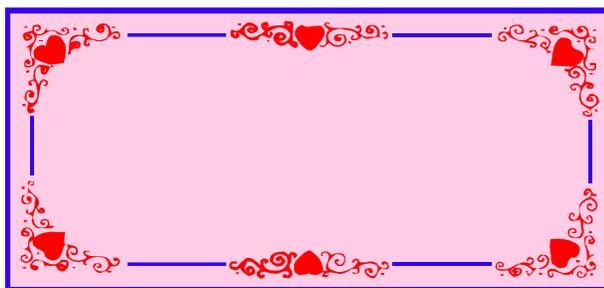
**Joleen Krings  
TCF, Green Bay, WI  
In Memory of my son, Dylan**

## The Paradigm Shift

Bereaved parents often recant with sorrow that the most calloused, harsh, and even cruel comments made to them regarding the loss of their child often comes from their nearest friends and family members. The reason for this is because these are the very people in our lives who have known us the longest and who think that they know us better than anyone. They have built a paradigm in their minds of who they think that we are based on our past relationship with them. We fit neatly into a box in their minds that tells them things like; "He has a great sense of humor," or "She loves to go the movies," etc. Based on our history with them, they have developed a long list of descriptive terms based on their memories about us that forms the framework of what they perceive us to be. When our child dies, the components that served to build the models in the minds of those we love folds like a house of cards. Suddenly, and irrevocably we are changed forever. This makes those closest to us very uncomfortable. To them we may look and sound like we used to, but we behave very differently now. Their uneasiness with this dramatic change causes them to pressure us into changing back to the way that we used to be in order for us to continue to fit the mold that they have conceived in their minds of how we should be. They want us to "Hurry-up and change back...now!" Sadly, this is the reason why some families grow distant and many friendships end. However, this is also one of the reasons that it is so easy to open up and connect with others at a Compassionate Friends meeting. No one there has any preconceived expectations or ideas of how we should act or behave. We are embraced and accepted in our grief and brokenness just as we are. One thing that we can do is to reach out to our loved ones and let them know that although we may never again be the person that we used to be before our child died, if they will bear with us and not abandon us, with time and effort we may regain some of the traits and characteristics that we were most loved and remembered for.

**Janet G. Reyes  
TCF, Alamo Area Chapter, TX**

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



Address Correction Requested

### ***TO OUR NEW MEMBERS***

*Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person - or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.*



### ***TO OUR OLD MEMBERS***

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